

Andy Grove's 100 point guide to being a better manager

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I went to see [Ben Horowitz](#) give a [talk at Columbia](#) a few months ago.

He was there pitching his new book, [The Hard Thing About Hard Things: Building a Business When There Are No Easy Answers](#), which was less entertaining to read than listening to him in person, but it did raise a salient point: the best guide on being a manager was written thirty years ago, by [Andy Grove](#).

Sure enough, [High Output Management](#) has stood the test of time.

Grove approaches the problem as an engineer, with a specific, deterministic way of looking at the world, which is a refreshing change from other business management books.

Here's the worksheet from the book's epilogue. In Grove's words, "If you do at least 100 points worth of what you find here, you'll be a distinctly better manager for it".

Production

Action	Points
Identify the operations in your work most like process, assembly, and test production	10
For a project you are working on, identify the limiting step and map out the flow of work around it	10
Define the proper places for the equivalents of receiving inspection, in-process inspection, and final inspection in your work. Decide whether these inspections should be monitoring steps or gate-like ¹ . Identify the conditions under which you can relax things and move to a variable inspection theme.	10
Identify half a dozen new indicators for your group's output. They should measure both the quantity and quality of the output.	10
Install these new indicators as a routine in your work area, and establish their regular review in your staff meetings.	20
What is the most important strategy (plan of action) you are pursuing now? Describe the environmental demand that prompted it and your current status or momentum. Is your strategy likely to result in a satisfactory state of affairs for you or your organization if successfully implemented?	20

Leverage

Action	Points
Conduct work simplification on your most tedious, time-consuming task. Eliminate at least 30 percent of the total number of steps involved.	10
Define your output: What are the output elements of the organization you manage and the organizations you can influence? List them in order of importance.	10
Analyze your information- and knowledge-gathering system. Is it properly balanced among "headlines," newspaper articles," and "weekly news magazines"? ² Is redundancy built in?	10
Take a "tour". Afterward, list the transactions you got involved in during its course.	10
Create a once-a-month "excuse" for a tour.	10
Describe how you will monitor the next project you delegate to a subordinate. What will you look for? How? How frequently?	10
Generate an inventory of projects on which you can work at discretionary times.	10
Hold a scheduled one-on-one ³ with each of your subordinates. (Explain to them in advance what a one-on-one is about. Have them prepare for it.)	20
Look at your calendar for the last week. Classify your activities as low-/medium-/high-leverage. Generate a plan of action to do more of the high-leverage category. (What activities will you reduce?)	10
Forecast the demand on your time for the next week. What portion of your time is likely to be spent in meetings? Which of these are process-oriented ⁴ meetings? Mission-oriented ⁵ meetings? If the latter are over 25 percent of your your total time, what should you do to reduce them?	10
Define the three most important objectives for your organization for the next three months. Support them with key	

results.	20
Have your subordinates do the same for themselves, after a thorough discussion of the set generated above.	20
Generate an inventory of pending decisions you are responsible for. Take three and structure the decision-making process for them, using the six question approach ⁶ .	10

Performance

Action	Points
Evaluate your own motivational state in terms of the Maslow hierarchy. Do the same for each of your subordinates.	10
Give your subordinates a racetrack: define a set of performance indicators for each.	20
List the various forms of task-relevant feedback your subordinates receive. How well can they gauge their progress through them?	10
Classify the task-relevant maturity of each of your subordinates as low, medium, or high. Evaluate the management style that would be most appropriate for each. Compare what your own style is with what it should be.	10
Evaluate the last performance review you received and also the last set of reviews you gave to your subordinates as a means of delivering task-relevant feedback. How well did the reviews do to improve performance? What was the nature of the communication process during the delivery of each?	20
Redo one of these reviews as it should have been done.	10

¹ Hold output at the "gate" and check it before allowing it to pass to the next stage of the production process.

² This book was published in 1983

³ Whereby the subordinate explains what is going on, and what is bothering him (i.e., it is the **subordinate's** meeting)

⁴ Where knowledge is shared and information is exchanged; held on a regular basis

⁵ Designed to produce a specific decision; usually held on an ad-hoc basis

⁶ What will the environment demand from you, your business, or your organization?

What are you producing now?

what more (or less) do you need to do to reconcile the gap?

Where do I want to go (i.e., what is the objective?)

How will I pace myself to see if I am getting these?

What is the period of time to focus on the objectives? (focus is important, to know what to say "yes" to, and "no" to)