

LEADERSHIP RESET IN PRACTICE

# The Manager Field Guide

Good leadership often comes down to what happens in small, everyday moments: how you respond when someone brings bad news, what you do when you lose visibility into your team, whether you go too deep into the weeds or help cultivate talent through delegation, and how you communicate when there's no clear or easy answers.

The Manager Field Guide turns the ideas behind **The Leadership Reset** into practical behaviors managers can use in those moments. These aren't complicated frameworks or additional processes to manage. They are simply questions, exercises, and habits designed to help managers see more clearly, listen more intentionally, develop capability, communicate through uncertainty, and recognize work that might otherwise go unnoticed.

You don't need to use everything at once. Start with the tool that fits the moment in front of you.

**Recommended use case:**

When managers need practical, in-the-moment tools to handle common leadership situations like bad news, delegation, uncertainty, visibility, team changes, and recognition.

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# The Field Guide

The best way to make the ideas in **The Leadership Reset** useful is to turn them into behaviors managers can actually practice. Here are some tools.

## The Bad News Test

The next time someone brings you a problem, stop before trying to solve it.

**Try:** "Thank you for bringing this to me.
Tell me what you're seeing."

**Then ask:**

**Who** else might have information?

**What** happened?
**What** do we know?
**What** don't we know?
**What** would make this worse?
**What** do you think we should understand before we decide what to do?

One thing to avoid: "Don't bring me problems. Bring me solutions."
The intention may be to encourage initiative. The unintended message can be: "Don't tell me something is wrong unless you've already figured out how to fix it."

**Consider:** Sometimes the best solution begins with letting the problem be seen.

### The Goal:

**Is not to agree with everything you hear.**
The goal is to make it worthwhile for people to tell you.

# The Visibility Audit

You cannot see everything. You can get better at noticing what you might be missing.

**At the end of a week, ask:**

- [ ] **What** do I need to ask rather than assume?

- [ ] **Whose** work did I see directly?
- [ ] **Whose** work did I only hear about?
- [ ] **Whose** strengths am I seeing repeatedly?

- [ ] **Who** contributed outside my immediate team?
- [ ] **Who** helped someone else succeed?
- [ ] **Who** solved a problem before it became visible?
- [ ] **Who** tried something that didn't work?
- [ ] **Who** has not been recognized lately?
- [ ] **Who** might I be overlooking because they are less visible to me?

## One Useful Question:

**"What happened this week that I probably didn't see?"**

# The Delegation + Capability Checklist

Before taking work back from someone—or deciding to do it yourself—pause.

**Ask:**

- [ ] Is this something only I can do?
- [ ] Am I holding onto it because it genuinely requires my role?
- [ ] Am I holding onto it because I can do it faster?
- [ ] Am I holding onto it because I enjoy being good at it?
- [ ] Could someone else learn this?
- [ ] Have I explained what good looks like?
- [ ] Have I given them enough context to make decisions?
- [ ] Have I agreed on what they own?
- [ ] Have I agreed on when we will check in?
- [ ] Am I giving them room to solve the problem in their own way?

## The Goal:

**Isn't to disappear from work.**
The goal is to create another person who can do it well.

## The 15-Minute Team Reset

Useful after a reorganization, leadership change, project launch, new team formation, or any moment when people are figuring out how to work together.

| | |
|---|---|
| **Start with the reality** | What has changed?<br>(Name it. Don't make people pretend it hasn't happened.) |
| **Then establish the work** | What are we here to accomplish? |
| **Then establish the uncertainty** | What are we not sure about yet? |
| **Then establish the people** | What does each of us bring?<br>What does each of us need? |

### Take Away:

**A team does not need months of bonding before it can begin to work well.** It does need enough shared understanding to be candid with one another.

# The Uncertainty Communication Framework

You don’t need to have certainty to communicate clearly.

**When you don’t know what happens next, try:**

| | |
|---|---|
| **What we know** → | “Here’s what we know today…” |
| **What we don’t know** → | “Here’s what we don’t have an answer to yet…” |
| **What we’re doing** → | “Here’s what we’re doing to learn more / address the issue…” |
| **What may change** → | “Some of this may change as we learn more…” |
| **What we need from you** → | “Here’s what I need you to do…” |
| **When we’ll update you** → | “Here’s when you’ll hear from me again…” |

### Take Away:

When people cannot predict the outcome, predictability in communication can become an important source of trust.

## The “Who Are We Missing?” Exercise

Use this in a team, talent review, or leadership meeting. Start with the people who are easiest to name for a given purpose.

**Then ask:**

- [ ] Who isn’t on this list?
- [ ] Whose work do we rarely see?
- [ ] Who contributes across teams?
- [ ] Who solves problems behind the scenes?
- [ ] Who is consistently helping others succeed?
- [ ] Who has strengths we have never really explored?
- [ ] Who gets recognized frequently because they are visible?
- [ ] Who might need a more deliberate system of visibility?

This is particularly important when proximity is doing too much of the work of talent identification.

### A Useful Tip:

Recognition data can be a terrific way of surfacing hidden contributors.

## The Recognition Habit Builder

Recognition becomes more meaningful when it is specific.

INSTEAD OF: “GREAT JOB.”

**try:** “i noticed you…”

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**then:** “…and it mattered because…”

↓

**end with:** “the impact was…”

**For example:**

“I noticed that you stayed on the call after everyone else had left to help the team work through the issue. That meant we were able to keep the project moving instead of starting over tomorrow.”

Specific recognition tells someone not only that they did something well, but **what others value about the way they work.**

**Each week, ask yourself:**

- Who helped someone else succeed?
- Who demonstrated a strength?
- Who made a problem easier?
- Who did important work that might otherwise have gone unnoticed?
- Who deserves to hear specifically what their contribution meant?

## Next steps:

**Choose 1 tool from the above list that matches a challenge you are facing right now, and use it this week.**

Afterward, reflect on what changed in the conversation, what you noticed, and whether the tool helped you see or respond differently.

## Want more insights?

Watch our documentary investigation **The Leadership Reset.**
**Available on demand now.**

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