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How To Avoid Top Leadership Mistakes

Many Human Resource professionals complain about the amount of time they spend managing feedback and complaints about ineffective leaders. The results of poor leadership include employee stress, lack of productivity, low morale and destroyed organizational value. If these ineffective leaders took heed on the “Nine Common Leadership Mistakes,” they would conversely have a positive impact on their organization.

Mistake Number One – Avoidance

Managing people requires open dialogue. The culture of the organization must foster trust and respect so every voice is heard. Sharing ideas, running projects and building business has its ups and downs in everyday work life. If the leader keeps his head down and office door closed when tensions or problems arise in a changing environment, the consequences may be conflict, frustration and staff turnover.

If the leader asks questions and engages with the staff with curiosity, seeking to understand, then potential problems or issues can be addressed before they become a full-scale revolt. Differences of opinion provide teams with innovative solutions and well-rounded recommendations. Effective leaders learn how to encourage differences while managing conflict. Effective conflict management maintains employee and group productivity.

Mistake Number Two – Micromanaging

Poor management practices and toxic cultures have been cited as top reasons employees leave. If a leader is focused on the minute detail (micro management) of their staff’s work, it is most likely because they have not embraced strategic skills so they can spend more time planning rather than being consumed with the detail work. Leaders need to focus on the organization’s goals, gap strategies and business drivers. Then they will utilize proper delegations which will in turn develop their staff’s skills and confidence.

Mistake Number Three – Delaying Decisions

Ineffective leaders procrastinate on important decisions citing their “busy schedule” as the cause for delay. Damage is done when the delayed decisions slow down progress. A strong leader recognizes that people need to be prioritized and allocates time to discuss and bring resolution to outstanding issues.

Mistake Number Four – Duplicated Efforts and Misused Resources

Leaders who don't give clear direction or feedback cause team members to go in different directions and potentially duplicate efforts. Problems and misused resources cost the company valuable time and money. Teams and individuals are more effective when leaders work with the team to establish common goals and how each person will contribute to those goals. When the shared direction is clear, practical action plans can be put in place, and individual strengths can be utilized.

Mistake Number Five – Firing Gun Approach

Ineffective leaders wait until an employee's list of discretions are an arm's length and then cites a list of concerns which causes defensiveness, blame shifting or covering up. If a leader deals with issues in a timely manner and addresses one issue at a time, there is space for modified behavior and collaboration rather than an antagonistic approach.

Mistake Number Six – Dominating Discussions

Ineffective leaders dominate discussions by talking 75% of the time or more, feeling they need to share their wisdom and "tell" staff how to do things. By planning meetings in advance and establishing key points that need to be made, leaders allow staff to become engaged and active in the process.

Mistake Number Seven - Staff Burnout

Over the short term, employees can expel energy to work extra time on a special project; however, working at this same intensity over long periods of time leads to burnout. Employee burnout is said to cause Canadian businesses millions in health claims, lost productivity and absenteeism. Successful leaders think strategically and realistically about a team's capacity to meet organizational goals, creating an environment of peak performance and renewal. Link to resources page the book ([The Power Of Full Engagement](#)).

Mistake Number Eight – Lack Of Recognition

Leaders who don't recognize people as a top resource and don't value employees' contributions experience higher turnover. When team members can't envision themselves working for a leader into the future, they often transfer or leave. It is said that "employees join an organization but quit a leader." A key employee is difficult to replace since undocumented knowledge and loyalties leave with them. The costs associated with replacing an employee is estimated at least double the employee's annual salary.

Mistake Number Nine – Denial and Defensiveness

Too many leaders see the faults and need for improvement in others rather than admit them within themselves. Well respected leaders welcome and encourage feedback from others, modeling a willingness to develop and improve.