

MANAGER INSIGHTS 2020

# What Managers Are Really Carrying

LEADERSHIP IN THE SMALL MOMENTS. PATTERNS FROM INSIDE THE WORK.

KEY OBSERVATION

*"These aren't skill gaps. They're relational challenges — lived in the space between people."*

*Read this study. You'll likely recognise yourself in at least three of the eight themes. That's the point.*

Patterns from 40+ manager conversations — read through the lens of 20 years inside people-centred organisations.

THE 8 RECURRING THEMES — AND WHAT HELPS

<p><b>THEME 01</b> <b>Accountability that won't stick</b></p> <p>Team members doing just enough, missing instructions, passing problems on unresolved — and cycling back to the same issues weeks later.</p> <p>WHAT HELPS <a href="#">ALIGN Bundle</a> <a href="#">Hold the Room</a></p>	<p><b>THEME 02</b> <b>Leading without feeling like a leader</b></p> <p>More sounding board than authority. Questioning real influence — especially in new, ambiguous, or matrix roles.</p> <p>WHAT HELPS <a href="#">1:1 Reset Workshop</a> <a href="#">Reset Sessions</a></p>	<p><b>THEME 03</b> <b>Managing up when the problem is above you</b></p> <p>Conflict-avoidant leaders, directives that don't make sense, senior leaders who please everyone except their own teams.</p> <p>WHAT HELPS <a href="#">Reset Sessions</a></p>	<p><b>THEME 04</b> <b>New to leadership, without a map</b></p> <p>Building the plane while flying it. No formal structures, poor role models, no 1:1 frameworks — and growing list of things no one prepared them for.</p> <p>WHAT HELPS <a href="#">1:1 Reset Workshop</a> <a href="#">ALIGN Bundle</a></p>
<p><b>THEME 05</b> <b>Team dynamics that quietly curdle</b></p> <p>One or two people creating friction across a whole team. Adults in conflict. A persistent negative vibe that's hard not to get pulled into.</p> <p>WHAT HELPS <a href="#">Hold the Room</a> <a href="#">Reset Sessions</a></p>	<p><b>THEME 06</b> <b>Burnout — in the team and in themselves</b></p> <p>Everyone burning out for different reasons. Trying to respond individually to each person while quietly depleting themselves.</p> <p>WHAT HELPS <a href="#">Load Reset</a> <a href="#">1:1 Reset Workshop</a></p>	<p><b>THEME 07</b> <b>Toxic situations they didn't create</b></p> <p>Gaslighting leaders, acquisitions gone wrong, teams refusing to support each other. Complex, ethically weighted, largely unsupported.</p> <p>WHAT HELPS <a href="#">Reset Sessions</a></p>	<p><b>THEME 08</b> <b>The loneliness of the middle</b></p> <p>Holding their teams, managing up, absorbing emotions — often completely alone. Part counsellor, part leader. Nobody asking how they're going.</p> <p>WHAT HELPS <a href="#">Reset Sessions</a> <a href="#">Stay close to the work</a></p>

**IN THEIR OWN WORDS**

*"I feel like I'm part counsellor, part leader. It's draining."*  
PEOPLE-CENTRED ORGANISATION

*"Leading my team through their challenges is one thing. Doing it without support of senior leadership is another."*  
NO PERFORMANCE/ MANAGEMENT ENVIRONMENT

*"Hardest part is getting the best from team members and getting them to own their role. It's draining me mad."*  
TEAM LEADER, MULTIPLE INDUSTRIES

*"I don't think I come across with much authority. I'm more of a person to offload to rather than a leader."*  
NEW LEADER ROLE

**WHAT THIS TELLS US**

**These aren't performance problems. They're relational ones.**

The leaders in this collection aren't failing. They're carrying a lot — often without the structures, support, or role models they needed from the start. The challenges live in the space between people: in trust, power, unspoken expectations, and conversations that never quite happen.

- Most are navigating this without peer support or senior backing
- Relational dynamics — not technical skills — are the core of what's hard
- The gap is between knowing what good leadership looks like and doing it under pressure
- You're not the only one finding this hard. Not even close.

**The Leadership Reality Check**

**FREE RESOURCE - THE LEADERSHIP REALITY CHECK**

**Discover Your Leadership Style & Strengths**

This quiz helps current leaders reflect on their leadership style, uncover their core strengths, and highlight opportunities for growth. Takes 5 minutes. Worth the pause.

[Take the Quiz →](#)

**Want the next set of patterns?**

Every month I send one short note to leaders who want to lead better in the small moments. No spam. No noise. Just the patterns I'm seeing.

[Join the list →](#)

**FROM COLLABWAY**

**There's a way through this.**

The patterns are clear. The next step doesn't have to be complicated.

START HERE

**90**  
**Minute Reset Session**  
\$450

One conversation. One pattern named. One next step. You bring the situation — a team dynamic, a conversation, a decision you're stuck on. You leave ready to act.

[Book a Reset Session](#)

hello@collabway.com.au

**ALSO AVAILABLE**

<p><b>GUIDE</b> <b>ALIGN Feedback Bundle</b></p> <p>For the feedback that actually lands — a framework and language for the conversations leaders keep avoiding.</p>	<p><b>GUIDE</b> <b>Hold the Room</b></p> <p>For the heavy conversations — a relational guide built like a coaching session for leaders who keep moving it to next week.</p>	<p><b>TOOL</b> <b>Leadership Load Reset</b></p> <p>For leaders carrying too much — identify what to stop, delegate, and protect before burnout decides for you.</p>	<p><b>WORKSHOP</b> <b>The Relational 1:1 Reset</b></p> <p>Transform 1:1s from status updates into the most powerful leadership tool a leader has.</p>
--	---	---	---