

THE 27 CHALLENGES MANAGERS FACE

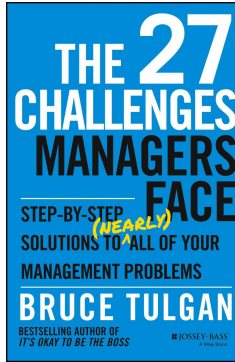
STEP-BY-STEP
(NEARLY)
SOLUTIONS TO [^]ALL OF YOUR
MANAGEMENT PROBLEMS

BRUCE TULGAN

BESTSELLING AUTHOR OF
IT'S OKAY TO BE THE BOSS

J JOSSEY-BASS[™]
A Wiley Brand

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THE 27 CHALLENGES MANAGERS FACE

Step-by-Step Solutions to (Nearly)
All of Your Management Problems

Bruce Tulgan

J JOSSEY-BASS™
A Wiley Brand

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A Note on How to Use This Book

When I talk about the 27 challenges, people often ask me, “Why are there 27 challenges, instead of 26 or 28 or some other number?”

This book is based on twenty years of workplace research conducted by my company, RainmakerThinking, Inc. We’ve asked hundreds of thousands of managers, in our management seminars, focus groups, interviews, and surveys, some version of this open-ended question: “Which employee situations are most challenging for you as a manager?” Despite the diversity of people and situations, the same basic challenges come up repeatedly. In fact, more than 90 percent of responses over the years refer to these same 27 challenges.

This book is intentionally designed to be used and reused as a reference book—a hands-on management tool you may go back to over and over again throughout your career as a leader, manager, or supervisor. As you’ll see in the table of contents, the 27 challenges are not enumerated in order of frequency or difficulty, but rather, grouped in seven chapters based on the larger themes they have in common. I encourage you to go ahead and skip right to the specific challenge you are facing today.

Once you’ve solved that problem, you may feel tempted to leave this book on your shelf until the next challenge. However, you should consider reading the whole book from beginning to end. Here’s why: It turns out that when things are going wrong in a management

relationship, almost always the common denominator is unstructured, low-substance, hit-or-miss communication. And almost always the solution comes from applying the fundamentals of management. Throughout the book, you'll see—one challenge at a time—how the most effective managers apply the fundamentals of management to gain control of any situation with a step-by-step solution to the problem at hand. So reading the whole thing from beginning to end is like putting yourself through management fundamentals boot camp. Then go ahead and put it on your shelf until you need a refresher on your next real-life challenge.

However you choose to use this book, please use it well and use it strong!

EXCERPT FROM CHAPTER ONE

The Fundamentals Are All You Need

The Fundamentals Are All You Need

You walk into your weekly team meeting expecting the standard updates around the table. Some people more prepared than others. Not enough information from some, too much from others. Digressions. Side conversations. Devices. One hour turns into two.

You sometimes think: “Why do we even have these team meetings?” After all, everyone touches base with everybody on the team almost daily. There is an open door policy. If something comes up, you let each other know as needed. You talk and email with each other all day long.

Nonetheless, the meeting begins as usual. Until it quickly surfaces that very important Project Q is off track and behind schedule. How could this be? You’ve been checking in with everybody regularly, one-on-one, on top of the weekly team meeting.

It’s not clear what happened. Maybe there was a change in specifications that wasn’t fully communicated. Perhaps a resource constraint got in the way, a technology glitch, or human error? Somebody must have dropped the ball—internally or externally. Is there anyone who can be held accountable? Mr. Red has dropped the ball before.

There are a lot of moving parts with Project Q. Now changes must be made throughout, changes that will require rework by counterparts in another group in another department. They will not be happy.

Time, resources, energy, and money have been wasted. There is blaming, complaining, explaining. Everything has been harder since the team recently lost its most valuable player, Ms. Platinum. And her replacement, Ms. Bronze, is still not fully up to speed.

You spring into action, and the firefighting ensues. You have a series of one-on-one huddles with the team members you know you can count on in a jam. You take over some responsibilities yourself—including begging the counterparts in the other group in the other department to redo their part. There are some quick stand-up meetings and long hours of heavy lifting. The crisis is handled, and Project Q is back on track.

When you figure out exactly what happened, there will probably be some very difficult conversations, and there will be consequences. Some people might lose their jobs. Even if Mr. Red is not to blame, it's about time you really spoke to Mr. Red about his stubbornly inconsistent performance.

Once you finally get everything back on track, you are way behind on your other responsibilities. So are your employees. But things are mostly back to normal.

You touch base with everybody almost daily. They know your door is always open. If something comes up, you let each other know as needed. You talk and email with each other all day long. In any event, you will catch up with everyone in the next team meeting.



Any manager will tell you: firefighting is part of the job. It's very hard to break the cycle, because when there is an urgent problem, it simply must be addressed. Things do go wrong—fires occur. If you are the manager, you are in charge. You lead the fight. Everybody has to grab a bucket and help fight the fire. But it's usually difficult, time-consuming work. By the time you are done, you are way behind on all of the other work you were supposed to be doing.

Many managers have asked themselves this question: How do I make any real progress when there are so many fires to put out?

The question you should be asking is this: How many of the most frequently occurring “fires” can be prevented altogether or largely avoided, or have their impact substantially mitigated? In advance? Way in advance? And every step of the way?

The answer is (roughly) 90 percent of them.

How? By consistently practicing the fundamentals, very well. That means maintaining an ongoing schedule of high-quality one-on-one dialogues with every single person you manage. High-quality means highly structured and highly substantive: ongoing, regular, scheduled, frequent, with a clear execution focus, specific to the individual, and two-way conversation. These are not the so-called “crucial conversations” when things go wrong, but regular check-ins when everything is going great, or not so great, or even just average. This insight is based on twenty years of in-depth research on supervisory relationships in the workplace. What’s amazing is that so few managers in the real world consistently practice the fundamentals very well. What’s even more amazing is that so many managers think they are already doing it, when they are not.

Look at the manager of Project Q, just described. At first glance, he appears to be attending reasonably well to the fundamentals of management 101: Holding regular team meetings, touching base with his employees almost daily, open door policy, and ongoing visibility by email and telephone.

That’s what makes this problem so complicated: the manager is following the right steps—going through the right motions. What else could he be doing? And if you had asked him just before Project Q fell apart, he probably would have said, “Everything is going just fine.”

The manager in this story is like the vast majority of managers at all levels in organizations of all shapes and sizes. This manager is communicating with his direct reports plenty. Just not very well. Not only that, because he is communicating plenty, he is lulled into a false sense of security.

EXCERPT FROM CHAPTER FIVE

The Challenges of Managing Attitudes

Sad to say, some attitude problems will resist solutions even when you deal with them meticulously, aggressively, and persistently. Maybe it really is a problem on the inside, one that nobody can ever help that employee fix. At some point, the only place to go is to let that employee know that his job is on the line. Whether or not, and when, to fire an employee is always a tough decision. But sometimes it just has to be done.

For the vast majority of employees, however, if you have the guts and discipline to coach them meticulously, aggressively, and persistently, they will either get better or else leave on their own.

MANAGEMENT CHALLENGE #14: WHEN AN EMPLOYEE NEEDS AN ATTITUDE ADJUSTMENT

When an employee starts seeming like someone with a bad attitude, you need to start talking about that in your regular one-on-one dialogue with that person. Zero in on the negative behaviors, one at a time:

1. Describe the specific words, format, tone and gestures.

Remember Beth, my previous example: “You fold your arms, roll your eyes, and say ‘No.’”

2. Connect the behavior with tangible work outcomes: “This makes other people, including me, reluctant to approach you even when they need something from you. Also, when you manifest disdain for someone, that person has an automatic incentive to diminish the weight of your opinion.”

3. Make reference to the performance requirement or best practice from which the negative behavior deviates: “We all need to be available and welcoming to each other in order to keep each other informed, cooperate with each other, and meet each other’s business needs.”

4. Define the replacement behavior that you will use as a specific performance expectation against which to measure the

individual's improvement. Discuss some possible replacement behaviors and then decide on one, like Beth's replacement behavior of smiling wide, opening her arms wide, and saying "Yes. Tell me more about that."

5. **Continue to follow up in your ongoing one-on-ones.** Pay attention. Monitor, measure, and document as best you can. Ask the individual to self-monitor and report to you on progress on a regular basis. Reward success. Do not accept failure.

The Six Attitudes Most Commonly in Need of Adjustment

It is no doubt true that every case is different, especially if one really tries to understand the inner feelings at the source. The good news is that the inner feelings of each employee are none of your business. Using the outside lens of communication practices, we've identified in our research the six most common types of individual attitude problems—aberrant communication habits—that have a negative impact in the workplace, and we have come up with names for the employees who exhibit them:

1. Porcupines
2. Entanglers
3. Debaters
4. Complainers
5. Blamers
6. Stink-bomb throwers

Porcupines

Lots of people just want to be left alone at work. I usually separate them into the loners, the hidiers, and the porcupines. The loners and hidiers are not much trouble. They can usually be coaxed out pretty easily by

a strong, highly engaged manager who includes them in team meetings and conducts regular structured one-on-one dialogues. They may be less social by nature, more introverted. That's fine. With guidance and direction, they will improve their skills and develop better habits for more engaged workplace relationships.

The porcupines are another story altogether. Porcupines want to be left alone with a special vengeance. Their words, tone, and gestures all say: "Get away from me!" Your entreaties will be greeted, at best, with a cold, curt response meant to discourage further interaction. Or you may well be received with a stinging word, tone, or gesture. After a few times, you learn to keep your distance. That's why I call them porcupines.

It's rarely the case that porcupines are avoiding work. Often porcupines do a lot of work very well, very fast, all day long. They just insist on being "left alone to do my work." That is another way of saying they want to do whatever they think should be done, wherever, whenever, and however they think it should be done. And they don't want to be bothered with anybody else's priorities.

That's just not an acceptable position. Everybody needs to be approachable, welcoming, and professional in their workplace communications. Nobody gets to do whatever they want to do however they want to do it all of the time when somebody else is paying them.

Some porcupines walk in the door every day with their quills up: "Get away from me!" Others are less overt about it. Some would prefer nobody even knew they were there. That's the one who seems like he's been working in the same corner cubicle forever. On what? "Why do you need to know?" He has eyes in the back of his head, waiting for someone to try—just try—to come over and start a conversation with him. Or call. Or send an email.

The most common mistake managers make with porcupines is to "get the message" and keep their distance, approaching rarely and then very carefully. That's what everybody does with the porcupine. She raises her quills because it works.

Don't surrender. Find your guts and get your arms around the porcupines. (Don't worry. That's just a metaphor.) Engage that porcupine

in the same regular, ongoing, structured one-on-one dialogue that you do with every other direct report.

That's one of the beauties of having a workplace and team culture of ongoing, structured dialogues. When everybody on your team is expected to have regular one-on-ones, porcupines—just like everybody else—know from the outset that nobody gets to be left alone. Just having that structure in place goes a long way toward taming most porcupines in a matter of weeks. Don't let yourself or the porcupine off the hook.

The one-on-ones with you should also give the porcupine a chance to practice interacting in a more approachable, welcoming, and professional manner—at least with you. As you fine-tune your ongoing dialogue with the porcupine and you both become accustomed to your one-on-ones, you will get into a rhythm. Once they get used to the process, porcupines often prefer this sort of scheduled, organized, and focused communication to more spontaneous interactions. The structure pays off in short order in the form of fewer interruptions. Sometimes porcupines find they prefer the structured communication so much that they start scheduling regular one-on-ones with their most regular “interrupters” and find that they quickly improve their working relationships with those colleagues as well.

What if the structure alone is not enough to solve the porcupine's communication problem? That's when you start talking about it in your one-on-ones: The goal is to help the porcupine use different words, format, tone, and gestures to become more approachable, welcoming, and professional. Zero in on the specific negative behaviors that seem to say, “Get away from me!” and replace them with new behaviors that say, “What can I do to help? Maybe we should schedule a specific time to discuss this. Maybe we should schedule a regular time for an ongoing dialogue?”

Entanglers

The opposite of the porcupine is what I call an “entangler.” Entanglers want everybody else to be involved in their issues, no matter how mundane or idiosyncratic those issues may be. As much as porcupines do

EXCERPT FROM CHAPTER SIX

The Challenges of Managing Superstars

MANAGEMENT CHALLENGE #18: WHEN YOU HAVE A SUPERSTAR YOU REALLY WANT TO RETAIN

For many years we have advised organizations of all shapes and sizes on best practices for employee retention and how to control employee turnover. Sometimes senior executives will call me in a panic over one particular superstar whom the executive is suddenly afraid might leave: “He has one foot out the door. What can we possibly do to keep him?”

One of my favorite calls of all time was from exactly the other end of the spectrum: “Great news: She did have one foot out the door after all, but now I’m quite certain she’s not going anywhere ever!” That call came from a senior executive in a huge multinational company in the mining industry (I’ll call him “Gold”).

I knew that Gold had been very worried about losing a very promising protégé with whom he had been working closely, mentoring and developing for nearly two years (I’ll call the protégé “Silver”). There was no question Silver was a superstar and she was going places. She had a Ph.D. in geophysical engineering and an MBA. She carried U.S. and EU citizenship, spoke multiple languages, and had life experiences that had seasoned her. Gold had invested a huge amount of time as well as significant resources in Silver’s growth and development. Gold had brought Silver in to high-level meetings, exposed her to powerful decision makers, and included her in the details of complex transactions. He was cultivating a deputy and, perhaps ten years down the road, a successor in his role. Gold had said many times: “I’m telling you—Silver could be the CEO of this entire company.” By the way, she was only thirty-three.

Needless to say, Silver was courted in grand fashion by many other potential employers. She got calls from headhunters every day, not to mention senior executives and even CEOs of other companies in or around the mining industry. Silver was one of those people who could write her own ticket, name her own terms. Gold could see that his considerable development investment in Silver was at risk. Gold had

already leveraged every last budget dollar to pay her a high salary, but any other employer could just match that money and eliminate that as a factor. Money alone was not going to solve the problem. The solution would have to come from a more interesting currency, something less easy to match in dollars in a bidding contest. The key would be to identify the non-financial factors that were really important to Silver and find a way to create a customized work situation that would be very hard to replicate at another employer.

My advice to Gold: “Find out what Silver’s ideal work conditions would be—other than money. Tell her to design her dream job.” Nobody quits a dream job.

Here’s what Silver wanted: She wanted to be based in the San Francisco Bay Area (although Gold and his team were based in Salt Lake City, Utah). She wanted to work directly with Gold and only on his deals. She wanted to work thirty-eight weeks a year, according to a strict calendar of weeks on and fourteen weeks off. (She agreed she could be available for a limited number of meetings during her weeks off.) She wanted her travel time limited to 50 percent of her schedule. She wanted to be paid at 100 percent full-time with full access to all benefits, bonuses, promotions, and raises. She wanted a full-time staff assistant based in the Bay Area with her and dedicated 100 percent to supporting her. There was more, but that was the gist of it.

Gold gave her everything she wanted. And he was right. She was not going anywhere. Nobody quits a dream job.

Sometimes business leaders become incensed when I tell them this story: “It’s like being held up for blackmail: ‘Give me a dream job or I’ll quit and take your training and development investment with me to your competition!’ We can’t negotiate with terrorists!”

Here’s my response: Why shouldn’t employees who are worth more negotiate for the best deal they can possibly get? Are you a communist? The imperative of negotiating generous terms and conditions with the best talent is just the application of free market principles to employment relationships. Employment is a transactional relationship.

The question is: Will you have the imagination to negotiate fair and compelling deals with your superstars? And will you be able to muster the discretion and resources to make those deals? The best people at every level should be in a position to negotiate the best deals. When a valuable person goes to the trouble of customizing his work situation—negotiating special arrangements with the organization, his manager, and his coworkers—his stake in the position grows tremendously. His investment in the organization, his commitment, his willingness to deliver results grows.

Money is, by its nature, interchangeable. Custom work conditions most certainly are not. If money is the primary currency you have for negotiating with talent, it is very easy for your employees to measure it against deals offered by other employers. Just so you know: other employers tend to pay people in money too. More is always better. Any substantial differential in financial opportunity is hard to resist.

Make your value very difficult for the employee to match anywhere else. Based on our research, these are the five nonfinancial factors of an employment relationship that people care the most about:

1. When they work (schedule)
2. Where they work (location)
3. What they do (tasks and responsibilities)
4. Who they work with
5. What they are (or are not) learning on the job

If you let people customize these factors, they will design their dream job. The dream job factors are the most valuable currency you can possibly offer as an employer.

Sometimes managers push back at this point: “Well, if I had all the flexibility in the world (not to mention the resources) then, sure, I could retain just about anybody too.” But of course not all work is amenable to every customization. Retail stores, for example, must be open certain hours on certain days. A grocery store cashier can’t very

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Bruce Tulgan is an adviser to business leaders all over the world and a sought-after keynote speaker and seminar leader. He is the founder and CEO of RainmakerThinking, Inc., a management research and training firm, as well as RainmakerThinking.Training, an on-line training company. Bruce is the author of numerous books including the best-selling *It's Okay to be the Boss* (2007), the classic *Managing Generation X* (1995), *Not Everyone Gets a Trophy* (2009), *It's Okay to Manage Your Boss* (2010), *Winning the Talent Wars* (2001), and *FAST Feedback* (1999). His work has been the subject of thousands of news stories around the world. He has written pieces for numerous publications, including the *New York Times*, *USA Today*, the *Harvard Business Review*, and *Human Resources*. Bruce writes a regular column called "Sticky Notes" in *Training Magazine* as well as a regular column about management for the *Huffington Post*. Bruce also holds a fifth-degree black belt in classical Okinawan Uechi Ryu Karate Do. He lives in New Haven, Connecticut with his wife Dr. Debby Applegate, author of the Pulitzer-Prize winning biography *The Most Famous Man in America: The Biography of Henry Ward Beecher* (2006); as well as *Madam; The Notorious Life and Times of Polly Adler* (forthcoming 2015). Bruce can be reached by e-mail at brucet@rainmakerthinking.com.

ADVANCE PRAISE FOR THE 27 CHALLENGES MANAGERS FACE

"In a large, complex organization a culture of strong, highly engaged and collaborative management is critical. There are not too many management challenges that you will run across that are not addressed in this book. Managers at all levels would be well served to have a copy on the shelf."

- David Zaslav, President & CEO, Discovery Communications

"As someone whose early management career was shaped by Bruce's other books and programs, I'm not surprised to see this book applies to everyone, no matter what your position or stage in your leadership journey. This book takes his prescriptive approach to a new level of relevance with specific tips to address the most common management challenges - right on!"

- Kat Cole, President, Cinnabon

"Bruce Tulgan's decades of exhaustive research, and the collected works that have resulted from it, have had a profound impact on how I lead. He has put together action-oriented ideas that have genuine practical utility for leaders in any organization. The ideas in this book comport perfectly with what I call "engaged leadership" and serve as the perfect antidote for what Bruce calls the "epidemic of under management" in America today. This terrific new book is a powerful tool for all leaders."

- Kevin J. Jacobsen, Brigadier General, United States Air Force

"Our Nation could save billions in productivity losses and lawsuits resulting from poor management and employee disengagement if only it heeded the very practical step-by-step advice that Bruce Tulgan's thoroughly researched book offers. Every chapter contains real life challenges (all 27 of them!) with fundamental solutions that enlightened managers must practice. Brilliant in its simplicity!"

- The Honorable Cari M. Dominguez, Chair, EEOC, United States Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (2001-2006). Senior Vice President, Human Resources, Chief Talent and Diversity Officer, Loma Linda University Health

"Bruce Tulgan's latest work addresses the fundamentals of management which are undervalued in most companies today but essential to the successful operation of our complex businesses. Our highly integrated products demand accurate data, complete communication, concise direction, and timely decision making from typically segmented teams and systems. Use this great book to take advantage of actual "lessons learned" and avoid the "lessons experienced" syndrome."

- Larry A. Lawson, Chief Executive Officer and President of Spirit AeroSystems, Inc.

"Bruce Tulgan's latest book provides exceptionally practical advice on how to execute "the huge responsibility of leadership". The last chapter, renewing a commitment to effective management, will be particularly helpful to leaders who think they already know how to manage the first 26 challenges".

- Alan J. Kreczko, General Counsel and Executive Vice President, The Hartford

"Bruce masterfully delivers a simple, transparent and powerful message about the fundamentals of management. I have always been a fan of Tulgan's work and we frequently reference his teachings throughout our training and development. THE 27 CHALLENGES MANAGERS FACE, tackles everyday situations and provides powerful and effective solutions for producing winning results. It is a true must read for Professionals, Entrepreneurs and Students. I am excited to introduce this leadership masterpiece to our team."

- Jim Mazany President, Joe's Crab Shack

Attracting, developing, and retaining a diverse, results-focused, and high-performing workforce capable of providing the technical expertise and exceptional leadership necessary to address our Nation's security challenges are of paramount importance to the Intelligence Community. Bruce's research and findings provide a blueprint for Intelligence Community managers to tackle management problems and fully engage their employees to meet the increasingly dynamic threats to the U.S. and its interests abroad. I highly recommend this book to all—not just

managers or those thinking about moving into management positions. It provides effective, step-by-step solutions to the most common and enduring management challenges.

- Kristin Bertelli Chief, Workforce Strategy & Planning, Central Intelligence Agency

“Whether you have been managing people for 27 days or 27 years, Bruce's research and book will prove a practical and invaluable guide for meeting specific challenges and managing for success.”

- Ray Kotcher, Chairman & Senior Partner, Ketchum, Inc.

“At CBR, we were suffering from an under-management epidemic brought on by promoting from within and not providing management training. Management is basic work, but hard work. We applied Bruce's principles of Management 101 to rapidly turn our organization into a focused execution machine. In this book, Bruce provides both a pocket guide and a comprehensive overview of how to manage, every day, for business impact. Whether you are an experienced manager or taking on your first direct reports, whether you are trying to be a better manager or improve an entire organization's ability to manage and execute, Bruce's guide is the manual you need. As a CEO I realized I could benefit from it. More importantly I realized the entire Company, our customers and our investors could benefit by focusing my entire organization on the basics of management.”

- Geoffrey Crouse, CEO and President, Cord Blood Registry

“THE 27 Challenges is one of those good reads for managers and people who lead people. Not only executives in the US, also managers in international business settings will benefit from the practical and relevant advice based on two decades of workplace research. Easy to use as a reference book to better tackle the recurring daily challenges of leading yourself and others by (re-)discovering fundamental principles of communication and management.”

- Sylvia B. Vogt, President, Carnegie Bosch Institute, Tepper School of Business, Carnegie Mellon University

"I've been a fan of Bruce and his work for over 15 years. THE 27 CHALLENGES MANAGERS FACE is a very well written and insightful guide. Whether a new or a seasoned manager, Bruce's book offers step by step guidance and practical advice. Bruce really nails it, and my only wish is that this book had been written years ago when I first became a manager."

- Lorie Valle-Yañez, VP, Chief Diversity Officer, MassMutual Financial Group

“A practical, smart, easy to use guide to managing from one of the clearest thinkers in the field. Bruce has done it again, creating a must read compendium for handling the most common to the most vexing management challenges. It's all here and everyone can learn from this book.”

- Alan Greene, EVP, Business Head, US Investment Services and Institutional Investor Services, State Street Corporation

“Bruce Tulgan demonstrates how managers can break the cycle of “firefighting” and learn to perform meaningful management that benefits the manager, the employees and the organization. A good manager will go back to “27 Challenges” time and time again to keep the management structure operating smoothly and effectively”.

- Colonel Craig Price, Superintendent South Dakota Highway Patrol

"Like Studs Terkel before him, Bruce Tulgan was educated as a lawyer, but discovered his real passion in the study of how people work and manage. Bruce brings that passion to life with his new book and reminds us that Management 101 is easy to understand in theory, but easy to forget on Monday mornings."

- Hank Harris, President and CEO, FMI Corporation

"Bruce Tulgan was the original voice of reason about how to manage the next generation of leadership. In his latest book, THE 27 CHALLENGES MANAGERS FACE, he provides an immensely insightful yet practical guide for managers of any generation. Bruce has always based his work on years of careful research, thousands of interviews and focus studies, and deep experience coaching managers from the front lines of fast food, to the officers of the elite US military. He writes as he speaks; pulls no punches, is immensely entertaining, and always leaves his audience better prepared to succeed as managers."

- Joni Thomas Doolin, Founder & CEO, People Report

"I have been a big supporter of Bruce Tulgan ever since reading 'It's Okay to Be the Boss'. His latest book THE 27 CHALLENGES MANAGERS FACE gives direct and straight-forward ways to handle these challenges. His continued focus on the basic fundamentals, the importance of one on ones and easy to understand examples is not only refreshing, but will yield results to those that use it."

- Robert Werk, SVP Operations, CraftWorks Restaurants & Breweries

"Bruce Tulgan has hit another home run with THE 27 CHALLENGES MANAGERS FACE! Simple and easy to read, yet relevant and practical in application. This book is designed to be referenced again and again, to address the classic challenges of getting results through others. No matter how seasoned a Manager is, the principles in this book will help fulfill the responsibilities of leadership in the most effective way possible. A must-read and a must-practice for today's new and experienced Managers!"

- Sharon McPherson, Director of Training, On The Border Mexican Grill & Cantina

"In his always-clear and insightful style, Bruce Tulgan puts forth practical and easy-to-follow solutions for the most common supervisory challenges facing all managers, regardless of industry. The book is helpful for new supervisors and seasoned veterans of management alike. Bruce researched in the right place – the workplace – to hear from real managers where their greatest challenges lay. He shares the basic solutions in an appetizing and easy to digest way making this a good reference book to keep on the shelf after reading."

- Doug Gammon, Vice President of Human Resources & Training for Black Angus Steakhouses

"I honestly believe anyone could benefit from it because if they had a particular need for advice, they could pick the book up, look at the table of contents and find help with a solution. Loved this book. Anyone interested in being a better manager would definitely benefit from reading it."

- Judy Irwin, VP Human Resources & Training, Golden Corral

"At Chick-fil-A, we've always felt that those that lead must first serve. Bruce's book is a great reminder of how to serve well through managing well. So many of today's challenges in organizations can find their beginning and end in the same place: people management. 27 Challenges is a great review of the fundamentals of great people management, and how to make them a part of your everyday life."

- Andy Lorenzen, Senior Director, Organizational Development, Chick-fil-A, Inc.

"What sets Bruce Tulgan's work apart from other management books is that he provides real world advice for real world management challenges. This book, like his others, is meant to be consulted again and again. Don't stick this one on your reference shelf; keep it close at hand, and watch your management performance improve."

- John Bissell, Executive Vice President, Greylock Federal Credit Union.

"A must-read for every manager on your team. These Tulgan fundamentals are the basis for running an outstanding organization. Great teams have a great playbook ... and this is a great playbook! Bruce Tulgan gives you the steps you need to develop a high performing organization. Every manager should read this book ...whether you've been leading an organization for days or decades!"

- Deb Dulsky Chief Commercial Officer, HomeServe USA

"This books brings great insight for executives at any level in their company and any phase in their career. This is practical information you can use now to inform your strategies for moving forward and to impact the way you manage people and impact how you are managed as well. This book is a comprehensive primer on managing people with heart and integrity while still getting bottom line results for your company. This is a book you should have within reach at your desk."

- Daniel Butler, VP Community Integration, National Retail Federation.

"First Bruce gave us permission to manage, now he tells us when and how to execute the fundamentals based upon years of experience and success. This book is for the seasoned executive as well as the new manager. It will make a lasting difference in your life and the lives of others."

- L Gary Boomer, CEO, Boomer Consulting, Inc.

"Bruce forces managers to ask ourselves what our job truly is, and then enumerates simple – though in no way simplistic – steps for us to take to do that job. From CEO to line manager, we are all tasked with getting the best from those we serve as 'boss'; by leaping over management 'theory' and diving into management 'practice', Bruce provides relevant signposts and weigh stations so that we can make sure we are doing all we can to support our charges in doing all they can. Management is work, and this book removes the excuse so many of us use as a crutch when those who perform under us underperform – that the fault lies not in ourselves, but in our stars."

- Homer Robinson, President & CEO Kaiserman Company

"Once again, Bruce Tulgan has provided us with a back to basics and fundamentals book that is packed with research and practical solutions. *THE 27 CHALLENGES MANAGERS FACE* will be a go-to reference and solution guide for years to come. Most of all, Bruce's writing style invites the reader to embrace management challenges, and be much better for it".

- Carl George, CEO, Carl George Advisory, LLC, Clifton Gunderson LLP, CEO (1993-2009)

"Bruce Tulgan continues to be my guru of management! This book categorizes challenges we all face, provides examples and research, and makes it easy to find the right material when facing a management issue. I'll use it to coach other managers too, and help them improve their confidence and performance."

- Janet Kyle Altman, Marketing Principal, Kaufman Rossin

"Based on decades of first hand interview research, Bruce's coaching enabled our general managers and store managers to more easily and effectively communicate with, motivate and develop their line staff, notably improving overall shop performance. His coaching will help owners & managers to connect authentically with staff overcoming the chronic misperception by staff that they are not seen or understood. This will enable a positive working atmosphere critical to growing your business."

- Doug Bell, President Grasslands Uruguay, President, Supercuts Owners Association (1995-97), owner and operator of 52 Supercuts (retired).

"*THE 27 CHALLENGES MANAGERS FACE* is yet another example of Bruce Tulgan's ability to identify the issues managers face, and offer specific action steps to help them lead their organizations to success. Leaders, managers, and employees at all levels will benefit by reading this book, and based on their current situation, can decide which chapter to tackle first! The book is a great read and a resource all managers should turn to as situations arise."

- Howard C. Fero, PhD, The Leadership Doc, Professor of Leadership Albertus Magnus College, co-author of Lead Me Out to the Ballgame

"Bruce Tulgan creates practical advice and solutions leaders can use to engage employees and deliver results. He understands the challenges modern managers face and, by helping them communicate more effectively, he prepares leaders to handle tough issues and help people achieve their highest level of performance."

- Jennifer Russo, Director of Corporate Communications, Rio Tinto, Copper Group

"Many of our managers at Westar Energy have found a mentor in Bruce Tulgan. As we work as a company on raising the level of conversation between managers and employees, we found that Bruce's message of "talk about the work" was particularly useful. After two visits and a series of weekly online messages, it's quite commonplace at Westar for our leaders to reference Bruce Tulgan."

- Diane Owen, Lead Training Rep, Westar Energy

"Bruce Tulgan hit a home run with this one! He speaks the truth and provides clear, concise management advice. This will become my desktop guidebook for helping leaders at all levels manage their way to more effective organizations and get even better results."

- Lisa Beutel, Ph.D , Executive Director, Center for Leadership, University of Dayton

"This book exposes the root management problem, refreshingly admits that there is no easy fix, but then provides a nuanced advice that can be individually tailored by each manager. Like others in the field, Tulgan offers numerous management tips, but where Tulgan provides significant added value is in his distinguishing between the application of solid management practices that generate real and lasting results and merely going through the motions. This book is a great day-to-day resource that will allow managers to increase their effectiveness and avoid management complacency."

- Steve Katz, Esq., Principal, Fish & Richardson

"Bruce will refocus you. His scholarly research and anecdotal style will make an immediate impact on developing talent. This is a must read for any company that believes it is their people who make the difference."

- **Keith A. Hoogland, President, Family Video**

"This book continues to deliver the effective and useful insight I expect from Bruce. It is a must for your management toolbox!"

- **Jon Morrison, Vice President, Vehicle Dynamics and Controls, Global, WABCO Vehicle Control Systems**

"Bravo! I use Bruce's "Back To Basics" principles in managing my direct reports and am a big supporter of his work. The 27 Challenges will be a great reference book for managers as they come across the various situations covered in the book. I plan to incorporate the newly promoted manager from peer in our new foreman training manual."

- **George Wilson, President, Barriere Construction**

"Once again Bruce takes the essential but often overwhelming responsibility of getting work done through others and breaks it into understandable, common sense steps that work for the new manager and seasoned manager equally as well. Another a great tool to add to our management tool box."

- **DJ Zarnick, Vice President, Human Resources, The Henry M. Jackson Foundation for the Advancement of Military Medicine, Inc.**

THE 27 CHALLENGES MANAGERS FACE is an excellent choice for both the novice and experienced manager. It covers a broad range of the most essential management topics regarding employee relations that will provide the beginner with a well-rounded set of skills and advice as well as refresh the skills of a seasoned manager. Based on the research of hundreds of thousands of managers, it provides practical, down-to-earth tips and tools for handling difficult situations. Written in an easy to read style and presented in the inspirational way only Bruce Tulgan can do, this book is the equivalent of having your own mentor. It is a book that every manager will learn from and become a better manager for it."

- **Jill Kilroy, AVP Learning & Development Horace Mann Companies**

"Bruce has done it again. His new book is a practical, research-based approach to managing one of an organization's most important resources—our people. Bruce once again combines research and best practices to create a book of solutions to management problems that virtually every manager faces. New and experienced managers alike will benefit from THE 27 CHALLENGES MANAGERS FACE."

- **Tani Bialek, Director, National Learning & Professional Development, McGladrey LLP**

"One of my partners, who cares deeply about being the best manager he can be, has been a fan of Bruce's work for years. He practices Bruce's techniques because, in his words, they are the most effective. With THE 27 CHALLENGES MANAGERS FACE, Bruce has done it again, but better. This book covers it all -- with valuable insight for managers everywhere. Its greatest value, however, is that it reminds us that to manage well is to manage often. Managing is a commitment, but one that delivers dividends daily. Bruce enthusiastically encourages us to invest the time and re-commit ourselves to our colleagues and ourselves. The tools are simple, the work hard, and the rewards great."

- **Jeffrey R. Katz, Esq., Partner, Ropes & Gray LLP**

"Like any other skill, managing people requires a mastery of the fundamentals. In THE 27 CHALLENGES MANAGERS FACE, Bruce Tulgan presents situations we all face and reminds us how to apply those fundamentals. This book is a mandatory addition to every managers toolbox."

- **Arturo M. Hernandez (Art)VP Engineering Grote Industries**

"27 Challenges is essential reading for managers. Too many managers are operating on autopilot—waiting for a crisis to happen before reacting. Bruce Tulgan rightly emphasizes critical fundamentals, especially around effective communication, that stop the vicious cycle of managing by crisis and then wondering why there's not enough time to be an effective manager. Tulgan's 'high-structure, high substance' model is golden: that advice alone is worth the price of this book. Our MBA students often ask us what the key elements of good management are. They're contained in this cogent, well-argued book."

- **Donald E. Gibson, Ph.D., Dean and Professor of Management, Charles F. Dolan School of Business, Fairfield University**

Q & A WITH THE AUTHOR BRUCE TULGAN

Author of the bestseller *It's Okay to Be the Boss* & the classic *Managing Generation X*

QUESTION: The title of this book is **THE 27 CHALLENGES MANAGERS FACE...** Why are there 27 challenges, instead of 26 or 28 or some other number?

ANSWER: The book is based on twenty years of workplace research conducted by my company RainmakerThinking, Inc. We've asked hundreds of thousands of managers, in our management seminars, focus groups, interviews, and surveys, some version of this open-ended question: "Which employee situations are most challenging for you as a manager?" Despite the diversity of people and situations, the same basic challenges come up repeatedly. In fact, more than 90% of responses over the years refer these same 27 challenges. Like clockwork, the same basic cases come up over and over again—the same 27—maybe it's the superstar whom the manager is afraid of losing, the slacker whom the manager cannot figure out how to motivate, the one with an attitude problem, or the two who cannot get along. From tracking managers before, during and after the training, I've identified the most frequently occurring "most difficult challenges" with which managers tend to struggle and the best step by step solutions. The 27 challenges are not enumerated in order of their frequency or difficulty, but rather they are arranged in terms of the larger themes the challenges have in common and grouped together into chapters based on those larger themes/issues.

QUESTION: You say that many of the most difficult challenges managers face come simply from the fact that "employees are human... and so are their managers." What do you mean by that?

ANSWER: The age old reality is that human beings have weaknesses as well as strengths. Humans are not always great at self-management much less at managing others. Human beings have habits, and not always good ones. Not only that, but everybody has bad days. Some people have bad weeks, months, and years. Productivity and quality of work are highly variable, sometimes due to employee performance. On top of all that, humans have attitudes, and not always good ones.

QUESTION: Yet you argue that managing people is harder nowadays than ever before. Why?

ANSWER: That is due in large part to the incredible complexities of today's workplace in today's world in what I like to call the "real new economy": Personnel discontinuity. People come and go. That's always been true. But employment relationships today are far more short-term and fluid than they have been before in the modern economy. So you are always losing good people. And you are always trying to get new people on board and up to speed. On top of that, one great employee is worth more than three or four or five mediocre employees. Sometimes you have to go to great lengths to effectively reward, retain, and develop the very best employees.

Constant change coming at you from every direction. Technology. The markets. The weather. Geopolitics. Micropolitics. Customer requirements. Vendor requirements. Employee requirements. Change regularly forces rework, often involving lots of moving parts, and therefore lots of counterparts here there and everywhere.

Interdependency. More and more of our work involves lots of moving parts and, therefore, lots of counterparts here there and everywhere. Most people must rely on many others within and without their immediate work group in order to do their own work.

Resource constraints. Everybody is expected nowadays to do more with less. Increasingly people report that they are making do with tighter and tighter resources, longer and more complex supply lines, with shorter and shorter lead times. Often people find themselves trying to do their jobs with what they feel are insufficient resources.

QUESTION: So then why do you insist that "the fundamentals" are all a manager needs, which is the title of chapter one? How can the fundamentals be the solution to such a range of very different, sometimes rather complex, management challenges?

ANSWER: It turns out that when things are going wrong in a management relationship, almost always, the common denominator is unstructured, low substance, hit-or-miss communication. And almost always the solution comes from applying the fundamentals of management. Throughout the book, you'll see—one challenge at a time—how the

most effective managers apply the fundamentals of management to gain control of any situation with a step-by-step solution to the problem at hand. Almost always, the ad hoc manner in which most managers talk to their direct-reports every day actually makes inevitable the most difficult employee situations that tend to vex managers. What is the key to avoiding most of these problems and the key to solving them quickly and with relative ease as soon as they appear? High-structure high-substance one-on-one dialogues with every direct-report.

QUESTION: You say the vast majority of managers do their “managing” more or less on autopilot until something goes wrong... What do you mean by “managing on autopilot?”

ANSWER: What managers tell us in our interviews and seminars, with striking consistency, is that they spend the vast majority of their management time on four pernicious time-sucks:

- #1. Attending too many mediocre group meetings,
- #2. Wading through a never-ending tidal wave of email.
- #3. Touching base/checking-in/and shooting the breeze.
- #4. Interrupting and Being Interrupted

Plus of course all the time they have to spend on formal evaluations and reviews which are rarely well structured, well implemented or well utilized as development and coaching tools.

QUESTION: You say that most managers are stuck in a vicious cycle. What is the vicious cycle?

ANSWER: Well, the problem is that most managers are “managing on autopilot” until something goes wrong... and if you are managing on autopilot then it almost always does. So then communication becomes more heated and urgent. Managers almost always get most thoroughly involved when there are problems to address— large, medium, or small—what I’ve been referring to here as “firefighting.” The vicious cycle is going back and forth between managing “on autopilot” and managing “by firefighting.” What happens is this: Most managers think, “Everything is going just fine. It’s just that we have a lot of fires to put out and that makes it very hard to get into a good routine. Whenever you get into a good routine, pretty soon there is another fire.” What they don’t realize is that they are stuck in this vicious cycle:

Managing on autopilot → False sense of security → Small problems have space to fester and grow → Problems inevitably blow up → Manager (and others) pulled into firefighting mode → Things get “back to normal,” managing on autopilot.

QUESTION: How can managers break that vicious cycle?

ANSWER: For many years, in the research we conduct before, during, and after our management seminars, we have studied what the very best managers actually do that is different from the others. I’m talking about the very best managers: Managers whose employees consistently deliver the highest productivity and quality; with high retention of high performers and high turnover among low performers; with the best business outcomes and high morale and team spirit; whose direct-reports are most likely to describe the manager as “one of the best managers I’ve ever had.” What is the common denominator among those managers? An abiding commitment to the fundamentals – relentless high-quality communication. Consistently engaging every direct-report in an ongoing highly-structured content-rich one-on-one dialogue about the work that needs to be done by that person. Things go much better when managers consistently make expectations clear and provide candid feedback for every individual every step of the way. Use team meetings only for what team meetings are good for – and make the most of them. When managers build and maintain high-quality one-on-one dialogues with their direct-reports, they almost always increase employee performance and morale, increase retention of high performers and turnover among low performers, and achieve significant measurable improvements in business-outcomes. They spend less and less time firefighting. They get ahead of the problems and prevent the fires. They break the vicious cycle. They start getting their management time back. Then, if they don’t slip up on the fundamentals, a virtuous upward spiral begins to build. Those regular one-on-ones are your fire prevention, preparation, and training. That’s where real impact occurs. Not in the crucial conversations, but rather in the routine conversations. First you need to make those routine conversations much, much better.

QUESTION: Is this book intended to be read straight through or used as a reference book that managers turn to over and over again?

ANSWER: Both! This book is intentionally designed to be used and re-used as a reference book— a hands-on management tool you may go back to over and over again throughout your career as a leader/manager/supervisor. I encourage readers to go ahead and skip right to the specific challenge they are facing today.

Once they've solved that problem, I encourage readers to consider reading the whole book from beginning to end. So I hope that reading the whole thing beginning to end is sort of like putting one's self through "management fundamentals" boot camp. In each chapter I examine the underlying themes and issues and show how, almost always, the ad hoc manner in which most managers talk to their direct-reports every day actually makes inevitable the most difficult employee situations that tend to vex managers. What is the key to avoiding most of these problems and the key to solving them quickly and with relative ease as soon as they appear? High-structure high-substance one-on-one dialogues with every direct-report. With each of the most common challenges managers face within each area, I show how managers typically respond to these problems when they become aware and how these typical responses sometimes exacerbate the problems. Then I show how to use the structured dialogue to control the situation and zero in on the specially focused techniques for continuing to grow the one-on-one dialogue in this situation.

QUESTION: So within the fundamentals, there are specially focused techniques for each of the 27 challenges?

ANSWER: Yes. With each of the 27 different challenges, step-by-step solutions are spelled out, showing exactly how to use the fundamentals to address each of the larger issues and then the very specific dynamics of each challenge. If you look at the table of contents, you'll see that the 27 challenges are grouped together in chapters based on the larger themes/issues they have in common

Chapter 2: The challenges of being somebody's "new" manager; dealing with leadership transitions

Chapter 3: The challenges of teaching self-management skills; teaching good work habits

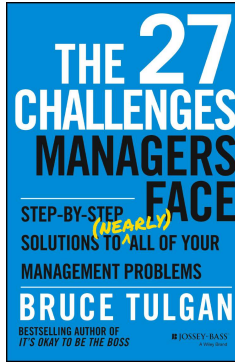
Chapter 4: The challenges of managing employee performance; productivity, quality, etc.

Chapter 5: The challenges related to employee attitudes

Chapter 6: The challenges related to managing superstar employees

Chapter 7: The challenges of managing despite factors beyond your control

Chapter 8: The challenges related to the need for a fresh start to an old relationship; renewal.



The 27 Challenge Managers Face is available for preorder at:

amazon.com

<http://www.amazon.com/Challenges-Managers-Face-Step-Step/dp/111872559X/>

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