



# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## SERIES

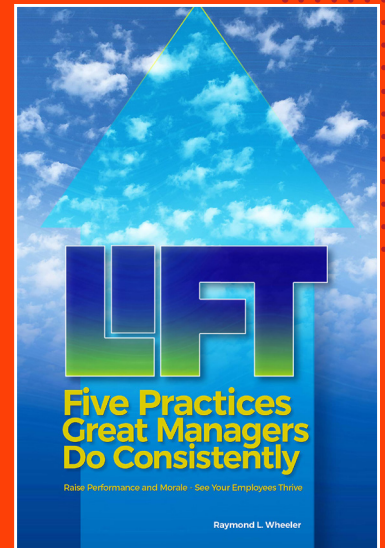
# THE NUTSHELL OF LIFT

By Raymond L. Wheeler  
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## Introduction

I have worked for some highly competent managers who lifted my perspective to more significant growth and skill. These managers accomplished great organizational goals and often outperformed what others thought they could achieve. They demonstrated an ability to meet their strategic objectives through people. They were inspiring, challenging, and sometimes corrective. They spoke the truth about what they saw and yet did it in a way that made me want to work more effectively. These managers viewed problems as an opportunity to discover new approaches and develop new skills. In many ways, these managers also acted as leaders.

I became curious. What makes great managers so successful? I was delighted to find that the five practices my inquiries uncovered worked in lifting employee performance and helped me become a better manager.



## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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## 1. Create Ownership Not a Dictatorship

Creating ownership is the opposite of exercising dictatorship. The managers I observed acting like dictators were top-down, autocratic bullies, who hoarded strategic information as an arsenal of power. They routinely belittled anyone with an original idea on how to work more effectively or more efficiently. These managers didn't listen, didn't delegate, and acted like their ego was the reason employees exist. These managers could get things done in the short-term but failed to develop consistently excellent operations.

So, how does a manager create ownership, not dictatorship?

1. Create a culture that hears the truth.
2. Create a strategy with input from your team.
3. Align performance with strategy and incentives.
4. Exercise emotional intelligence.

## 2. Work Facts Not Emotion

Emotional intelligence turns the attention of the manager from anxiety, panic, and fear to insight. Anxious, fearful managers who try to fix performance without facts become emotional IEDs that blow up when employees least expect it. In their wake lays a demotivated workforce whose goals shift from flourishing in their track to minimizing their exposure to managerial tantrums.

So how does a manager work fact, not emotion?

1. Distinguish between optimism and faith.
2. Engage the rigor needed to define acceptable performance.
3. Place emphasis on coaching, not punishment.

## 3. Know Your People—Know Yourself

A manager must bring her whole self to every situation—her values, passion, creativity, emotion, and discerning judgement are essential. A manager's unique presence is the combination of their driving passion, natural abilities, and acquiring skills. The high performing managers I talked with intentionally employ their unique bearing to bring clarity and personhood to the demands, relationships, and strategic objectives of their business.

How do you know your people and know yourself?

1. Engage the opportunity present in your context.
2. Seek out and make the most of the feedback.
3. Determine your purpose and personal mission statement.
4. Identify what makes you unique.
5. Understand and utilize your sphere of influence.
6. Manage Activities Not Results

Companies expect managers to contribute by getting things done. However, working harder to achieve results usually results in frustration and failure. The focus of the work is the activities that generate results, not the results themselves. Great managers achieve results by focusing the activities that create results.

How do you manage activities and not results?

1. Help others see patterns of behavior as a foundation for development.
2. Learn to adjust your management approach.
3. Remember to utilize support elements.
4. Delegate don't abdicate.
5. Learn to evaluate employee development.
6. Build a Climate of Hope Rather than Cynicism

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Each of the managers I interviewed demonstrated one more critical behavior: they intentionally set the tone or climate of their organization, and this climate was the basis of an organizational eco-structure that encouraged risk, development, growth, and excellence. These managers reinforce the environment by setting an expectation about the kind of performance and learning they look for from everyone in their organization.

What does it take to build a climate of hope rather than cynicism?

1. Recognize the power of climate.
2. Lean into the challenge of risk and learning.
3. Believe in your team.
4. Recognize the destructive force of dissonant behavior.
5. Communicate specific outcomes.

## Now What?

To the degree that the organizational culture does not support the assumptions behind these five practices, a manager will experience tension both internally and externally. But those who adopt the five practices of Lift as their core management strategy will enjoy the benefit of higher productivity and morale.







