



Many experienced managers have gained their wisdom through hard work and self-evaluation. They have typically experienced frustration along the way using approaches that appeared to make good sense at the time. With experience, it is easy to see the mistakes that could be avoided. Here are a few common management mistakes it would be wise to avoid:

Training someone to do something they can already do

Think about it. How much of your time is spent teaching people something they already know? If a problem is not caused by a lack of skill - in other words, if the person could do it if they really wanted to - then training the person in order to fix the problem is a waste of time.

Most of the time it's likely that the problem won't be caused by a genuine lack of skill. People will usually be able to do what's expected of them except, of course, people who are new to their jobs or are doing a task that is new to them. Ask yourself, "*Could he or she do it if they really wanted to (or if their lives depended on it)?*" Training is an invaluable activity when it is focused on building skills and knowledge that is really needed.

Treating everyone exactly the same

There is nothing as unequal as the equal treatment of unequals. We are all individuals and deserve to be treated as such. Of course we should be held accountable to the same standards, but applying a blanket-management approach is a quick way to lose trust, credibility and motivation. The skilled manager will always change style and approach depending upon the individual they are dealing with, the current task under discussion, and the specific circumstances.

Feeling the need to maintain credibility by always providing the answers to questions

An important role of any manager is to build the awareness, responsibility and self-esteem of their people. Always telling people what to do withholds responsibility and denies awareness. Involving and engaging individuals by expanding their thinking and letting them take the initiative to provide ideas and solutions, will not only enhance their self-esteem but also ensure their commitment and buy-in. You aren't helping by always telling them what to do, when to do it, and how to do it.

Treating others as you would like to be treated instead of treating others as THEY would like to be treated

The real intention of, 'Do unto others', is to consider how **they** want to be treated. What is their learning style? How do they prefer to take in information? It is most likely that they have different preferences to you and most of the time this can be accommodated.

Avoiding confrontation and difficult conversations

The quicker an issue or behaviour is addressed, the easier it is to have the conversation. Not having the conversation can be perceived as condoning the behaviour. These discussions require certain skills. It is easy to deliver a difficult message and leave the person feeling de-motivated, but it takes skill, gravitas, and diplomacy to deliver it whilst maintaining self-esteem and motivation. Best to get skilled up fast! The problem won't go away by ignoring it.

Assuming that your values are common-sense and expecting the same from others

We tend to judge people when they don't behave the way we would behave. You hear someone say, "*He has no manners!*" It is most likely that he does have manners; they are just different to the way you would do things.

Assuming that everyone's big motivator is money

Of course money is very important to most people but it is what the money represents to that person, at that particular time, that is the true motivator. Is it to provide an education for their children? To fund a holiday in the Bahamas? To have their teeth whitened? Make a point of knowing as much as possible about your people, their values, their preferences, their goals, and their dreams.

Assuming that the only consequences that affect behaviour, are disciplinary in nature

Too many managers use the threat of disciplinary procedures to motivate their team. And even more often, managers fail to focus on providing **positive** consequences. A consequence is *an act or instance of following something as an effect, result, or outcome*. Feedback is a consequence and so are promotion, praise, and attention. Whether it be positive or negative, a consequence can only be effective if it is felt by the person you are directing it to. **So make it matter to them.** Once again, we are all different and moved or motivated in different ways.

Assuming that what motivates you will also motivate others

Take the word, 'motivation' and place an 'e' after the 'v' and a 'c' after the 'a'. This gives you two words, 'motive' and 'action'. *Motivation means a Motive for Action.* We all have different motives. Some people are motivated by fame or recognition, some by security, some by being in control, etc. What motivates one person may have no significant appeal for others. It is very important to know your people well in order to influence them or to *move* them to action.

Assuming expectations are crystal clear

Most of the time we assume that expectations are crystal clear because it seems to be common sense. Frank Zappa said, *"There is no such thing as common sense, good sense is rare!"* Just because it is crystal clear to you doesn't mean it is to anyone else. The easiest way to check if your expectations are clear is to ask, *"If someone else asked that person what I expected them to do in a certain situation, what would they say? What would their actual words be?"*

Trying to be liked instead of gaining respect

Most managers befriend their people and try hard to be liked. People will like you when they respect you, when they are getting value out of your relationship, not just enjoyment.

Focusing mostly on tasks or mostly on people, instead of maintaining a balance

It's important to keep the balance. Too often managers focus mostly on one particular part of the job. For example, if the focus is just on the task, then the people probably won't feel valued and will typically do just enough to stay out of trouble. An equal focus needs to be placed on the task, the individual, and the team.

Engagement Skills for Managers & Team Leaders
3 Day Workshop

Engage Motive and Excel

An interactive workshop for managers and team leaders to learn how to develop the practical skills to systematically engage their direct reports with the challenge of change and improved collaboration with colleagues and partner organisations.

Call 01491 845504 or visit www.dakacademy.com for full course details.