



Is There An Attila The Hun In Your Business?

Human nature dictates that if a manager treats his or her employees with respect the staff will respond in kind. It also stands to reason that if one individual can manage to bring out the best in a group, another individual could mismanage the same group of people, negatively affecting their attitude, morale and performance.

Mismanagement practices can be defined as managerial actions that could be reasonably construed as unfair, arbitrary, irrational or biased. They combine to create a strained, stressful working environment that will adversely affect productivity and cost control efforts.

A food and beverage operation can be an extremely stressful place to earn a living. Working under pressure, there are a number of ways that a manager can negatively affect morale and productivity. The following items detail fifteen commonly observed mismanagement practices, look at why they are considered counterproductive and how these flawed management tendencies can be avoided.

1. Verbal Reprimands — Verbally reprimanding an employee in front of fellow employees or customers, is not only embarrassing for everyone involved, it can also drive a wedge between the staff and management, creating an “us against them” attitude. The appropriate time and place to reprimand or discipline an employee is after the person’s shift in the privacy of the office. This will spare the employee humiliation and from having to work the shift with the burden of a reprimand. Naturally, ensuring that the basis for the warning is valid is of primary importance.

2. Misrepresentation — Initially overselling an employee on the company and the person’s role in the future of the business is ill-advised. It is human nature for an employee to become disillusioned and resentful when reality sets in and the person sees the job or company for what it really is. The business is best served by giving a prospective employee an accurate portrayal of what his or her job will be and what the person

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can realistically expect to earn. There are serious consequences when employees perceive they have been misled by management regarding issues affecting their livelihood.

3. Lack Of Guidance — Failing to initially provide employees with the company's policies and procedures can create an inequitable situation. The most effective way to get a group of people to achieve a discernible level of competency is to first inform them exactly what is expected of them. If employees are not given definitive guidelines governing their on-the-job performance, management cannot reasonably hold them accountable to professional standards of conduct.

4. Lack Of Training — Failing to furnish the personnel with adequate training and supervision does a disservice to the business and employee alike. The business suffers because the staff will not be nearly as competent and productive as they possibly could. The employee's performance will suffer by comparison and be evaluated without sufficient training, a decided liability. As a result, their ability to earn a decent livelihood is hampered.

5. Obvious Bias — When a manager demonstrates an obvious bias or preference for certain employees, it inevitably engenders feeling of ill-will among the other members of the staff. It is unreasonable to expect the others on the staff to passively tolerate inconsistent treatment, especially if it affects their ability to make a living. Management's objective should be to create a cohesive, tightly knit staff, not to be divisive.

6. Lack Of Maturity — A manager that exhibits irrational or immature behavior undermines his or her ability to be a strong leader. Included on the list, not limited to, is inappropriate behavior such as being intoxicated at work or making sexual advances toward employees. Respect is a vital aspect of authority.

7. Lack Of Feedback — Failing to periodically evaluate employee attitudes and performance makes it less likely that the staff will achieve their fullest potential. Periodic evaluations afford the personnel the opportunity to learn about the perceived quality of their on-the-job performance. In addition, any deficiencies can be addressed and a plan can be devised to help the employee overcome the problem.

8. Scheduling Inequities — Few things are more closely associated with an employee's livelihood than the weekly schedule. Unfulfilled scheduling requests, over- or under scheduling, or preferential treatment towards certain employees can lead to rapid and consistent turn-over. Equity, aptitude and experience should be the prescribed criteria behind scheduling.

9. Lack Of Support — Without positive reinforcement, employee enthusiasm, initiative and motivation are difficult to maintain. Failing to reward or acknowledge an employee's on-the-job performance can be a serious error of omission. Encouragement and positive feedback go a long way in helping employees reach their fullest potential.

10. Admitting Fallibility — Respect and admiration can be won or lost. Managers who cannot bring themselves to admit that he or she has made a mistake to an employee damages their authority and ability to lead. Perfection is an impossible standard to attempt to maintain.

11. Lack Of Motivation — Any food and beverage operation requires a motivated and well-trained staff in order to continue to grow as a business. One of the most significant reasons for employees to leave a business is lack of advancement and infrequent wage increases. For individuals to remain motivated and enthusiastic they must be challenged and continually prompted to mature professionally. It is a mistake to expect employees to remain inspired and conscientious without management's assistance.

12. Lack Of Tipped Income — It is definitely in management's best interest to ensure that their employees are more than adequately compensated for their efforts. Therefore, any managerial decision or policy that hinders the employees ability to earn a reasonable tipped income may be interpreted by the staff as managerial disregard and foster discontent.

13. Lack Of Credibility — When management fails to follow through on stated policy decisions or to rectify problem situations it undermines management's credibility. It also sends a negative message to the staff that they cannot necessarily trust what management says it is going to do.

14. Inconsistent Behavior — Failing to discipline employees for infractions of policies and procedures, and permitting mediocre on-the-job

performance negatively affects staff attitude and morale. Why should employees make a concerted effort to follow the establishment's policies if there are no consequences associated with breaking them? Likewise, if mediocrity is tolerated and some employees' abilities are allowed to remain barely adequate, the entire staff will suffer by association and the operation's professionalism as a whole will be diminished.

15. Social Involvement — Becoming socially involved with the staff causes needless entanglements and seriously hampers management's ability to lead effectively. While a warm, congenial relationship between the staff and management should be fostered, outside fraternization or sexual involvement is deleterious to the operation.

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