

25 Things Managers & Leaders Should NEVER Do

If you are a supervisor, manager or a leader at any level, you should NEVER:

1. **Detach yourself from the business acumen** required to manage and lead. Anyone who calls himself “manager/leader” without knowing the business side of work is living in a fantasy land.
2. **Give ambiguous work instructions.** It kills productivity and leads to re-work. Take more time to think, if needed. “Some delay” now is better than “lot of re-work” later.
3. **Bad mouth your organization** in front of your team. Sure, there are things about your company that you don't like much. Go, talk to people who matter. Team members get terribly de-motivated when they hear their boss bad mouthing the organization.
4. **Bad mouth a team member** in front of other team members. It is a matter of pure common-sense.
5. **Sugar-coat problems and hold back the information.** Call spade a spade when it is needed. Problems have a bad habit of showing up sometime or the other. When they do, you lose respect because you did not communicate the enormity/magnitude of the problem upfront.
6. **Just hear what your people have to say. Listen.** Actively listen.



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7. **Talk constantly about problems, issues and delays.** People are smart enough to gauge “who you are” by the “words you use”. Spread the good news and celebrate small successes.
8. **Under estimate the power of non-verbal communication.** Smart managers/leaders pick up some vital clues about team members from their non-verbal communication.
9. **Manage by inducing fear.** That’s dictatorial behavior. People grow only when they are “coached”, “counseled” and “enabled”. With fear, they will do everything dispassionately.
10. **Use “You” versus “I” language.** You are tearing the fabric of your team apart. Foster support and be there when they need you.
11. **Under estimate the power of setting right examples.** People observe and emulate your behavior. Model right behaviors.
12. **Ignore the context.** Things that worked in your past context may not necessarily work in the changed environment, new organization or a new project. When your context changes, if you don’t align your thinking to the new context, you are more likely to fail. Sticking to past ways of working is comfortable (because it worked), but no longer safer.

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13. **Loose focus on results.** It is easy to get into mundane activities and lose focus on results. You can be an easy going manager or a tough one. You can be a coercive leader or an inspiring one. But ultimately, leadership is all about generating meaningful business results. Results should drive us, not the circumstances.

14. **Throw the weight around.** Sure, you are higher up in the order, but you still shouldn't ignore Uncle Ben's advice to Spiderman: "Remember, with great power comes great responsibility." Humility is the most important virtue of leadership. The moment you have to show that you are powerful, you are not. Moreover, power comes from doing right things, not by cheap tactics to demonstrate that you are powerful.

15. **Not scheduling critical stuff.** I read this somewhere, "What doesn't get scheduled doesn't get done". Lot of project managers say, "I always wanted to have code reviews done but we never had time!" Wrong. You always had time, but you never planned it. Remember – if you want something to be done and if you don't schedule it, it ends up being a fantasy.

16. **Expose the team in crisis:** When in crisis, it is expected that you protect your team members and accept responsibility of team performance. The moment you try to expose your team members when things don't turn out well, you are actually exposing your own weakness as a leader.

17. **Not understanding people.** We work with breathing, living and emotional human beings. Leaders fail utterly when they ignore the people aspect of work and start treating people as 'resources'. When it comes to managing people, one size does not fit all because each individual is unique. My simple formula is – treat people as "humans" not as 'resources' and watch them deliver great results.

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18. **Under estimate the power of personal/professional integrity.** Being a leader is like being a fish in a glass bowl. You are constantly being observed. People take important cues from the way you talk, what you talk and what you actually do. You lose respect when they find out the gap between what you preach and what you do. My definition of integrity is simple – Do what you say, say what you do and be yourself.

19. **Conduct long and unscheduled meetings.** When you don't respect your team member's time, you lose respect too. Resist conducting unscheduled meetings when they are not needed. Another mistake is to not conduct meetings at all.

20. **Try doing critical portions of the work by self.** Sure, that may minimize the risk of failure, but your team members will not grow. Delegate and then guide them. Let them raise their game too. Act as a catalyst who helps them improve. If you do everything, you are not doing enough. You need to do more by doing less – and delegation is the way to go.

21. **Fail to say "No".** Not saying no when it is needed (to clients, stakeholders and bosses) can be a real killer for you, your project and your people. Saying no firmly, but politely is an art every leader has to master. Say no, so that you can say yes to more important stuff.

22. **Not reviewing the progress.** When you don't review the progress periodically, you lose momentum. Projects generally start on a high note – maintain the momentum by periodic reviews. Take a stock, retrospect and take corrective steps to ensure that your team is on track. Review early and often.

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23. **Run away from fears.** In fact, leaders embrace their fears. Fear is our most important emotion. We fear criticism, we fear failure and we fear risk. This should not stop us from doing stuff. It should rather help us doing stuff better. A leader has to overcome fear and help team members do the same.

24. **Not acknowledging what they don't know.** Leaders become integral when they know what they don't know – and when they acknowledge it. It is not weak, but a courageous act to acknowledge what you don't know. You will easily find someone who does. This again boils down to having humility to accept things you don't know.

25. **Fail to “celebrate”.** We live in an action oriented world, where doing is sometimes over emphasized. We complete one phase and quickly jump onto another. Celebrate small wins. It gives new energy to the team and also extends an opportunity to know each other better. Celebrating is very human – do it often.

About the Author



Tanmay Vora heads Quality practice at [CIGNEX Technologies Inc.](#) and has 12+ years of diverse experience in software development methodologies, quality management, software testing and process improvement initiatives.

Tanmay is also an author of [#QUALITYtweet – 140 bite-sized ideas to deliver quality in every project.](#) '#QUALITYtweet' is a handy collection of bite sized ideas on practical aspects of Quality Management with a focus on people, processes, and leadership.

He consults on Software Quality Assurance and hosts [QAspire Blog](#). You can follow him on Twitter at [@tnvora](#). He currently lives at Ahmedabad (India).