

Messenger

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Overcoming Common Managerial Mistakes, Part 4

Being prepared is a part of life. We save for a rainy day. We make wills. We read all kinds of books and articles to help us know how to better handle situations. We try to glean information from experts on how to be better. Why should it be any different on things we should avoid? Learning from other's mistakes is just as important as learning from their successes. We are continuing our journey through common managerial mistakes.

Mistake #12 - Not Setting the Personal Example for Your People to Follow

All organizations have protocols that are expected to be upheld. Whether it's not riding on the blades of a forklift or making sure that changes are approved by the proper people, there are rules by which you should abide. When management begins thinking that the rules are for everyone else besides them, it trickles down to everyone else. Soon no one will be obeying the rules! Make sure your managers are setting a good example. Don't lower your standards. Keep them high and encourage everyone else to rise to the level. Most people imitate the behavior of those around them. Give them someone positive to emulate.

Mistake #13 - Trying to be Liked Rather than Respected

When a new manager is brought into a department, he may be tempted to become everyone's friend. This is even more a temptation if he is now the manager of the same department in which he used to work. He doesn't want everyone to think he's a different person or better than them just because

of the promotion. While it might seem like a good thing to do, being everyone's friend will make it almost impossible when it comes time to discipline. You should never be disrespectful or degrading to your employees; however, it's probably not the best idea to be buddy-buddy with them.



Also, never get in the habit of doing special favors for people in order to be liked. You may think that covering for one employee when she's late is no big deal, but employees talk. Before you know it, you'll have more and more people asking for special exceptions.

Mistake #14 - Failing to Give Cooperation to Your Employees

Most managers make the complaint that they don't get cooperation from their employees. It's possible that they're looking at things backwards. They don't see the need to give cooperation to their employees. It's difficult to ask someone to do something for you when you've never done anything for them. You'll find that when you give of yourself to your employees, they will be willing to repay the effort--often multiplied several times. Give your employees the opportunity to help make decisions. Try their suggestions. Even if it doesn't

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It's a poor rule that won't work both ways.
Frederick Douglass (1817-1895)
Abolitionist

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work, you'll show that you are willing to take a chance with them.

Mistake #15 - Failing to Ask Your Subordinates for Advice and Help

When management runs along a problem they can't solve, who do they ask? Do they bring in someone to come up with a solution? Do they start with their own people? When there is a problem, who better to ask than the people who actually deal with the situation day after day? You'll be amazed at the ideas your employees have! Asking them for help will show that you value their knowledge and experience. Now, there are times when outside help may be required, but try starting with your own people. Using their ideas will give more ownership and cooperation in trying a solution.

Mistake #16 - Failing to Develop a Sense of Responsibility in Your Subordinates



It may be difficult to find how to develop a sense of responsibility in your employees. If they don't take their job seriously, they will not be productive. They will fall behind on their tasks and others will have to pick up the slack. Teach the individual what is expected, but let her figure out a plan on how to accomplish it. By not micromanaging, you give the employee the freedom to choose how a task will get done (within the given parameters) in a way which fits her style. Trying to conform everyone to the way *you* do things will hamper their full potential. When your department knows that you trust them, you will find they require less supervision. This will free up your time for other responsibilities.

Mistake #17 - Emphasizing Rules Rather than Skill

There are some companies that don't care how much you produce as long you're putting in a full days work. There is no incentive for working harder or going above the status quo. Even if you've finished all your work for the day, you are required to stay

at the office, even if you do nothing while you're there and are just goofing off. With no enticement for working harder or being more productive, there is no reason for employees to push themselves to become better. In these instances, is it possible to establish a flex-time system? Time off is often a better motivator than more money. If people work harder and put in a few more hours at the beginning of the week, can you compensate them by giving them time off at the end of the week? You will get more out of people when they have something for which to work. If there is an incentive or bonus for getting things done quickly, but still keeping exceptional quality, you may just find that you will save money and have better quality in the long run.

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



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The Mathis Group, Inc
Dr. Keith Mathis
106 Lakeview Woods
Eureka, MO 63025
800-224-3731
636/938-5292 voice/fax
keith@themathisgroup.com
www.themathisgroup.com
www.pmexpertlive.com
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