



Five Reasons Your Employees Might Hate You

If your small company employees have suddenly become unhappy, unproductive or disengaged, you are very likely making one or more of these management mistakes.

#1: You Don't Let Them Have Any of the Credit

Because you spend years if not decades working alone to build your business, over time it becomes easy to visualize yourself as the person who makes absolutely everything happen. But the minute you begin to hire employees, a team is formed—and for the first time, credit for accomplishments needs to be divided multiple ways. If you are an entrepreneur or manager who struggles to step out of the spotlight (or hand out a “Thank You” once in awhile) look at it from the perspective of your employees: you already earn more money than they do. There is no need to take more of the credit as well.

#2: You Don't Involve Them in Important Decisions

As mentioned above, the transition from Lone Wolf to Team Leader is one the biggest adjustments any entrepreneur or manager will make, and nowhere is this more evident than in the area of decision-making. Although making decisions on the fly probably allowed your company to grow large enough to actually hire people, continuing to run the company AROUND your employees—instead of WITH them—will eventually chase away any talented people you may have managed to attract. When employees don't feel included in decisions, they will distance themselves not only from your initiatives, but from your company as a whole. If you're going to hire smart, qualified and motivated people to take your company to the next level, you can't be afraid to use them.

#3: You Don't Allow them to Challenge Your Ideas

After nearly 20 years of working for rapidly growing small companies, two of which were scooped up by Fortune 500 firms, I can say this with 100% certainty: companies managed by

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people who realize they don't know everything ALWAYS outperform those managed by people who think they know it all. The fact is, great leaders don't simply allow their employees to question them—they DEMAND to be questioned. Unfortunately, the first instinct of many small company owners is to react negatively toward employees who challenge them. Regardless of company size, the courage to stand in front of employees and say "Tell me why my idea won't work" is something every manager should have, but very few do.

#4: You Have No Idea How Much Time They Spend Making You Money

We all understand that owning or managing a small company means long hours and short weekends. But you are rarely the only one making this type of time commitment. Unlike their counterparts in the Fortune 500—who show up for work at exactly 8am and check in at Happy Hour promptly at 5:15pm—employees at small companies often work 50, 60 and 70-hour weeks just to keep up. To this day, it surprises me how few small company managers actually take the time to thank, much less compensate, employees who are putting their personal lives on hold to make them wealthy.

#5: You Are Not Up Front With Your Long-Term Intentions

As a career small company executive who has never had an ownership stake outside of stock options, I have spent thousands of hours wondering—and worrying—about the long-term plans of the people I work for. Is he going to sell? Will she transfer power to an in-law? Are they going to retire and walk away? Understanding it is ultimately your investment, as a small company owner or manager you need to understand that the people who work for you have important long-term plans of their own; and being evasive about your future intentions breeds nothing but speculation, mis-interpretation, uncertainty, and a great deal of unnecessary stress among your most loyal employees.

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