

Giles Daoust

Management!

100 tips
for
(young) managers
who want
to work *better!*

Title Books

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and support.

*“...you should rebuke these two kinds of men—
both those who always lack repose,
and those who are always in repose.”*

Seneca, Letters from a Stoic

About me

I was born in Brussels, Belgium in 1979. I wear many professional hats, including:

Alumnus of **Solvay Brussels School of Economics and Management**.

CEO of **Daoust**, a Belgian human resources firm my grandfather founded in 1954. In 2016, we received the **Entrepreneur of the Year®/L'Entreprise de l'Année®** award organized by EY in collaboration with the newspaper *L'Écho* and BNP Paribas Fortis.

Founder and CEO of **Title Media**, a media company I created in 2003 based in Brussels and Los Angeles.

Founding partner of **LN24**, Belgium's first 24-hour news channel.

Director of the **Ommegang** show, a historical reenactment inscribed on the **UNESCO** Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.

Columnist at the Belgian newspaper *L'Écho* and **Beci Brussels Business** magazine.

Author of *Mots d'esprit d'entreprendre* (2020) and *Workaholic!* (2021).

Writer of screenplays and graphic novels.

Photographer for the *Nature Fantastique* project, featured in numerous exhibitions and a book published in 2021. Member of the Strategy Committee of the **FEB/VBO** (Federation of Enterprises in Belgium).

Member of the **YPO** (Young Presidents' Organization).

Winner of the **Young Top Manager of the Year 2018** award from Top Management.

Nominee for *Trends-Tendances* magazine's **Manager of the Year 2020**.

A lover of **books**, movies, and music (my home is a veritable library!).

Foreword

When I turned forty, I realized I had been a certified workaholic for the past 20 years. I decided to take a hard look at **how I structure my work**. I thought a ton. I read a lot. I wrote a bit.

I published a book last year based on my experience called ***Workaholic! 100 tips for (young) entrepreneurs who want to work better***, primarily aimed at entrepreneurs, CEOs, and management committees. I started from the premise that people with these responsibilities often work *too much*, and my goal was to help them work *better*.

The book you're holding now is intended for managers, whatever their position within the organization.

My goal with *Management!* is to define **managers' roles and responsibilities** and then offer **actionable advice** to help them do their jobs—without turning into workaholics.

This book builds on the **management training** I created at my own company, Daoust. Some tips are taken from *Workaholic!* (and given a manager's spin) and some are new insights I've gleaned from the things I've seen and read and the people I've talked to.

This book may well be of interest to **every employee at every level in your company**. When employees understand what their managers are grappling with, it makes for a better, **more cohesive team**. **And maybe, just maybe, they'll consider becoming managers themselves one day.**

My hope is that you'll take the tips that **inspire** you and run with them.

Feel free to **ignore** the rest.

Glossary

Manager: Someone who runs a department or team.

Department: The part of the business (of any size) the manager runs. This could also mean a store, agency, restaurant, factory, or even an entire company.

Employees: The team members in the department the manager runs.

Supervisor: The person the manager reports to, i.e., their boss.

Direct reports: The employees that report to the manager.

Peers: Those at the same hierarchical level within the organization.

Coworkers: Everyone at work, including supervisors, direct and indirect reports, peers, etc.

Methodology

It would be pointless to try to start following all 100 of these tips today.

It's probably impossible to follow more than **80%** of them all the time.

If you're interested in my approach, here's how I'd go about it:

Pick the **10** tips that resonate with you the most and try to stick to them for a month.

If you manage to follow **8**, forget the other **2**.

The next month, pick **10** new tips and add them to your first 8.

Keep doing this until you've tried out all the tips that appeal to you.

Don't feel guilty about dropping the ones that don't stick.

The whole point of this book is to find what works for **you**.

I.
YOUR
ROLE

1. Be the driver of your department

Departments are led, not followed.
Be proactive and take the wheel.

2. Take ownership

For better or worse,
the buck in your department
stops with *you*.

3. Take a 360° approach

Manage your department holistically,
casting a discerning eye on how it works
and looking at everything from top to bottom.

4. Consider every stakeholder

Think of everyone your department serves or works with, internally and externally: customers, partners, suppliers, coworkers, applicants, etc. Be in touch regularly and measure their satisfaction.

5. Make an annual action plan

...and *commit* to it!

Start with 10 big goals or projects for the year,
then, whenever possible, set quantifiable targets
or KPIs (key performance indicators)
to measure your results.

6. Be bold

Challenge the status quo and dream big
while keeping your feet (mostly) on the ground.

7. Think critically

Regularly question why and how your department does things and be on the lookout for ways to improve.

8.

Think outside the box

In our constantly changing world,
innovation is everything.

9. Be flexible

Rules are essential, but so is adapting to the reality
on the ground and the people around you.

10.

Plan ahead

90% of the problems you'll face
you've either already encountered
or could have predicted.
Plan ahead to keep them
from happening (again).

11.

Focus on the future

Managers need to balance the routine day-to-day with forward-looking projects.

Whether they're big or small, external or internal, process or people oriented, make sure you carve out time for them.

12.

Don't hide behind excuses

“I didn't know...”

“We've always done it that way...”

“No one told me that was my responsibility...”

“My predecessor didn't handle that...”

“It's our supplier's fault...”

...are things you should never catch yourself saying.

13.

Balance results and relationships

If you're too nice, your results will suffer.
But if you're obsessed with results,
you'll lose the human touch.

14. Be a lifelong learner

Take the courses your company offers
and look farther afield for more training.
Remember, it's *your* career.

15.

Read voraciously

Staying informed and current is part of your job and keeps you at the top of your game.

Read books, magazines, websites—
everything you can get your hands on.

16.

Set goals for your own growth

What new knowledge or skills
do you want to learn?

What weaknesses or shortcomings
do you want to fix?

Make a list and work on a few things each quarter.

II.

YOUR TEAM

17.
Surround yourself with
the right people

They're the foundation for everything else.
You can't go it alone.

18.

Help hire your team

The right candidates won't just appear out of thin air.
Finding them isn't just HR's job—it's *yours*, too.

19.

Don't hold out for your dream candidate

Determine the (truly) essential job requirements
and be ready to compromise to make a hire.

20. Don't hire carbon copies

People tend to want to work with other people just like them, which is a mistake because diverse teams perform better.

21. Onboard new hires yourself

New team members should be able to fly solo
by the end of the first month, at the latest.
Helping them launch is your job,
not HR's or the training team's.

22. Give continuous feedback

Your employees need your guidance to grow.

23.

Leverage mentoring

If you don't have the time or knowledge to coach an employee in certain areas, find someone who does (maybe even from another department, with their manager's approval).

Good mentors are willing, motivated, and qualified—and don't act like the employee's boss!

24. Evaluate performance quarterly

Set short-, medium-, and long-term goals for every employee.

During their end-of-year reviews, be sure to ask what *you* can do to work better together.

25.

Make sure everyone is pulling their weight

Whether your work hours
and location are fixed or flexible,
everyone has to do their share
or you team will get discouraged.

26. Coordinate vacations

If everyone is out at the same time, it'll all be on you!

27.

Define who's on deck

When someone is out sick or on vacation,
who covers for them?

Assign regular fill-ins and make sure they're trained.

If everyone knows who they are ahead of time,
everything will continue running smoothly.

28.

Apply common sense to remote work

Be as smart and flexible as possible
when enforcing your company's rules.
You can be mindful of what your team
members are dealing with at home
(long commutes, family responsibilities, etc.)
without feeling like you always have to say yes.

29.

Use video meetings sparingly

No one wants to talk to a screen all day.

30.

Foster team spirit

Give your employees
ample opportunity to get
together in person.
Connection is what brings
a company's culture to life.

31.

Nurture young talent

Challenge them and help them grow within your team or within the organization—otherwise, they'll take their talent elsewhere!

32.

Keep your ear to the ground

Fine-tune your conflict and controversy detector
and step in right away.
Escalate anything you can't handle
to your supervisor or HR.

33.

Be willing to let people go

It's better to end dysfunctional
work relationships than let them
spoil what the rest of you are working toward.
But don't wait until the last minute
to talk about it with your supervisor.

III.
YOUR
EMPLOYEES

34.

Treat your employees well

Want them to stick around?
Give them a reason to!
But that doesn't mean
they get to walk all over you

35.

Lead by example

Act how you want your employees to act.

36.
**Don't do their
work for them!**

Is it any wonder you're so swamped?!

37.

Learn to delegate

Focus your effort where
you add the most value and delegate the rest.

Encourage employees to make decisions
and accept that mistakes will be made—
that's how they'll learn.
But be ready to jump in
if things start heading south.

38.

No micromanaging

Do you like being micromanaged?
Then don't be a micromanager!
Give your team clear instructions,
then stand back and let them shine.
Accept that the result will be different
than if you'd done it yourself.

39.

Respect the hierarchy

Deal only with your peers,
supervisor, and direct reports,
not *their* supervisors and reports.

Going around the chain of command
creates disorganization, confusion, and frustration
(and makes it hard to hold people accountable).

40. Have them consolidate their questions

If you have an employee who
constantly pings you with questions,
request a once-daily digest.
You'll help them become more self-reliant.

41.

Answer questions with questions

Your employees will learn to find the answers
on their own if you teach them
how to ask the right questions.

42. Stop repeating yourself

Employees who don't listen or pretend they don't understand might not be the best fit for your team.

43.

Give them time

Everyone can improve,
but probably not overnight.
Be patient, especially when you can see
they're really trying.

44.

Respect, trust, and loyalty...

...are earned.

If you're the fresh face on the team
or a newly minted manager,
start by proving yourself.

45.

Acknowledge your limits

Admit when you're not an expert!
No one knows everything.
Your team will appreciate your honesty.

46.
Remember to say
thank you

Appreciation is the foundation
of successful teams.

47.

Learn to say sorry

Managers make mistakes.

Managers get frustrated.

Apologizing will go a
long way with your team.

48. Give praise

It's a good motivator and it feels good—
but only dole it out when it's deserved.
You don't want to give your team an ego trip
by making them think they're the best in the world.

49.

Guilt trips aren't a management tool

Don't try to get your employees to work
more or better by laying on the guilt.

It never works and
creates a toxic environment.

50.

No office gossip

Whispers about who said
what about whom have no place
in the workplace.

51.

Be their manager, not their friend

Get along well with your employees? Great!
But letting them think you're their buddy
could backfire.

52.

Treat your suppliers
like any other member
of the team

Use the same management style and approach.

Review how everything is going regularly,
and always remember final responsibility lies with you.

IV.
YOUR
PROJECTS

53.

What? Why? Who?
How? When?
How much?

Ask yourself these key questions
before starting any project.

54.

Good, fast, cheap

You can only pick two!

If it's cheap and fast, it won't be good.

If it's cheap and good, it can't be fast.

If it's fast and good, don't expect it to be cheap.

55.

Top-down THEN bottom-up

Managers can either make decisions
on their own (top-down)
or consult their employees (bottom-up).

Strike a balance by doing both.
First define your vision for your project.
Then share it with your team
and get their feedback.
The final version should marry your initial vision
and your team's input, comments, and ideas.

56. Set milestones

Outline a general roadmap for your project
before getting into the details.
Otherwise you'll lose sight of the forest for the trees.

57.

Plan backwards

Start with the delivery date and work backwards to set your milestones. Expect delays and give yourself a buffer.

58. Set up task forces

Hold biweekly meetings for each project
with key stakeholders.

➤ See *20 Tips for Effective Meetings* in the appendix.

59.

Ask people to take ownership

Every project or task needs an owner
who is ultimately responsible.
Ownership can't be shared and
shouldn't be assigned to someone
who doesn't want it.

You're probably wondering:

“How do I do all this without feeling overworked?”

Here are some tips that may help.

V.
YOUR
TIME

60. Make to-do lists

Write down all your tasks, meetings,
and appointments for the week,
highlighting the most important ones
and crossing them off as you go.

61.

Split your week into 10 half-days

This will give you 10 time slots
for your most important tasks,
meetings, and appointments,
and a starting point for your to-do list.

62.

Set up recurring meetings

A set routine helps you create an efficient schedule.

For example:

A weekly team meeting

Biweekly project meetings

Monthly one-on-ones with your supervisor
and each direct report

Monthly, quarterly, or annual meetings with key
customers and suppliers

63.

Create a regular schedule

And try to stick to it as closely as you can.
You'll obviously have to deviate,
but knowing what's usually on the docket will help
you plan out your week.
Feel free to change it over time.

Sample week:

Monday afternoon: team meeting
Tuesday and Thursday morning: no meetings,
focus on tasks and projects
Friday afternoon: admin tasks and preparing
for the next week

Note: mornings are usually best for tasks
that require the most concentration,
while afternoons are better for meetings,
appointments, and administrative tasks.

64.

Don't let your inbox hold you hostage

You can't focus if you're answering emails all the time.

Instead, designate blocks of time
during your day to tackle your messages.

For instance, check your email first thing, at noon,
in the early afternoon, and at end of day.

During the rest of the day,
don't reply unless it's an emergency.

Note: this clearly doesn't apply
if you're in charge of customer service, reception,
or another department where people expect an
immediate response.

65.

Tell your team how to reach you

Your reports need to know
the best way to get a hold of you
in case of an emergency (call, text, etc.).
That way, you won't have to check
your email every 5 minutes "just in case."

66. Follow the 80/20 rule

20% of your effort generates
80% of your results.

Choose your battles and focus on
the most impactful tasks and projects.

67.
Find your
one thing

Your *one thing* is a goal so important that achieving it would make up for having to miss or sideline other goals.

Pick your *one thing* for each day, week, month, and year—and get it done.

(Read *The ONE Thing*
by Gary Keller and Jay Papasan)

68.

Use the Important/Urgent Matrix

AKA the Eisenhower Matrix,
which helps you sort tasks and projects
so you can take action.

Important and urgent: do it
Important but not urgent: schedule it
Not important but urgent: delegate it
Not important and not urgent: eliminate it

69.

Learn to say no

Be selective about
your commitments to free up
your time and do better work.
Explain why you're saying no
so your reasons are clear.

70. Stop the spread of *meetingitis*

Many meetings are counterproductive or unnecessary.
Hold fewer meetings, make them brief,
and keep the attendee list short.
Encourage others to do the same
so your schedule stays clear.

➤ See *20 Tips for Effective Meetings* in the appendix.

71.

Don't CC everybody

If everyone replies,
you'll be buried in emails.
Need multiple people's input?
Schedule a (short!) meeting instead.

72.

Flag your emails

Most emails can wait.
If you don't have to answer right away
or aren't sure what to say, flag them for later.

VI.
YOUR
ATTITUDE

73. Smile!

Everything, including work,
is nicer with a smile.

74.
Use your sense
of humor

It's a powerful tool for tackling sticky situations
and defusing conflict—but never resort
to sarcasm or cruelty.

75.
Master the art
of diplomacy

Being too direct won't
win you any admirers.
Handle others with care.

76.

Let go of your ego

It's a manager's worst enemy.

You don't know everything.

You make mistakes.

You aren't better than your colleagues.

Ditto for your department:

don't fall into the trap of thinking

it's the company's best and brightest.

77.

Don't be too eager

If you committed to delivering in 24 hours,
don't try to deliver in 4.

It will take a toll on you, your team,
and the quality of your work.

78.
Be solution-oriented

Not problem-focused.

79.

Don't point fingers

Looking for a scapegoat
won't solve anything.

80.
**Resist the urge
to have the last word**

It rarely adds anything to the discussion
and usually makes things worse, not better.

81.

Keep it simple

Making things straightforward is one of the greatest skills there is.

82.

**Don't make mountains
out of molehills**

Leaders are more mature than that.

83.

Allow yourself to make mistakes

And learn from them.

Nobody's perfect.

When you mess up, acknowledge it,
take responsibility, and set things right ASAP.

Then make sure it doesn't happen again.

84.

You have the right to change your mind

Managers have to make a lot of decisions.

You're allowed to change course
from time to time, just don't flip-flop.

85.

Control your temper

Getting hot under the collar? Wait a few hours.

If it's still worth it—go ahead and get mad.

If not, drop it.

It'll help you become a bigger person.

86.

Sleep on it

Have a tough decision to make?
Things will look clearer tomorrow.
You can usually wait to make the call.

87.

Lean into the slope

When you're skiing, if you don't lean forward as you head down the mountain, you'll fall.

Learn to enjoy doing things that scare you.

It's how you build character.

VII.
YOUR
WELLBEING

88.
**Don't give in
to anxiety**

Everyone gets anxious.
Don't let it overwhelm you.

89.

Have a little perspective

Billions of people out there are
less fortunate than you.
Millions of others are in the same boat.

90.
Nighttime is
for sleeping

Not ruminating over your work worries.

91.

Give tea a try

Coffee's energizing effects
can make you feel wired
and then quickly wear off.

Tea offers a steadier energy boost.

Try black tea in the morning,
green tea in the afternoon,
and herbal tea in the evening.

92.

Eat healthy

If you neglect your body now,
you'll be sorry in 10 years.
Eat lots of fruits and vegetables and
limit your fat intake.
Don't skip meals.
Swap your chips and candy for nuts
and other healthy snacks.

93.

Pack in the protein at breakfast

A sugary start gives you a burst of energy—
followed by the inevitable late-morning crash.

A high-protein breakfast
will keep you going all morning long.

Need to satisfy your sweet tooth? Add in a piece of fruit!

94.

Avoid drinking alcohol during the week

The more you drink at night,
the harder it'll be to get up in the morning
(and on the right side of the bed).

Don't drink alcohol at lunchtime
or you'll have brain fog all afternoon.
Abstain at work events: you can be social
while keeping things professional.

95.

Walk for 30 minutes a day

Sitting still all the time
is bad for your body and your mind.

Make time to walk, whether in
the morning, afternoon, or evening.

To hold yourself to your goal,
even if it's raining, invest in a treadmill.

96.

Evenings and weekends

If you're on call or expecting a message,
only handle what's urgent.

If you have to work, concentrate on the task at hand:
don't let yourself be distracted.

Remember, free time should be free.

If you're always working,
you'll be tired and ineffective during the work week.
Balance is key.

97.

Take two vacations a year

Check your messages once a day
and answer the ones that can't wait.

Managers can't be unreachable
but shouldn't get trapped into working all day
when they're off, either.

98.

Feeling worn out?

Take a (half) day off this week.

I know—you don't have time.

But if you *make* time, you'll be twice as productive afterwards and get caught up faster than you think.

While you're at it, schedule a few more days off in the coming weeks.

99.
When you're
overworked, you usually
underperform

Working smarter instead of harder
doesn't make you a slacker.

100.
Nothing is worth
ruining your health

Protect it. Your future depends on it.

Appendix

20 Tips for Effective **Meetings**

1. If you call a meeting, you have to **lead** it—before, during, and after.
2. First ask yourself if the meeting is really **necessary**.
3. Keep it to **an hour**, or if you have a lot to cover, an hour and a half, max.
4. Keep **attendees** to a minimum.
5. Don't just send a calendar invite. Before you call the meeting, make sure everyone is **available** and can make it.
6. Send the **agenda** at the same time as the invite.
7. Send **meeting materials** at least 48 hours in advance so participants have time to read them.
8. If other participants will be presenting, make sure they've **prepared** their points.
9. Kick things off with a **reminder** about the agenda and objective.
10. For each topic, use a **PowerPoint** presentation (no more than 10 slides) or a **Word** document (no more than a page). Use short bullet points and be as concise as possible.

11. Limit straightforward presentations to **15 minutes**. Cap complex topics at 30 minutes. Any longer and participants will lose focus (and patience).
12. Share information on a **need-to-know** basis.
13. Spare everyone the **complexity**: cut out department-specific or personal details that don't involve everyone.
14. For every decision, offer **1 solution** or no more than 3 potential options. Avoid open-ended questions, or your meeting might go off the rails.
15. Solicit questions and **feedback** after each presentation. If no one speaks up, ask follow-up questions to get the conversation started. Plan enough time for discussion.
16. Cut out irrelevant **chitchat** and keep people on topic as much as possible.
17. Don't let the meeting end until a **decision** has been reached and lingering questions answered.
18. **Wrap up** with a summary of the decisions made so everyone is aware.
19. Decide on the date and agenda for the **next meeting**, what tasks need to be done in the meantime, and who is responsible for them.
20. If distributing **minutes** or a recap, don't include a play by play—the key points and action items will suffice. Include a one-page (max) bulleted to-do list for the next meeting.

➤ It's YOUR meeting, YOUR time,
and YOUR responsibility.

Notes

A series of 20 horizontal dotted lines for writing notes.

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A graduate of Solvay Brussels School of Economics & Management, Giles Daoust is the CEO of Daoust and Title Media. He is also the director of the Ommegang show, a founding partner of LN24, and a regular contributor to *L'Écho* and *Beci Brussels Business*.

A certified workaholic, he offers 100 tips for (young) managers who want to work *better*.

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