

Listen to part of a radio programme where a manager is talking about dealing with staff.

Optional exercise Listen to the programme and decide which subjects she mentions. (Answers below)

Which subjects does she mention?

- a. her experience of bosses
 - b. staff attitudes towards her
 - c. staff discipline issues
 - d. discussing staff development
 - e. staff pay negotiations
 - f. the variety of the job
 - g. balancing work and home responsibilities
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Presenter: Welcome back to the second part of our programme 'How do you manage?' I have with me Jenny Buxton, who works in Ipswich. Welcome Jenny

Manager: Hi

Presenter: You work for a well-known firm of retailers, but it's not the products I wanted to talk to you about today, it's the people involved. You've been responsible for a staff of 15 for a year or so now. Tell me how you got there.

Manager: Well, I did the standard round of applications from university and this is my second employer. I enjoy the area of retailing, but as far as managing staff, that's more recent and so it's quite a new area for me with a whole new set of challenges.

Presenter: You pride yourself on being good with people. You've got quite a sociable, outgoing personality. I imagine you'd be a good person to work under.

Manager: Well, that's what I like to think. But managing people isn't all about sitting down with a cup of tea and talking over issues. Being in a position of responsibility means you can be the bringer of bad news as well as good. You have to develop a thick skin...to be unpopular, not to be liked for a decision you make.

Presenter: And I guess that can be hard at first.

Manager: Yes, but the thing you learn, if you stick at it long enough, is that people will still respect you even if they don't like what you had to say on a particular subject, or the way you acted.

Presenter: Are there other aspects of line managing that you find difficult?

Manager: One of the hardest, most awkward things is the issue of disciplinary action. The company should have a system in place for dealing with this kind of area and you have to make sure the system is understood and agreed by everyone. But ultimately, if you've taken the employee through all the procedures and he or she still doesn't shape up, some hard decisions have got to be made.

Presenter: We seem to be focussing a lot on the negative side here. What about some of the positive things?

Manager: Oh, the chance to help people reflect on things, how they are developing with the company. I like seeing people develop, change and perhaps go off on a completely new path, something that may never have occurred to them if you hadn't pointed them in that direction.

Presenter: I imagine it can be quite satisfying.

Manager: Yes. And then there's the sheer variety. You plan your work, you have to get yourself well-organised, but ultimately no two days are ever the same. There is always a new challenge, and I like that more than anything.

Answers: b,c,d,f