




10 Mistakes Managers Make *and* how to avoid them!



with Neil Ihde, MA

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Opening Comments

- Employees don't leave organizations, they leave managers
- Manager is unlike any other pre-management role
- Cross our fingers...
- Concept behind "10 Mistakes"...Stumbling
- Thinking caps required
- The job of a manager is really quite simple...

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Personal Introductions

1. Name
2. Describe what you do in 6 words
3. What about your role "feeds your soul"?

 @lifeiq #6words


 Life IQ

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Vulnerability

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- We spend many hours at work and with our colleagues
- *Vulnerability...is it safe? Can I belong here?*

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Life IQ


- Vulnerability is not a weakness...
- Uncertainty, risk, and emotional exposure are not optional...
- ...our only choice is a question of engagement.



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- Perfect and bulletproof are seductive, but they don't exist in the human experience.
- Vulnerability isn't good or bad: it's not what we call a dark emotion, nor is it always a light, positive experience.



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- Here's the crux of the struggle...
 - *I want to experience your vulnerability, but I don't want to be vulnerable*
 - *Vulnerability is courage in you and inadequacy in me.*
 - *I'm drawn to your vulnerability but repelled by mine.*



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Life IQ

1. Continue to be an individual contributor

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Life IQ

Mistake #1 – Continue to be an individual contributor

- The role of a manager is to get the work done through others.
- Managers are put in roles of leadership because of their past individual success
- The scope of the work is multiplied 10-fold

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Mistake #1 – Continue to be an individual contributor

Why is this a common mistake?

- It's worked well in the past
- Don't trust others to get it done as well as you can
- Don't know how to delegate
- Don't know who to delegate it to
- Reluctant to lower personal standard of excellence

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Mistake #1 – Continue to be an individual contributor

What are the ramifications of this mistake?

- Burnout
- Lack of employee engagement
- Learned helplessness

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Mistake #1 – Continue to be an individual contributor

How to avoid this mistake...


- Be an individual/team developer
 - Delegate and monitor their follow through as you build trust
 - If it is not up to your standards, give feedback
- Ask questions
 - Who does the work?
 - How does it get done currently?
 - Are there better ways to do the work?

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1. Continue to be an individual contributor
2. Don't take time to get to know your people


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Mistake #2 – Don't take time to get to know your people

- It's not about you! It's all about your people. It's taking time to get to know their personalities, values, motivations, and what makes them feel appreciated!
- The best way to get the work done through others is to match the individual's interests and talents with the needs of the organization.

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Mistake #2 – Don't take time to get to know your people

Why is this a common mistake?

- Doesn't feel like *work* is being accomplished
- Doesn't seem relevant
- It's their responsibility to talk to you
- Too many other things to do!!!

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Mistake #2 – Don't take time to get to know your people

What are the ramifications of this mistake?

- Lack of employee engagement
- Inefficient/ineffective use of employees time/talents/abilities

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Mistake #2 – Don't take time to get to know your people

How to avoid this mistake...


- MBWA, rounding
- Performance reviews
- Scheduled individual meetings

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1. Continue to be an individual contributor
2. Don't take time to get to know your people
3. Don't know how to handle authority


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Mistake #3 – Don't know how to handle authority

- We're nice people...employees will always act in the best interest of the organization, right?
 - Theory X, Theory Y
- En"titled" management
- Permission management


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Mistake #3 – Don't know how to handle authority

- **Leadership Styles**
 - Authoritarian (autocratic)
 - Participative (democratic)
 - Delegative (free reign)
 - Good leaders use all three styles at different times


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Mistake #3 – Don't know how to handle authority

- **Leadership Styles**
 - Authoritarian (autocratic)
 - Directive in what and how it something should be done
 - Shouldn't be overdone, but there are times when you have the information and authority to solve the problem and time is of essence


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Mistake #3 – Don't know how to handle authority

- **Leadership Styles**
 - Participative (democratic)
 - Employees have input, but you have final say
 - Let them know their role up front


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Mistake #3 – Don't know how to handle authority

- **Leadership Styles**
 - Delegative (free reign)
 - Allows employees to make decisions, but you are ultimately responsible for their choices
 - Macromanagement
 - Works well when there is history and trust in place


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Mistake #3 – Don't know how to handle authority

- **Leadership Styles**
 - A good leader uses all three styles depending on the situation
 - Authoritarian – new ee just learning the job
 - Participative – team knows role and job, leader knows problem, but doesn't have all the info
 - Delegative – ee's know more about the job than you


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Mistake #3 – Don't know how to handle authority

- **Leadership Styles**
 - Factors that influence the style to be used:
 - How much time is available
 - How much trust and respect is in place
 - Who has the information
 - How competent are the employees
 - Internal conflicts
 - Stress levels
 - Type of task

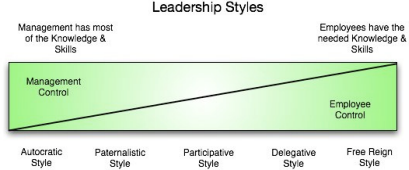
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Mistake #3 – Don't know how to handle authority

- **Leadership Styles**
 - Power Difference Index

Leadership Styles



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Mistake #3 – Don't know how to handle authority


- **Leadership Styles**
 - Authoritarian (autocratic)
 - Participative (democratic)
 - Delegative (free reign)

Small group

- *Discuss the situations where the three leadership styles are used.*
- *Which style feels the most natural to you?*



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Mistake #3 – Don't know how to handle authority

Why is this a common mistake?

- Different situations call for different levels of authority
- Different employees need different levels of authority
- If you lack self-confidence, it is difficult to lead others
- “Art” of management takes time and experience

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Mistake #3 – Don't know how to handle authority

What are the ramifications of this mistake?

- Lose trust and respect of employees
- Employees don't feel that they are involved in decisions
- Employees don't understand how decisions are made
- Lack of employee engagement

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Mistake #3 – Don't know how to handle authority

How to avoid this mistake...


- Communicate rationale behind decisions and decision-making process
- Communicate that there will be times that decisions need to be made that may not involve their input
- Involve employees in on appropriate decisions
- Build trust in their skills and delegate

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1. Continue to be an individual contributor
2. Don't take time to get to know your people
3. Don't know how to handle authority
4. Lack self-awareness

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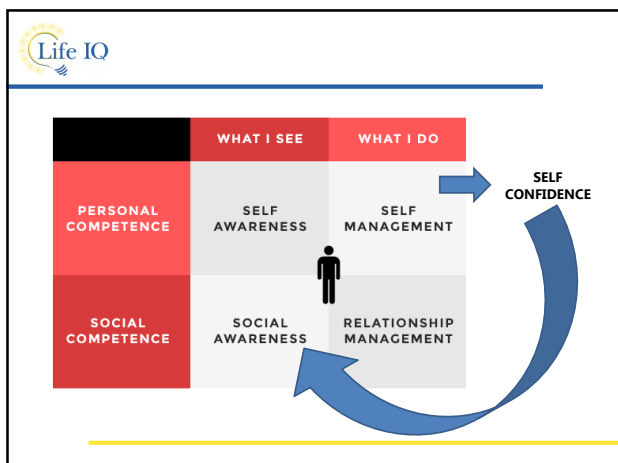


Mistake #4 – Lack self-awareness


- One of our life tasks is to figure out what we excel at and what doesn't come as naturally
- One question...
- *Admit your errors before someone else exaggerates them.* – Andrew V. Mason
- Authenticity rules! (Domino's commercials)
- **Self-awareness worksheet**
 - *Small group discussion*



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Mistake #4 – Lack self-awareness

Why is this a common mistake?

- A surprisingly large percentage of people cannot speak to their strengths and weaknesses
- Don't ask ourselves tough questions
- Lack self-confidence
- We are lousy self-evaluators

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Mistake #4 – Lack self-awareness

What are the ramifications of this mistake?

- Ineffective leadership
- Lack of respect from employees
- Lack of a teachable spirit
- Employees may resist feedback from you
- You will unconsciously favor those who are similar to you and may have an unconscious bias to those who are different than you

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Mistake #4 – Lack self-awareness

How to avoid this mistake...

- Personality tests
 - Myers-Briggs
- Introspective questions
- Mentors
- 360 Feedback

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Life IQ

1. Continue to be an individual contributor
2. Don't take time to get to know your people
3. Don't know how to handle authority
4. Lack self-awareness
5. Like to be liked

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Life IQ

Mistake #5 – Like to be liked

- A harsh management reality is that you will not be liked by everyone all of time.
- For those who seek approval or lack confidence in themselves, this is a huge stumbling block
- You will be criticized whether it is warranted or not
- You cannot take everything personally. Period.
- If you are looking to get your esteem needs met through the affirmation of your employees, you are in the wrong field

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Anyone else check their face as they spit?

This guy sucks!

Whatever you say, I know this guy is a S-E-R

The sharp of his nose is disturbing and his job is valid as a tumor

Either on high or the way you're talking is hallucinating

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Life IQ

Mistake #5 – Like to be liked

- Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs – Need to make sure that belonging and love needs are not met through employees

Self-actualization desire to become the most that one can be
Esteem respect, self-esteem, status, recognition, strength, freedom
Love and belonging friendship, intimacy, family, sense of connection
Safety needs personal security, employment, resources, health, property
Physiological needs air, water, food, shelter, sleep, clothing, reproduction

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Mistake #5 – Like to be liked

Why is this a common mistake?

- Lack self-confidence
- Lack resiliency
- Management goals and employee goals sometimes are not the same
- The role requires that you make tough, unpopular decisions
- Role requires you side with the organization

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Mistake #5 – Like to be liked

What are the ramifications of this mistake?

- Compromise organizations goals
- Do not make objective decisions
- Scared to make unpopular decisions (Michael Scott, *The Office*)

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Mistake #5 – Like to be liked

How to avoid this mistake...


- Examine where you get your belonging and love needs met – ideally outside the office, or with trusted mentors
- Recognize that decisions need to be based on organizational needs and not individual needs
- Mentors

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3. Don't know how to handle authority
4. Lack self-awareness
5. Like to be liked
6. Lack of follow-through


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Mistake #6 – Lack of follow-through

- One of the ways your employees will build trust with you is through your follow-through
- You need to think through each response
- If your “yes” does not bring follow-through, it will ruin your credibility
- Your employees don't want excuses, they want results – you don't get credit for good intentions
- Another way to build trust...ask for help

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Mistake #6 – Lack of follow-through

Why is this a common mistake?

- It's easier to say “yes” than “no”
- The requests seem “doable” at the time, but circumstances change
- Too many things to keep track of
- Not hardwired as a detailed, “completer-finisher”
- Lack of infrastructure

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Mistake #6 – Lack of follow-through

What are the ramifications of this mistake?

- Lack of trust
- Lack of credibility
- Lack of engagement
- Poor morale
- Resistance to being held accountable

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Life IQ

Mistake #6 – Lack of follow-through

How to avoid this mistake...

- Be predictable
- Be accountable
- Admit mistakes
- Organization infrastructure
 - **Example:** hallway conversations – please send email
 - Reminders in calendar
 - Delegate

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Life IQ

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3. Don't know how to handle authority
4. Lack self-awareness
5. Like to be liked
6. Lack of follow-through
7. Tolerance of problems and mediocrity

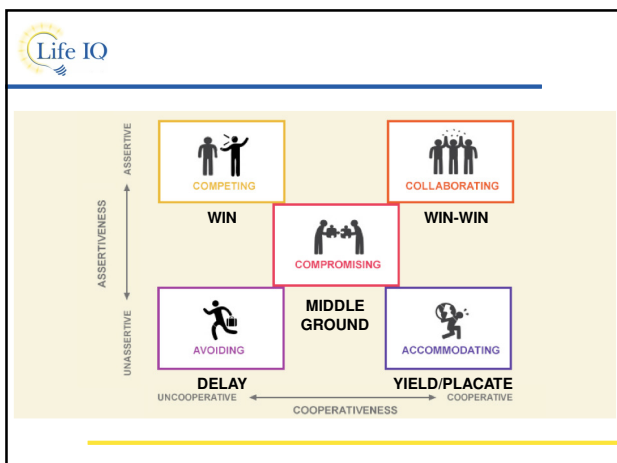
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Mistake #7 – Tolerance of problems and mediocrity

- Managers avoid tough conversations
- May naively believe that employees will always act in the best interests of the company
- “Who me?”
- 80/20 rule

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Mistake #7 – Tolerance of problems and mediocrity

Why is this a common mistake?

- Conflict is uncomfortable
- Avoid confronting because it may make the situation worse

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Mistake #7 – Tolerance of problems and mediocrity

What are the ramifications of this mistake?

- Loss of engagement of top performers
 - “If mediocrity is tolerated, why am I trying so hard?”
- Culture killer
- Lack of credibility
- Poor morale
- Work around poor performers – system dynamics
- Your staff is a reflection of you...ineffective

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Mistake #7 – Tolerance of problems and mediocrity

How to avoid this mistake...


- Address issues early
- Frequent individual meetings
- Crucial conversations
- Clear expectations
- Get rid of poor performers

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3. Don't know how to handle authority
4. Lack self-awareness
5. Like to be liked
6. Lack of follow-through
7. Tolerance of problems and mediocrity
8. Too ambitious too soon


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Mistake #8 – Too ambitious too soon

- New mgrs want to impress and prove themselves right away
- Unwittingly set precedents they are unable to maintain

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Mistake #8 – Too ambitious too soon

Why is this a common mistake?

- Eager beavers
- Don't protect schedules – a lot of work isn't the right work
 - Some meetings
 - Committees
 - Side projects
- Like to say “yes”
- Naïve about what can realistically get done

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Mistake #8 – Too ambitious too soon

What are the ramifications of this mistake?

- Take on too much work and deliverables suffer
- Become overwhelmed
- Lose confidence
- Overcommit staff and resources
- Lose credibility with team

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Mistake #8 – Too ambitious too soon

How to avoid this mistake...


- Schedule yourself at 75% capacity
- Set a schedule and stick to it
 - *Workweek creep*
- Give yourself **two years**
- Identify and deliver core work before agreeing to additional “fringe” work
 - *What is the mission of your team?*
- Managing is a marathon not a sprint...set a realistic pace

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3. Don't know how to handle authority
4. Lack self-awareness
5. Like to be liked
6. Lack of follow-through
7. Tolerance of problems and mediocrity
8. Reactive instead of proactive
9. Don't understand the sociological realities of the role


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Mistake #9 – Don't understand the sociological realities of the role

- Actions speak louder than words
- You are on a stage and they are watching you
- They will gauge their work ethic by your work ethic
- They will constantly scrutinize the value and effectiveness of you and your role
- Friends?

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Mistake #9 – Don't understand the sociological realities of the role

Why is this a common mistake?

- You forget that you are now one of “them”
- Hard to keep in mind that everything you do is scrutinized

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Mistake #9 – Don't understand the sociological realities of the role

What are the ramifications of this mistake?

- May attempt to step in and out of role – take off your management cap
- Speaking “off the record” may come back to haunt you
- Loss of employees trust and respect
- Negative inferences

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Mistake #9 – Don't understand the sociological realities of the role

How to avoid this mistake...

- Everything is “on the record”
 - Think through how you want to answer questions
 - Less is more – the longer you talk, the better the chances you'll misspeak
 - Don't necessarily answer the question – communicate the info you want communicated
- Avoid editorializing
- Be visible
- Be consistent

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Mistake #9 – Don't understand the sociological realities of the role

How to avoid this mistake...


- No shortcuts
- Be careful what you put in writing
- Keep your emotions in check
- Maintain maneuverability

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8. Reactive instead of proactive
9. Don't understand the sociological realities of the role
10. Don't connect with key peers and next-level leaders


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Mistake #10 – Don't connect with key peers and next level leaders

- To get things done, you need to develop relationships with peers and next level leaders
- Identify who is key to your success and develop a working relationship
- Manage up

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Mistake #10 – Don't connect with key peers and next level leaders

Why is this a common mistake?

- Too wrapped up in the day-to-day
- May be at different locations – hard to connect with them

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Mistake #10 – Don't connect with key peers and next level leaders

What are the ramifications of this mistake?

- Unable to move forward with initiatives because of lack of buy-in from key stakeholders
- Aren't recognized for abilities and input
- Aren't considered for promotions

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Mistake #10 – Don't connect with key peers and next level leaders

How to avoid this mistake...

- Set up meetings
 - Standing meetings, even if it is just once a quarter
- Find a mentor – seek advice
- Be teachable

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