



## Management Blind Spots

### Self-Evaluation

Do you know how others really see you? While your behaviour is on display all the time for those around you, most of your influence as a manager goes unnoticed by you.

Research has shown that people are five times more sensitive to their manager's unconscious negative actions than to their manager's efforts to motivate them. In other words, much of what managers do to motivate their staff is being undone by their thoughtless negative actions. But there's also an upside to this finding: the best thing a manager can do to motivate their staff is to identify and eliminate their unconscious demotivating behaviours. This will allow all the motivating things that managers do to have the desired effect.

The following self-evaluation reveals the most commonly reported\* undesirable manager tendencies and corresponding behaviours. Simply knowing what they are will help focus your attention on the most important behaviours for you to avoid doing.

#### Instructions

Review the following list and check the boxes of any behaviours you think you may display from time to time. Be brutally honest with yourself. Select the top 3 – 5 behaviours that you have checked that you think you exhibit most frequently, and that you think others may find most irritating. Work on trying to notice when you do them and then, consciously and consistently, try to eliminate them. Having the humility to accept and work on one's shortcomings is an incredibly important leadership attribute.

*“People are five times more sensitive to their manager's unconscious negative actions than to their manager's efforts to motivate them.”*

\* The Management Blind Spots Self-Evaluation was composed from numerous social media articles, books and business articles each proposing their own list of most common demotivating management behaviours. Tendency categories are sorted according to the most commonly cited themes.

The following most common undesirable management tendencies can be identified by their associated behaviours.

Managers who have a tendency to...

**1. Micromanage**

- Tell subordinates what to do, how to do it and when to do it, allowing very little latitude.
- Regularly provide too much communication (e.g. too many emails to keep up with).
- Usually “improve” the ideas, work, or projects of their subordinates.
- Routinely second-guess subordinate’s decisions.
- Give finicky critical input that provides minimal value (e.g. nitpicking comments regarding grammatical or formatting errors on internal office correspondence).
- Perform work that subordinates are capable of doing, which these subordinates should be doing as part of their development.
- Do not delegate authority. All decisions, no matter how small, must go through them. They regularly remind people to “run things by” them.
- Insist that subordinate managers attend to certain activities personally, not allowing them to delegate work to their subordinates.
- Monitor salaried employee’s daily activities, including their comings and goings.
- Require excessive amount of reporting on progress.

**2. Be a ‘Know-It-All’**

- Feel very pleased to show others how smart they are.
- Feel the need to always be right. Do not allow others to disagree with them. Aggressively challenge contrary opinions.
- Feel compelled to appear like, as the leader, they should have the answer for everything.
- Do not allow any criticism of the organization. People who criticize the organization incite the bosses’ wrath.
- When subordinates are speaking to them, they do not pay close attention (e.g. check emails, texting, or signing cheques).
- Do not frequently solicit other people’s opinions.
- Give their opinion so forcefully that it does not leave any room for disagreement.
- Fail to see their own shortcomings.
- Do not apologize or admit mistakes.

**3. Be Dictatorial**

- Remind people, overtly or through subtle strategies, that they are the boss and they make the final decisions.
- Typically talk more than others and try to ‘own’ the conversation.
- Interrupt others.
- Belittle others’ ideas.

Criticize subordinates in front of others.

Try to always have the last word in any disagreement.

Use intimidation tactics – have occasional outbursts of anger; yelling, pounding their fist on the boardroom table; pointing; intimidating, pointed looks.

Brow-beat people for making mistakes.

Speak abrasively.

Call last minute meetings (or reschedules them at the last minute) with no regard for their staff's previous commitments.

Reverse previously approved plans.

People fear them.

#### **4. Avoid Confrontation**

Do not have face-to-face meetings to resolve conflicts.

Frame the same information differently to different people, sending mixed signals.

Avoid delivering tough messages.

Do not give specific, meaningful feedback.

Do not address non-performers.

Fail to intervene in order to manage interpersonal conflict and stop bad behaviour.

#### **5. Be Impersonal**

Have a weak relationship with subordinates.

Do not say anything personal about themselves.

Do not show any vulnerability for fear it will make them look weak.

Do not try to get to know their staff on a personal level.

Appear detached, cold, and aloof.

Do not show concern for team morale.

Do not attempt to make any personal gestures of goodwill such as recognizing birthdays or accomplishments.

#### **6. Fail to Develop Others**

Do not give employees a sense of where they can go in their careers.

Provide little or no professional development or coaching for employees – does not make this a priority.

Do not invest the time to develop successors.

#### **7. Appear Insincere (Untrustworthy)**

Do not follow through with what they say they will do.

Are not entirely honest with employees, clients, suppliers, etc.

#### **8. Blame Others**

Throw others 'under the bus' to avoid blame.

When something goes wrong their first instinct is to blame others rather than calmly analyzing the issue.

Deflect blame on small, even trivial items.

**9. Steal Credit**

Take credit for other people's ideas or work.

**10. Not Provide Clear Direction**

Do not communicate the organization's purpose and top priorities clearly and consistently.

Frequently change priorities.

Do not clarify performance expectations.

Do not provide enough guidance for subordinates to be successful.

**11. Be a Slave Driver**

Consistently overload people with too much work.

Have unrealistic expectations of how dedicated people should be to their work.

Do not fully appreciate that most people find a great deal of fulfillment outside of work.

Speak derisively of "nine-to-fivers" or of people who take their vacation at "inconvenient times" (do not recognize that just about any time is a 'bad time' for people to be off).

Do not provide additional resources or people in order to achieve stretch goals.

**12. Suffer from "Analysis Paralysis"**

Delay making decisions in favour of exhaustive analysis and debate.

Vacillate between choices, delaying action.

**13. Be Emotionally Volatile**

Have erratic mood swings. Happy, laughing, joking one day (or moment) and angry, non-communicative and short the next.

Are high strung. Easily stressed.

Often speak with emotionally charged language.

**14. Be Overly Negative**

When someone presents a new idea, they often say some variation of "Let me explain why that won't work."

Overly critical – preoccupied with people's weaknesses and mistakes.

Regularly slips a negative comment about a colleague into conversations.

**15. Play Favourites**

Favour people who are like themselves – similar background, motivations, interests, etc.

Favour people who do not disagree with them.

Favour people who are shameless suck-ups – people who laugh at their bad jokes, who tell them how wonderful they are, and who are generally friendlier to those above them in the pecking order.

For more accurate results, contact Avail Leadership about conducting an anonymous management evaluation survey for your team.