

The Top 10 Habits of Highly *Offensive* Managers

By Larry Hulsmans

A survey of 65 managers from a wide variety of public and private sector organizations was recently conducted to determine what they believed to be the most offensive habits of their managers. The top ten offensive habits were:

1. Inability to Communicate Effectively

This category includes those managers who fail to provide feedback on jobs performance including praise and constructive criticism, discipline subordinates openly, or unable to effectively communicate job or assignment requirements or falsely assume that subordinates understand their requirements.

2. Failing to Have Confidence in Employee Ability

Managers that fail to trust employees to do good work, or allow them the latitude to accept increasingly more difficult tasks are viewed as a hindrance to employees and a roadblock to employee growth and good performance. This lack of confidence leads to a reluctance to delegate on behalf of managers, which in turn may lead to employees withdrawing their involvement from the workplace.

3. Inability To Listen

Managers who fail to act upon employee requests, or fail to tell employees why they have not acted on their suggestions, leads employees to believe that managers are not really listening to employees. Managers do not explain why they have failed to act on employee suggestions, as a result employees feel as if they are not being listened to. This element is closely linked to communication.

4. Failure To Be Organized

Managers who race from crisis to crisis, or who are constantly reacting to crisis, rather than being proactive are viewed as ineffective by employees. Ultimately, much of the managerial stress will be transferred to the employees.

5. Indecision

Managers who are either afraid to accept responsibility or are afraid of the consequences of decision making are viewed as offensive by employees.

6. Failing To Set The Example

Managers who fail to set the example in their department, work habits, and attitude make it difficult for employees to maintain these same high standards even when they want to. Indeed it would appear as if employees blame managers for providing them with an excuse not to perform at their best.

7. Being Disrespectful

Managers who fail to treat employees as human beings are detested. For many managers there is a we-they attitude which is not justified. Managers frequently do not treat employees with common dignity and respect. This would include using profanity, sexual harassment, asking employees to do personal errands, and generally just failing to be fair and friendly.

8. Manipulative Managers

Self-indulgent managers who play employees off against one another or incite employees to undertake tasks, which are for purely personal gain on the manager's behalf, are viewed as offensive. Work place "politics" which is engendered or fostered by managers is de-motivating and disruptive to employees. Unequal treatment of employees can also be viewed as manipulative.

9. Breaches of Confidentiality

Managers who tell employees that discussions or issues will be kept in confidence, but proceed to discuss these issues with other people are viewed as offensive and untrustworthy.

10. Lack of Knowledge

A number of employees cited the tendency for manager not to ask questions, bluff their way through a situations, or basing decisions on something they know new very little about to be highly offensive.

Becoming a more effective leader and manager requires that we are self-aware and that includes knowing our shortcomings and where we need to improve. How aware are you of your managerial strengths and weaknesses? ■