

Executive Summary

The Seven Most Common Mistakes Leaders Make

Introduction: Our experience has been that great leadership is very difficult to come by. And yet, the number one contributor to a talented employee's job satisfaction is their relationship with their immediate boss.

An effective leader engages other people to deliver desired results. As leaders, we need to balance two key elements – **Accountability** for results and **Inspiration** of people.

Three key models are introduced in this workshop:

1. **The Box of Life** provides a great visual reminder that everyone comes from a different place and everyone's box is different. It's not about you. Take time to ask and listen *first*; then you've earned the right to talk. Our own expectations, based upon our life experiences, may lead us to judge others. You must stop and think before you judge.
2. **Integrity:** Leaders need to define their values in this role and then demonstrate integrity by ensuring alignment between values and actions.
3. **Giving feedback:** Leaders need to give feedback much more often than they commonly do. This is one of the leader's most underutilized skills. Employees at *all* levels (including senior leadership) wish for more feedback – both positive and redirective!

The Seven Most Common Mistakes We See

1. **Avoidance of key issues** – The number one response to a difficult situation is avoidance. Many leaders are not equipped to address key issues.
2. **Too much negative (disrespectful) feedback** – This point has a bit of a semantics issue. Negative feedback is not the same as redirective feedback. Much of the focus on negative feedback is rooted in reactive human behavior.

3. **Absence of positive feedback** – Without a deliberate mindset about positive feedback, leaders just don't think about this. The vast majority (98%) of employees report that positive feedback motivates them to work harder.
4. **Disrespectful treatment** – Many leaders are at risk of behaving disrespectfully when under pressure, especially toward employees who have less power. This is usually not intentional; humans have a built-in physiological "fight or flight" response to stress.
5. **Imbalance of accountability and inspiration** – Leaders are innately wired either to lean toward the accountability of getting work done or toward inspiring, motivating and fulfilling people *while* getting work done. We help leaders balance the scale by introducing skills necessary to execute the other half of the equation and to recognize that this will feel uncomfortable.
6. **Doing, not leading** – Almost all leaders are former high-performing individual contributors. Most leaders place high value on getting things done. At the same time, many leaders do not know what's involved in the day-to-day responsibility of leading others. It becomes easy to default to their own to-do lists.
7. **Lack of humility** – Our key message: once you've become a leader, "It's not about you."

Summary: This session focuses on helping leaders make a shift from self-centered to other-centered thinking. It helps leaders become more mindful of how they treat employees while getting the work accomplished.