

*The Simple and Easy Manager:
What Managers Need to Know Before They Need to Know It*

The
Simple
and **Easy**
Manager



**What Managers Need to Know
Before They Need to Know It**

Ned Parks

Author: Ned Parks

Category: Business

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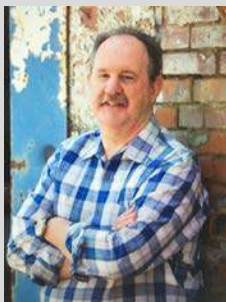
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Ned Parks, author

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About The Book

Summary

The Simple and Easy Manager: What Managers Need to Know Before They Need to Know It uses the experiences of the fictional character, Quentin Spalding, to illustrate easy-to-implement management strategies and techniques.

[Brief—62 words]

In *The Simple and Easy Manager: What Managers Need to Know Before They Need to Know It*, business consultant and executive coach Ned Parks illustrates that management problems can often be solved with easy-to-implement solutions.

The entertaining yet instructive story details the experiences of the fictional character, Quentin Spalding as he learns successful strategies and practical techniques to solve typical management challenges.

[Expanded—155 words]

In *The Simple and Easy Manager: What Managers Need to Know Before They Need to Know It*, business consultant and executive coach Ned Parks illustrates that management problems can often be solved with easy-to-implement solutions. The entertaining yet instructive story details the experiences of the fictional character, Quentin Spalding as he learns successful strategies and practical techniques to solve typical management situations.

From his early days as a new employee at Critical Direct he is introduced to a company culture that stresses the importance of valuing each team member as important members of the corporation. Through the challenges inherent in managing other employees, Quentin gains an understanding of what proactive leadership is and how it impacts the organization.

The insights Parks shares in *The Simple and Easy Manager* will be of value to readers new to management level positions, while more experienced leaders will find unique approaches and applications that can enhance their management approach.

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Chapter Summaries

The Interview—Quintin “Quint” Spalding interviews at Critical Direct, a progressive company known for its unique management approach, leadership development training, coaching, and mentoring opportunities.

The First Day—During his first day on the job, Quint is introduced to a key element of the Critical Direct culture: the belief that Day One of a new associate is critically important and if handled properly, is a predictor of employee engagement.

On Boarding—Quint discovers that the Critical Direct on-boarding process is different from any other he had undergone and learns about the DiSC® personality assessment that helps build more effective working relationships based on an understanding of different behavioral styles.

The First Three Weeks—During his session with owner Marshall Olson, Quint learned the difference between being a manager and being a leader as well as the importance of succession planning for all team members, regardless of their position in the organization.

The First Challenge—Faced with his first management challenge—an underperforming team member—Quint learns the importance of detailing expectations at the outset and evaluating the status of five key aspects to determine where the problem may be.

Ask Your Way to Success—Quint continues to learn the fine points of handling problems with subordinates, including the pitfalls inherent in using a ‘Why’ question to determine the failure to deliver.

The First Failure with the Team—Despite his best intentions, Quint fails to build a solid connection with his team—a fact made clear during a candid discussion with one of his members, who also introduces him to the concept of Management by Walking Around or MBWA from *In Search of Excellence* by Tom Peters.

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Chapter Summaries (cont.)

Teaching the Boss—The tables are turned when Quint has the opportunity to share his One-Sheet communique with owner John Olson, who praises him for his initiative and adopts the concept for his own use.

Meetings Suck—Quint and his co-worker Logan are tapped to present a workshop on holding productive meetings, which also includes the ‘Parking Lot’ concept for topics to be explored at a later date.

Setting Them Up for Success—With a valuable team member retiring, Quint and other managers explore options for filling the slot, as well as the importance of providing those promoted with the support to ensure their success.

Supporting Managers—Now in charge of educating others on how to lead effectively, Quint helps one of his team faced with a challenge with a subordinate. This gives him the chance to share some of his hard-learned skills.

The Next Phase—Several years after joining Critical Direct, Quint has the chance to assume a higher-level position as director, providing him with the opportunity to use his leadership knowledge and entrepreneurial approach to help advance the company.

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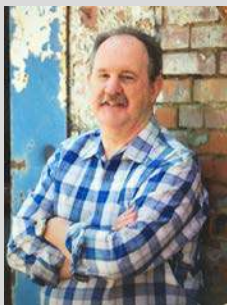
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Book Excerpt

Book Excerpt: The First Three Weeks

Quint had finished three full weeks of company on-boarding training, visiting with every department to familiarize himself with the many components that made up the company. He rode with two different drivers delivering products to clients, spent a half a day with the janitor and another half-day with Margaret the receptionist, greeting visitors and answering calls.

It did not take long before Quint saw a pattern emerge as he spent time with each of these associates. They all seemed to “own” their jobs, in the sense that they took 100% responsibility for not just their job but for whatever else came their way. And they were all inbound talkers—something Quint had learned from his dad. “Inbound talkers work to bring responsibility and influence to them, while outbound talkers try to push responsibility and influence away from them,” his father had explained. “Always be an inbound talker”—advice Quint never forgot.

“It’s so different here at CD, compared to my last job,” he told Logan one evening after work. “For example, last week I was out with Mike, one of the delivery drivers, taking some parts to one of our customers. The client started asking him about some repair work and equipment upgrades. Even though he didn’t know anything about it, Mike listened, took down the information, asked lots of questions and when we got back to the office, he went straight to the sales office, got the account rep that handled that account and passed on all the information.”

“Yeah, so?” asked Logan.

“At my old job, the delivery drivers would have just said, ‘Not my job’ and left it at that,” explained Quint. “And if they had taken the information back to the office they would have gotten yelled at for getting into someone else’s job.”

“The way Marshall explained it to me when I started was that anything that affects our customers is our business,” said Logan.

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“If we can’t solve the problem ourselves, then it’s up to us to get it to someone who can. That’s just the CD way.”

Quint was still mulling over the difference between the two companies when he met with Marshall for the final stage of his orientation—a full immersion into the DiSC® training. As it turned out, he was going to get a deeper understanding during the course of his four-hour leadership training.

The past weekend, Quint had completed his DiSC® assessment. He had taken plenty of psychological evaluations while in the Army, but rarely received feedback or an explanation on the results. In contrast, this one was easy to read. Once he finished it, Quint shared it with his parents who both agreed it was a pretty accurate description of him, but he was still looking forward to having a complete understanding of it during his session with Marshall.

“Quint, there are lots of books and opinions on leadership and managing,” said Marshall as they sat down. “I don’t pretend to have all the answers *but* I do believe there are some basic qualities of a good leader/manager.”

Marshall pulled out a stack of laminated cards and pushed them over to Quint. “I’m going to get a refill on my coffee and yours. While I’m gone, I want you to take these cards and sort them into two categories, depending on whether you think the traits are more suitable for a manager or for a leader. And if you want to add some categories, feel free.”

Quint began sorting the cards and soon found out there could be multiple answers depending on how you interpreted each card. He ended up with four stacks, manager, leader, both and bad.

“Four stacks!” Marshall said with some delight as he set down the coffee and took his seat. “So, tell me your four!”

“Well this was harder than I thought,” Quint started. “I found some that I thought would not be good traits for either a manager or a leader, so I put them here.”

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Marshall smiled and did not even look at the stack.

“Then I struggled with the notion that a manager and a leader were different, but the more I sorted the cards, the more I saw some differences so I separated them into these two stacks. Do you want to go through them?”

Marshall gathered all the cards together and put them aside. “No, that is not the point of the exercise. Besides, fifty people will give you fifty different responses. The point is to open up the conversation and, no matter how you see the difference, to have an understanding that there *is* a difference. Here’s the lesson: there are times you will need to keep people on task, direct their work and so on. That is more a function of a manager. Then there are times you just need to connect with people, have a cup of coffee with them, ask them what you can do to make their job easier and so on. That is more a function of a leader.”

Marshall let that sink in and then went on. “I have an expectation that *everyone* here is a leader, *everyone*. You spent time with our facilities man, Jim, right?”

Quint nodded his head. Marshall went on, “Tell me your observations about Jim.”

“Well, he seems to enjoy his job, no matter what he is doing. He greets everyone and asks them how things are going.” Quint paused and Marshall waited. “He found things that needed done, like a door we opened that had a squeak in the hinge and he stopped and put some lube on it.” Then Quint added, “He chuckled that a squeak would drive people crazy and they should not be driven crazy at work.”

Marshall broke in. “Yep, that is Jim. He shows pride in his work, treats people with respect, lives the values of CD every day, and is always ready with a kind word. Jim is a leader. He does not have anyone that works under him, but he is a leader in every sense of the word.”

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Reviews and Endorsements

“Straightforward yet profound message, *The Simple and Easy Manager* is an example of how everyone is called to be a leader. If you want to implement change tomorrow, everyone in your organization should read this book today.” **Dr. Phil Kim, Professor and Author of *Chase One Rabbit***

“Ned’s story of Quentin shaped me as a business coach with insights of a compelling corporate culture. If these effective practices are emulated, results would improve across any corporation. I found myself enviously wishing that I had the opportunity to work for a company like this early in my career.” **Steve Sinisgalli, Business Coach**

“When I was a young manager, one of the required readings was *The One Minute Manager*. It was an easy to read and understand book that taught me how to be an effective manager. This book accomplishes the same thing 40 years later and should be required reading for emerging leaders as well as existing ones.” **Marvin Montgomery (The Sales Doctor), Author/Motivational Speaker/Professional Sales Trainer & Coach**

“Ned Parks has a way of bringing clarity, simplicity and humor to seemingly complicated situations. *The Simple and Easy Manager* is a great illustration of this.” **Dave Green, Entrepreneur, Sales Coach**

“Ned Parks gets it! Not only does he get it, he gets it right! He knows exactly what the best leaders and managers do and this book helps bring that to life in many ways... I promise you that this book and what Ned knows is not rocket or even aviation science! They are solid principals of genuine leadership and management that work and work well. Anyone can adopt these and make immediate improvements in their relationships with their employees, no question.” **Doug Bird, PhD, Director-Parker MBA Program, Lake Erie College-Painesville, Ohio**

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Interview Topics

- Why employees should be encouraged to think like owners
- Why it's critical to teach leadership skills to new managers and supervisors before they are promoted
- How to improve communication between staff members
- How to create a format for effective and productive meetings
- Why recognizing and addressing existing barriers within a team is the first step to creating a collaborative environment
- What is business acumen and why it is important
- What is organizational culture and how to develop one
- Why the employee's first day on the job is the most important

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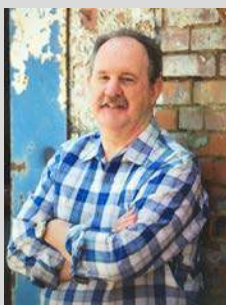
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12 Tips for Effective Management and Leadership

1. When interviewing potential candidates, look for “In-trepreneurs”: entrepreneurially-focused employees who work for the company with the same passion as if it was their own.
2. For long-term employee engagement, make sure the first day on the job sets the right tone and emphasizes the employee’s role in and value to the corporate “family.”
3. Have a well-planned on-boarding process that explains the corporate culture, expectations and allows time for the new hire to ask any questions.
4. Developing leadership and management skills takes time and education, making it essential to factor in time for newly promoted managers to gain in both areas.
5. A key part of being a successful manager is to make expectations clear and to resolve issues as soon as they arise.
6. Learning what questions to ask—and not ask—during an employee critique session can mean the difference between having a productive conversation and generating ill will.
7. Management and leadership are both ongoing processes, making it essential to “test the water” by soliciting honest feedback from all levels of the organization.
8. Managers should be open to learning not only from their superiors, but also from those who are their equal or subordinates.
9. While essential for communicating to groups, meetings need to be well-planned and focused to achieve goals effectively and efficiently.
10. Promotions, while welcome, can also be a source of stress when team members face unfamiliar challenges and new responsibilities, which can be addressed by providing necessary support during the initial stage.
11. Part of being an effective leader and manager is being able to teach those skills to those who have now been charged with handling management-level responsibilities.
12. Failing to provide employees with new challenges and opportunities can lead to feelings of frustration, and ultimately cause them to seek new avenues where their skills will be met.

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About Ned Parks

Ned Parks is a business consultant who draws on his background as a U.S. Army Warrant Officer helicopter instructor pilot and business owner to provide owners and management-level executives strategies to improve their operations and strengthen their business goals.

As part of his duties in the Army, Ned worked on the international training team teaching leadership and flight topics to military students from all over the world. After leaving active duty and joining the Army Reserves, Ned opened Parks Aviation, growing the business to three service areas and a 24-hour operation. He sold his business and worked as a division manager for a manufacturing company.

In 2000, Ned opened Aegis 360 Consulting, a firm focusing on corporate culture, leadership development, and business strategy.

Certified as a Registered Corporate Coach, Ned's expertise includes the areas of strategic planning, leadership development, and coaching. He guides leaders to connect with their teams and combine personal and organizational objectives to achieve their goals, offering proven business strategies with creative approaches, practical methods, and unique execution applications.

Ned is a Lean 6 Sigma Green Belt training. He is also certified in Everything DiSC®, The Five Behaviors of a Cohesive Team program, and PXT Select.

Ned attended The University of Akron and Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University. He currently lives in Akron, OH with his wife Brenda, a dog, cats, and a horse, while his daughter Sammy sets the world on fire.

LinkedIn: www.linkedin.com/in/nedparks/

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Interview with Ned Parks

Why did you write this book?

I have been teaching these management methods for years and my clients kept saying, “Write a book” so I did.

How is your book different from other business and management books in the marketplace?

Less is more in the world of developing yourself as a leader. What I mean by that is, all too often, we learn lots of complex models and approaches to a problem and then are overwhelmed by all of it. I purposely made this book an easy read with simple and easy methods.

Who will most benefit from this book—who is your target reader?

Anyone in the workplace who wants to be a better manager or leader.

What are the top three takeaways the book offers?

Treat people with respect, engage them in problem-solving, and realize that some of the best leadership lessons in the world come from your employees, not your boss.

What do you hope readers will gain from this book?

You will not be perfect as a manager. No one is, and no one ever will be. Own your mistakes. And look yourself in the mirror every day and ask yourself what you can do better tomorrow.

The book is written as a story, detailing the experiences of a fictional character, rather than a straightforward narrative. Why did you choose that style?

People are out of school and are just not interested in a narrative, academically written book. Besides this style of writing lets the reader know the characters.

You stress in your book that many management problems can be solved by adopting some basic strategies. Is that something that is overlooked in business management courses in favor of more complicated or involved approaches?

We have gotten into a pattern of belief in business that if it is not big, colorful, complex and has a name of a model next to it, then it can't be good. That is nonsense.

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What is your background?

I started my working career as a police officer, then joined the Army, went to officer's school and then pilot school. I learned the basics of management and leadership there. I have always had an entrepreneurial spirit, so I started my own aviation business after the military and then worked for a corporation. I love teaching and learning and was lucky to have worked for some of the best leaders ever.

What are some of the most common problems or situations you encounter in your role as a management consultant?

Poor leadership, hands down. Bosses who either have no desire to do their job better or are too arrogant to learn. I sometimes walk out of a client's office in maddening disbelief mumbling to myself, "Did I just hear and see that take place?"

Do you have any interesting or relevant statistics about management issues or problems?

I just read a study that claims that 75% of employees consider that their managers are the worst part of their job. Let that sink in for just a minute. Think of the worst job in the world and then imagine that 75 out of every 100 workers in that job hate their boss worse than the job.

What types of services does Aegis 360 Consulting provide? Who are your typical clients?

Depending on the project, we work with multinational companies in the Fortune 100 all the way down to small businesses.

Are you working on another book?

The main character of this book, Quint, gets a major promotion in the last chapter. The challenges change when you become a director/VP so the next book will cover his development and challenges at that level.

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Aegis 360™ Consulting

Aegis 360™ Consulting is a global provider of business consulting and staff development services that helps organizations improve leadership competencies, discover and align business strategies, and improve culture through employee engagement efforts.

The company provides business consulting to both non-profit and for-profit clients in sectors ranging from healthcare, manufacturing and service to financial, education, libraries and faith organizations.

Aegis 360™ Consulting's practice focuses on entrepreneurs, emerging leaders, senior leaders, and business owners, assisting them to exceed business goals and develop a legacy of leadership, using tools including Everything DiSC® Series of assessments, PXT Select™, and Apples & Oranges finance and other simulations from Celemi International, with whom the company is a Certified Solutions Provider.

For more information, visit the company website at WWW.A360C.com/.

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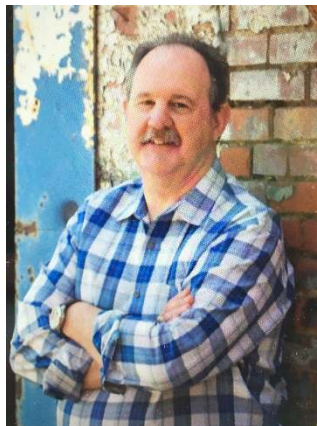
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*The
Simple
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What Managers Need to Know
Before They Need to Know It

Ned Parks



The Simple and Easy Manager: What Managers Need to Know Before They Need to Know It

The Simple and Easy Manager



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Before They Need to Know It

Ned Parks

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