Management techniques

L ots of manuals and courses have been issued to teach how to become a perfect manager; however, this is a skill that cannot be learnt but takes time and experience to develop. A manager becomes a manager by virtue of his/her position and subordinates or employees follow him willy-nilly because they have to. Nevertheless, he needs not only to learn how to manage a team, but also to possess the qualities of a leader if he wants to be followed down difficult paths. Leaders, in fact, don't have subordinates, but voluntary followers who share and believe in their vision and goals, simply because they look up to them as models.

A manager is not necessarily followed by his team, but he still has to plan, organise, lead and supervise his employees to achieve goals and respect deadlines. Thus, he needs to:

- have subordinates and plan, delegate and schedule their tasks according to their relevant abilities;
- have an authoritarian style, due to his position in the company;
- have complete knowledge of his field and common sense to make quick productive decisions;
- take a strategic vision of each project;
- set clear and attainable goals, like a roadmap, for his team;
- direct day-to-day work efforts, review resources needed and anticipate needs along the way;
- establish precise work rules, processes, standards and operating procedures;
- fix a consistent set of disciplinary procedures to be respected by the team;
- look after his staff's needs, listen and give employees motivation, a sense of responsibility and empowerment by involving them in decision-making processes;
- avoid conflicts where possible and be able to keep the team under control;
- recognise team members for their achievements or initiatives;
- show empathy, i.e. have an insight into the thoughts and emotional reactions of other people.

1 GROUP WORK Do you think a teacher is the manager of their class? Think of your teachers and analyse their management techniques, then discuss with the other groups to define what qualities the perfect teacher-manager should have.