

Management Minute

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Key Leadership Mistakes & Mess Ups That You Can Avoid

1. Failure to understand that the key ingredient in leadership is not power, but influence
 - You are awarded the privilege of leadership by those who you lead.
 - This is done everyday even if you don't know it.
 - It requires direct face-to-face contact with people.
2. Failure to understand that the most powerful and persuasive thing a leader can do is listen
 - Listening gives others one of our most precious resources...our time.
 - Listening affirms the worth of the individual's thoughts and words.
 - Listening fulfills two basic human needs.
 - The need to be understood.
 - The need to feel important.
3. Failure to recognize the silent communication of leadership.
 - Everything you do sends a message about you.
 - When you're in a good mood, everyone's in a good mood.
4. Failure to understand that the "Grape Net" is still the most powerful means of communication in the fire service.
 - In the absence of information, firefighters will create information.
 - The "Grape Net" is not a necessary evil. It is a normal and natural channel to share information, on an informal basis.
 - When you detect false information, immediately set the record straight.
 - You need to find reliable sources to keep you informed.
5. Failure to recognize that in leading people, one size does not fit all.
 - There is not one "best" style of anything when it involves people.
 - Everyone is different and we must stop trying to force everyone into the same mold.
 - Personality surveys (such as Myers Briggs) are useful in understanding other people.
6. Failure to understand the power of genuine praise and encouragement.

- Everyone is fed up with leaders that fail to acknowledge their efforts.
 - When you make others feel good about themselves, they will feel good about you.
 - Find creative ways to send your message.
7. Failure to solicit input from firefighters before making changes that affect their responsibilities
- Good communications is essential if changes are to be positive.
 - You are seeking commitment by seeking input.
 - Try to use as many ideas as possible.
8. Failure to take care of yourself
- Get enough sleep (8 hours per night, minimum)
 - Exercise more
 - Watch your diet
9. Failure to manage conflict constructively
- Accept the fact that it is your responsibility, as the leader, to resolve conflicts.
 - Accept the fact that conflict resolution is part of your job.
 - Train yourself and your staff in conflict resolution techniques.
 - Learn to manage your emotions.
10. Failure to meet routinely with both internal and external customers to discover what they really want
- Listen
 - Listen
 - Spend one-on-one time with as many "customers" as possible.