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Balancing your balcony and dance floor activities

Gain perspective in the midst of action

A self-awareness raising guide to help you balance strategic and operational management

Manager Guide and Toolkit



Introduction

This short guide will raise your awareness of your management style and will give you some pointers about where you may want to pay attention so that you **balance** your balcony and dance floor management activities.



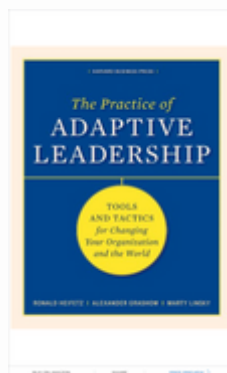
What do we mean by 'balcony' and 'dance floor'?

Management is all about balance. Balancing priorities, work and life demands, team issues and balancing the detail with the bigger picture. It's this last point that we're going to briefly explore in this workbook

We need know when we need to do the work and when we need to ensure that the work gets done.

According to Heifetz, Linsky and Grashow (Adaptive Leadership, 2009), we need to gain perspective in the midst of action. The perspective is the 'balcony' and the midst of action is the 'dance floor'.

Because managers are in constant, often relentless change, we need to ensure we move **intentionally** between the balcony big picture and the more operational dance floor.



Manager's self-audit - are you more on the balcony or the dancefloor?

Below is a way to get a quick snapshot of how you spend your days and whether they are more balcony or dance floor.

Using the graph on the left (below), take a **red** pen and mark out how much time you spend on the dance floor for each day of the week. Then take a **green** pen and mark out how much time you spend on the balcony for each day of the week.

Then go to the **coaching section** to help reflect on your audit.



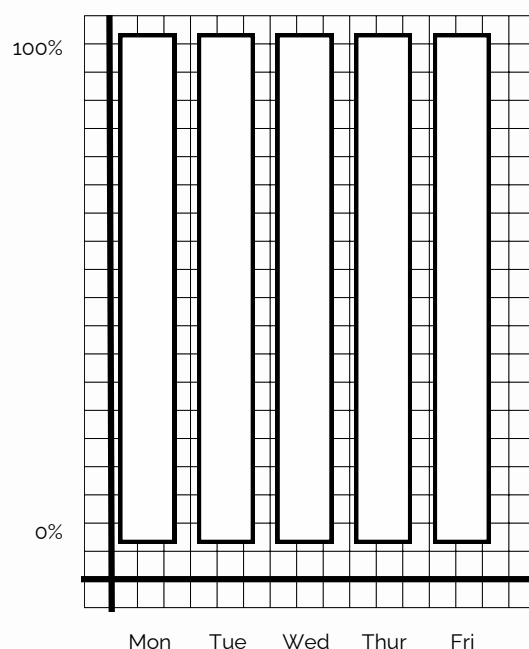
Dancefloor

Dance floor = doing lots of tasks, operational, rolling your sleeves up and doing the work with your team, handling crisis situations (fire-fighting) and solving problems that others in your team could solve, if they had the skills and training.



Balcony

Balcony= stepping out of the business, thinking about the future, looking at progress towards delivery of targets, reflecting, planning, delegat and re-prioritising. Also, networking, building connections and communicating your plans to your team and stakeholders.

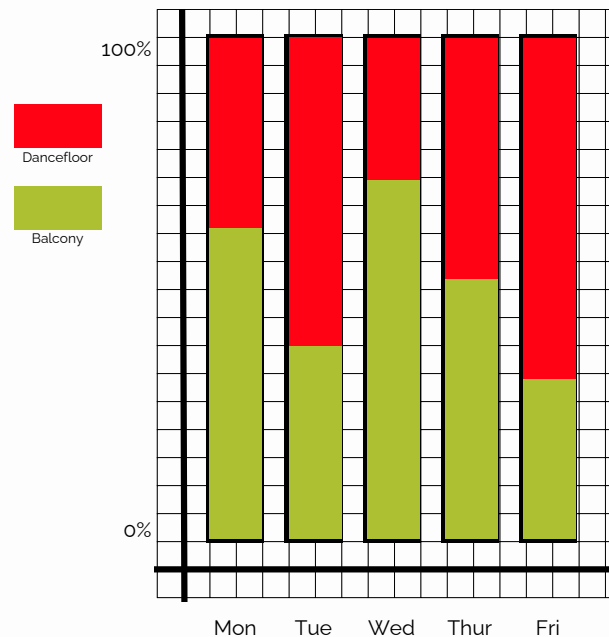


Coaching on your self-audit

On the right is an example of an audit of a manager that I coached.

Yours will obviously look different and probably changes from week to week.

Below are some coaching questions to help you make sense of your self-audit responses.



Coaching questions

Am I happy with the split between balcony and dance floor this week?

What are my graphs telling me?

What would I like the balance next week to be between balcony and dance floor?

How will I diarise and prioritise this?

Who in the team do I need to communicate/ delegate to/ discuss this with?

(Don't forget to do the self-audit next week and see if you've moved towards the balance you are aiming for.)

Ways to move between balcony and dancefloor

Though there is no right or wrong, I hope the questions above have helped you gain some clarity on what the balance between balcony and dance floor needs to be for you. Here are **10 things you can do to improve your balance**:

1. Regularly **review** when you need to move between time on dance floor versus balcony.
2. Taking a **step back** and looking at the **big picture**. For example, what is happening across all the teams and projects? Are we on track? If not, what do I need to do?
3. Keep **track of progress** on projects, goals and schedules.
4. **Bring your team** up to the balcony from time to time e.g. your weekly or fortnightly team meeting to discuss what they can do to help achieve goals, learn new skills and support each other more.
5. Keep **communicating the link** between the overall vision and key priorities of the team and the daily dance floor work of the team.
6. **Reflect on the amount and quality** of the time you spend between dance floor and balcony. being honest when answering the question: do I spend too much time on the dance floor and why?
7. Look for opportunities to **delegate** more to ensure the works get done by my team instead of you.
8. **Diarise it your time** between balcony and dance floor - use the colour coding I've given you above.
9. Ask yourself **what's working** in terms of delivery and team relationships and where are the most **successful connections** happening? And where do connections need to be created or strengthened?
10. Answer the question: what do those on the dance floor **need from me** that they are unable to see or ask for themselves?

Action planning matrix



For all your action points, put a date/ deadline for when you will commit to doing it. It would be worthwhile sharing your action plan with your line/ people manager.

Action point	Time/ deadline for doing it

Managing with Impact

As I mentioned, this activity is taken from the Managing with Impact Program. This interactive online blended learning program is delivered over 7 consecutive weeks, with each week's content offering short and engaging modules that include:

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Learning modules



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Unleash Team Excellence



Turning Your Vision Into Reality through SMART targets



Certificate of completion and close of the program



Managing a conflict-free team



Coaching for the Performance Edge



The Art of Feedback

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