




Management Concepts Series – 2010

* *Common-Sense Guidelines for Successful Organizations* *

	Management Concept #10 <i>Mistakes, Problems, Intimidation, and Leadership</i>
<p>Active Management Pillar Applicability</p> 	<p><i>You are intimidating.</i> If you are a supervisor, manager, director, or executive, you are intimidating. The nature of each of these titles includes power over the fate of others. It's part of your identity as a member of the management team. It isn't a bad thing. The management hierarchy is the most effective form of organizational structure in the history of the world. So, get over it. You are intimidating.</p> <p><i>But:</i> as a leader, you need to understand that the power of your position can lead to isolation, misleading information, and bad decisions. You will need to deliberately craft your management style and practices to encourage (and require) transparent discussion and resolution of problems and mistakes. This is done through a culture of accountability rather than accusation or vindictiveness. It requires a strong bias toward solution rather than sunk cost thinking. Part and parcel of this culture is the understanding of the nature of mistakes and problems:</p> <p><i>Mistakes</i> Human beings learn and grow through a single primary mechanism: mistakes. We try something new and we fail. We try it again and we are a little better at it. We practice until we become proficient.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ If you make a basket the first time you shoot the ball, it was probably pure luck and you learned nothing. As you practice, you come to know your muscles, how energy is stored in the spring of the ball, body balance, glass vs. swish, and eventually become a pretty good shooter. ❖ Executives learn almost universally through mistakes the difference between delegation and abdication. <p>Expect mistakes from your staff and yourself. If there are no mistakes, no one is doing anything different than they did yesterday. And remember this: Making the mistake is seldom the downfall of a person or organization. Hiding the mistake is the road to perdition. (Can you say Watergate?)</p> <p><i>Note: You can learn from others' mistakes as well. That and the ability to make beer separate us from other advanced primates.</i></p>

Problems

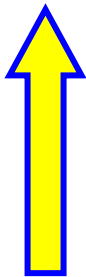
A problem is a flag. A problem is a thing to be solved and learned from. A problem can be a challenge or just something to be fixed. Problems will indicate opportunities, weaknesses, and threats. Without an awareness of your problems, as a manager, you are operating blind.

Note: Don't spend too much time on the semantics of problems. (i.e. "we have no problems, only challenges") The word "challenge" is slightly more positive sounding. Use it if you want. But don't jump on people for using the "P" word. Personally, I think the word "problem" is more descriptive in most cases. If I'm planning to climb a mountain, I have a challenge. If I break my ankle on the slope, I have a problem.

Leadership

Mistakes and problems are inherent in human activity. They are good in that they are the shadows cast by bold action and growth. They provide you with the signposts for both urgent action and for future plans. Expect them. Encourage their discussion and the understanding of their root causes. Work them. Solve them. Without them you will not grow and you may not survive. Be very worried if you are not seeing them. Because believe me, they are there!

Don't forget the results reporting scheme below. It's a joke, but sadly it does happen. Your job: make sure you hear the real story.



President to Board: It is good

Vice President to President: It actively promotes growth and vigor of the company

Director to Vice President: It promotes growth, and it is very powerful

Manager to Director: It aids plant growth, and it is very strong

Supervisor to Manager: It is a container of excrement, it is very strong, and it bothers us

Worker to Supervisor: It is a pail of dung, and we can't live with the smell

Worker to Worker: It is a crock of s**t and it stinks

About Agovia Consulting

Agovia is your partner in crafting common-sense plans, execution governance, and management practices that are laser-focused and, by design, create your results and your success. We help you solve your problems today and help assure your success tomorrow through management practices built on outcomes, results, and achievement.

Managing to Success

Success requires the alignment and coordination of many factors. Enterprises must be competent at, not only the elements of their core mission, they must also have the ability to create and maintain the infrastructure that surrounds and supports that mission.

What We Do

Agovia is a management consulting firm. It's what we do. Picture us a management fitness coach. We help you develop and strengthen the skills you need to succeed. We have provided consultation and solutions to multiple industries including: Information Technology, Insurance, Universities, and Homeless Services. We bring you the support, advice, and driving facilitation that allow you to stop "planning" and start getting results.

Services

- ❖ **Positioning for the Win**
- ❖ **Identity Development (Mission & Vision)**
- ❖ **Team Effectiveness Coaching**
- ❖ **Strategic and Tactical Planning**
- ❖ **Planning and Governance Training**
- ❖ **Organization Turn-Around**
- ❖ **Retreat Facilitation**
- ❖ **Runaway Project Services**
- ❖ **Problem Solving – A Cultural Effective Approach**
- ❖ **Conflict Mediation**
- ❖ **Team/Function Start-Up**

Trust yourself

Experience tells us that most of the time you do know what you are doing. You are the expert in your core domain area. The challenges businesses often encounter are nuts & bolts issues: organization, clear vision, discipline, management infrastructure, and communication. Sometimes you just need a catalyst.

We can help.

We listen.

We pay attention.

We work with you

