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How not to motivate employees: 10 management habits to break now

By Mary Lorenz, CareerBuilder Writer



Feeling unmotivated? Uninspired? Disengaged? You're not alone. "There's a lot of valid reason we're feeling burned out," says Holly Green, workplace management expert and best-selling author of "More Than a Minute: How to Be an Effective Leader and Manager in Today's Changing World."

"It's because we are," she says.

I recently spoke with Green about the amount of pressure that managers are under today to re-engage their employees in an increasingly stressful work environment. If employees think they're the only ones who need a break these days, Green says, they should think again. "Managers are feeling the same way. And when you're burned out, it's that much harder to think about engaging someone

else."

So rather than add one more thing to the already-overstretched manager's to-do list, perhaps it would be easier to simply know what not to do. Green was kind enough to offer the following 10 tips on how not to manage your employees:

- **Don't practice the halo effect.** This is when a manager assumes that because someone has one good quality, the person is great at everything, preventing the manager from seeing the opportunities for improvement; similarly, managers should also avoid the opposite of the halo effect -- the devil effect.
- **Don't humiliate or demean employees** especially not in front of others.
- **Don't withhold feedback** because you assume your employees already know where they need to improve or will "figure it out" on their own. "If you're going to be a good manager, it is essential that you get good at giving feedback," Green says. That means both constructive and negative feedback.
- **Don't underestimate the power of ongoing one-on-one conversations** to build trusting, more productive relationships with your employees.
- **Don't assume your team knows what winning looks like.** "A manager's most important role is to clarify what winning or excellence looks like, and then help people achieve it for themselves and the organization. You can't overcommunicate in this regard."
- **Don't assume people understand your reasoning** behind decisions. By the same token, don't blame any decisions on "upper management," "the HR department" or anyone else. Employees see right through that.
- **Don't forget that praise is about them, not you.** When recognizing employees, pause and consider what the individuals would want to receive and how they would want to receive it. "For some people, presenting to the senior executive team could be a big perk and considered a reward for a job well done; for others, this could be the worst possible and most stressful of all scenarios," Green says. Likewise, don't give lavish public praise to someone who is very private or a Starbucks card to someone who doesn't drink coffee or tea, or buy a cake for someone with dietary restrictions.
- **Don't speak negatively about other team members,** their peers or senior management and leaders.
- **Don't give "sandwich" feedback.** While many managers were taught to give sandwich feedback saying something good, sneaking in something negative and then quickly saying something good again this method only "leaves the receiver wondering what the heck was the point," Green says.
- **Don't ever stop recruiting.** "Folks need to be re-recruited and re-energized -- especially after the past few years."

Anything you would you add to this list? What "habits" have you broken, or would like to see others break?

Mary Lorenz writes for The Hiring Site, CareerBuilder's community for hiring professionals and other curious-minded individuals to discuss the attraction, engagement and retention of their #1 asset -- their people.

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