6 Mistakes Managers Make That Drive Their Employees Crazy
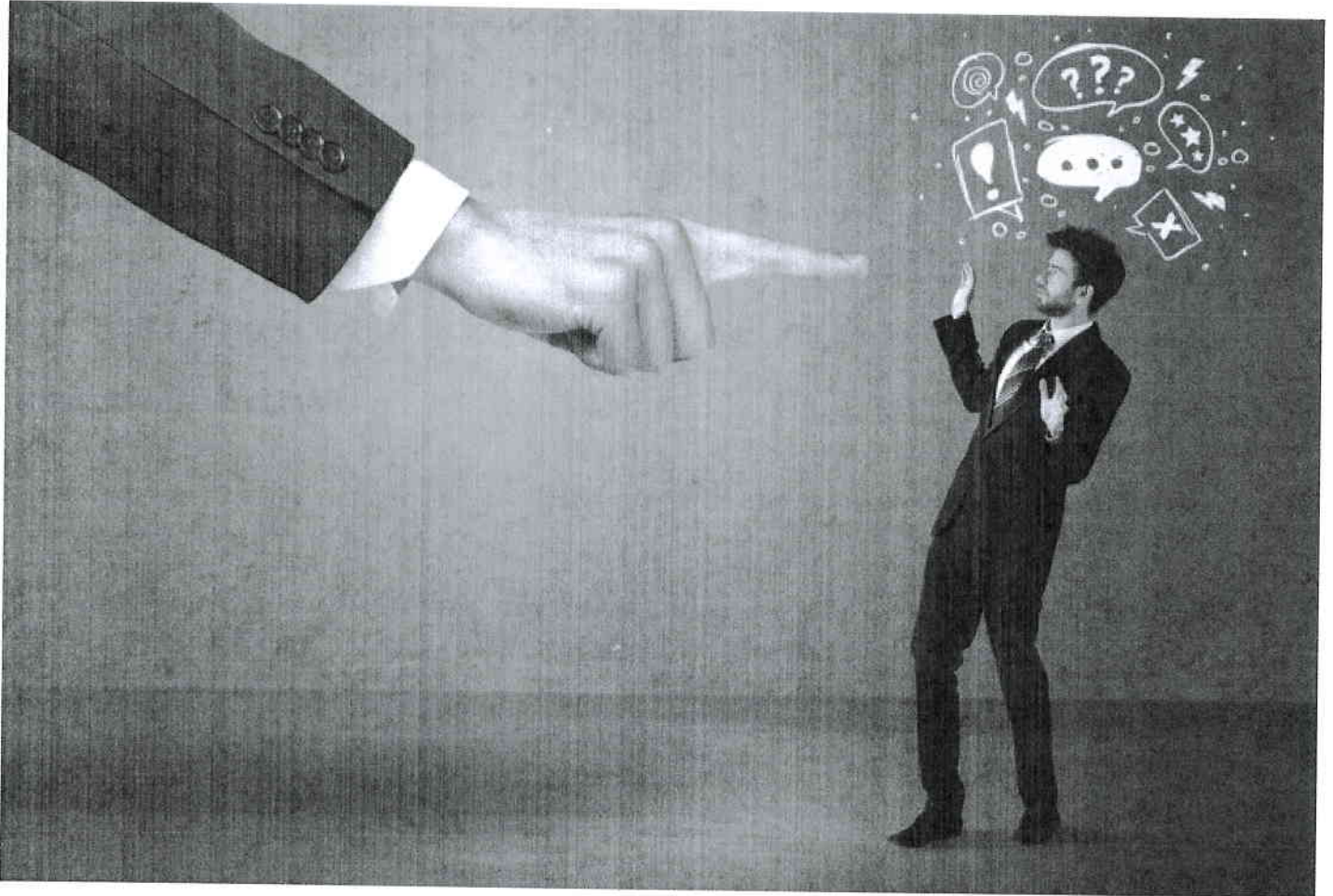
By Dianna BooherMay 24, 2016TLNT

If you haven't worked for these managers, you've heard about them. Employees buzz about these bosses over lunch, complain about them around the water cooler, and chew them up at the dinner table with their spouse. And if these leaders don't get some feedback or training from their superiors, they'll soon cost their organization big bucks because of employee turnover.

At the least, for the individual reporting to such managers, frustration leads to deep-seated resentment that often triggers a career move.

Mistake 1: Exposing the hole in the donut—the mistake, the misstep, the misunderstanding
These managers never seem to focus on the perfect circle. Instead, their first comment calls attention to the inconsequential mistake. They ask for trivial back-up data that you failed to bring with you to the presentation. They imply that maybe you have misunderstood the politics surrounding the situation and therefore have written the email with a more aggressive tone than appropriate. Rather than the positive result, their focus lands on the "gotcha."

Mistake 2: Wearing their moods like armor

These managers have not learned to master their moods at work. Their facial expression, gestures, voice, and walk work like a weather vane, telling you whether it's safe to approach or stand clear. When it's cloudy or, heaven forbid, stormy weather with them, their bodily weather vane tells you to stay out of their path: Do not phone, text, email, or otherwise expect a pleasant response until they *feel* better.

Mistake 3: Playing the part of know-it-all

Although great leaders learn to hire people smarter than they are in key disciplines, less confident managers feel out of control around brilliant staff members and colleagues. So they have to keep reminding people that they are the smartest person in the room. They communicate that know-it-all attitude in various ways: by doing all the talking, by refusing to listen to new ideas, by lots of I-told-you-so lines and looks after failed attempts and with a plethora of war stories.

Mistake 4: Micromanaging the process rather than stating the goal

Leaders assign a project, state the goal, provide the resources, communicate any warnings or safeguards, and state any required check-back points along the way. Then they let you go about the task until it's completed. Some managers, however, haven't learned how to delegate. Instead, they assign a project, blindfold team members as to where they're going, and then lead them through the process. A huge waste of time for the manager and frustration for the team.

Mistake 5: Playing hide-and-seek

The disappearing boss is here today and gone tomorrow. In the office at 10:00. Missing in action at 2:00. Mysteriously back to work at 4:00. Comes in at 11:00 the following day. Ask them why, and their explanation makes perfect sense to them: "I don't owe you an explanation. I can work from anywhere. I've put in 50 hours already this week."

What they don't understand is why someone needs to know their physical location: To sign documents, to attend an onsite meeting, to meet with a customer on site, to answer an unexpected question, to make a quick emergency decision. Can they be interrupted wherever they are? If the CEO or a VIP client calls, when will they be able to return the call or answer the email? Being unable to get in touch with this disappearing boss creates frustration — not to mention leaving a bad impression with clients and colleagues.

Mistake 6: Announcing or canceling staff meetings at the last minute

This action implies that no one's schedule counts but the manager's. Productivity plummets for everyone else as they reshuffle the day's projects, including client commitments. Last-minute, or overtime, meetings send a strong message to outsiders waiting on attention: "My manager here has decided you customers or colleagues don't matter. Tough luck."

Managing a team of diverse personalities can be a challenging proposition. Why increase the odds for dissension?