

15 Key Skills for a Successful Career in Lab Management

Are you considering a career in laboratory management? Here are 15 different skills that will help you be successful in your career.

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EINPresswire.com/ -- What's the ideal skill set for becoming a successful lab manager?

We take a look at the top 15 skills that you should develop to become a top-flight [laboratory](#) manager.



1. Mentoring

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Let's assume you have already obtained the requisite education credentials (typically a four-year BS in science, although some employers would prefer candidates with a Master's degree), and you have been honing your skills as a lab technician for several years.

How does one make the leap from lab technician to lab manager?

What's the next step?

For the majority of lab managers, their career break came as a result of finding a mentor within the organization where they work.

Someone who could help them grow into the management role by slowly allowing them to take on new responsibilities commensurate with their aptitude and developing skills.

If you're fortunate enough to find someone who can help you up the career ladder in this way, don't forget to pay it forward. As you advance in your position, be sure to identify a candidate working in your team for whom you can provide the same kind of mentoring skills for their career development.

2. Chief Problem Solver

From the perspective of many bench scientists and lab technicians, the role of lab manager can seem attractive for several reasons, including increased flexibility in the job, ability to control available resources, and, if we're honest, increased compensation and future career opportunities.

But, once in the role, many new lab managers realize that, in the words of President Truman, "The Buck Stops Here."

As problems arise in the laboratory, no matter how big or how small, lab managers have to come up with [practical solutions](#) quickly. This can make the role quite stressful, whether it's due to malfunctioning lab equipment, vendors who fail to deliver reagents on time, or staff members who are away due to illness or other personal matters.

When faced with obstacles such as these, lab managers need to find answers without becoming overwhelmed by stress.

That's why lab managers must develop the ability to prioritize and address more than one issue at a time (e.g. multitasking). And, as they gain experience, they'll learn to solve problems as soon as they arise, to always be prepared with a backup plan, and to keep an eye on supply inventories and schedule proactive equipment maintenance.

3. Attention To Detail.

Details matter. A lot.



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In the case of clinical testing laboratories, doctors make life or death patient medical decisions based on the results provided by the laboratory.

In scientific research, the credibility of the PI, and the institution as a whole, is on the line when data submitted for publication runs into trouble during the peer review process, whether due to lab errors or other inconsistencies that make the results impossible to replicate.

As a result, lab managers play a critical role in establishing and maintaining the highest quality control standards in an effort to increase precision and accuracy and reduce error and uncertainty in the results.

4. Safety First

Working in a laboratory science environment is not without risk.

Scientists and technicians handling corrosive agents or biological pathogens in a wet lab need to adhere to relevant safety regulations and best practices to minimize the risk of personal injury to the worker – or to the community at large.

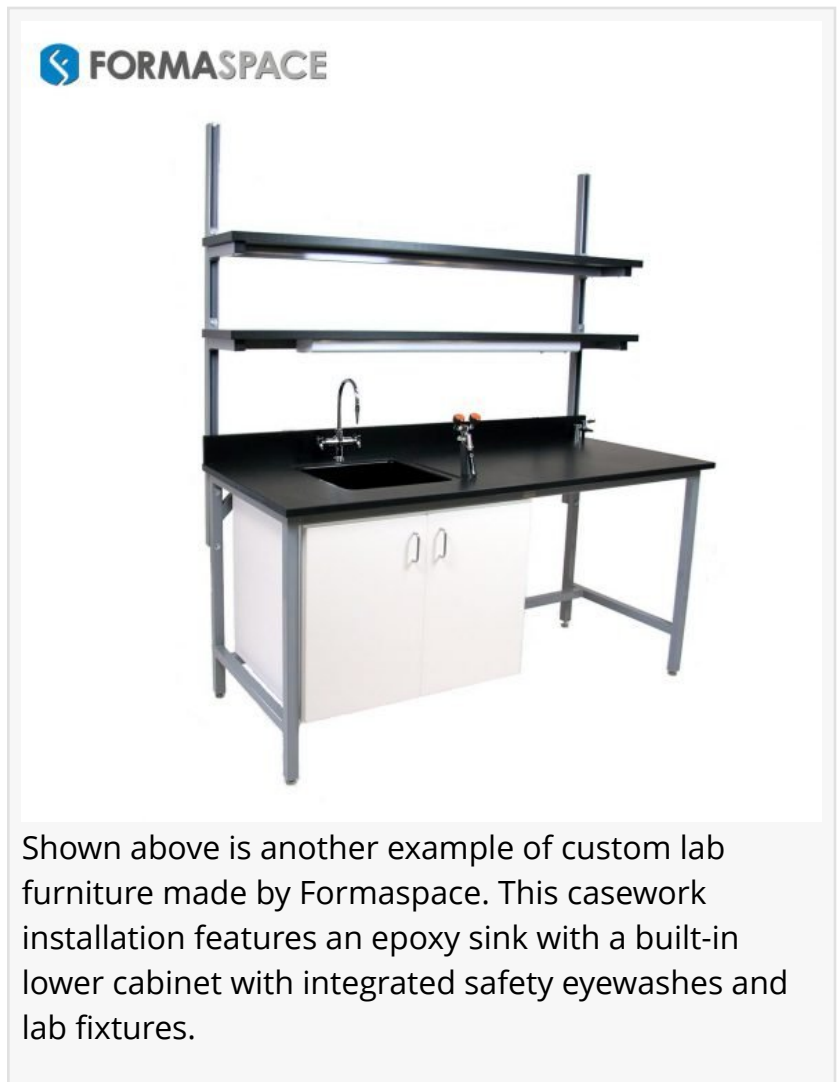
The lab manager plays a central role in ensuring that all laboratory equipment meets safety standards and that employees are well-trained and follow safety protocols.

In the larger context, it's the responsibility of the lab manager to create a safety-first culture that prioritizes safe work practices and discourages risky shortcuts.

5. Demonstrate Leadership

Many first-time managers are under the misapprehension that their job is mostly about setting the rules and enforcing them.

Fortunately, over time, most (hopefully all) new managers begin to realize that their role is quite



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different. Rather than being a pure rule enforcer, the more sophisticated managers soon realize they are also very much in service to their employees, offering them assistance when they need help to work better and more efficiently, by taking care of the problems that get in the way of accomplishing their tasks.

Taking this approach to management will also make you a more informed leader, one who knows what's happening on the ground in your organization. This will also allow you to make clear, timely decisions as needed.

6. Maintain Clear Lines Of Communication

Whether one is working in a clinical diagnostic lab within a large healthcare institution, or at a university research lab, the position of lab manager serves as an important conduit of information between bench scientists and lab technicians and the greater organization at large – including key stakeholders, ranging from upper management, human resources, facilities and operations management – as well as government regulators and funding sources.

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