

Messenger

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Overcoming Common Managerial Mistakes

Managers try to do everything within their power to prevent obstacles from slowing down the performance of the organization. However, many times, those same managers do common mistakes that can sabotage everything for which they had been working so hard.

We are going to begin a series on common mistakes managers make and how to avoid them at all costs.

Mistake #1 - Failing to Keep Abreast of Developments in Your Own Field

Knowing the latest developments and information pertaining to your field will keep you up-to-date. You will be one of the first to know of a new theory or methodology that may work in your organization. Not only will you become an expert in your field, but your job will always be exciting. You will also be ready at any time for a promotion by already having the knowledge to take your career to the next level.

Mistake #2 - Confining Yourself to Your Own Specialty

By limiting yourself to only your speciality, you are restricting your potential within your company. Broadening your horizons and learning about other areas in the organization will set yourself up for promotions beyond your department. Specializing yourself in your department works great at the beginning of your career; however, there is only so far that you can travel up the ladder of success before you need to learn about other areas. You should set your goals high. Don't make your end goal be department head. Once you achieve that goal, where will you go from there? Think beyond your department. Do you want to be Vice President? President? Aim for the stars!

Mistake #3 - Refusing to Seek Higher Responsibility or Take Responsibility for Your Actions

It is a natural defense mechanism to try to pass the buck to someone else when problems arise. We want to take the focus off ourselves and place it on someone--anyone--else. We have the urge to explain why it is not our fault; however, as a manager everything, whether good or bad, stops at our feet. If something goes well and you receive praise, be quick to pass down the compliments to everyone involved. If something fails, don't try to blame someone else. Your supervisors will see that for the excuse that it is and you will "lose your position of confidence and trust".



As you look for more responsibility within your company, you will also be learning how to take the initiative. When a problem arises, you will be ready to find a solution because that has been your mindset all along. You will also be prepared for executive leadership should the opportunity present itself. Looking for more responsibility and accepting responsibility for your actions will build the confidence of your subordinates and upper management in your ability to lead.

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Be willing to make decisions. That's the most important quality in a good leader. Don't fall victim to what I call the "ready-aim-aim-aim-aim syndrome."

You must be willing to fire.

***T. Boone Pickens
Financier***

The Mathis Group's Messenger

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Mistake #4 - Failure to Make Sound and Timely Decisions

Many employees dream of the day where they will reside in an executive office and make the important decisions. However, once they arrive, they freeze whenever there is a decision to be made. They are tentative to make the decision, assigns a committee to look into the situation, and tries to ensure that if the decision is wrong it will not be traced back to them. They are afraid to take a position and make a stand. In order to make confident decisions, you must have good, sound, logical judgment. Look ahead to the impact this decision will have on the organization. Always ask yourself the question, "What will happen if...?" You also have to have a strong backbone. Once you make your decision, stick with it. Guaranteed, you will have those who disagree and will let you know how much they disagree. If you feel the correct decision has been made, be confident. If it turns out to be the wrong decision, however, chalk it up to experience. Take responsibility, make corrections, and move on. Don't dwell on it and don't let others continue to bring it up.

When you make sound and timely decisions, "people will have confidence in you as a leader". They will also trust what you have to say. They will know that this is something in which you have put a lot of thought and is not a rash call. Being able to make timely decisions will also decrease frustration within the company. There are times when employees need a decision from upper management before they can proceed with their task. If it takes the manager forever to make that decision, it cuts down on the time the employee has to complete their job. This can lead to loss of time, money and resources.



Here are five questions to ask yourself before you make your decision:

1. Do I have to make this decision?
2. What do I have to decide?
3. When must I decide?
4. What else do I need to know?
5. How shall I make this decision?

Once you have determined that you are the decision maker, assemble all the facts. Know everything you can about the situation. Second, test the facts you have gathered for accuracy and relevance. Third, get rid of irrational thoughts. Take away all prejudice, preconceived ideas, and emotions. Fourth, reach a tentative solution. As you look at the problem, you will probably come up with dozens of possible solutions, however, you want the best one. Finally, put your solution into effect. While this may be the hardest step, it should actually be the easiest. All of the hard work of coming to the decision is over. Have confidence in the choice you made and put it to effect immediately.

Next month we will continue our look at common mistakes that managers make.

Adapted from *The 22 Biggest Mistakes Managers Make and How to Correct Them* by James K. Van Fleet



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