



# IMPERATIVE

SNAPSHOT

## **BUILDING MANAGER CAPABILITY**

Leverage the power of peer coaching to help people managers develop the skills to become beloved by their teams.

**“As more organizations build remote or hybrid work into their long-term strategies, the very role of the manager is being redefined.”<sup>2</sup>**



29% of L&D leaders report managers can effectively lead remote/virtual teams<sup>3</sup>

## **Managers are the unsung heroes of the business world.**

They're “the quietly diligent ones who sharpen, modify and turn a conceptual high-level strategy into something truly brilliant,” the dean of a top business school declared<sup>1</sup>. It is our managers who define our culture and the experience and growth of the majority of employees. And, they are our pipeline to executive leadership.

With every passing year, **the role of a manager is becoming more challenging**. The speed of change, evolving technology, and a chaotic outside world all directly impact managers and what we expect from them.

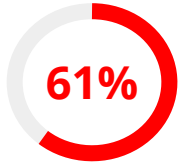
*Many of us grew up with this mental model of what a manager is from our parents, which was, ‘Oh, they just give the orders.’ **Now, you're a mentor, you're a coach, you have to set vision and strategy and give feedback. There's just so many things for managers to do, and that's complex.***



**CORINA KOLBE**

*VP of Learning and Development*

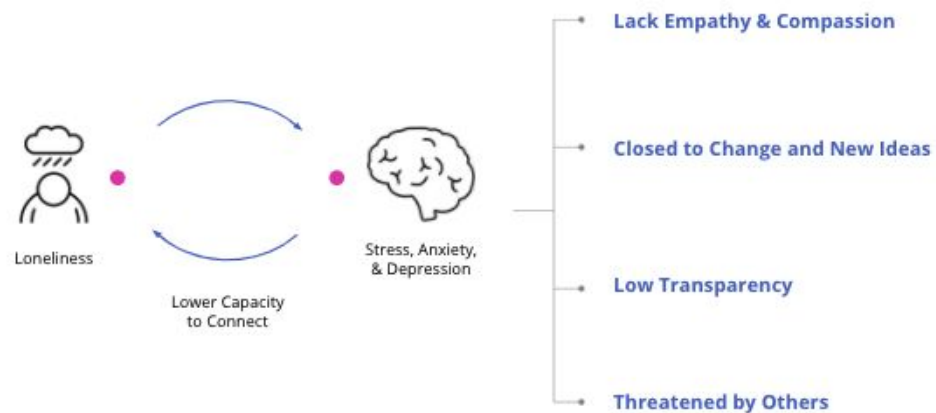




61% of Americans reported being lonely before the pandemic.<sup>5</sup>

What amplifies this challenge is **the isolation managers experience**. “The loneliest place of all may be middle management,” a study<sup>4</sup> found. With pressures coming at them from both above and below, managers constantly have to manage up as well as down, and feel they have nowhere to turn for support that feels safe and accessible.

The loneliness this isolation creates has a well documented, negative impact on people’s mindsets. **Loneliness leads to stress, anxiety, and depression**. When we are in that state, it’s harder to connect with other people -- which then just makes us more isolated.



**Loneliness has a direct impact on how managers show up for their teams.** They are less empathetic and compassionate. They are more likely to be closed to new ideas and change. They start to operate out of a scarcity mindset. Fear then causes them to feel threatened by others; they stop being transparent and authentic.

Addressing this vicious cycle is an imperative for any organization.

The impact? Not only are managers the most likely to be unhappy at work<sup>6</sup>, but **this problem causes turnover, lost team productivity, stagnation, and difficulty attracting top talent.** And as we all know now, Gallup<sup>7</sup> has demonstrated that “one in two employees have left a job to get away from a manager.”

## WHERE TRADITIONAL MANAGER DEVELOPMENT FALLS SHORT

Companies keep applying the same solution and expecting a different result.

Companies invest millions of dollars per year training and supporting managers. They use online learning, instructor-led training, assessments, coaching, and 360 feedback. All of these have value, but they don't ultimately make the impact organizations need.

These programs fall short of their desired impact for three core reasons.

1

### **They don't create regular space for reflection.**

The skills managers need are mostly human skills, not technical skills. Human skills are primarily developed through building self-awareness and reflecting on recent experiences. Managers have challenges and learning opportunities every day—these are the moments learning and support must be built around.



**2 They don't address the psychological and emotional side of management.**

The hardest parts of being a manager are emotional and psychological. They are about our identity, our relationships, and our fears. To grow to be a great manager you need a very safe and consistent place to process your experience, normalize it, and gain courage to move forward.

**3 They don't address the social isolation at the root of the issue.**

Coaches and trainers don't build strong, ongoing, two-way relationships that managers need to thrive and maintain the right mindset. Managers need consistent, positive, and vulnerable relationships with high levels of empathy.



Science, technology, and greater appreciation for psychology have enabled a breakthrough in the field.

## MANAGER-TO-MANAGER COACHING HARNESSES THE POWER OF PEERS

Unlike mentoring or traditional coaching, peer coaching brings together two people at the same level in an organization's hierarchy to engage in a thoughtful, meaningful, effective, and action-oriented conversation. Neither person is the "teacher" or "student." Instead, through Imperative's guided prompts and structured format, participants *help each other process their biggest challenges and find their own solutions.*

1

### **Peer coaching creates regular space for reflection.**

In peer coaching conversations, managers are able to take a step back from their work to reflect on their experiences and challenges. Research has found that time spent reflecting leads to a 19% jump in someone's likelihood to be a top performer.<sup>8</sup>

*Because my peer coach was another manager, I was able to share work experiences with someone who gets it, which was incredibly helpful. We never get the chance to reflect as managers. Peer coaching gave me the space to do that while also building a new trusted peer relationship in the organization.*

*Manager, Operations*



## 2 **Peer coaching addresses the psychological and emotional side of management.**

Managers support each other in processing the emotional rollercoaster of people management, normalize their challenges, and help them remain positive and constructive.

"It allowed us to express how we feel about things. We were able to be frustrated together, and I think that's valuable. I think sometimes we over-index towards action in work. And I think it's just as important to know when *not* to take action, especially when it's an emotional thing. Sometimes just naming it and sitting in it for a second, resolves it enough to let you move on."

*Manager, Sales*



## 3 **Peer coaching addresses the social isolation which is at the root of the issue.**

Managers engage in consistent, positive, and vulnerable conversations - the three ingredients of meaningful connection.<sup>9</sup> Research<sup>7</sup> shows that these relationships are often even more important than the nature of the work itself in helping people feel job satisfaction<sup>10</sup>.

"It was really helpful to have someone that's at the same level going through similar career developments, challenges, and having those conversations on what we're trying to do and bouncing it back and forth off each other. It made me realize I'm not alone."

*Manager, Engineering*



## CULTIVATING CRITICAL MANAGEMENT SKILLS

Managers need different support at each stage in their development. Peer coaching is the throughline that supports them as they reinforce and apply basic functional management skills, create space to put their work in context, learn how to influence diverse stakeholders, and become leaders as they align their work and lives with their purpose.

APPLYING MANAGER-TO-MANAGER COACHING  
BY DEVELOPMENTAL STAGE

### PEER COACHING APPLICATION



*What's difficult with leadership programs is just that they're just massive. And you do the program for five or eight hours or whatever, and you go home, and you apply one or two things. By the end of the second week, it's like it's in your rearview mirror. Imperative helps you continue to apply what you learn over time so you really make the most of it.*



Manager, Operations



## BUILDING A LEARNING AND SUPPORT NETWORK

Build a community of practice for managers that not only shares best practices but provides the emotional support unique to their situation.

On Imperative, managers are matched with another peer coaching partner every quarter for five guided one-hour coaching conversations over video. **Over the course of a year, they are matched with four other managers, creating a trusted network of peers.**

In one year, an organization with 1,000 managers will create 4,000 meaningful relationships through peer coaching.

**These meaningful relationships provide different perspectives and support.** Managers can pull insights from people with different experiences and overcome silos and biases.

“In this virtual world that we all have transitioned to, it felt like a way to create intimacy, trust and build deeper relationships between colleagues. This isn’t just about individual growth. This is about strengthening the fabric of an organization and its workforce.”



*Manager, Finance*

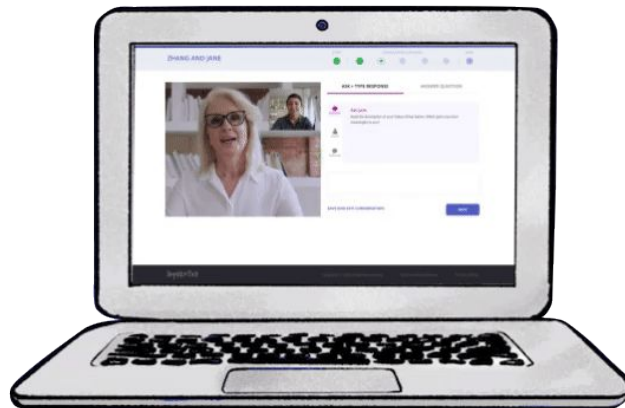
With support from their peers, managers can address almost every challenge.

As managers build their learning and support network they become less dependent on human resources and hierarchy and turn to each other for support. **The network becomes a self-sustaining living and breathing organism.**

*It's very interesting - when you're not talking to someone who directly either reports to you or who you report to, how freely one can speak. You can almost freeform think. We combine to put something together that's really gold.*



Manager, Tech

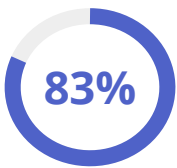


**Peer coaching on Imperative is a scalable solution to help managers develop their capabilities and show up everyday as inspiring leaders.**

## EASY TO IMPLEMENT AND SCALE

Imperative's SaaS platform makes it easy to launch and manage peer coaching at scale. With wrap-around support, it's a complete solution for your manager development team.

- Dynamic peer matching
- Purpose profile
- Embedded personalized guides
- Conversation scheduling
- Action setting and tracking
- Analytics



83% of Imperative actions that are pledged are completed.

Manager-to-manager coaching with Imperative is also designed to easily add on to existing programs and events, making it hassle-free. It is typically introduced to managers as part of an existing manager training program to amplify and apply the learning. From there, managers are launched into the learning and support network on Imperative.

*We were just paired wonderfully. Our conversations are informative, insightful, emotional, and productive.*

*Manager, Customer Service*

