

10 Common Mistakes of UF Managers



Podcast Transcript

Hello, my name is Courtney Moon, and I am going to share with you 10 common mistakes that Managers at UF make.

Mistake #1: Bad hiring decisions

It's important to have a full team, especially when they have a full workload, but hurrying recruitment can lead to hiring the wrong people for your team. Avoid this by using Behavior-based interviewing; ask questions that give you insight in a person's past experiences. Those past experiences are our best predictor for how they will behave or perform in the future.

Also, Use the probationary period or time on first contract wisely. If you didn't hire the person, you are wise to move swiftly when you realize you have a problem or "bad fit". Letting a low performer remain on the team not only affects you, but the morale of the other employees as well.

Mistake #2: Communicating ineffectively

Employees are not mind readers.

- You must verbalize expectations
- Model what's expected
- Pay attention to what's going on and be visible

- Have daily 10-minute check-ins, weekly 1-on-1 meetings, regular staff meetings and talk about the work to be done, progress on goals, updates or changes affecting the team

Be a coach not a cheerleader.

- Coaches are supportive and give guidance and direction
- Cheerleaders say rah rah, good job, which is nice to hear, but not helpful
- Learn to communicate with your employees
- Here's what I need from you ...What do you need from me?
- Are there any problems that need to be solved? Do you have the resources you need?
- Are there any instructions or goals that aren't clear?
- Has anything happened since we last talked that I should know about?
- Open up the lines of communication

Mistake #3: Giving answers or assuming things that aren't true

Often managers feel if they don't know the answer, they will lose credibility with their team, well if you give someone incorrect information rather than saying I'm not sure, let me find out—you will lose more than credibility, you will lose trust, which is very difficult to build back after you've lost it. It's perfectly acceptable to say, "I don't know that answer, but I will find out and get back with you soon".

Mistake #4: Having different or inconsistent standards

Don't play favorites. This will cause you to lose respect from the rest of the team. It's hard to bounce back from this mistake—so be consistent on issues.

Mistake #5: Showing lack of respect for employees

A good manager knows it's not all about you; it's about the results of the team. Show respect for your employees, show that you appreciate their efforts. Don't emphasize your power over your employees; this will lead to an environment filled with fear and animosity. Management is a position of dependence more so than authority; effective managers lead by persuasion rather than being solely directive.

Mistake #6: Lack of self- management

It starts with self-awareness, be aware of your own feelings, strengths, and limits. Don't let your anger show at the wrong times, such as getting defensive when employees question you or challenge your answers. Demonstrate that you are

flexible and can work with changing situations and different people. Keep impulsive feelings and emotions under control—pause before responding and consider the impact your actions or behavior will have on your employees.

Mistake #7: Not taking advantage of resources, especially colleagues

Some managers worry too much that they will look like a failure. Listen in every direction, ask others for advice and help – it's a sign of strength, not weakness, and helps you build trust with your colleagues.

Mistake #8: Managers not understanding what they have the authority to do and not do

It is okay to set standards—in fact, standards are your friend. Clearly articulated expectations create a climate of fairness and can provide support for necessary actions.

As appropriate, have written policies.

Common policies for staff include: ■ Attendance/tardiness, dress codes, cell phone use

Common policies for faculty include ■ Office hours, travel fund allocations, use of staff time

Mistake #9: Not concentrating enough on team dynamics

In addition to individual performance, it's important to pay attention to the group. Your organizational culture will either work for you or against you. The beliefs, experiences, and interactions of your team creates your culture, it is the personality of your team and will either advance you towards the achievement of your goals or prevent you from reaching them. Pay attention to how your team communicates, coordinates their work, and how well they work together. Role model the behavior you want to see. Mistake

#10: Not dealing with discipline issues

Leaders need to be proactive in preventing problems and this is achieved by:

- Verbalizing expectations
- Developing a positive workplace culture by modeling what's expected

Remember to give employees guidance and support and respond promptly and directly in the event problems do occur, not dealing with discipline issues sends a message to other employees that you tolerate inappropriate behavior or poor performance, and you'll begin to see an increase in negative results as a consequence of this.

So what do you think? Have you seen any other managers or leaders make any of these mistakes? Have you made these mistakes yourself? If so, it's not too late. We all make them, and it's true that an error can be a learning opportunity. So acknowledge it, and recognize how to avoid these common mistakes in the future.