Book Summary: The One-Minute Manager, by Ken Blanchard and Spencer Johnson

Learn the key points in minutes.

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This is a preview of the Shortform book summary of The One-Minute Manager by Ken Blanchard and Spencer Johnson. Read the full comprehensive summary at Shortform.

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1-Page Book Summary of The One-Minute Manager

The New One-Minute Manager is a guide that teaches managers how to get the most out of their employees. After all, the essence of management is getting results out of an organization's most important asset: its people. One-minute managers are those who recognize that productivity is a function of both quality and quantity: you need to get good results, and quickly.
They do this by empowering employees and giving them the motivation to do well on their own. One-minute managers do not tell people what to do: they help them realize on their own what they need to do.

New one-minute managers get great results from people by using three simple, but effective management techniques:

- **Goal Setting**: makes clear what is important to focus on, and provides a way to measure performance
- **Praising**: gives employees confidence that they're doing well and meeting goals
- **Redirects**: holds employees accountable for lower performance and gets the employee back on track to meeting goals

### One-Minute Goal Setting

This entails having employees set a 250-word goal for each new task. It puts managers and employees on the same page. The manager knows what the employee is supposed to achieve, while the employee knows what to do without needing constant direction and input.

**How They Work**

The manager and the employee sit down together to come up with task-specific goals, each readable in one minute or less. These are specific, measurable goals with deadlines, where success is clearly defined. The employee then emails the goals to the manager so they can always be checked for reference and follows up with regular progress reports.

**Why They Work**

These are effective because they define what constitutes success and promote accountability for achieving specific results. They work because employees are motivated when they have a clear idea of exactly what they're supposed to be doing. In an ever-changing business world, managers don't have the time to micromanage their employees. **One-minute goals empower employees to be self-starters and stewards of their own success.**

### One-Minute Praising

New one-minute managers deliver immediate and thoughtful praise when an employee does something well.

**How They Work**

The key to a one-minute praising is that it be immediate. The manager has to be on the lookout for good behavior and praise it in real time. Instead of looking to catch their employees doing something wrong, **one-minute managers make a conscious effort to catch their employees doing something right.**

Good one-minute praisings are specific and consistent, and the manager must explain why the employee's success has contributed to organizational goals. The manager then encourages the employee to do more of the same and reiterates that they are pushing for the employee to succeed.

**Why They Work**

Employees gain the confidence to achieve bigger goals later on when they receive quick praise for small accomplishments when they're just starting out. They are also able to link their positive performance with the praising, because **the praising is immediate and focused on a specific achievement.** Contrast this approach with that of managers who deliver vague and dilatory positive feedback: the employee doesn't know what they did right and therefore won't be able to replicate it. One-minute praisings are also highly motivating for employees, as they begin catching **themselves** doing things right.

### One-Minute Redirects

Managers deliver quick, specific, and consistent redirects when an employee who ought to know better makes a mistake.

**How They Work**

One-minute redirects must be linked to the defined goals above: you can't hold people accountable for not doing things they weren't told they needed to do.

Redirects happen in two parts. In the first part, the manager clearly conveys that they are disappointed in the employee because they failed to achieve a specific goal or meet a specific deadline. They also need to demonstrate to the employee why their mistake hurts the organization as a whole. This needs to immediately follow the mistake and it needs to be specific to that mistake. The goal is to help people learn...
The One-Minute Manager Summary Shortform Introduction

The book is written in the form of a narrative fable. In this story, a young man visits the new one minute manager and learns from him the three secrets of successful one-minute management. We later learn that he applies these principles in his own life and career to great effect, becoming a one-minute manager himself. In this summary, we leave out this narrative framing device to focus solely on the principles, since the plot doesn't add much beyond conversation around the principles.

Also, this is primarily a summary of The New One-Minute Manager, the updated and revised version...

The One-Minute Manager Summary Shortform Introduction: Getting Results

The New One-Minute Manager is all about how to use effective management to get the most out of the people in your organization. The people you manage are the organization's most valuable asset: they're the ones who do all of the day-to-day work that enables your organization's prosperity and success.

Thus, good managers are those who know how to motivate people to produce positive results for the organization.

Most managers fall into one of two different categories of boss.

"Tough" Managers

Managers who care only about the organization. These are autocrats who treat their employees as mere cogs in a machine: they give orders, expect them to be followed, and don't train their employees to make decisions on their own. For these bosses, you're only as good as the numbers you produce.

"Nice" Managers

Managers who only care only about people. They are overly concerned about their employees' feelings and insufficiently focused on achieving results. These managers don't hold their people accountable for poor performance. This hurts the organization and deprives employees of the opportunity to learn and grow from mistakes.

One-Minute Managers

One-minute managers care about both results and people. These are not competing aims: they are complementary.

They instill confidence in their employees, because they know that confident people produce results. Therefore, helping people feel good about themselves is the key to getting things done, both quickly and effectively. They understand that they must tap into the skills and talents of everyone in the organization to achieve results. Talent does not reside only in the executive office.

Productivity = Quality x Quantity

One-minute managers are also time-management experts. As their name would suggest, most of the techniques they use can take as little as one minute. In today's interconnected, fast-moving world, your organization needs to be adaptive. It's not
enough to just do good work: you have to produce it quickly and efficiently.** Productivity is a...

The One-Minute Manager Summary One-Minute Goals

One-minute goals are the foundation of the one-minute manager philosophy. They set the tone for all subsequent interactions between the manager and the employee, because they are the gold standard against which all of the employee's subsequent feedback (both positive and negative) will be held. Anything that is measurable, has a clear standard of success or failure, and that has a deadline, can be defined as a goal.

Setting One-Minute Goals

At the beginning of a new task or responsibility, you sit down with your employee to come up with specific goals related to that task. **Each goal and its performance standard should be defined in no more than 250 words**, making it readable in one minute or less.

**Goals should be clear and define what constitutes success or failure.** Deadlines are an important part of this definition, putting everyone on the same page about when items are due. These written performance standards allow you as the one-minute manager to determine whether or not your employee has lived up to her goals.

Once agreed on, the employee follows regularly regarding the goals:

1. She emails the goals to you after the meeting.
2. She checks her work against her goals periodically (even daily) to see if she's on the path to achieving them.
3. You as the manager also require her to submit regular reports of her progress.

How Many Goals to Have?

The 80/20 rule (also known as the Pareto Principle) is a useful tool that will help you and your team avoid setting too many goals that are hard to keep track of. The 80/20 rule stipulates that **80 percent of the results come from 20 percent of the goals**. Thus, you should rank the most important tasks to be accomplished in order of importance and design your employees' goals to only focus on the first 20 percent of items on that list. This means that most goals will be fairly large and long-term. This keeps the overall number of goals for each employee down to a manageable level, usually **three to six goals total**.

Why One-Minute Goals Work

What makes one-minute goals...

What Our Readers Say

This is the best summary of The One-Minute Manager I've ever read. I learned all the main points in just 20 minutes.

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Shortform Exercise: Setting the Objective

Think about these questions to help you set goals and manage expectations.

Have you ever struggled in a job because you were unclear about what you were supposed to be doing? Describe the situation. How do you think you could have avoided this ambiguity?
The One-Minute Manager Summary One-Minute Praisings

Once they've set goals, one-minute managers use one-minute praisings to motivate their employees. One-minute praisings are quick bursts of positive affirmation delivered by the manager to the employee when the employee has done something that helps the organization.

In many organizations, people are only given feedback when they're doing something wrong. This is demotivating and puts employees on edge. Consistently and immediately praising people for their work lets people know how they're doing and encourages them to work even harder to earn even more praise.

Preparing for One-Minute Praisings

Before you get started with one-minute praisings, you need to do a few things beforehand.

1. Tell your employees right up front that you'll be giving them immediate feedback. This sets the expectation right out of the gate and eliminates and chance of them being surprised or caught off-guard. You want them to internalize your praise; they might not do this if they're caught off-guard.

   1. Have your employees keep careful records of all their progress toward their goals and make sure they share that progress with you on a regular basis. You want to catch them doing something right. This is what truly sets the stage for one-minute praisings. Contrast this to what what so many ineffective managers do: scanning through their employees' results looking for something that they've done wrong, so they can reprimand them.

Giving One-Minute Praisings

Each one-minute praising follows a specific sequence of steps. Complete the sequence, and you'll give a complete praising that's meaningful and specific.

Connect It To a One-Minute Goal

Employees need to know that they are being evaluated based on how they've delivered on the one-minute goals they created with you. This makes the praising specific and actionable. The employee will know they're on the right track and will keep working hard on their goals because they've been motivated by your praise praise.

Be Specific

Tell your employee precisely what they did right.

Don't give...

Shortform Exercise: Praise in Action

Work through these exercises to think about how one-minute praising can improve your performance.

Think of someone you would like to praise for their work. Write down praise that's specific that relates to exactly what they did, and why you appreciated it.
You can't praise employees' good work without also holding them accountable when they don't perform up to expectations. The two balance out to keep workers on track to achieving their goals. As a one-minute manager, you need to master the one-minute redirect technique.

(In the old version of The One-Minute Manager, these were called “One-Minute Reprimands.”)

### Prepare for One-Minute Redirects

For one-minute redirects to work, you need to do a few things first.

#### Set One-Minute Goals

You won't be able to point out when an employee hasn't performed up to standards if you never set those standards in the first place. It's not fair (and it's ineffective) to reprimand someone for not doing something they didn't know they were supposed to be doing. Check that the goal is clear too. Sometimes, goals can be unclear, unrealistic, or poorly designed. That's ok. Just make sure you take responsibility for that as the manager and clarify the goal with your employee.

#### Set Expectations

As with one-minute praisings, set expectations beforehand by telling employees that you'll be giving immediate feedback. This matters even more with one-minute redirects: it's hard for anyone to hear negative feedback about their performance, no matter how constructively you deliver it as their manager. Setting expectations early minimizes the potential that they'll feel so blindsided by your criticism that they don't hear it and don't learn anything from it.

Also, only redirect people who have the experience to know better. As we've seen, people who are just starting out need encouragement and positive reinforcement. Unless it's an extreme example, you don't want the first feedback you give to a new hire to be negative.

### Giving One-Minute Redirects

Once you're sure you need to re-direct, the one-minute redirect has two distinct halves. The first half focuses on the mistake itself.

#### Begin Immediately

Begin the redirect immediately following a mistake. Again, delay only breeds resentment and confusion, particularly with negative feedback like...

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**Shortform Exercise: Reviewing the Redirects**

Work through these exercises to discover how you can use one-minute redirects in your life and career.

Think of someone in your professional or personal life whose performance needs some correction. Describe the situation.

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