

Episode 70: What is expected from a General Manager?

Whatever type of GM your company has, there are some basic skills. Here, we explore them.



1. Broad understanding of the business

As a GM you, of all people, need to be able to talk about the whole business
You need to talk about revenue, profit and cost but also build a 3-5 year strategy
GM's know their big customers and partners by name and what their needs are
They know their team and are involved in the building, management and retention of top talent.

2. You need to think vertically and horizontally

It is usual for all the resource you need as a GM to report to you, but often some people report to others
Those other teams may report to your peers or maybe higher up than you
You may want to focus on managing up; you need to focus your time horizontally too
GMs who try and operate in a 'hub and spoke' model often fail to build the team they need

3. Empower yourself

As the person who looks across the business, you will be expected to help solve ALL its problems, often
regardless of whether the people or problems report directly to you
A GM brings the team and the resources together to make things happen
A true GM would never say, "but I am not empowered to do that".

4. Metric based

While others around you may resist given numbers and metrics, you cannot

- ◆ Firstly, numbers are the way you will set your strategy
- ◆ Secondly, metrics are the best way to show you are achieving your strategy
- ◆ Thirdly, shared objectives are the best way to synchronize the team around goals
- ◆ It's also worth remembering that what you don't inspect, they will not respect.

Bottom Line: Every ship needs a captain and while they don't do every job on the vehicle nor can they control things like the weather, it's still their responsibility to get it to the port on time.