

## Summary

People enter management from all sorts of varied backgrounds. Common to all are some mistakes which are easily avoidable. Doing so contributes to higher productivity, greater loyalty, and dedication to success.



## ACTIVTips

Summary information or practical advice for business leaders, ACTIVTips represents best practices for businesses seeking new opportunity, predictable growth, and leadership excellence. Integrating ACTIVTips into your business can help you consistently **“Lead Like Never Before.”**



the **afterburner** group

## Management - Top Mistakes

Management is more art than science. No matter the experience, training, individuals, groups, or personalities every manager is going to make a mistake. As a leader in your organization, your responsibility is to minimize common mistakes and maximize productivity, loyalty, and dedication to customer success. The following represent common mistakes which you should be looking out for:

**Not Communicating:** This is the most common mistake of all. In the rush of the day-to-day, leaders and managers will fail to communicate direction, tasks, expectations, timelines, and responsibilities to their people. Communication needs to be frequent, clear, concise, and motivating to the people on your team.

**Having All The Answers:** Poor managers feel that they have to have all the answers or solve every problem. Good managers seek out others who have greater experience or training and rely upon them for advice is a sign of managerial maturity and strength.

**Policy Priority:** Make no mistake. Company policies and procedures are an important component to a smooth running operation. However, policies are there as general guidance and require flexibility when dealing with your employees. Standing behind policies at the expense of people or customers lead to employee and customer attrition. Evaluate the significance of policy in each unique circumstance, taking into account the ‘people factor’ before deciding a course of action. Policy flexibility is a good thing - unless it is a matter of safety and security.

**Not Listening:** Managers are often people who have been promoted because of individual competency. As such, managers often ‘listen’...but don’t hear what is actually being said. Effective managers listen closely to the needs and concerns of their employees and customers.

**Focusing on Negative:** Managers seem to think that their number one responsibility is to minimize risk. As such, they focus on the negative - missed deadlines, cost overruns, or other problems. Successful managers understand that their primary responsibility is to maximize opportunity. They do this by focusing on the positive, providing motivation, and removing obstacles to their team’s success.

**Shifting Blame/Taking Kudos:** Blame can’t be delegated. Kudos shouldn’t be stolen. If your team doesn’t hit the goals, it is your fault. If the team achieves success, it is their success. Being a manager means that you accept responsibility for the negative and eagerly share successes with the team. Successful managers know this and take full responsibility for what happens - including the bad.

**Having Favorites:** Natural, but deadly behavior. Managers can not show favoritism to specific employees or groups. Doing so destroys trust and credibility which directly contributes to poor performance.

**Technology Dependency:** Especially acute today, managers are relying upon technology to do their managing. Instead of working with people, day-to-day, managers will defer to email, software-induced procedures and policies, and electronic tasks. Technology is key to doing business today. However successful managers know that there are times when the technology must be set aside and the direct, interpersonal relationship developed. You manage people, not technology. Make sure they feel that you care about them more than the project, task, or technology.

**Inflexibility:** Another death trap for managers. Business continually undergoes change which requires new approaches and thinking. What made you successful last year may not be the answer this year. Successful managers are always on the lookout for new, innovative ideas and methods to improve their work environment, their people, their customers, and their business. Inflexibility breeds failure.

**Ignoring Details:** The people and groups you manage expect that you know and understand the details of what is happening in your area of responsibility. Likewise, they look to you for direction, clarification, and priority setting as they go about their responsibilities. Good managers take the time to understand what is going on, identify and remove obstacles, and clarify goals/expectations for the team. Ensure that your team is successful by you being involved in their business.

**Not Delegating:** Hire good people, give them clear direction/responsibilities, and trust them to get the job done. Stop micro managing people, projects, and tasks such that your people lose confidence in themselves and you. Delegate everything you appropriately can. Grow your team’s capabilities.