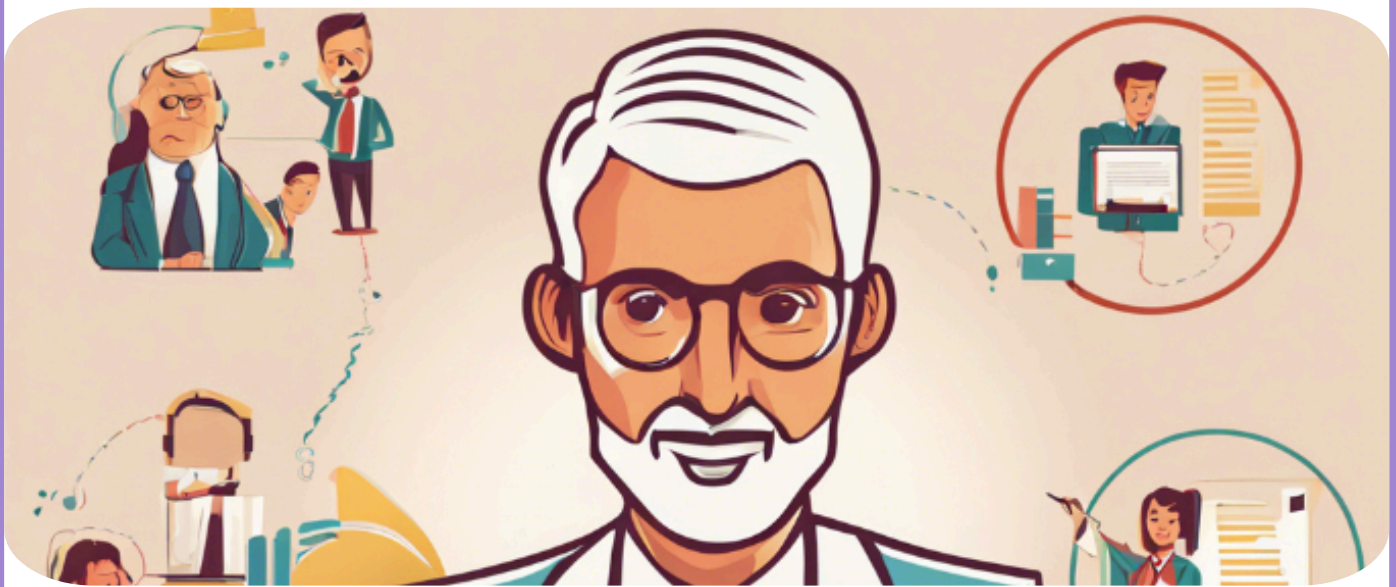




2024

10 Common Mistakes Business Owners/MD's Make with Their Team – and How to Avoid Them



1) **Not Communicating your business's strategic mission and vision effectively**

Chances are you are aware of the reasons behind starting your business – whether to address a market need or contribute to a better world. However, have your managers and staff been informed of these reasons?

Without a clear goal or a compelling reason for your business's existence, your team may experience confusion and lack of motivation. When employees understand the bigger picture and their role in it, they're more engaged and driven. By communicating your strategic goals clearly helps create a united and efficient work environment.

Address it by:

- Keep the conversation going with your team by engaging in discussions about goals, acknowledging achievements, and openly learning from mistakes.
- Set meaningful and practical goals that drive progress consistently throughout the year, not just during annual reviews!



2) **Causing delays and hindering progress by holding up decisions**

I understand how precious your business is to you, it's your creation, and naturally, you want to be involved in every decision. I feel the same way about my own business. However, there's a delicate balance between staying in control and micromanaging. Insisting on overseeing every single decision can overwhelm you and create bottlenecks, slowing down your team's progress. This scenario can lead to frustration for both you and your team, hindering the swift advancement of your business.

Address it by:

- It's essential to trust your senior team and managers to make sound decisions on your behalf.
- Clearly communicate which decisions you need to be involved in and which ones you trust them to handle independently.
- Empower your experts to create straightforward, effective processes for routine tasks. This will not only relieve your stress but also enable your team to work more efficiently and drive your business forward at a faster pace.



3) **Failing to set the standard that create a thriving company culture**

As an MD or business owner, your team looks to you for leadership every single day. It's not just about setting standards for what's good or bad, but showing by example. If you have a senior team, they need to walk the talk too – nothing frustrates employees more than 'do as I say, not as I do.' True culture isn't about perks like pizza or casual Fridays; it's about a team with shared values working together towards common goals, solving problems and achieve success together.

Address it by:

- Defining your company's culture goes beyond slogans and posters. It's about setting clear expectations and accountability look like in real actions, not just words.
- Leading by example means incorporating those values every day and addressing any gaps across all levels of the organization.
- Being visible and approachable builds trust and encourages open dialogue with your team.
- Creating a positive employee experience is vital – instead of fostering fear, cultivate an environment where people feel supported and motivated to excel.





4) Refusing to adapt to current trends or developments

Ever heard the saying that standing still in business means moving backwards? It's true. If you're stuck in old ways how you treat your team, serve your customers, and set expectations while your competitors adapt and innovate, you'll find yourself left behind. I've seen too many businesses caught in a time warp, doing the same old thing and wondering why they're not seeing results.

Your industry evolves; are you evolving with it?

Address it by:

- Continuously reassessing your strategy to stay on course, staying ahead of industry changes, and staying informed about legal, financial, and employment trends to meet the evolving needs of your team.





5) Not embracing new ideas

What really drives job satisfaction for your team? Beyond compensation and benefits, it's about giving them meaningful work where they can problem-solve and see positive outcomes. But for them to excel, they need the freedom to propose new ideas and solutions without fear of reprimand or being overlooked. As your business evolves, it's important to acknowledge that you can't oversee every aspect all the time.

Trusting your teams to perform at their best not only empowers them but also allows you to focus on strategic priorities. This approach not only encourages innovation and initiative but also cultivates a culture where everyone feels valued and motivated to contribute their best efforts.

Address it by:

- Recognize you can't master everything. Invest in skilled professionals, whether consultants or employees, for expert guidance.
- Promote a culture where learning from mistakes is encouraged.
- Optimize bureaucracy to promote efficiency.
- Empower your team to provide constructive feedback openly, building a culture of communication.
- Foster a foundation of trust, not suspicion, to cultivate a positive workplace environment.



6) When You and Your Senior Leaders Don't Lead by Example and Cultivate the Right Culture

Employees get really frustrated when they see senior leaders not leading by example and struggling with basic decision-making. It often shows a misunderstanding of what makes a good workplace culture. It's not about superficial perks like casual Fridays or occasional pizza parties — it's about treating your team as capable adults and avoiding a patronizing approach.

As a business owner, creating a genuine culture means empowering your employees to succeed and contribute effectively to the company.

Address it by:

- Clearly define and communicate your company culture to everyone.
- Invest in leadership training for senior leaders to ensure they're equipped for their roles.
- Avoid promoting "accidental managers" who lack necessary training or people skills.
- Promote individuals into leadership roles based on strong people skills, not just technical expertise or tenure.
- Ensure your teams feel psychologically safe, fostering an environment where everyone can contribute and grow.





7) **Avoiding tough conversation**

Let's face it, tough conversations aren't anyone's favourite. But avoiding them only lets problems fester. When you don't address poor performance or behaviour, it can grow into a bigger issue. Your dedicated team members will become frustrated if they see someone getting away with underperforming or behaving badly just because they're good at their job. Tackling these challenges head-on not only maintains standards but also shows respect for those who consistently perform well.

Address it by:

- If you're unsure how to tackle these discussions, investing in some training can really boost your confidence.
- Embed this skill into your company culture so all your managers feel equipped and supported in handling these situations. This approach ensures problems are addressed promptly, maintains fairness, and respects the efforts of your hardworking team members.



8) Valuing your customers over your staff

Businesses frequently excel at using their values and sales strategies to win over customers but drop the ball when it comes to using that same expertise to attract top talent. They might create a good marketing message but fall short in crafting an enticing job offer and delivering a stellar experience for new hires. Remember, your customers today could be your best employees tomorrow, so it's important to align your marketing and employee experience to attract and retain both.

Address it by:

- Design a captivating branding and marketing campaign to attract your dream candidates.
- When your staff shines in their interactions with customers or colleagues, back them up with unwavering support.
- Team up with a People Expert to design an exceptional employee experience that keeps your team engaged and motivated.





9) Lacking knowledge of UK employment law

UK employment law is complex and constantly evolving, and as a busy business owner or MD, it's easy to fall behind. Falling behind can lead to unintentional legal missteps, exposing you to complaints and tribunal claims from job applicants, current, or former employees. Defending legal claims can be costly, even if you come out on top, so staying informed and compliant is essential to safeguard your business and avoid expensive complications.

Address it by:

- Work with a people expert to stay updated on employment law and keep your employee documents current, avoiding costly errors.
- They can also guide you through specific employee issues, ensure you handle them correctly and legally, give you confidence and protect your business.





10) Not recognizing the full potential of your People/HR function to enhance your business or having it managed by your PA, EA, or Finance Director handle it can limit its value and impact.

In my years as an HR Consultant, no one has ever asked me to handle their Company VAT return as an extra task. Yet, it's all too common for HR roles to be delegated to non-specialists, like a Personal Assistant or Finance Director. A truly effective People/HR function isn't just about handling administrative tasks or compliance, or organizing events—it's about driving productivity, engagement, and innovation.

When done right, it reduces turnover, cuts absenteeism, lowers grievances and tribunals, and creates a happier, more dedicated workforce. Many of my clients find value in using me as a sounding board because, as an MD or Founder, it can be lonely at the top, and having someone to discuss ideas with can be incredibly valuable.

Address it by:

- Get an HR/People Audit to see how your people function is doing. If you sign up for my "Peace of Mind" Package at Essential or VIP level within 30 days of the audit being completed, then the audit is free (normally worth £995+VAT). It's a smart way to get both valuable insights and ongoing support at no extra cost.





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ABOUT ME

I'm **Doug Betts**, the founder of Sure Betts HR Solutions Ltd – and I'm on a mission to make your workplace better. I've worked in the People/HR space for over 20 years across many sectors and in addition to my Peace of Mind HR Service, I also offer training that turns nervous new line managers into great people leaders, and specialise in dealing with difficult employee situations, leading on change, pay and benefit benchmarking and HR Software.

I am a member of the CIPD, the professional body for HR people (Chartered status) and hold a Level 7 Qualification in Coaching and Mentoring.

I have also been shortlisted for the 2024 Great British Entrepreneur Awards in the category of Service Industries in the East of England.

WHAT YOU GET WITH ME

- ✓ Strong sounding board with no nonsense, practical advice on how to get the best out of your people, even if you've contacted me because you've got into a difficult situation.
- ✓ No convoluted procedures/corporate HR BS.
- ✓ Friendly, engaging, concise training sessions for your people leaders without the normal training day cliches!
- ✓ If you sign up to one of my subscription packages there are no lengthy contract tie ins like you get with national chains,
- ✓ Regular, consistent, legally compliant advice and guidance to stop problems escalating
- ✓ Innovative ideas to continue to drive your teams engagement and retention.

HOW YOU CAN WORK WITH ME

Book here <https://www.surebettshr.com/about> to get a free call to discuss a no obligation people/HR audit for your business to make sure we're a good fit for each other.