

the 78 biggest mistakes new managers make

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW
TO AVOID CAREER SUICIDE

Mistake 49 – Play Politics

It would be best if your boss or co-workers would never have the chance to “get” you. Many times bad behavior toward you has nothing to do with you personally. The workplace setting brings out the worst in people; especially during economic slow-downs. Human nature will do everything to deflect negativity and turn it toward someone else.

But, participating in proactive politics is a way of navigating the political waters positively. Ward off gossip and backstabbing in the first place by:

- Asking respected managers for guidance – If your organization has a mentoring program, take advantage of it early in your tenure. This will be the person you can go to figure out the way business decisions are made and who has influence.
- Be strategic in offering help – Spread goodwill in your department by staying late to help a team member meet a deadline. Go out of your way to sincerely thank someone for any kindness they have shown toward you.
- Create visibility with important projects – Let everyone know exactly what work you completed. It can be as simple as emailing key stakeholders a short project summary and asking for input. You want to avoid having someone else take the credit for your efforts.

TIPS:

- Build a relationship with someone well-liked and well-thought of in the company. Periodically ask for their advice. They are more likely to defend you when you need it most if you are not an unknown employee.
- If you suspect someone of sabotaging your career, ask yourself: Am I being left out of the loop? Are resources being taken away? Who is behind this?
- Receive a complimentary copy of the e-book, *Team Leadership Essentials: The Art of Office Politics* by visiting www.78ManagerMistakes.com. Click on FREE RESOURCES tab and download *Office Politics* ebook.

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Mistake 66 – Don't Involve Staff Regularly

An easy way to get everyone involved is to have a brainstorming session. Have you been doing them correctly? Let's find out...

Brainstorming Ground Rules:

- Record every idea exactly as it was stated. Don't evaluate ideas.
- Don't discuss ideas until the clarifying step (See Step 5 below).
- Wild ideas are encouraged. Use your imagination.
- Build on other's ideas (combine, expand, piggyback).
- Go for quantity – more is better. Repetition is okay here.
- Don't quit too soon. When ideas start to slow down, ask, "What else?"

Purpose: To generate lots of ideas in a short period of time; encourage creativity.

Time Needed: 10 - 30 minutes (depending on group size; number of ideas)

Brainstorming Steps:

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| Step 1 | Clarify the challenge OR ask a key question. Write it on a flipchart or whiteboard. |
| Step 2 | Review / establish ground rules – see above. |
| Step 3 | Have participants shout out ideas and capture them on a flipchart. Accept all ideas. Write the idea exactly the way it was spoken. (It may be helpful to have two flipcharts and two scribes to capture all the ideas.) |
| Step 4 | Build on ideas. Keep the creative process going.
AFTER THE LIST HAS BEEN GENERATED: |
| Step 5 | Clarify each idea – seek more information. Now is the time for discussion! |
| Step 6 | Eliminate duplicate ideas – do not combine at this point. |
| Step 7 | Now start making some decisions around the remaining ideas: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Eliminate any unrealistic ideas (cannot be achieved due to lack of time, funding, or management buy-in)• Prioritize remaining ideas (team decides on priority criteria – for example, easiest to complete in next 30 days) |

TIPS:

- Set a goal such as 75 ideas. Often the best ideas are the last ones.
- Rotate the role of scribe so everyone is involved in the process.