

LEADERSHIP MISSTEPS/ MISTAKES

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Being a leader isn't easy, and not every decision you make is going to be a good one. But you can be a more effective leader if you avoid the most common missteps that bosses make. Taking the time to learn how to recognize and avoid missteps will help you to become a successful, and highly respected leader.

Here are some examples of the kind of thinking that can become a problem for you and your organization.

Failure to provide feedback: One of the most common mistakes leaders make is failing to provide constructive feedback to their staff depriving them the opportunity to improve their performance or depriving them of the enjoyment or boost of confidence in being told they are doing a good job. Providing feedback in an effective manner will avoid this mistake.

Leadership is not a popularity contest. It is easy to think that you must please everyone, all the time. But this will create issues. Of course, there is nothing wrong with being popular, but it is more important to be respected. You gain respect by being predictable, clear in your communication, setting clear boundaries and by your ability to make the necessary decisions. Even if those decisions are not popular for everyone. Most people actually accept unpopular decisions if the reason for the decision was clearly communicated. Asking your team for their input before the decision is made is another important factor in their acceptance.

Not knowing what motivates your team? Many leaders are mistaken when they assume that their team is only motivated for monetary reasons. People are motivated by many things such as a sense of achievement, extra responsibility, praise or a sense of belonging. In today's world, many people are seeking a greater work and life balance and are motivated by things like telecommuting days or flexible work hours. As a leader it is important for you to identify what motivates your team.

Model what you expect. Be a role model. Successful leaders tend to be positive role models for their teams. This means lead by example. If your employees must follow your organization's policies or rules, as a leader you should set the example by also following them. The same goes for your attitude!!! If you are positive your team will be positive. If you are negative the same negativity will come through to your team. Model the traits that you would like to see in your team members.

Assuming you are right. Often leaders believe that because they have the title and position their decision-making power means that their way is automatically the right way. Listening to input from other members of the team will not only add perspective but also engage your team's ownership and involvement in the decision process. The more time spent involving your team at the beginning of the process, the easier it will be to execute and move the team forward toward the goal. Involvement is the key to speeding up professional growth and development.

Failure to delegate. Most leaders have a busy, full schedule, so it makes sense to delegate a variety of tasks. However, if you are a leader who likes things done in a specific way you may think you are the only one who knows how to do certain tasks. It can be difficult asking others for help, but delegation to team members you trust will help build the motivation and morale of your team. Unless you delegate tasks, you will not have time to focus on other key elements you are responsible for and you will also fail to develop your people.

Blaming Others: As a leader, you have a lot of responsibility. Despite your best intentions, mistakes happen, and when they do it's important to deal with them professionally and openly. Admitting and owning up to an error is the first step and most important. Be humble enough to admit

mistakes. Learn from them and improve. People appreciate honesty and humility when a leader makes a mistake and this openness may go a long way in bringing the team back together.

As leaders one thing is for sure — we all make mistakes. Leaders should not be afraid to acknowledge their own missteps. What differentiates the winners from the losers is what we do next. Increasing your awareness of leadership missteps and how to avoid them, is crucial in becoming a better and effective leader.

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