



“Leaders Need an Ear Full.”



What should leaders know about the biggest mistakes they can make? Results from our new Fault Lines

*Study show, from the workforce’s perspective, the biggest, and perhaps the most preventable leadership mistake, is a **‘failure to Listen.’***

Not just casual listening, but really hearing what others think, and feel. Listening to a level where you understand them as unique individuals. Encouraging and accepting their feedback shows you care; shows you can learn from their ideas; and shows your perceptions always benefit from fine-tuning.

“If you don’t solicit the opinions of others, and get them onboard, you will get nowhere, or have a difficult, uphill battle.” This means listening to internal, as well as external voices. “My way or the highway is an express lane to disaster.”

Sharpening your listening skills builds trust, makes team members feel valued, improves the respect they have for you as the leader – while promoting greater dedication to their work.

A truly ‘Listening Leader’ fosters a highly-engaged, productive workplace. That’s the way to get your agenda accomplished.



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Fault Lines: A Study on Leadership

Learning What Can Fracture a Leader’s Agenda

The Fault Lines Leadership Study surveyed 577 Employees across a broad spectrum of careers, and organizational affiliations, by asking, “What’s the One Biggest Mistake a Leader Can Make?”

http://www.jerrystrom.com/research/js_fault-lines.html

Listening Strategies for the Executive Suite.

As you rise in the organization, the very nature of your work changes. The further up you go, the more of the 'Playbook' you get to influence – creating structure, policies, plans, budgets, and priorities – arranging the X's and O's to your liking.

The end result may be the feeling you're at the center of things, but a danger is the growing distance between you and the employees on whom you depend. Now you have a listening problem.

Overcoming the isolation of leadership is a challenge for many executives. Everyone needs a plan to stay connected and informed about the real people doing the real business below them.

Here are 10 plays every leader should believe in, and run on a consistent basis:

1. **Listen to Solicit Feedback:** The operative word is "solicit," meaning seek it out. People will be reluctant to offer you their feedback unless you actively inquire about the perceptions they hold, and the opinions they have.
2. **Listen in 360 Degrees:** Internal, external, peers, partners ... great leaders don't limit their sources, but look for input in every direction, and interaction.
3. **Listen to Value Others:** Even if you've heard it before, be patient with people. Employees want leaders who value them and what they have to say.
4. **Listen to Ask Better Questions:** Don't ask in a manner that appears you're prying, but in a way which shows that you're genuinely interested. Make sure "you are genuinely interested!"
5. **Listen for Ideas:** Set ego and position aside, and recognize many junior people have excellent ideas.
6. **Listen for Adoption:** Always put the best ideas you hear into practice, and give the credit to the person it's due.
7. **Listen to the Experts:** The purpose of experts is to offer informed opinions which sharpen your judgment.
8. **Listen to Help Others:** In the eyes of the worker, leaders can either remove obstacles, or become the obstacle.
9. **Listen for Flexibility:** When your body language says, "Leave me alone," you're on the short-list to failure.
10. **Listen to Yourself:** Don't become 'tone-deaf' and fail to hear when you've gone from leading to bossing.

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