

You Are Killing Us

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Leaders who don't listen will eventually be surrounded by people who have nothing to say.

There is no doubt that employers are expecting more than ever from their employees. Guess what employers, so are employees. The biggest thing they are expecting is "leadership," not just management and a title. A vision and true direction need to be communicated. Employees will forgive you for a few bad decision, but if you start to rack up, you need pack up. There is a learning curve for everything, but trial by fire is not the road to take when in a leadership position. Often when leaders or "attempted leaders" make bad decisions that were 100% avoidable. They simply are not in tune with their employees or listening. I have observed this and been in the middle of this numerous times. Often pride gets in the way, and leaders (failed leaders)

disregard what advice is being given to them. The crazy thing is they still expect a loyal following. This could be lesson 1: listen and let your actions match what you hear as a leader.

Unfortunately, bad decision making among leaders often becomes a pattern. This pattern will certainly lead to a lack of staff confidence, decreased morale and momentum, and decreased initiative from employees. Sure, you can bark orders and lean to the side of fear and coercion to get your results, but don't expect to have top performers as employees. Lesson 1- not listening and bad decision making will provide you with an increase in turnover over time.

Lesson 2 involves lip service. Keep your word. All too often leaders simply appease employees. This could be telling them they will get a bonus or even an opportunity. If you say it, you better follow through, or you again will be looking for staff. Employees remember when things are promised or said, and it is your job as the employer or leader to follow through. If you do not, again you destroy staff confidence in your abilities.

Another big failure point is one that I frequently see in and out of healthcare. Leaders put way too much stock in their past experience. We have all seen and know the leader that brags about their past accomplishments, track records and degrees. However, all these achievements do not mean that they fit into your current role and position and company. This is a fast track pitfall that is again led by pride. So, for Lesson 3- admit when you may not know and seek input from others. This is difficult because leadership roles are full of egos and corporate pissing contests. The most effective leaders can easily admit when they make mistakes and take ownership. This is one of the most important keys, but in order to do it you must go back to Lesson 1 and listen.

Listening requires being present. All too often companies will begin a downward spiral from something as simple as not being present. I am not talking about physically; I am talking about pulse. Too many employers don't know the pulse of their employees. Things go well, and employees are performing, then the mistake happens. Ineffective leaders will fall into the trap that it is now the norm and the expectation is sustainable. They go and do other things while widening the connection gap between those who have made it happen. This is where lip service, mentioned above, becomes a temporary bridge that is not stable or sustainable.

The final Lesson we will call Lesson 5- the Free PASS. This is all too often common and killing organizations and departments. A leader will often expect employees to do things a certain way, produce and stick to timelines, respond to emails, use certain tools, and send certain notifications. There is nothing wrong with this until you the leader don't participate and do it. I hate to break it to you, but you are not above doing it too. Leaders, especially in small companies, often choke it out with processes and formalities. When the staff sees the leader not doing it, your credibility is shot. Stop making it so difficult as a leader; the core components are not that difficult. It is your consistency and follow through that will define your success or failure.

Making it and making it last are very different.