



Cracking the Code on Manager Impact

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About Insperity

Since 1986, Insperity's mission has been to help businesses succeed so communities prosper. Offering a suite of the most comprehensive, scalable HR solutions available in the marketplace, Insperity is defined by an unrivaled breadth and depth of services and level of care. Through an optimal blend of premium HR service and technology, Insperity delivers the administrative relief, reduced liabilities and better benefit solutions that businesses need to drive performance and growth.

With 2025 revenues of \$6.8 billion and sales and service operations throughout the U.S., Insperity is currently making a difference in thousands of businesses and communities nationwide.

For more information, visit <https://www.insperity.com>.

Background

As a thought leader in HR solutions, Insperity is committed to delivering research-driven insights that shape industry conversations. This research commenced as AI began to more tangibly impact the workplace and a trend of eliminating the middle management layer emerged as companies sought to flatten organizations and cut costs.

Objectives

This study explores the role of managers in talent attraction, retention, and organizational performance. The research was also designed to uncover strategies for optimizing manager impact on workplace culture and business success.

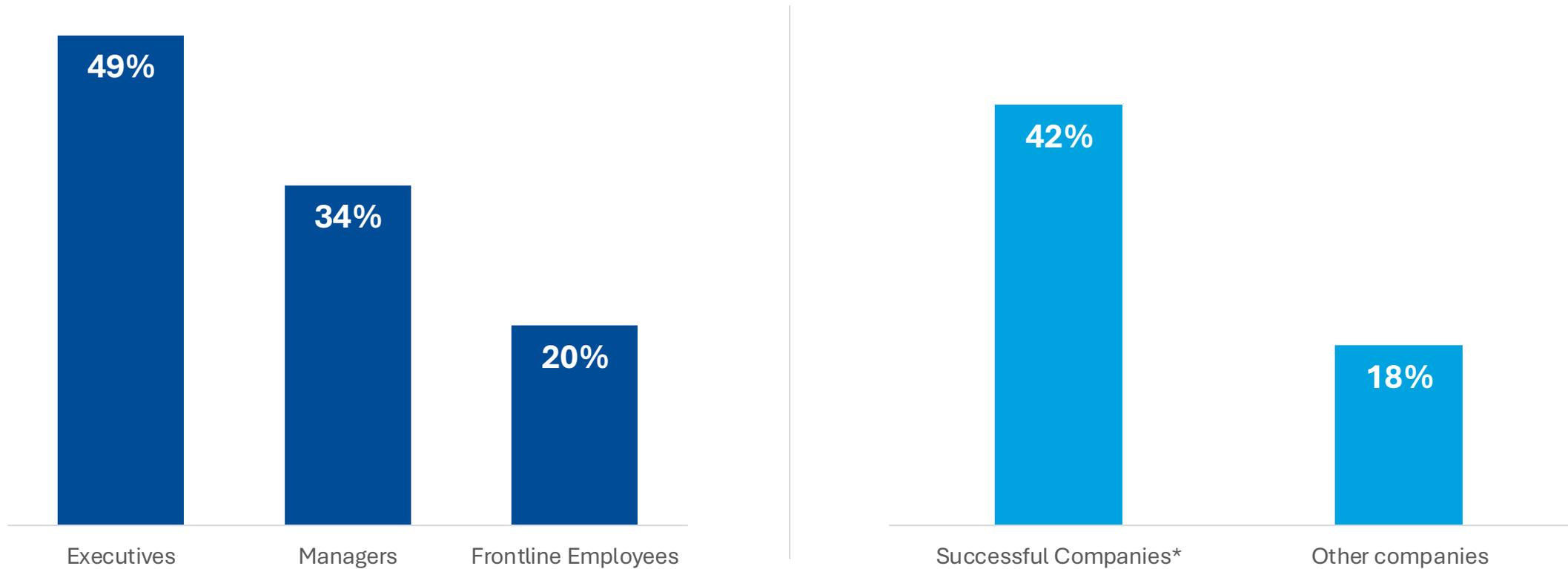
Methodology

An online survey of 1,000 U.S.-based employees was conducted in January 2025 by Provoke Insights across four key employee groups: frontline employees (300), managers with direct reports (300), executives (200), and human resources professionals (200). At a 95% confidence level, the margin of error across these groups is $\pm 3.10\%$. The sample included representation across major industries and companies of at least 25 employees.

Limitations: As with all survey research, findings reflect self-reported perceptions and experiences. While the study provides valuable insights into management effectiveness across organizational levels, results should be interpreted within the context of respondent perspectives rather than objective performance measures.

The manager performance gap

% who believe their managers exceed expectations



***“Successful companies” include respondents who strongly agree their company is successful. All others are represented in “Other companies.”*

Managers as performance multipliers



My work has
meaningful impact

Managers meet or exceed expectations
Managers fail to meet expectations

% strongly agreeing



I understand my
company's vision

Managers meet or exceed expectations
Managers fail to meet expectations



My company has a
healthy culture

Managers meet or exceed expectations
Managers fail to meet expectations



My company is a
great place to work

Managers meet or exceed expectations
Managers fail to meet expectations



Where the performance gap shows up most

% very effective, as perceived by role



Communication

Enable communication between leadership and frontline employees

15% 35% 45%



Development

Train and develop team members

16% 40% 49%



Empowerment

Empower employees by removing obstacles and providing support

18% 31% 47%



Recognition

Recognize and reward employees

19% 37% 48%



Culture

Promote good company culture

20% 35% 49%



● Frontline employees ● Managers ● Executives

Top 5 out of 12 behaviors studied that impact employee enablement

High-impact manager behaviors

% of managers are very effective



Communication

Enable communication between leadership and frontline employees

Successful companies

40%

Other companies

17%



Development

Train and develop team members

Successful companies

44%

Other companies

24%



Empowerment

Empower employees by removing obstacles and providing support

Successful companies

41%

Other companies

16%



Recognition

Recognize and reward employees

Successful companies

43%

Other companies

21%



Culture

Promote good company culture

Successful companies

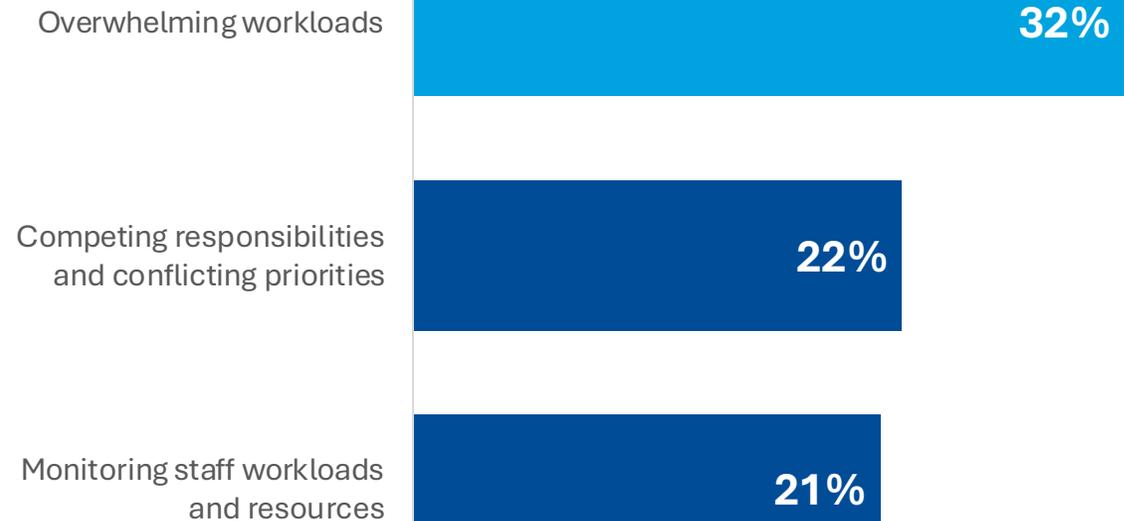
43%

Other companies

21%

Barrier 1: Overwhelming workloads

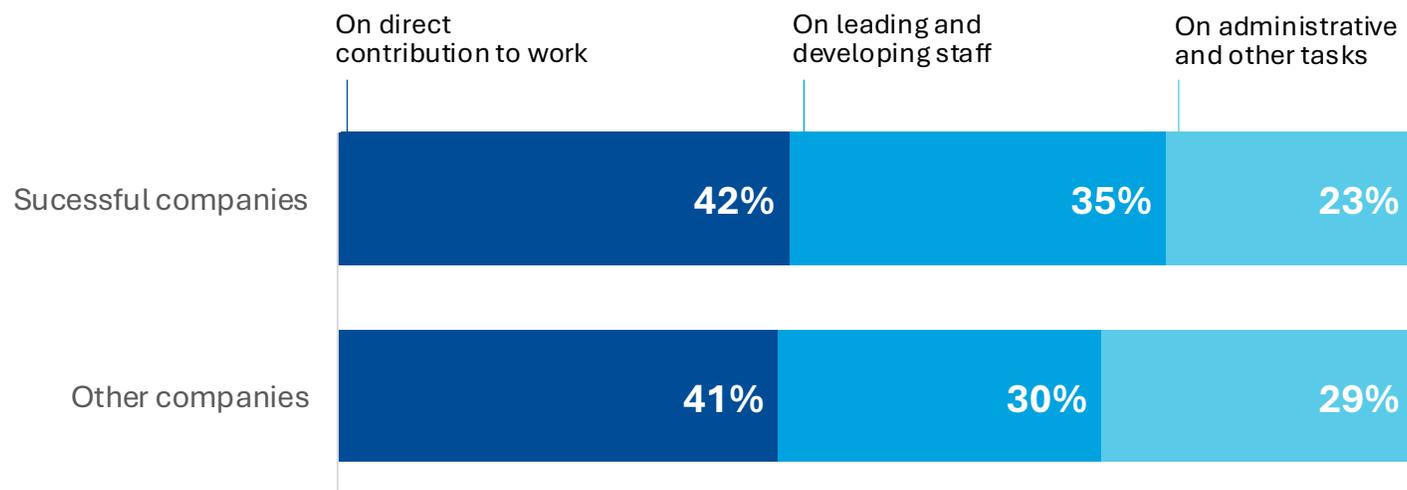
Commonly cited manager challenges

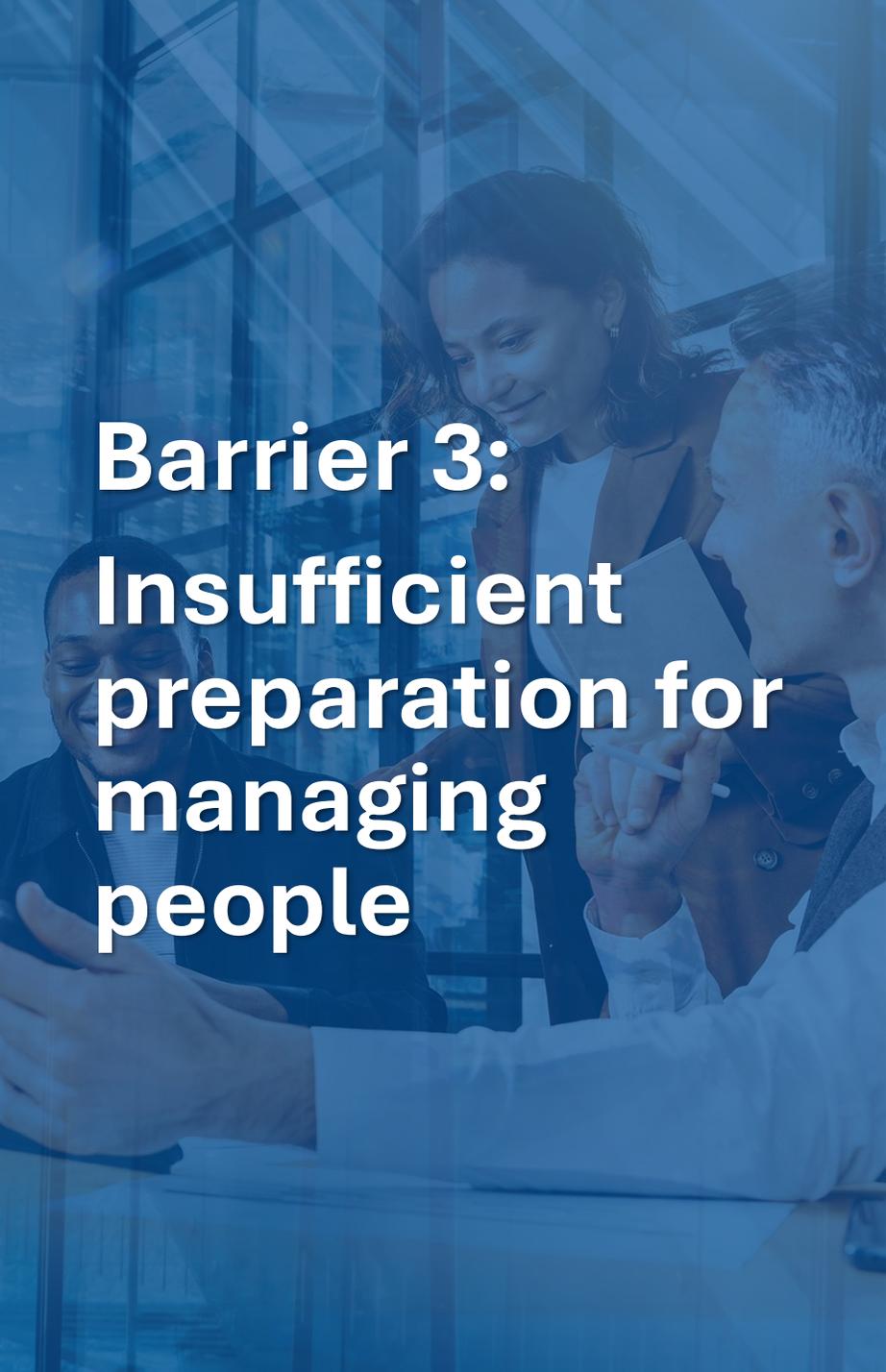


**Survey respondents could choose up to three answers from a list of fifteen choices.*

Barrier 2: Administrative burden

Manager time allocation





Barrier 3: Insufficient preparation for managing people

Insufficient preparation for managing people

Only 51%

of newer managers surveyed (those with <3 years' experience) feel completely prepared to lead others

73%

of experienced managers surveyed feel completely prepared



This preparation gap correlates directly with burnout – newer managers report burnout at higher rates (74%) than experienced managers (59%).

Priority manager support needs

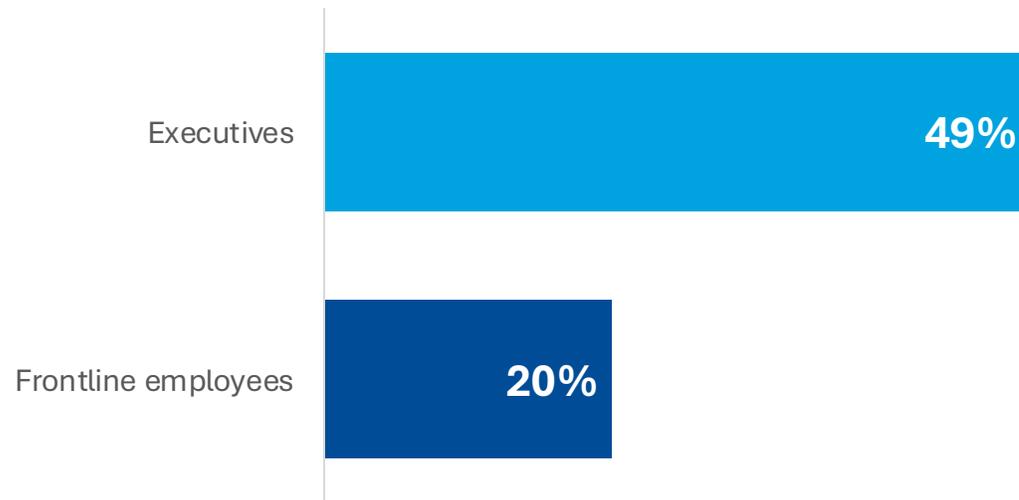
% indicated as top 3 most helpful for preparing managers to lead*

| | Frontline employees | Managers | Executives |
|--|---------------------|----------|------------|
| Leadership development program | 26% | 38% | 30% |
| Training for job-specific skills | 32% | 33% | 25% |
| Team-building activities to improve collaboration skills | 24% | 29% | 31% |
| Coaching or mentorship opportunities | 30% | 24% | 27% |
| Feedback or performance evaluation tools | 21% | 22% | 27% |
| Stronger connection with a peer team with the organization | 22% | 24% | 18% |
| Resources for stress management and productivity | 23% | 19% | 22% |
| Access to advanced technology to enhance performance | 11% | 20% | 26% |

*Darker shading indicates the most frequently selected support needs.

Closing the manager performance gap

% who believe their managers exceed expectations



What you gain (when managers excel)

- **Business success doubles:** Companies are 2X more likely to report overall success.
- **Engagement soars:** Employees are 3X more likely to find purpose in their roles.
- **Culture becomes a competitive advantage:** Teams are 5X more likely to report a healthy workplace culture.

Thank you!



Download the full report at
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