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# Want to Fail as a Manager? Do These Three Things

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**S**o you're now a manager. Condolences. You've stepped into one of the hottest breeding grounds for workplace contempt, dissatisfaction and organizational blame.

Why would you want such a thankless role?

Sure, there are those superstar managers you've heard about who actually teach, inspire and motivate people to do and be more than they ever thought possible. And of course, being a great manager of people resources today can keep you more connected, engaged and contributing to more of your organization's success, and contributing more is the best path to promotion and career success.

But why be one of those? It's easier to fail. Here are the three best things a manager can do to make failure happen—fast.

## 1. LEAVE TOUGH QUESTIONS UNANSWERED

- *Where are we going as a business/department/team?*
- *What's coming next?*
- *What's next for me?*

The average employee has those and more questions swirling about in her head, and they take up valuable thought and conversation bandwidth. And for good reason—they're hard questions that don't have easy answers today.

In fact, as a manager, you probably have exactly the same questions. And because you're not sure yourself, you avoid saying anything for fear of being wrong. That's a great move to help you fail.

Keep silent, and let employee worry accelerate. Let the rumor mill fill the vacuum. Let people add up unrelated actions and decisions and make false and harmful conclusions.

To really fail with the best, make sure that for the few questions you do try to answer, you communicate in emails filled with formal language—the type

that would never come out of your mouth in a conversation. Don't bother with face-to-face or voice-to-voice meetings—someone might actually enjoy the live conversation and may even ask you for help.

## 2. DON'T VOICE APPRECIATION

"I think people should recognize that their paycheck is their thank you," shared a currently failing manager.

To be more like him, totally ignore the benefits that using acknowledgment as a tool can give you, like greater reinforcement of the kinds of behaviors that are significant in your organization and creating a habit of talking about what's working rather than only about what's not. Make sure you overlook all of the behavioral research that shows how appreciation increases intrinsic motivation (meaning "I'm doin' it because I'm feelin' it, not because you tell me to"), and how intrinsic motivation contributes to productivity, innovation and sales. (I mean, those things probably aren't on your performance plan, anyway.)

To really be sure to fail in this area, never mention anyone else's accomplishments, big or small, in everyday events like team meetings or project updates. Finally, you don't have to give up saying "thank you"—just make sure that when you do, you really mean "you can go now."

## 3. EXPECT IMMEDIATE TRUST

I worked with a manager who was exasperated at having to deal with the same issue over and over in his organization. "Why can't they just trust us?" he exclaimed. Why indeed!

To fail dramatically as a manager, just forget one of life's simple laws:

**Trust = Truth / Time.**

Assume you will always be able to build trust immediately with anyone, without investing in truth, consistently, tempered with patience.

Follow these rules and you'll be ready to join the growing ranks of those failing as a manager. ●



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