

Gartner®

Managers Are Cracking and More Training Won't Help

4 HR actions to go beyond skills development
and redesign the job



Expectations of managers have increased exponentially since the pandemic, and signs of failure are clear

Managers today are expected to be superheroes. New and added responsibilities now include managing hybrid teams, providing work flexibility and ensuring employee well-being. At the same time, organizations are asking managers to do even better with existing responsibilities, such as managing changes, hiring critical talent and driving productivity.

Employees, too, are more reliant on managers than ever before. Seventy-seven percent of employees say that it has become more important than ever to receive support from their manager, while managerial responsibilities have doubled compared to those of individual contributors. It's clear that managers are under immense pressure, and many are cracking under the load.

HR leaders recognize the situation is dire. Leader and manager effectiveness was cited as HR leaders' No. 1 priority in 2023. To improve management outcomes and avoid losing talent to burnout, CHROs must confront this reality head-on.

This action plan details four ways HR leaders can evolve the manager role, improve effectiveness and reduce stress. Leverage step-by-step guidance for implementation immediately, 90 days out and across the next 12 months.

Welcome to the new era of manager effectiveness.

Warning signs from your managers



Goal Conflict

45% of managers are spending more time managing projects than managing people.



Stress and Fatigue

54% of managers are suffering from work-induced stress and fatigue.



Lack of Confidence

Only **1 in 2 employees** is confident in their manager's ability to lead their team to be successful in the next two years.

Source: Gartner

Managers are the linchpin to organizational success

Left unaddressed, manager ineffectiveness can have a significant negative impact on not just managers, but long-term spillover effects on business and talent outcomes.

Employees who report to effective managers ...



are 15.4x more likely to be **high performers**



are 13.4% **more engaged**



are 3.2x more likely to have **high intent to stay**



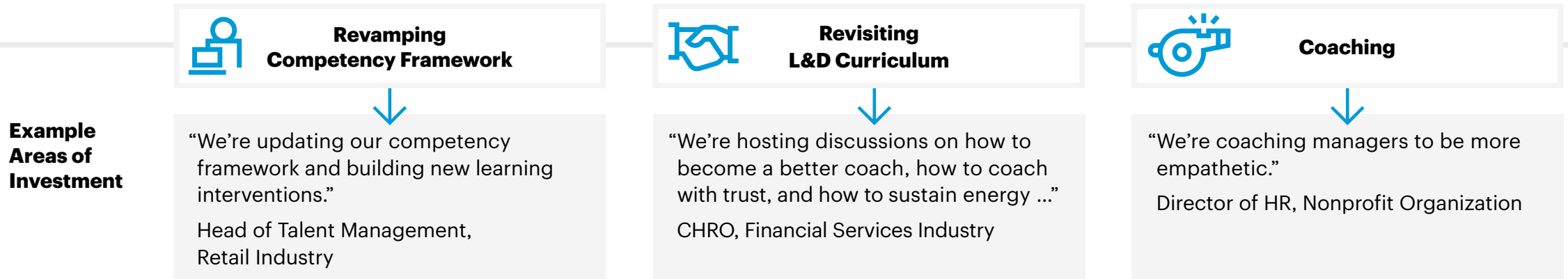
have 12.5% higher **physical and mental well-being**

Manager effectiveness

The overall effectiveness of a manager is key for four key components of the job: (1) project and work management, (2) performance management and goal alignment, (3) coaching and development, (4) collaboration and building a positive team environment.

The typical approach: **Increase investment in manager skills development**

Fifty-nine percent of HR leaders will spend more on manager development programs in the next two years.



Skills development interventions aren’t working — a mutual feeling between managers and HR leadership. This approach alone is not sufficient.

⊗ Only 25% of managers say their organization’s skills development programs are fully effective.

⊗ Only 23% of HR leaders feel confident their investment in manager development is paying off.





Source: Gartner

But improving skills doesn't address challenges with the job

✔ What skills can help with

✘ What skills can't help with

Building expertise at must-have skills required for the job

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
|  | Reducing the load of the job | ← | An average manager has 51% more responsibilities than they can effectively manage. |
|  | Driving motivation for the job | ← | 1 in 5 managers would prefer not being people managers , given a choice. |
|  | Always driving long-term behavioral change required for the job | ← | Only 1 in 2 employees say that their managers treat them with empathy and fairness. |
|  | Changing processes around the job | ← | 59% of managers report spending a significant amount of time on “work to do work.” |

Source: 2023 Gartner Building an Organization of Great Managers Manager Survey; 2022 Gartner Building an Organization of Great Managers Employee Survey

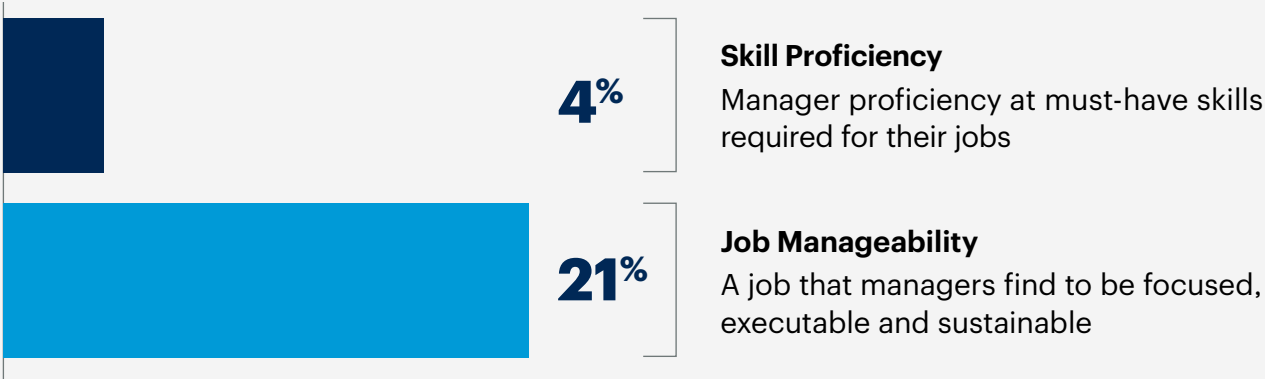
Key finding: **It's the job, not the skills**



The job of the manager has become unmanageable.

Impact of Manager Skill Proficiency vs. Job Manageability

Maximum Impact on Manager Effectiveness



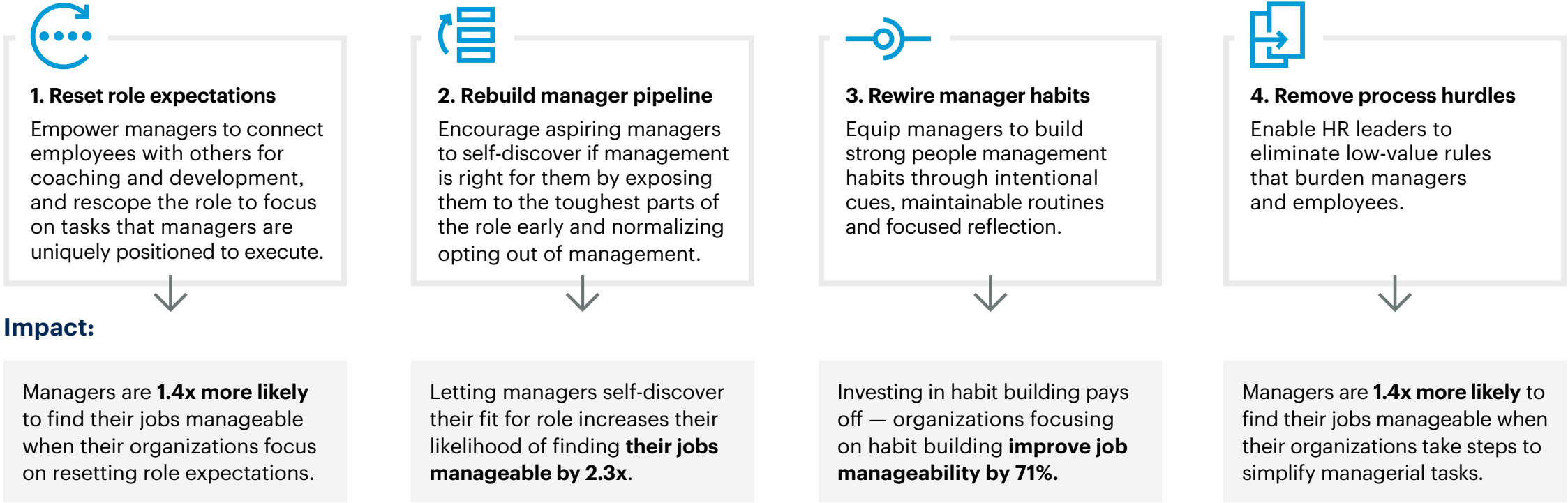
Job manageability is **5x more effective** than skill proficiency in improving manager effectiveness.
Improving job manageability can increase manager effectiveness by up to 21%.

Source: 2023 Gartner Building an Organization of Great Managers Manager Survey; 2022 Gartner Building an Organization of Great Managers Employee Survey

A better approach: **Evolve the job itself**

The best organizations have realized that investing in traditional manager development programs alone is not enough. Building manager expertise in “must-have” skills doesn’t address the foundational issue — the manager job is no longer manageable.

Top organizations instead are evolving the job itself by taking four critical actions:



Source: Gartner

Making the manager job more manageable

Instructions: This action plan includes recommendations for steps to take immediately, within the next 90 days and within the next 12 months, to make the manager job manageable.

Immediate Action Steps

90-Day Action Steps

12-Month Action Steps

Monday Morning: Initiate Change

Review and Reflect on Current Approach to Manager Effectiveness

- Identify your organization's current approach to improving manager effectiveness.
- Review the **four ways to make the manager job manageable**. How does your organization make managers' jobs more focused, sustainable and executable?
- Anticipate potential pushback for investing in making the manager job more manageable.

Start the Conversation

- Share key take-aways from this research study with senior leaders to generate support for, and gauge organizational readiness to, **reset role expectations, rebuild the manager pipeline, remove process hurdles and rewire manager habits**.
- Identify leaders who can help champion efforts to make the manager job more manageable.

Potential Partners

- HR leadership team
- Senior business leaders (e.g., CEO, CFO, CIO, COO)
- Representatives from HR, IT, legal, internal communications

Assess current capabilities

Immediate Action Steps

90-Day Action Steps

12-Month Action Steps

Next 90 Days

Examine Expectations for the Manager Role

- Solicit manager feedback on their most burdensome tasks and what responsibilities pull focus from their people management responsibilities. Use this input to identify managers' highest-value tasks.
- Assess how well managers form development connections with their employees, among their teams and across the organization.

Identify Opportunities to Rebuild the Manager Pipeline

- Reflect on your current manager selection criteria and consider ways to focus less on individual contributor performance and more on individual self-discovery.
- Gather feedback from new managers to understand whether your current manager selection process adequately prepares them for the hardest parts of their new role.

Evaluate Manager Skill-Building Practices

- Audit your manager trainings, including the methods employed to teach new skills and the overall time spent.
- Gather manager feedback on the effectiveness of — and the degree of behavior change from — skill-building training at set intervals after the training is complete.

Identify Process Hurdles

- Gather input from managers to understand the different types of process hurdles they experience.
- Analyze the prevalence of time spent on and level of frustration with these process hurdles.

Potential Partners

- Senior leadership
- Business unit leaders
- IT
- Internal communications
- Managers
- HRBPs
- Employees

Drive change

Immediate Action Steps

90-Day Action Steps

12-Month Action Steps

Next 12 Months

Reset Role Expectations

- Empower managers to act as “Connector Managers” by facilitating greater employee, team and organization connections.
- Redesign the manager role to focus on high-value activities.
- Establish governance for changing the manager role design.

Rebuild the Manager Pipeline

- Create resources that expose aspiring managers to the hardest parts of the role, build opportunities for them to practice those challenging parts of the job, and drive self-reflection to help them determine if management is the right fit for them.
- Build a friendly environment for opting out of management penalty-free.

Rewire Manager Habits

- Create diverse cues across a variety of channels that prompt managers to build new habits.
- Embed habit-building opportunities into managers’ workflows to create routines that stick.
- Establish opportunities for managers to reflect on — and realize the benefits of — their new habits.

Remove Process Hurdles

- Invite cross-functional stakeholders to take part in identifying, solving and approving process changes.
- Prioritize changes based on change impact and change effort.
- Create a mechanism to surface process hurdles on an ongoing basis.

Potential Partners

- Senior leadership
- Business unit leaders
- IT
- Internal communications
- Managers
- HRBPs
- Employees

How Gartner is helping HR leaders adapt and stay ahead

The decisions HR leaders make today can impact their company brand for the next five years. It's critical to have trusted support. With our insights, actionable tools and advice, we help HR leaders adapt their strategies across a variety of mission-critical priorities to set up their organizations for success.



Diagnostics and benchmarks



Guides and toolkits



Expert inquiry



Expert research



In-person events



Peer connections



Case studies and best practices



Live webinars and online learning events




Document reviews


Illustrative key initiative support you receive as a Gartner client

For Gartner clients only

Diagnose current state


 Use our insights on [human leadership](#) to align your leadership approach to support what the most effective people leaders do today.


 Draw on our [2023 Leadership Capability Benchmark Report](#) to help inform your people management assessment and development priorities.

 Talk with a Gartner expert about the state of your organization's leadership strategy, and benchmark your approach against those of your peers.


Develop your plan


 Explore potential development approaches using our [Guide to Building a Leadership Development Program](#).


 Meet with an expert to apply Gartner's [Connector Manager model](#) to empower managers to connect employees with others for coaching and development.

 See in-depth case studies of how Expedient, WPS, State Farm and Quartz evolved strategies to redefine the manager role.

Execute and drive change

 Review your manager enablement strategy and communication plan with a Gartner expert to check alignment.

 Adopt [4 Strategies to Drive New Manager Success](#) to help first-time managers succeed as people managers.

 Co-create customized and actionable development plans with Development Plan Templates for Managers and Leaders.

Key research question:

How can we improve manager effectiveness in today's work?

Our research process: Employee and manager surveys and data analysis



9,000+ employees
and managers



23 industries



6 regions

HR leader interviews

We interviewed HR leaders at **more than 70 organizations** to determine the challenges that managers are facing and the strategies they are adopting to improve manager effectiveness.

HR leader survey

We surveyed **close to 100 HR leaders** to determine the support that organizations are providing to enable managers to lead effectively in today's work environment.

Source: Gartner

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