

11 THINGS MANAGERS SHOULD NEVER SAY TO THEIR TEAM

AND WHAT TO SAY INSTEAD

Have you ever wondered how your management style could be affecting your team? Or if there might be a better way to engage with them? Sometimes what seems like a good thing to say could actually be damaging.

THE COACHING METHOD AND ITS BENEFITS

Many modern leaders are turning to coaching style leadership; a system based on asking questions rather than issuing orders or making statements.

+12%

+13%

80% of people who have received coaching report positive results?

A strong coaching culture at an organization can boost **employee engagement by 12%** and **productivity by 13%**¹

80% of people who have received coaching report positive results?²

Here are 11 potentially damaging THINGS YOU SHOULD NEVER SAY TO YOUR TEAM, along with a coaching style question you can ask instead.

1 "I DON'T PAY YOU SO I CAN DO YOUR JOB FOR YOU."

Why not say it?
Dictatorial statements and threats won't inspire loyalty or great work from your team.³

What to ask instead:
"What would be your plan in this situation?"

2 "NICE JOB TODAY."

Why not say it?
Generic platitudes like this make it sound like you're not really paying attention to what they're doing.⁴

What to ask instead:
"How did you find [their current task] today?"

An open culture is the most valued thing by employees:

67% of people value recognition for quality work, manager support and opportunities to share feedback with decision-makers.⁵

3 "THAT CLIENT DRIVES ME CRAZY!"

Why not say it?
It shows your team that you don't take customer service seriously and that it's ok for them to do the same.⁶

What to ask instead:
"What do you think causes [client] to be a challenge for us?"

4 "KEEP DOING WHAT YOU'RE DOING."

Why not say it?
Many team members require specific and constructive feedback to help them develop.⁶

What to ask instead:
You're excelling with [appropriate task or project]. Are there any areas in which you wish to develop?"

Team members value feedback:

Nearly 60% reported that they would like feedback on a daily or weekly basis.⁷

5 "DON'T WASTE MY TIME; WE'VE ALREADY TRIED THAT BEFORE."

Why not say it?
This shuts down innovation and makes your team feel uncomfortable to bring you new ideas.⁴

What to ask instead:
"What other options do you see?"

6 "WHY DIDN'T YOU DO THIS?" "WHY DID YOU DO IT THAT WAY?"

Why not say it?
Accusatory questions can de-motivate your team. It's human nature to feel defensive when someone asks "Why?"

What to ask instead:
"How could we improve next time?"

Giving constructive feedback is not always easy:

Around 9 out of 10 managers avoid giving constructive feedback for fear of negative reactions.⁸

7 "I DON'T HAVE TIME TO TALK RIGHT NOW."

Why not say it?
Taking time out to speak with your team helps them feel valued and encourages them to grow.⁹

What to ask instead:
"I'd like to discuss this but I'm busy right now. Can you book in some time for us to discuss this further?"

8 "THAT'S NOT IMPORTANT."

Why not say it?
Quickly dismissing a concern from team members can make them feel like their thoughts are not valued.⁶

What to ask instead:
"Explain to me what concerns you about this issue?"

9 "WAS THAT CLEAR?" "DOES THAT MAKE SENSE TO EVERYONE?"

Why not say it?
You won't get an accurate picture of whether your team understands you by asking this.

What to ask instead:
"Could you walk me through the plan to make sure we're on the same page?"

1 If you have provided them with a lot of information, they might not know how to respond.
2 If it's a team meeting, they might not speak up for fear of looking like the only one who's confused.⁹

10 "FAILURE IS NOT AN OPTION."

Why not say it?
Statements like this can make team members unwilling to experiment or innovate for fear of making mistakes.¹⁰

What to ask instead:
"What is our backup plan if this idea doesn't work?"

11 "LEAVE YOUR PERSONAL ISSUES AT HOME."

Why not say it?
Being insensitive to employees' issues shows them that you don't care about their wellbeing. This can negatively affect morale.¹⁰

What to ask instead:
"Is there anything that's bothering you at the moment?"

WHAT TO DO WHEN YOU'VE SAID SOMETHING YOU SHOULDN'T HAVE

If you lose your cool, don't worry. Here's how you can recover in 3 easy steps:

1 Determine if it's necessary to say anything about the incident

Pay attention to how your team acts toward you to determine if what you said is affecting them.

2 Acknowledge your mistake

Taking ownership of your mistake will earn back the trust of your team.

3 Explain and move on

Calmly say what you meant to say in the first place, then move on.¹¹

Simply switching from giving orders to asking questions can have a huge impact on the productivity and wellbeing of your team. By listening to them and being open with constructive feedback, you will be sure to get the best out of your team members.

So why not give it a try? Next time you have a team meeting, try asking a few questions.

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