

New Manager Toolkit

Inspire People.
Support Performance.
Drive Results.

Welcome to Your First-Time Manager Toolkit

Stepping into leadership is exciting—and challenging. This toolkit gives you quick, practical tools to help you lead with confidence from day one.

What is inside the toolkit:

- Conversation Starters
- Trust-building activities
- SMART goal template
- Tools for driving engagement
- Free Blanchard resources

Use it as your go-to guide for navigating new responsibilities, building strong habits, and growing into the leader your team needs.



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Trust First: Unlocking Team Potential

Trust is the foundation of every high-performing team. Use this section to help teams assess and strengthen trust levels.

Conduct a quick 'Trust Audit' using the following self-assessment. Rate yourself from 1 (Never) to 5 (Always):

Statement	1 Never	2	3	4	5 Always
<i>I follow through on my commitments.</i>	<input type="radio"/>				
<i>I admit when I'm wrong.</i>	<input type="radio"/>				
<i>I ask for input—and use it.</i>	<input type="radio"/>				
<i>I communicate with transparency.</i>	<input type="radio"/>				

Come back and rate yourself after you've taken any of [Blanchard's public courses](#).

Activities to Build Trust:

- **Blind Spot Circle**
Each team member constructively shares one perceived strength and one area for growth about another member.
- **Speed Stories**
Each participant shares a meaningful personal story in 60 seconds to build empathy and connection.
- **Open Loop Roundtable**
Each team member shares an "open loop" (a lingering challenge or point of friction). The focus is on open, respectful sharing. Others listen with curiosity and ask thoughtful questions to understand, not to fix or solve. *Note: this is not a space for personal grievances.*

1-on-1 Prompts for Better Connection

Help managers run effective and meaningful check-ins with these starter prompts, tailored to various experience levels. A 1-on-1 meeting is a regular check-in between a manager and employee to discuss progress, provide feedback, and support development.



First-Time Manager Prompts

“What’s one thing I can do to support your growth this week?”

“What part of your job feels unclear or frustrating?”

“How do you prefer to receive feedback?”



Experienced Manager Prompts

“What’s a win you’ve had recently that went unacknowledged?”

“What would help you show up at your best more consistently?”

“What’s something we should stop doing as a team?”



Kickstart the Week: Conversation Fuel for Teams

Use these at the start of the week or during team huddles to spark insight and alignment as a group:



What's one thing
you're excited to work
on this week?

Who deserves a
shoutout for helping
you recently?

Where might we
need to slow down
and re-align?

What do you need to
feel more supported
this week?

Culture Spark: Easy Wins for Team Energy

Culture isn't about free snacks or ping-pong tables. It's about how people show up, connect, and deliver, especially when no one's watching. So how can you move the needle without blowing the budget? Whether you're energizing a hybrid team, reigniting trust after a tough change, or helping new managers find their cultural footing, these best practices can give you the ready-to-run, low-lift, high-impact strategies to make it happen.

Thank You Thursday (Slack Shoutouts)

Boost peer recognition and real-time appreciation.

How it Works: Create a standing Slack/ Teams thread every Thursday for peer-to-peer kudos. Keep it casual, emoji-rich, and leader-participated.

Why: Builds emotional connection and team accountability through recognition rituals.

Blanchard Alignment: Reinforces "I develop people" and the habit of noticing contributions.



Mini Culture Sprints (2 Weeks at a Time)

Activate specific leadership behaviors across teams.

How it Works: Pick a focus (e.g., "lead with curiosity"), announce it org-wide, and embed daily prompts or micro-challenges in team meetings.

Why: Anchors learning in practice. Promotes habit formation through repetition and visibility.

Blanchard Alignment: Supports the "Think Like a Leader" mindset shifts (e.g., from control to connection).



Hot Seat Learning Rounds

Normalize sharing, learning, and failing forward.

How it Works: In a recurring meeting, one team member shares a quick story about something they built, learned, or struggled with. Rotate each time.

Why: Cultivates psychological safety and a growth culture.

Blanchard Alignment: Connects to "Mistakes are learning opportunities."



Goal Template: The SMART Way to Align and Achieve

Add your SMART goals to this table. Start with what you want to achieve (Specific) and how you'll track it (Trackable). Then review the goal against the remaining criteria (Attainable, Relevant, and Motivating) to ensure it's complete. Keep the table accessible as a reminder or revisit it during team meetings.

 <p>Goal</p> <p>Give your SMART goal a title.</p>	 <p>Specific</p> <p>State exactly what you want to accomplish and when.</p>	 <p>Motivating</p> <p>A goal needs to tap into not only what is actionable, but also energizing.</p>	 <p>Attainable</p> <p>Goals should stretch you but stay realistic. Don't risk losing commitment.</p>	 <p>Relevant</p> <p>The goal should align with organizational priorities and have a meaningful impact.</p>	 <p>Trackable</p> <p>Include performance standards and a timeline to monitor progress</p>

Steady Through Change: Tools for Navigating What's Next

Change is constant and as a new manager, you're often on the front lines of helping your team navigate it. Whether it's a new system, reorg, hybrid work policy, or shifting priorities, how you support your team through change will define their engagement, productivity, and trust in you.

Blanchard's Leading People Through Change® model helps managers lead with empathy, clarity, and momentum. Here's how to use it:

Stage	What It Means	What You Can Do as a Manager
Explore Concerns	People resist change when they feel unheard.	Ask open-ended questions. Validate emotions. Normalize resistance.
Share Purpose	People support what they understand and connect to.	Communicate the "why" behind the change—link it to values and impact.
Develop a Shared Vision	People commit when they help shape the future.	Involve your team in how the change gets implemented. Seek input.
Lead with Consistency	People follow leaders who walk the talk.	Reinforce messages, model adaptability, and recognize wins along the way.



Quick Prompts for Change Conversations:

"What's one part of this change that feels unclear or tough for you?"

"What concerns or questions do you have that we haven't addressed?"

"What would success look like for us during this transition?"

"How can I support you better as we move through this?"

Try This: Mini Change Impact Map

Team Member	 <p>Alex (New hire)</p>	 <p>Jordan (Senior)</p>
What's Changing for Them?	 <p>New project + hybrid schedule</p>	 <p>Role shift</p>
Likely Reaction	 <p>Overwhelmed</p>	 <p>Resistance</p>
What They Need from You	 <p>Clarity, check-ins, reassurance</p>	 <p>Context, involvement, autonomy</p>

Pro Tip: Don't assume reactions—ask directly.

Mini Change Impact Map: Create Your Own

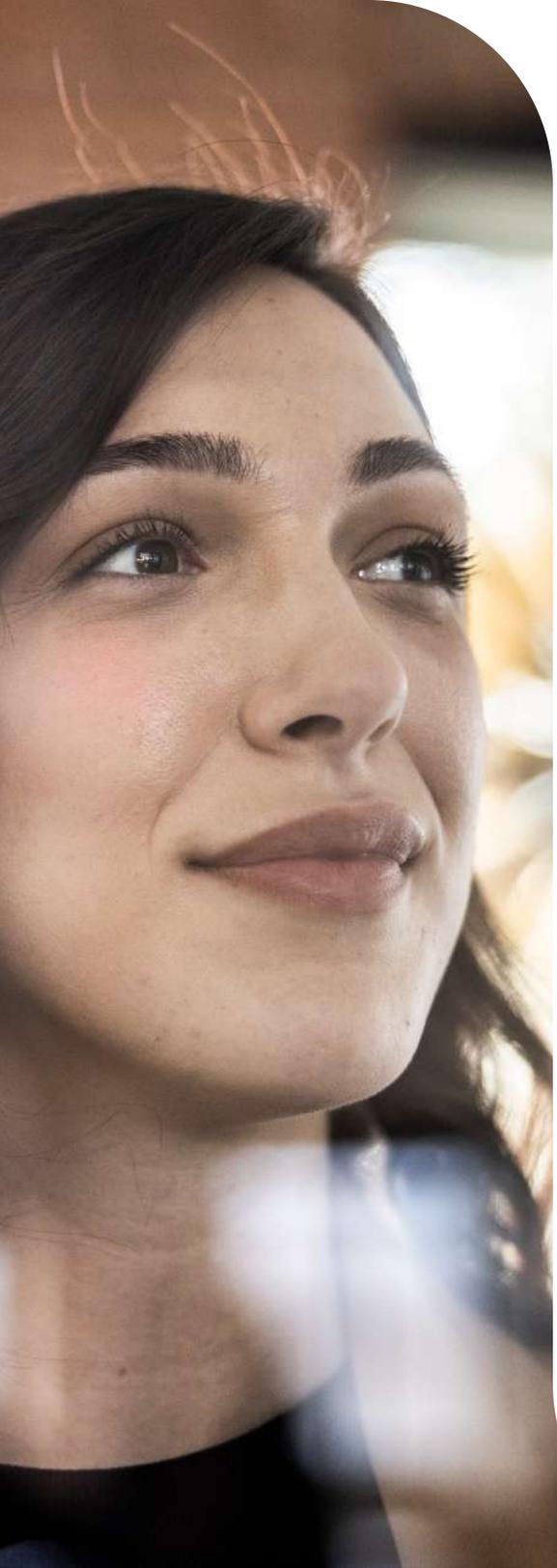
Team Member		
What's Changing for Them?		
Likely Reaction		
What They Need from You		

Pro Tip: Don't assume reactions—ask directly.

Think Like a Leader: Manager Mindset Shifts

Great leadership isn't just about tools; it's also about beliefs. Use this table to help leaders reframe outdated thinking and embrace growth-oriented mindsets.





The Leadership Journey: The Right Support at Every Level

If you are a first-time manager, you are navigating a brand-new landscape: leading others, managing expectations, and building trust. This journey guide gives you practical steps, paired with Blanchard resources, to help you grow with confidence. Take advantage of free tools, proven training, and a supportive community to build your leadership foundation.

Challenge	What to Do	Blanchard Courses, Tools, and Resources	Access Details
Building Trust with a New Team	Hold consistent 1-on-1s, listen deeply, and set clear agreements.	Blanchard Management Essentials® , Conversational Capacity®	Join an upcoming public session via Blanchard's Leadership Marketplace
Learning to Flex Your Leadership Style	Adapt how you lead based on your team member's competence and commitment.	SLII® , Self Leadership	Join an upcoming public session via Blanchard's Leadership Marketplace
Developing Leadership Habits Over Time	Use daily nudges and reflections to strengthen mindset and skills.	Leadify App	Download for free via your Apple or Android App Store
Getting Support from a Peer Community	Ask questions, share wins, and learn from other managers.	Blanchard Community	Join for free at community.blanchard.com
Learning On-Demand and Expanding Your Growth	Explore workshops, learning paths, and events anytime.	Propel by Blanchard™	Subscription based access to courses and tools through Propel by Blanchard™

Blanchard® is a global leader in leadership development, consulting, and coaching. For more than 45 years, Blanchard has partnered with organizations to maximize individual achievement and organizational performance, bringing measurable progress and true transformation. Blanchard's SLII® is the global leadership model of choice, powering inspired leaders for more than 10,000 organizations worldwide. Blanchard also offers a suite of award-winning solutions through flexible delivery modalities to meet the specific needs of clients and learners.

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