

Messenger

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Overcoming Common Managerial Mistakes, Part 3

For the past two months, we have been making a trek through common mistakes that all managers have made at some point in their career. If you haven't experienced a few of these, please read carefully so you can avoid inadvertently falling into the same trap.

Mistake #7 - Failing to Make Sure the Job is Understood, Supervised, and Accomplished

Most complaints people have against others can all boil down to some form of poor communication.



Whether it's the fault of the listener or the speaker, communication failure leads to mistakes. People respond better when they understand what is being asked of them. They will also perform at a higher level with fewer mistakes when they know exactly what is expected. When you accurately

communicate what needs to be done, you will save yourself the hassle of having to repeat orders over and over again. Keep things short, simple and concise. Encourage to whomever you are speaking to repeat what they heard. This is the easiest and quickest way to find out if what they heard is really what you said. And you will find if what is heard was what you meant.

Mistake #8 - Wasting Time on Details or Work That Belongs to Others

Micromanaging your employees slows down how quickly a project can be finished and it makes unnecessary work for you! Please realize that you

don't have to do everything personally. Find people whom you trust, delegate tasks to them, and let them do their job. Giving people authority to work without constantly looking over their shoulder will build mutual trust and respect. You may even find that you may not have the best idea on every issue. Allow others to use their imagination. You might be surprised with what they come up with.

Mistake #9 - Accepting the Minimum Instead of Going for the Maximum

Every manager has faced someone who seemed impossible to motivate. This person may be a quality worker, but never gives more than was required. Never goes the extra mile. Instead of trying to find a way to motivate this person, most managers would be tempted to label him or her as a lost cause and move on to someone with more potential. However, this is not what you should do.

First, look at yourself. Are you giving the maximum effort? If you're not, how can you expect anyone else in your department to do any differently? When you are motivated and excited about your job, chances are it'll rub off on everyone else too. Next,

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Do more than you are paid for. There are never any traffic jammers on the extra mile.

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The Mathis Group's Messenger

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don't assume that the current way of doing things is the best. Just because a task has "always been done this way" doesn't mean that there isn't a better technique out there. Encourage people to come up with a better method. Next, have each employee set goals. All companies have organizational goals, but do employees have specific goals to meet? Help them create specific, attainable goals with a doable plan of action. Have a reward system in place for when goals are met. Finally, make people proud of their job. Everyone wants to have pride in their work. When they know *you* know they've done a job well done, you'll get the maximum performance you desire.

Mistake #10 - Using Your Management Position for Personal Gain



It doesn't take long for people to realize who is using their position for personal gain. We are always hearing about business executives, politicians, and countless others who succumb to greed. When you honestly deal with people, regardless of consequence to yourself, you will gain the trust, respect, and loyalty of your employees.

Mistake #11 - Failing to Keep Your Word

When you achieve the reputation of being honest, people won't question what you say or orders you give. You will be dependable to those around you. When you say that you will do something, others will know that it will get done. Telling the truth to everyone can also save you some headaches by not having to remember what tales you have told to whom! Honesty, however, is not always the easiest attribute to do. When a mistake has been made and blame must be given, it's our natural instinct to try to get someone else to take the fall. In those instances, it goes against the grain to stand up and take responsibility. Doing just that, though, will build respect from others.

Never make a promise that you can't keep. Don't make promises that are not in your authority to give--such as a raise or promotion. Also, never use promises to get a desired result and then go back on your word. Along the same line, failing to follow through on punishments can have the same negative effects. Your employees will soon realize that they are empty threats and won't take them seriously. You will no longer be in charge--they will.

We have made it to the half way point of our journey through common managerial mistakes. I hope you are learning from the mistakes of others. Next month, we will continue the expedition.

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



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