



The 7 Deadly Mistakes Managers Make



MANAGERS

Executing business operations is the function of the manager. Working effectively with staff is the potent engine of production.

Adopting the changes listed below will improve effectiveness, efficiency and profit.

And an added benefit, you will have more satisfaction from your daily work.

This is not some random list. It is information I have gathered over many years of working with small and large businesses who have struggled to find, hire, and onboard the right people for the job.

The 7 most common mistakes made by managers are:

1. Hiring the wrong person.
2. No onboarding plan and execution.
3. Not communicating expectations.
4. No timely performance appraisals.
5. Not delegating work but doing it themselves.
6. Lack of professional development opportunities.
7. Failure to deal with low performers.

Included at the end is my [Checklist for Managers Striving for Your Highest and Best](#). This list provides 'to the point strategies' for you to consider.

1. Hiring the Wrong Person

I hear this comment a lot when working with my clients, ***“The person that I thought I was hiring was not the person that showed up”***. It is a common challenge experienced when a faulty hiring process is used.

The mis-hired person then quits or is let go. According to *“The Hiring Compass”*, the average cost of this can be as high as 4 times their annual salary. All of that waste could have been avoided with a well-designed hiring process.



The Biases That Interfere

Let's look at the three biases used in many hiring processes that lead to selecting ineffective hires. They are education, experience and gut feeling.

First, formal education. This is highly valued in the selection process so much so that it casts a negative shadow on the applicants that lack the educational level set for the job. It is assumed that the degreed applicant is more likely to perform better, which isn't always true.

Degrees are so highly valued that many job advertisements list them as a prerequisite for applying. This concept is 20 years out of date and hurts companies and organizations striving for an A or B player in every position.

I know a young man that didn't have the chance to go to college even though he wanted to. He has risen to the number two person in a small company and he makes a 6-figure income. He was the right person for that company. If the company would have insisted that he have a formal degree, they would not have discovered their most valuable employee.

I have consulted for small business owners for over thirty years and about half did not have degrees but were highly successful.

Next we look at their experience. If they have experience in a similar job, it is often looked at as a key indicator of position potential. Job success has a lot to do with their satisfaction in doing what they are good at and being effective. If the culture from the old company is the similar to the new company, there is a good chance for success. If not, then they won't be a good fit.

Creating a job benchmark that includes measuring culture serves as a road map to determining the viability of a good match. Comparing the applicant's motivator and temperament assessment scores to the same categories on the job benchmark reveals who the best candidates are, regardless of experience.

The third bias, "They just feel like a good fit". This is often the driving factor behind a hiring decision. Sometimes the manager or other person on the selection team has strong feelings and can convince the rest of the selection committee. There are a couple of reasons for the "gut feeling" response.

Subconsciously or consciously they are being reminded of a person they like or admire. Or the applicant may have a friend on the selection committee that is rooting for them and uses the gut feeling approach. Maybe they have similar associations with a University or other organization. For sure you want to feel good about the person being selected, but when it is the primary driver, it isn't valuable in the selection process.

What makes an employee successful at their job? Assuming they have the technical skills, the major issue is their core motivators or what they derive satisfaction from. If they are performing work that feeds their core motivators, they will engage in the work and freely donate extra effort. When they can express themselves in their natural temperament style, they will do even better.

Use *Subjective & Objective* information to avoid a mis-hire and save money.

In order to hire the right person, it is imperative that subjective information include resumes, interviews and calling their references.

Also vitally important is the objective information which is more factual. This includes a job benchmark plus hiring assessments that create a comparison to the job benchmark.

The most qualified candidates emerge when adding a benchmark and corresponding hiring assessments to the resume/interview/reference process.

If subjective and objective data is used in the selection process, your chances for ending up with a mis-hire are drastically reduced. Not doing so ends up in a mis-hire with a potential cost of 4 times their annual salary. That translates to \$200,000 dollars lost for a \$50,000 salary.

2. No On-Boarding Plan and Execution



When you go on a cruise, the ship events coordinator has a specific plan to help you enjoy your vacation to the fullest. The staff is trained in executing the plan and there is a lot of attention given to the passengers.

Onboarding a new staff member is similar. Some companies have elaborate plans that look good on paper but don't have the positive intended effect.

For example, the new director of a nursing home showed me her onboarding plan for the first month. It was all done in writing with no contact with a real person. The new hire was to answer about 20 questions about how she was adapting to her new job at the thirty-day mark.

That newly hired manager lamented, "it would be nice if someone would call me and ask me how I am doing."

The purpose of an onboarding plan is to help employees become effective, enjoy the work, integrate better with the staff, the customers and the vendors. The benefit of an on-boarding plan is molding a staff member for success and retaining them longer.

Onboarding into Your Business Culture

A simple definition of business culture is, "The way you do business and why". Many firms believe that *culture initiation* is something that happens naturally. But it doesn't. It is necessary to have formal training on culture. That which is reinforced by management is believed.

Mastering the culture norms, interpersonal development with the team, career support and company strategy are the pillars of an effective onboarding system. It will take 6 months to a year to cultivate the new executive so that they become a major contributor.

If you are using selection instruments and good behavioral interviewing, you will have selected a person that broadly fits the culture. The results of their assessment report will illuminate the next steps for their personal and professional development.

Interpersonal Network Development

To succeed in the work environment, new staff need to forge strong connections with others. In addition to work development, they learn about the community/city they live in from peers and its potential for them. They feel supported.

Have the new person interview several key players. Take into consideration their behavioral needs, create the questions for them to ask, help them make the appointments and check in as to how it is going with the interviews. Alert the people that will be interviewed of the plan and seek their voluntary cooperation. With an executive, use less constraints than you would with a frontline person. If all you do is this one exercise, the new person will integrate and be a contributor quicker.

Early career support appeals to the new hire's self-interest as it answers "what's in it for me?" Show them their potential and what is expected of them to achieve their career goals. As they mentally calculate their career plans, they are also planning on staying with the company for a long time. That is pure profit to the bottom line. New staff should highlight key points in their copy of the Employee Manual and thoroughly understand company rules.

Strategy Immersion

This helps the new hire feel and know they can contribute to the ongoing success of the team. Their comments matter. I asked the manager of a group of welders what made his team outperform all others. He said, "I tell new hires that they will get the hang of this job, just keep working at it". "I get to know them personally and remember things about their family. Most importantly, I tell them if you see a way we can improve, tell me. If we haven't already tried your suggestion, we will. And if it works we will adopt it." In essence, he was encouraging his new people and showing them that he cared about them personally and valued their intelligence.

Not too long ago I ran across an advertisement for a job in Japan. One of the requirements was to provide 78 ways that the company could improve each year. They wanted all of their employees to become part of their evolving strategy for the growth and prosperity of the company.

When you ask your staff for their ideas, ways we can make improvements, it compliments them as a person and cements their value in the team effort. So I challenge you to do this and you will be amazed at the insights they have.

3. Not Communicating Expectations



Communicating work and behavior expectations is what staff desire. Modeling what you expect is what guides their actions. Create sound bites for them to remember such as, "Our goal is to treat our customers like our mothers".

This provides **a framework of high expectation.**

Expecting others to perform well demonstrates your belief in them. Staff will accept your style at different rates, some quickly and others take a while. Here are some suggestions for communicating expectations.

Communicate your expectations clearly. Project assignments requires a meeting of the minds. Put expectations in writing, meet in person to review the expectations and negotiate the details. If no verbal review is done, there isn't a meeting of the minds.

Communicate expectations to all members of the group involved in the project. Every member needs to know what the other staff are doing, deadlines, shipment dates and all that is required to make the project come to fruition.

Communicate all change of plans (expectations) as soon as possible. When a change of plans is not communicated to those involved, the 'communication loop' is left open. Contact all involved and get input on how the change affects them. This 'closes the communication loop'. Not closing the communication loop on change of plans always leads to disruption and waste of time.

Celebrate success with hoopla, fanfare, food, gifts and recognition.

Complement their work, not them. Say, "Your work provided us with the data that we needed to get the project accomplished on time".

Communicate what went wrong and how to fix it. Create a **no-blame** work environment. Mistakes will happen, and we will fix them without blame.

4. No Timely Performance Appraisals



The most common complaint I hear as a consultant working to repair communication breakdowns is, “They promised a performance appraisal in 90 days, and it is 9 months later and no appraisal.”

Managers know that a pay raise will be expected and so they avoid the sit down appraisal. If your on-boarding process is being followed, they will know the dates for their appraisal and the next steps and conditions for an increase in pay. **If a promise is made for a formal performance appraisal, it must be kept.**

Every new hire is wearing a sign that says, “How am I doing?” They and your seasoned staff need to know, on an ongoing basis, how they are doing—whether good or bad.

If they need to make some corrections, state what is happening and ask, “how we can get up to conformity”. Dialogue and lead them to the correct answers. Set a date to get back together to determine how the new behavior is working.

If they are doing well, complement their effort and the result of their work. For example, “Your timely response made us look good before the budget committee”. Recognition is the energy driver of individuals in the workplace. Learn how to give recognition according to the way they like to receive it. Ask them!

5. Not Delegating Work but Doing It Themselves



My dad constantly reminded me as I was growing up that **delegation is the key to success in business.**

He loved to say, ‘delegate or stagnate’. He was an ardent adherent to General Motors’ counsel to him on how to run his Chevrolet dealership. Dad wasn’t afraid of his staff making mistakes with assignments he gave them. He rarely complained when something went wrong.

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At 15 years old, I put a long crease along the full passenger's side of one of his new Chevy's trying to maneuver it onto the wash rack. I was expecting a big lecture, but he never once mentioned my error. He taught me I was more important than his Chevy. So, when you delegate, realize that there may be some mistakes made along the way.

Expecting perfection in the delegated task is wrong. Getting the job done is more important than getting it done exactly your way. Retire perfection in relation to delegation. Let go of the reins and discover the new ways tasks can be completed. When delegating make sure there is consensus of what needs to be done and the associated parameters.

Stop believing that you are the only one who can perform the job. As long as you are doing the work instead of delegating it, you are not using your time for best use in maintaining company quality and innovation.

6. Lack of Professional Development Opportunities



“School is never out for the pro” is an overused phrase. However, it is true that if you aren't increasing in your abilities, you are decreasing.

To strive for your highest and best requires continual professional development.

For example, a veterinarian that I talked with recently had hired a manager to work at his animal hospital. In the beginning the manager was quick to write someone up and/or dismiss them. When he became aware of this, he took away her authority to fire someone and instead provided specific training on being an effective manager. At the end of 6 months, she became very effective with staff and was a true asset to his team.

In modern times, managers need to be taught how to coach a person to bring out their best. **A great coach is a good listener and seeks to understand his subordinate's points of view.**

They are privy to their hiring assessments report which provides a communication and motivators inventory. Encouragement is what drives a person to learn new skills and attitudes.

The two enemies of professional growth are time and money. However, if there is no coaching, then both time and money are being wasted. **A trained coach providing attention can resolve many big issues.**

A procurement company that I consulted for was in turmoil with what to do with one of their most effective customer service representatives. He was great with the customers but abrasive with staff. If he and I couldn't resolve his anger problems, he would be hunting for a new job.

We devised a plan to deal with communicating his chronic pain to others. It didn't work. In our discovery session he discovered a new way of looking at his challenge. The outcome was that he gave up trying to tell others about his chronic pain.

The result was released pressure on him to be heard. Then he relaxed more and was less abrasive. He remained employed with the same company for at least three years after our 90-day coaching program. It cost 4 times their annual salary to replace an effective staff member, so the company saved over \$200,000.00 by resolving his issue.

The employee's TriMetrix coaching report provided a safe format for him to explore his challenges and solutions. It showed me exactly how to deal with him so that he could accept change.

7. Failure to Deal with Low Performers



At a roundtable discussion of business owners and senior executives, I posed the question **"What is the biggest morale reducer in your workplace?"**

Eight out of 10 had the same answer, **a poorly performing employee.**

Some of the reasons for poor performance were bad attitude, couldn't handle the job stress, was only interested in a paycheck or was vocally opposed to company policies.

One man commented with conviction, "If they aren't working in the system, take them to the bus station and buy a one way ticket".

Business owners struggle with firing low producing staff. Their compassion, becomes their weakness. If a staff member is a low performer, let them go so they can find the job they can excel at.

After coaching a department leader for 90 days, my city manager client was frustrated. There was no improvement but he was resisting letting him go. Finally I said, "What will be different 6 months from now?" He said "nothing." I said "Why wait?" He let the person go and the person that replaced him was well liked and was much more effective.

About 9 months later I saw the fired person in a grocery store. He said, "I found a better job that pays more, I'm glad I got fired." When a staff member isn't working out, it is best to let them go or reassign them to another part of the organization. In the end, everybody wins.

Coaching for Faster Results



No one can know the potential of a manager that is committed to excellence. Excellence is always beckoning. All you must do is reach out and get it. **A coach can help you past your blind spots, prejudices, hurts, poor thinking and self-concept.**

If you find yourself challenged in any areas discussed in this publication, I believe that you would benefit greatly from professional coaching.

Let's meet on the phone and discuss your barriers and opportunities for reaching your highest and best. I will coach you to a good plan of action in a complementary session. All it costs is 30 minutes of your time. Override that resistance to call and let's get together and discuss what program would work best for your situation.

Contact me for a 30-minute complimentary strategy session.

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Here is a checklist that I put together many years ago to help the managers improve their performance and team morale. Responding to these 15 questions will provide you with greater insight as to where to put most of your efforts for your desired outcomes. Print this page for easy reference.

Checklist for Managers Striving for Your Highest and Best

Answer whether the following statements are True or False for your style of managing.

	True	False	Statement
1			Experience is always a good indicator for a job match.
2			Education is always a good indicator for a job match.
3			In hiring, gut feelings are usually accurate.
4			The job is benchmarked for what it needs to flourish.
5			There is a specific written 6-month 'Onboarding Plan'.
6			Performance feedback is provided to my staff.
7			Sit down performance appraisals are provided as promised.
8			There is a 'meeting of minds' in project & work assignments.
9			Changes in plans are communicated quickly to everyone.
10			It is OK to delegate work & have it be less than perfect.
11			I have participated in people management skills training in the past 6 months.
12			My staff has access to people skills development training.
13			I know how to coach different personality styles.
14			Low performers are tolerated.
15			We celebrate our success as a team.

For those areas where you answered no, pick one topic and begin working on it. If you find yourself getting stuck, I can help you get results faster.