

*Profile Strategies*

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# EMPLOYER'S ADVANTAGE

NEWSLETTER

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**FROM JIM SIRBASKU'S DESK**  
**How poor managers threaten us**

What have ineffective managers contributed to organizations around the world? No list would be complete without these "gifts" from those who manage poorly:

- The 80-hour work week
- Discouragement of initiative, creative thinking and risk-taking
- Massive turnover
- Ultimate failure of the organization

This is the story of business that gets repeated, often in scandalously public ways, year after year. One spectacular collapse of a poorly run company earlier this decade included a customer service vice-president who did not exist, even though his name appeared at the bottom of the company's form letters. The business received so many complaints from customers that it made up the name so that no one had to deal one-on-one with dissatisfied people.

Although poor management is the standard operating procedure at many places—and although poorly managed companies often seem to thrive—believing that they will prevail is like believing a house of straw can survive 150-mph winds. Unless the builder erected the straw house underground or reinforced it with steel, it cannot withstand a storm. So goes the poorly managed company.

We are devoting this issue of Profiles Advantage to the subject of incompetent managers because they are so prevalent and so destructive. A new Profiles International report, "Eight Signs of Incompetent Managers," notes that 40 percent of workers believe they have bad bosses. Yet organizations often manage to survive for years or even decades even though they are poorly run.

How does this happen? First, many of them likely provide important goods and services, something that a majority of the population needs or wants.

Second, if they are about to miss important deadlines, they are well versed in reactionary management. They throw more people and hours at a problem, forcing others to bear the burden of poor management.

Third, they reward poor managers for finishing the project on deadline. This ensures that nothing changes and sends the message to other workers—some of whom put in 20-hour workdays to help finish poorly managed projects on time, that:

- a. Planning is not necessary or perhaps not even something the boss wants.
- b. Poor performance is not only acceptable, we reward it.
- c. Creative thinking is not welcome, even when the project is foundering
- d. If you complain or offer ideas different from the boss's, you will not fit in.
- e. If you don't like the way things are, here's the door.

Sadly, people who might offer courageous solutions and a brighter future to a troubled business either fall in lockstep with poor management, or they do leave. And when poor operation causes high turnover, we have a perfect storm. Because in most areas of commerce, there is too much competition for poorly managed organizations to survive.

Their failure might occur in stages, so that it's not all

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that evident. But it will happen, as surely as the house of straw will blow away in a hurricane.

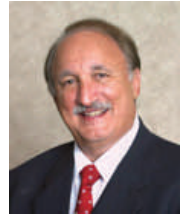
Top leaders who are paying attention to detail will want to act quickly if they see any of these symptoms of incompetence:

- Managers discourage decision-making by failing to make decisions themselves, or refusing to own up to a decision if it might result in criticism.
- They prevent the completion of tasks because they give no one the responsibility to do things; often, they try to do too much themselves because they don't want to give control of a project to someone who might do it worse—or better.
- They react to problems instead of thinking ahead and planning. Projects are late; new initiatives are non-existent.
- Since they do not engage anyone, there is no

team play. Communication is rarely face-to-face. They don't value people, or if they do, don't know how to show it.

- They don't often improve because they fail to see problems in themselves and problems they create.

Leading the managers is not easy, but it's not impossible, either. It requires paying attention to the big picture and, sometimes, to the details. This is the kind of foundation work that ensures an organization will stand up even to gale-force winds.



*Jim Sirbasku, CEO  
Profiles International*

“Effective leadership is not about making speeches or being liked; leadership is defined by results, not attributes.”

—Peter F. Drucker, writer, management consultant, author

### **POP QUIZ** (Answers on next page.)

Circle a T or an F on each question. Then read below to find out the correct answers.

1. Paying attention to detail means that a good manager must hover over subordinates he put in charge of a project to ensure that they do it right.

T F

2. When unexpected problems arise, panic is not only acceptable, but advisable.

T F

3. Sensitivity to team members includes never embarrassing them by criticizing them in public.

T F

4. Saying "NO" to certain tasks is sometimes necessary to accomplish the bigger picture.

T F

5. Because too many viewpoints interfere with quick decisions, even the best communicators find it wise

to ignore opinions that differ from their own.

T F

6. Busy managers should not be concerned if they fall behind on important new developments in their profession.

T F

7. It's wise to withhold learning opportunities from a subordinate if you feel she might surpass you on the job.

T F

8. A manager's wait-and-see attitude often indicates fuzzy thinking about what he or she needs to accomplish.

T F

develop their teams to be productive contributors.

### **PRODUCT FOCUS: PPI and PWC: Two Assessments for a Shifting Landscape**

The business landscape may change like a twisting kaleidoscope, but one thing remains the same—the need for managers to understand, respect and work

with the differences between themselves and the people on their teams. However, even the sharpest manager needs help in the complex

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area of directing others. Profiles Performance Indicator™ and Profiles Workforce Compatibility™ offer the kind of direction that gives leaders a clear picture of the work characteristics of the people they manage daily, and what their workers need to be productive contributors on the job.

Organizations use PPI to evaluate the differences between team members and to understand how to use this information to increase employee productivity. The assessment, which takes only 15 minutes to administer, analyzes a worker's productivity, quality of work, ability to get along with other team members, problem-solving skills and, finally, his ability to improve his performance. The assessment then takes this custom analysis and provides two reports immediately—one for the employee and one for the manager—with recommendations for improving worker performance to reduce stress, frustration and conflict on the job, and to stimulate motivation.

Profiles Workforce Compatibility™ also offers two reports. This assessment examines seven important characteristics that define the relationship between an employee and the manager: self-assurance, self-reliance, conformity, optimism, decisiveness,

objectivity and approach to learning.

Once these are measured and analyzed for both boss and worker, each receives a report. The manager's report provides a description of the differences between the two on each characteristic, as well as a "best-practice" working style—one that works for both the manager and the employee. A "Next Steps" section offers detailed instructions on how to proceed.

The Employee Report compares the worker's similarities to and differences from the boss, with ideas for making the work relationship smoother.

PWC helps both manager and employee communicate better, spot conflicts before they occur, and successfully resolve problems.

Whether you have an internet-connected computer or prefer to use a booklet and pencil, these assessments are easy to access and quick to provide useful information. Call Profile Strategies at 800-406-0087 to help your organization deal with the changing workforce landscape.

"Make heroes out of the employees who personify what you want to see in the organization."  
—Anita Roddick, British businesswoman

### Answers to Pop Quiz: *(Previous page.)*

- 1. False.** This kind of micromanagement saps creativity and initiative.
- 2. False.** A panicking manager is one who likely has trouble adapting to change. Superb managers have a "Plan B"—or can devise one quickly if necessary. Panic accomplishes nothing.
- 3. True.** Successful managers correct behavior in private. This is a crucial part of creating a respectful relationship with others.
- 4. True.** Activities that divert attention from priorities are time-wasters. A smart manager knows when

to put those aside—which is most of the time.

- 5. False.** Trying to understand other points of view is a hallmark of good communication, and is imperative to good decision-making.
- 6. False.** Staying current on new developments in your field is crucial to self-development.
- 7. False.** Mentoring team members and helping them grow makes managers look good.
- 8. True.** People who are paralyzed by indecision are often fearful of making a mistake. Thus, they rarely accomplish their goals.

## STRATEGIES FOR WINNING: FIRE 'EM UP! \*

### 21 Days to a Winning, Motivated Team

Here's a distillation of all you need to know to motivate people – it's drawn from all of the great writers on the subject – along with a simple, 21-day plan.

### Employees Want Management They Can Look Up to – Not Management that Looks Down on Them

An honest respect for all, a genuine recognition that everyone has something good to offer – this is at the heart of the successful motivator. Without respect, so-

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“Leaders must encourage their organizations to dance to forms of music yet to be heard.

—Warren G. Bennis, American scholar, consultant, author

called motivation becomes manipulation, and manipulation is never successful in the long term. If you or your managers cannot show respect for your people, then, before you invest time and energy in motivational efforts, get someone who can – and have that person read on from here!

**Take an Interest in the Career and Personal Goals, Aspirations, Interests, Lives and Families of Those Who Work with You**

Do you know anyone who complains about getting too much recognition or praise for a job well done? Research consistently shows that people will go to extraordinary lengths for a leader who takes the time to catch them doing something right and, when they do, provides them with sincere praise and recognition in front of their colleagues. Praise and recognition are more motivating than money or any other single thing we can give to the people we lead

**Don't Criticize, Condemn or Complain**

**Dale Carnegie nailed it with this gem.** When you must draw attention to poor performance, don't criticize. Coach. Don't pick at what is being done wrong, but focus all of your attention on the new behavior or action that will put things right; always finish with a positive comment to let the employee see that the reason you've raised the matter is that you have seen that he or she is capable of so much more. Correct the errant action, provide some positive feedback, and then forget it. Act like you expect better performance next time – and you'll get it.

**Request – Don't Order**

Real leaders lead from the front – they don't need to push from the back. Everyone rebels to some extent against being bossed around. No one minds being asked to help.

**Discuss – Don't Argue**

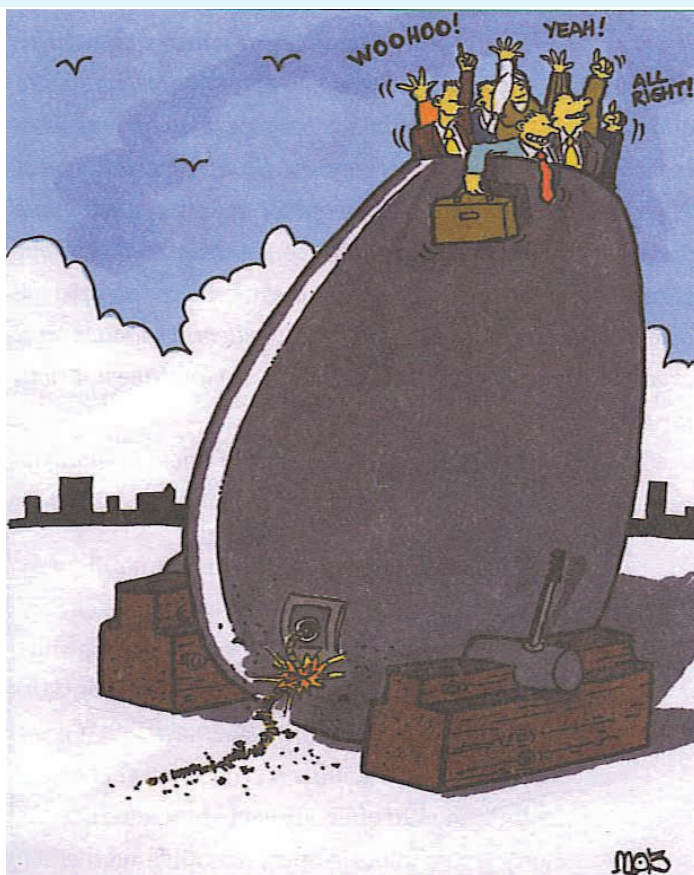
Maturity is being able to disagree agreeably.

**Be Careful with Humor**

Avoid any kind of demeaning humor. If there's the slightest chance of being misunderstood, keep it to yourself. "If in doubt, leave it out."

**Listening is the Greatest Compliment You Can Pay Anyone**

Our opinions are all sacred to us. Listen – and hear the concerns of your people.



**Most Importantly of All**

Model the behaviors and attitudes you expect others to display. Show them it works.

**21-Day Action Plan**

Why 21 days? Research shows that it takes 21 days to establish a habit. Take the topics discussed above and apply them for 21 days. You will discover that by the end of this period, you will be doing all of these things naturally. And the level of motivation in your team in general, even in your toughest cases, will be at an all-time high.

**To implement your plan:**

Create a table with each employee's name down the left-hand side, and each of the motivators listed above across the top. Rule your table so that each person has a box against each motivator.

Target improvements. Copy this strategy and put it in a place where you can review it daily. Each day, make a determination to apply each motivator as often as possible with as many members of your team as you can. Plan to speak to each of your team members often enough to get to know what turns them on and

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“Remove from your ranks those who don't measure up. Do it as charitably as possible, but do it with a ruthless focus on the needs of your Most Talented People. They deserve no less.”

—Tom Peters, management guru, writer. From **Essentials: Leadership, "Top 10 To-Do's" for leaders**

off; determine to catch them doing something right; praise them in front of their colleagues; listen to their opinions, and so on. At the end of each day, put a tick mark in your table for each motivator you effectively applied with each team member. Make sure your table is filling evenly with marks; make sure all motivators are being applied across the whole team. Be careful not to fall into the trap of simply working with those you already get along with, those you like, those who least need real motivational lift, or with the motivators that come most naturally to you.

Review and repeat. At the end of your first 21-day period, stand back and admire the difference you have made. Pat yourself on the back, and start all over again. Select the next person you need to target specifically, and start a new table for the team at large.

**Motivation is easy** – if you care enough to put in a little extra effort. Anyone can motivate, and anyone can be motivated. All it takes is the right person in the right place, managed by someone who cares. Invest a little of your time over the next 21 days and fire 'em up like never before.

*\* From the book 40 STRATEGIES FOR WINNING IN BUSINESS by Bud Haney and Jim Sirbasku. © S&H Publishing Co., 5205 Lake Shore Drive, Waco, Texas 76710-1732. All rights reserved. Contact S&H Publishing Co., (254) 751-1644, for reprint permission.*

“The single biggest way to impact an organization is to focus on leadership development. There is almost no limit to the potential of an organization that recruits good people, raises them up as leaders and continually develops them.”

—**John C. Maxwell, leadership expert, speaker. From The 17 Irrefutable Laws of Teamwork**

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