

WHAT YOUR FOLLOWERS WANT YOU TO KNOW....

Much of a team's success lies in the pattern of connection a leader has with direct reports, and the way he or she empowers them to extend that pattern to **his or her** direct reports, and so on. In a business environment that is woefully lacking in employee commitment, leaders who aren't actively connecting with people are themselves a liability.

Below are the top seven complaints that followers have about their leaders. Whilst pretty comprehensive – this is not an exhaustive list. Although many complaints about leaders are symptoms – and can be traced back to one of the following.

#1 Failing to set out a clear aim, *raison d'être* or mission for the team

Without a clear purpose, team members - your followers, have no direction and potentially embark down different paths, squabbling over priorities. More work is spent **putting** things right then **getting** things right and that can take up to between 25% – 75% of your time and theirs!

#2 Failing to meet individually with each and every team member **AT LEAST** once a month

Without regular, ringfenced quality time with your followers, they start to **feel ignored and unimportant**. They lose the connection with 'Management', causing passive (or active) rebellion through 'Them and Us' justifications. Morale plummets, relationships suffer - and bear in mind a bad relationship with the boss is cited by around 80% of people who leave the organisation.

#3 Failing to act on or 'close the loop' on requests and issues raised individually or collectively

To close the loop will avoid your followers feeling **ignored and dismissed**. If you fail to get back to them, they will grow agitated and yet passive feeling powerless to make a difference. Agitation and passivity = disconnection and apathy. Through low morale and a feeling of pointlessness, your followers stop giving you their best ideas – often taking their ideas to another organisation.



#4 Failing to elicit (or even being open to) challenge

If you fail at this hurdle, your followers will feel afraid to point out where things are not working (or could be better), and will disconnect from the work through a feeling of '*fait a complis*'. Worse still, they will start to act in the same way to THEIR colleagues... Remember that leaders lead by example whether or not they mean to. Under this type of leadership, productivity suffers when the leader isn't present... and discretionary effort drops to non-existent; a powerless team member is an apathetic team member who will recruit others to their point of view.

#5 Failing to be specific in their positive and constructive feedback

Depending on which feedback is used (positive or constructive), **team members feel either empty positivity or sullen negativity**. They don't understand what 'excellent' or even 'good' looks like and so seek to maintain the lowest common denominator. Productivity and morale is compromised.

#6 Failing to appreciate/give credit for individual and collective effort and say 'Thank you'

Failure here will create in your followers a lack of confidence, validation and camaraderie. In studies, validation and appreciation is counted above salary as a motivational factor. Team members will feel less appreciated and give less back, dropping to the lowest acceptable work ethic – just enough to avoid a rollocking. Many will simply leave.

#7 Failing to maintain visibility/communication in general

This failure leads to followers feeling abandoned and losing respect for their leader. They 'double guess' what's REALLY going on with you... some will go to their boss's boss for clarity. When this failure manifests, team members re-trench, keep their heads down, uphold and justify their inherent fearfulness - and potentially take anonymous pot-shots at the boss. Productivity drops to an all-time low and good people leave.



Others, that followers tell me (which may be symptoms of the issues above), include:

- "Is disorganised and reactive"
- "Micro-manages me"
- "Doesn't trust me"
- "Is not interested in my development"
- "Doesn't care about my current workload"

What it all boils down to is that business is about people. It always has been, and always will be. Too often businesses fall short, not because leaders don't understand the business, but because they don't understand what the people who work for them need in order to bring their best effort to work.