

Top Tips for Successful Lab Management



A research lab is where big discoveries are made. Like a business entity, a laboratory can be successful and achieve its goals if it's managed well. Lab-management skills, while used every day by scientists, are not directly taught to young scientists. Rather, they are learned secondhand.

Management skills are important for science careers of all types. Whether you work at the bench or away, the ability to organise your work and supervise those under you is critical.

You can manage your lab well through planning, organisation, leading and controlling.

Planning allows a lab manager to know where the lab is going. In a study by McKinsey & Company, all successful, thriving labs utilised three- to five-year plans. It's the lab manager's responsibility to ensure that all experiments are aimed toward a common goal. A five-year plan allows you to gauge the progress of your research and keep it goal-oriented. Once you know where you want your research to be, you can plan experiments much more efficiently.

Organising is also an important job for a lab manager as he or she determines who does which project and technique, manages the timelines and budgets for multiple projects, and keeps current with research in the fields. Lab meetings are a great way to help keep a group of people organised and focused on their goals. They also can be a good forum for brainstorming and troubleshooting.

Leadership is extremely important for a lab manager, as it often sets the environment and pace of the lab. Good leadership can inspire lab members toward productivity and creativity and help members work together. Also, many people emphasised that lab managers should walk the talk. In other words, do what you say. This action builds trust and respect from colleagues and fellow scientists.

Controlling a lab involves the evaluation of lab members' and projects' progress and the ability to correct problems as they arise. One of the best ways to prevent issues with employees is to be clear about standards and expectations from the start. Management experts also suggest motivating lab members through rewards rather than fear.

Remember: If you can learn science, you can learn lab management.

Top 10 lab-management tips:

1. You can learn management skills.
2. Have a five-year plan for your lab.
3. Set clear standards and expectations.
4. Optimise your management style for each lab member.
5. Listen to your lab members.
6. Walk around the lab daily.
7. Learn when to say no.
8. Be prepared when small amounts of free time become available.
9. Get to know the people at your institution who can help you.
10. Celebrate successes with your lab.

Source: [ASBMB Today](#)

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