



Developing People-Centric Leaders

Great leadership isn't just about results, it's about relationships.

As workplace expectations evolve, the role of a manager is shifting from taskmaster to people developer. In this guide, we explore how employers can equip their managers with the people skills they need to lead with empathy, clarity and impact.

Whether you're nurturing emerging leaders or upskilling experienced ones, the goal is the same: build emotionally intelligent, self-aware managers who know how to bring out the best in others.

Why People Skills Matter More Than Ever

In a hybrid, multigenerational, and increasingly values-driven workforce, people skills are no longer soft, they're strategic.

Modern managers must be able to:

- Deliver feedback constructively
- Navigate conflict sensitively
- Support employee wellbeing
- Adapt communication to individual preferences
- Create inclusive, psychologically safe team environments

Failing to develop these skills can lead to disengagement, poor retention, and missed potential.



The Foundation: Ongoing Leadership Development

A one-off course isn't enough. People skills need continuous learning, reflection and support.

Recommended elements of a sustainable development programme:

- Regular skills workshops – covering topics such as coaching conversations, emotional intelligence, managing stress, difficult conversations, and giving and receiving feedback.
- Peer learning groups – create safe spaces where managers can share real challenges and solutions.
- Bite-sized digital learning – provide access to short videos and toolkits managers can use at the point of need.
- Leadership mentoring – pair new or struggling managers with role models in your business.

Using 360-Degree Feedback for Deeper Self-Awareness

Many managers don't realise the full impact of their behaviours, both positive and negative, until they see it through the eyes of others.

A 360-degree assessment is a powerful tool that gathers anonymous feedback from a manager's peers, direct reports, and leaders. It provides insight into how they are perceived, identifying hidden strengths and blind spots.

Key benefits:

- Encourages personal accountability and reflection
- Highlights areas for growth in emotional intelligence
- Provides real-world input to shape individual development plans

To maximise impact, 360s should be followed up with coaching support and clear development goals.



The Power of Profiling for Performance

At Breedon, we use Thomas International's profiling tools to give managers deeper insight into their behavioural tendencies, emotional awareness, and leadership style.

Key tools we recommend:

- Thomas Behaviour (DISC-based assessment) – reveals how managers prefer to communicate, what motivates them, and how they handle pressure.
- Thomas Personality – assesses traits that predict job success and risk for derailment
- Thomas Aptitude - measures an individual's aptitude in 5 key areas; Reasoning, Perceptual Speed, Number Speed & Accuracy, Word Meaning and Spatial Visualization.
- Thomas Emotional Intelligence – a scientifically validated tool that measures a manager's awareness of their own emotions and their ability to manage relationships, self-control, empathy and adaptability.

Benefits of Profiling:

- Empowers managers to understand how they come across to others
- Equips leaders to manage their own stress and energy
- Improves team relationships and communication
- Supports inclusive, resilient team cultures

These tools are especially valuable when developing leaders in high-pressure or people-critical roles.

Signs Your Managers Need Support

Not sure whether your management team is equipped to lead in today's environment?

Here are some red flags:

- High team turnover or absenteeism
- Poor engagement scores or feedback
- Inconsistent or unclear communication
- Micromanagement or conflict avoidance
- Low confidence handling sensitive conversations (e.g. performance, mental health)

These aren't signs of failure, they're signals that your managers may need development, not discipline.

How to Encourage Managers to Engage in Development

Not all managers are naturally enthusiastic about people development, especially if their strengths lie in technical or operational work.

Here's how to encourage uptake:

- Frame it as a business skill – Emphasise the impact of leadership behaviour on team outcomes.
- Make training practical and relevant – Use real case studies and relatable scenarios.
- Involve senior leadership – When senior leaders prioritise people skills, others follow.
- Recognise progress – Celebrate improvements in feedback, engagement or team performance.
- Offer personal insight tools – Profiling and 360 feedback provide clear, personalised entry points.

From Self-Awareness to Strategic Impact

Developing people skills isn't about turning every manager into a therapist. It's about building self-aware leaders who know how to:

- Create clarity
- Communicate with empathy
- Give meaningful feedback
- Coach others to perform
- Adapt to team needs and pressures

These skills fuel trust, innovation and long-term retention, and they don't come naturally to everyone. That's why they must be taught, practised, and reinforced over time.

Our Approach: Tailored Management Development That Works

At Breedon, we help businesses build confident, connected managers through:

- Structured training programmes
- Thomas International profiling & feedback
- 360 assessments with follow-up coaching
- Leadership diagnostics and bespoke development plans
- Ongoing HR support to embed learning into everyday practice

Whether you're developing new team leaders or transforming senior managers, we'll help you build people leaders who inspire, support and deliver.

Let's Build Stronger Managers Together

People don't leave jobs — they leave managers. Let's help yours become the reason people stay.



We can offer support in developing your managers and helping them to prepare for the changes ahead.

To discuss our packages in more detail, please get in touch for a confidential chat.

Simply contact our team on



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