

# STUCK IN THE MIDDLE

## 2022 MANAGER CHALLENGES RESEARCH



# Being a manager has always been a tough job— and the changes brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic have added to that challenge.

Researchers at The Ken Blanchard Companies® recently completed a survey to identify the challenges managers were facing and how they were coping. More than 800 managers responded to questions that asked:

- **What are your biggest stressors/challenges?**
- **What's blocking your success?**
- **How much time do you spend on typical management duties?**
- **What would help you be more effective?**



More than 70,000 data points were analyzed, yielding an in-depth look into the lives of today's managers.

Long-time challenges topped the list. Managers reported that their productivity is limited in many ways.

Insufficient staff

77%

Constant change

72%

Inefficient processes

71%

Underskilled workforce

70%

Outdated systems

66%

Organizational conflict

64%

**While all levels of managers experienced these challenges, middle managers reported being in the most pressurized spot.**

Three themes were identified...



THEME ONE:

Managers are suffering  
from fragmentation

60% say they have **too many**  
priorities to focus on



**70%** are spread across  
too many projects

**66%** have too  
many goals

**59%** have unclear  
priorities



# Managerial Shiatsu

As a result, managers are being pulled in multiple directions

**62%** of managers are feeling this simultaneous squeeze and stretch



## THEME TWO: Managers are overworked

Respondents reported  
working an average of  
**48.5 hours per week.**

But that didn't mean managers  
were getting all their work done.  
When asked, "**How long would  
it take to complete your work?**"  
managers estimated it would  
require 62.5 hours weekly.





**As a result, two out of three managers have experienced burnout in the last 12 months.**

**Most say they'd be more successful if they could focus on fewer projects.**

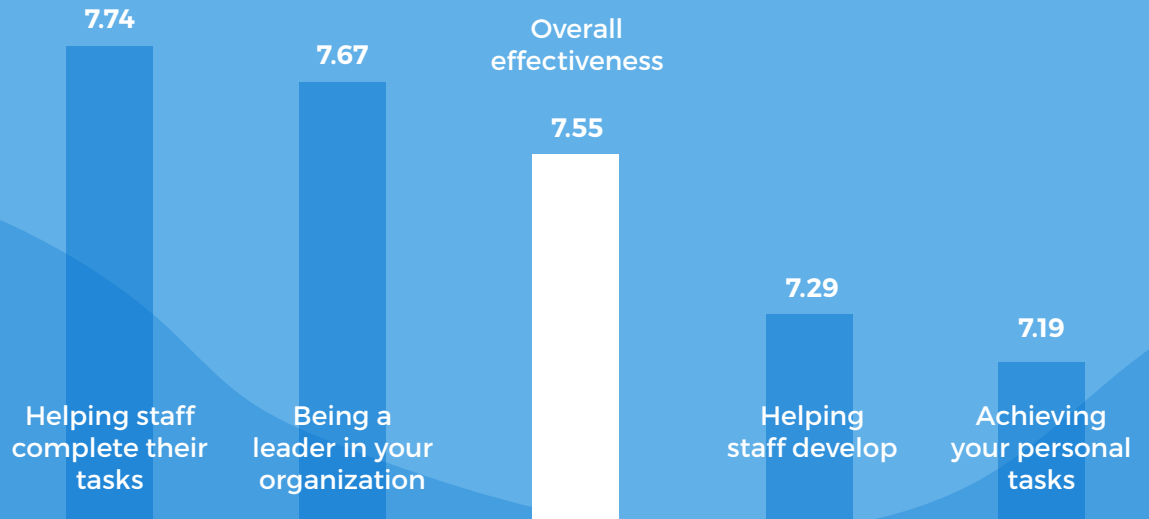


## THEME THREE:

# Managers give themselves a mixed grade on effectiveness

On a scale of 1 to 10, managers rate their overall effectiveness at 7.55

However, they do feel that they are better at helping staff complete their tasks and being a leader in their organizations than they are at helping staff develop or getting their own work done.



When it comes to effectiveness on specific skills, **providing clear direction, listening to others, and communicating actionable feedback** were identified as the most important responsibilities.

When asked what they were least effective at, managers cited **networking with others, cultivating innovation, and recruiting new staff members**.

The two areas with the **biggest gap** between importance and effectiveness? **Confronting performance problems and dealing with interpersonal conflict.**



**When asked what organizations can do to help, managers identified three strategies.**

**#1**

# **Honor requests for time and resources**

- More time to complete their tasks
- More time to mentor their people
- More budget for hiring and upskilling staff
- Better systems and processes

# #2

## Provide vision and clarity

- Sharing what's most important
- Guiding them on how to make tradeoffs and juggle goals
- Helping them manage and prioritize
- Protecting them from being overly fragmented

# #3

## Provide differentiated training for leaders at every level

### Frontline Managers

- Leadership
- Decision-making
- Personal assertiveness
- Problem-solving
- Team leadership

### Middle Managers

- Decision-making
- Leadership
- Communication
- Team leadership
- Problem-solving

### Senior Manager/Director

- Strategic planning
- Leadership
- Communication
- Personal assertiveness
- Collaboration

### Executives

- Emotional intelligence
- Leadership
- Measure and track results
- Communication
- Strategic planning

**Today's managers are effective and dedicated,  
but many are suffering from too many hours,  
too little clarity, and too few resources.**





# Ready to help your managers take their teams to a higher level of performance?

**The Ken Blanchard Companies specializes in equipping managers with time-efficient strategies that bring out the best in others.**



Learn more by visiting our website at [www.kenblanchard.com](http://www.kenblanchard.com) or scheduling a free consultation at

[www.kenblanchard.com/Get-Started](http://www.kenblanchard.com/Get-Started)



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