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Common Boss Blunders in a Tough Economy

by Heather Boerner, for Yahoo! Hot Jobs

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If you're a manager in this economy, all eyes are on you. It can be a little terrifying.

"In troubling times, some managers don't know how to react," says Bill Treasurer, author of "Courage Goes to Work" and founder of Giant Leap Consulting, which develops leaders. "In the past they had the answers, but now they don't. And that kind of pressure can amplify bad habits."

Those bad habits are worse than irritating. They can kill your team's morale and take your professional reputation down with it.

Consider these manager no-no's, and their fixes:

Don't Join the Pity Party

"When a leader expresses his doubts, he may do it at decibel level six, but it will be received by the staff at decibel level nine or 10 because of his position," says Treasurer. "As managers, we've got to stop talking about what keeps us up at night and start talking about what gets us up in the morning, what we're passionate about."

Your staff may want to know you feel their pain, but all it does is confirm what may have been just a nagging anxiety before. Instead, express your concerns to trusted mentors, work out anxiety at the gym -- and come to the office with a sense of calm and focus.

Don't Use the Economy to Bully

Resist the urge to allude to the economy when someone asks for vacation or complains about added workload, warns Brian Brandt, president of Summit Solution Group, a strategic planning and consulting firm in Texas.

"The increased stress is certain to not only add to staff uneasiness, but also impact their performance," he said. "Now is a great time to build a stronger bond with your staff by instilling confidence and providing them with the opportunities to develop into an even more valued employee."

Don't Pretend It's Business As Usual

The economy is out of whack, says Julie Morgenstern, author of "Never Check Email in the Morning." So don't pretend your staff can function the way it used to, either.

"In the current economy, there's paralysis --"What do I do? What do I spend my time on?" she explains. "The truth is, a lot of companies aren't really sure. It's hard to make a long-term plan right now. But what you can do is come up with the key priorities for the next eight to 12 weeks."

Find a revenue line your department can improve and lay out the top two or three things your staff should aim for: retain clients, close two new accounts. Give them clear guidance on how to be successful, and keep them focused on work, not the economy.

Don't Hide or Hover

Do you deal with stress by shutting your office door or hovering over employees? Both will stress out employees and reduce productivity. Recognize those urges, and then refocus on the task at hand.

"Ask yourself if you're going to let this environment run you," advises Treasurer, "or if you're going to show up as the leader and the manager you're called to be."

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