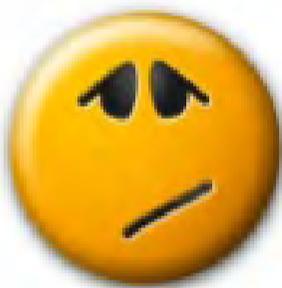


OOPS!

13 Management Practices That Waste Time & Money (and what to do instead)

BY DR. AUBREY C. DANIELS



Just Because Every Organization Uses Them, Doesn't Make Them Effective

- To achieve management excellence, you need to avoid faulty management practices
- Managing individual behavior is the answer but it requires an understanding of the basic behavior-based principles that drive good performance
- Here are 13 of the most commonly used and misguided management practices and what to do instead.

(The following is derived from [Aubrey C. Daniels book](#), OOPS!) ▶



OOPS! #1: EMPLOYEE OF THE MONTH

What's wrong?

A program meant to motivate all employees to deliver superior performance can only have one monthly winner. The others are left with performances that go unrecognized -- violating every known principle of effective positive reinforcement.

What to do instead!

Understand what you want to achieve as a result of this kind of program, and then establish an initiative based on criteria that recognizes all employees who deliver outstanding performance.



OOPS! #2: STRETCH GOALS

What's wrong?

It is proven that people fail to reach stretch goals 90% of the time. The primary reason: stretch goals are typically set too high.

What to do instead!

Set many, mini-goals. To get the kind of improvement an organization needs, in both people and production, managers need to ensure that positive reinforcement is delivered for the many small achievements along the way to reaching the larger, desired goal.



OOPS! #3: PERFORMANCE APPRAISALS

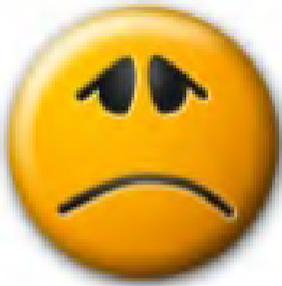
What's wrong?

Any system that doesn't recognize performance as it's happening misses the opportunity to get the most and best from employees.

What to do instead!

Set up an environment in which each employee knows how well he or she has done at the end of every working day. Evaluate each performer against what he or she is expected to do, not in relation to others. ▶

“Any system that doesn’t recognize performance as it’s happening misses the opportunity to get the most and best from employees.”



OOPS! #4: RANKING

What’s wrong?

Your competition is outside your organization, not inside. Publicly displaying how employees rank based on objective measures breeds unhealthy competition and inhibits sharing and teamwork.

What to do instead!

Evaluate individuals and units in terms of what they need to accomplish, rather than comparing their performance to others’. When the conditions are right, people will not only achieve at high rates but also assist others in doing the same.



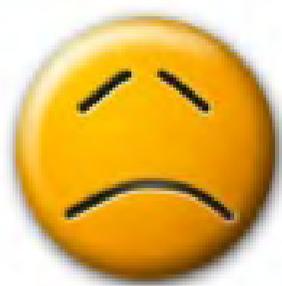
OOPS! #5: REWARDING THINGS A DEAD MAN CAN DO

What’s wrong?

Across the board perks and benefits are examples of undeserved rewards. Employees will do just enough and when poor performers are rewarded, it is punishing to those who do a good job.

What to do instead!

Employees are hired to do things. Make sure all rewards and recognition are earned by active behaviors.



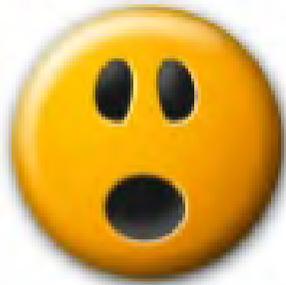
OOPS! #6: SALARY AND HOURLY PAY

What’s wrong?

Pay contingencies that aren’t closely tied to the right behaviors or accomplishments are essentially “pay for showing up.” ▶

What to do instead!

Implement a true pay-for-performance system. Abernathy's *Profit-Indexed Performance Pay* provides a way to increase employee pay and company profit at the same time (refer to William B. Abernathy's [The Sin Of Wages](#)).



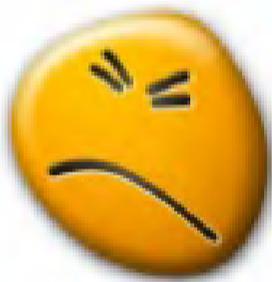
OOPS! #7: “YOU DID A GOOD JOB, BUT...”

What’s wrong?

It has become commonplace to provide positive and constructive feedback. While it seems efficient to do both at once, the positive statement rarely has the intended effect and employees end up focusing only on the negative.

What to do instead!

Be clear to separate the good and the bad. Give the good first, and at a later time deliver the corrective feedback. That way the good will be valued, and the employee will be more responsive to the corrective feedback.



OOPS! #8: THE SANDWICH

What goes wrong?

The sandwich practice is a cousin of the “You did a good job, but...” and creates a “waiting for the other shoe to drop” environment where attempts at social reinforcement are received with suspicion.

What to do instead!

Be direct. If behavior needs correcting, pinpoint the behavior to be stopped: Tell the person the consequences of continuing the undesirable behavior. Then discuss the behavior you want to see in its place and positively reinforce all instances of the new behavior.



OOPS! #9: OVERVALUING SMART, TALENTED PEOPLE

What’s wrong!

Smart, talented people are not in short supply. Thinking that some employees are smarter than others is harmful to all. ▶

What to do instead!

Most of what we call talent is nothing more than unrecognized practice. Given the right environment, most people can become “smart and talented.” Create a culture where managers are rewarded for the number of “smart, talented people” they produce -- not hire.



OOPS! #10: THE BUDGET PROCESS

What's wrong?

The budget process is a game: Ask for more than you need, and hope that you get what you need. Managers who do more with less are often punished rather than positively reinforced.

What to do instead!

Include ways to reward those who do more with less. Extend this incentive to all employees. Properly arranged, this can create a culture of continuous right-sizing.



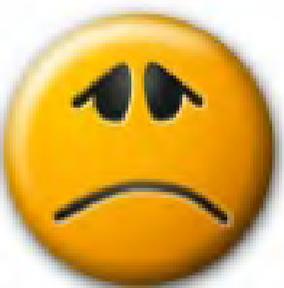
OOPS! #11: PROMOTING PEOPLE NO ONE LIKES

What's wrong?

There is a perception in leadership that managers who are well-liked are not effective at producing results. There is a correlation between ineffective managers and other operational costs: high turnover, grievances, absenteeism, training, and recruitment.

What to do instead!

Look for managers and leaders who get results the right way: those who understand behavior from a scientific perspective and can design systems, policies, and procedures that bring out the best in people every day. These folks are always well-liked.



OOPS! #12: DOWNSIZING

What's wrong?

The way companies downsize is rarely effective. Terminations are typically made in a matter-of-fact way and remaining employees ▶

are given more work. More often than not, surviving employees spend more time looking for another job than looking for ways to be more effective and productive.

What to do instead!

Get employees involved in a solution as a first step to avoiding a lay-off. If the lay-off happens anyway, be more generous than you need to with those who are downsized; that will help calm the anxieties of surviving employees.



OOPS! #13: MERGERS, ACQUISITIONS, AND OTHER FORMS OF REORGANIZING

What's wrong?

Financial considerations almost always trump human ones in any form of reorganization. None will be successful without the energetic, enthusiastic behavior of all employees. Yet plans for creating such behavior are usually a mere afterthought.

What to do instead!

Make decisions quickly. Incorporate the best practices of both organizations into the work of the new organization. Integrate policies, management practices, and managers. Make sure that all managers know how to build positive reinforcement into all of the work of the new organization on the first day so that employees will see that it is and can trust that all will be okay. ■



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