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What is this?

# 16 signs that leaders are negatively affecting their teams



L-R: Vinnie Fisher, Natalie Ruiz, Cody McLain, Kris Lindahl, Amanda Cecconi, Suneera Madhani, Tony Julianelle, Keith Woods, Joy Frestedt, Brock Berry, Joe Reilly, Brett Farmiloe, Zee Ali, Solomon Timothy, Rachel Namoff, Brent Foley



## **The Business Journals Leadership Trust By Business Journals Leadership Trust Expert Panel®**

Business Journals Leadership Trust is an invite-only network of influential business leaders, executives and entrepreneurs in your community.

As a leader, you're doing more than simply managing your team members and directing their efforts. You're also setting the tone and culture of your organization, something that directly impacts your team's productivity, morale and bottom line.

Below, the members of [Business Journals Leadership Trust](#) share 16 seemingly innocuous ways leaders can negatively impact their teams. If you find yourself relating to any of these situations, read on for their advice on what you can do to change.

## **1. You don't enjoy coming to work every day.**

Leaders need to have the right attitude and pass it on to their employees. If you as a leader do not enjoy coming to work every day, then there is a problem with the culture. Culture is an important aspect of all companies, and if employees do not get along, it is the leader's job to sift out the bad apples. When you have a happy work environment your business will excel faster than you could imagine. - [Vinnie Fisher, Fully Accountable](#)

## **2. You're overly involved.**

Great leaders help create cultures and teams that can make the right call in their absence. Every day, thousands of decisions – ranging from small to massive – are made in organizations, and leaders can't weigh in on everything. A mistake well-meaning leaders can make is to be overly involved, thereby undermining their team's confidence, stifling growth and slowing productivity. - [Natalie Ruiz, AnswerConnect](#)

## **3. You discourage employees from coming to you without solutions to problems.**

Those who approach company culture with an attitude of “Don't come to me with a problem unless you have a solution” miss opportunities, as this method only serves to undermine the employee's ability to bring issues up to you. Instead, you should reward problem-finding and then work with those individuals to brainstorm a solution. - [Cody McLain, SupportNinja](#)

## **4. You freeze up in a crisis.**

When leaders freeze, their teams lose confidence. This year, we saw a lot of leaders freeze when Covid-19 hit. Teams want to follow someone who confidently makes

decisions or takes a stand. People look to leaders for direction and guidance, especially during tough times. A lack of confidence from leadership can very quickly have a negative effect on an entire team. - [Kris Lindahl, Kris Lindahl Real Estate](#)

## **5. You treat great employees and low performers in the same way.**

In working with more than 70 companies over the past decade, we've seen our share of great cultures be sabotaged by leaders who struggled to make tough decisions about underperforming employees. By treating great employees and low performers the same, leadership can frustrate all employees, impacting their willingness to go the extra mile. - [Amanda Cecconi, Punching Nun Group](#)

## **6. You overwork your best employees.**

Many leaders mean well when they entrust great employees with more high-level tasks and projects. However, this normalizes over-performance as a measure of achievement. Pay close attention to the amount of work sent to good employees, and compare it to what is sent to those whose work quality is lower. Find alternative ways to reward good employees that will lower the risk of burnout. The workload should always remain balanced. - [Suneera Madhani, Fattmerchant](#)

## **7. Your team members' roles are unclear.**

There are many ways in which leaders can have a negative impact on team members — one way is not providing clarity around roles. This can be harder than most people realize, especially in small organizations where employees often wear many hats. In these situations, it is even more important to communicate and align expectations. - [Tony Julianelle, Atlas Real Estate](#)

## **8. You surround yourself with 'yes men.'**

Some leaders tend to surround themselves with “yes men” and push away, or reprimand, employees who offer differing opinions. I think this is due to a leader's

insecurity. The best way to resolve it is to confront that person through senior leadership or the company's chairman or board. Then introduce a leadership coach or governance specialist to remediate the behavior. - [Keith Woods, KB Woods Public Relations](#)

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## **9. You allow your emotions to take over in difficult situations.**

Dealing with difficult situations is common for a good leader. Detaching from emotion is critical. A leader must be able to shift from a highly charged event to interactions with others without carrying over the stress. Employees deserve a calm leader who can navigate difficult times competently. - [Joy Frestedt, Frestedt Incorporated](#)

## **10. You pay most of your attention to low performers.**

In a time-starved world, it's not uncommon for a manager to focus most, if not all, of their time on poor performers. This can cause the best team members to look elsewhere for leadership, find a new job and leave that manager with a team of poor performers. Don't ignore your high flyers; help them fly higher and you will, too. - [Brock Berry, AdCellerant](#)

## **11. You recognize problems more often than accomplishments.**

With multiple responsibilities and limited time, managers are typically very busy. A challenge that may arise from this is only addressing issues or problems and not properly investing the time to regularly recognize accomplishments and thank employees for specific jobs they have completed or helped to complete. - [Joe Reilly, National Drug Screening, Inc.](#)

## **12. You're careless with your words.**

One of my biggest surprises as a first-time CEO is that the words you use as a leader will be words used at your company. If leaders swear, employees will curse too. Sometimes, something as simple as a choice of words can have a negative impact on good employees. Even when speaking in private, CEOs should choose their words wisely because of the impact on culture. - [Brett Farmiloe, Markitors](#)

## **13. You micromanage your team.**

Micromanagement stems from a lack of organization, KPIs and processes, and it's probably the fastest way to smother your team and send them running for the hills. However, there's one universal solution that's guaranteed to identify and solve a problem, no matter what it is: Ask your employees for feedback, then commit to adjusting your management style based on that feedback. - [Zee Ali, Z-Swag](#)

## **14. You assume there are no problems if you don't hear complaints.**

Good employees seem content; they do their work and do it well. What can go wrong? Many leaders think that if an employee does not complain and gets the job done, it's not necessary to take the time for one-on-ones. This is so wrong. You can have a negative effect on your best players by simply ignoring them. Pay attention to all the people in the team, not just the ones who need help. - [Solomon Timothy, OneIMS](#)

## **15. Your employees see your fear, anxiety and worry.**

Gratitude, compassion and gumption are small but powerful motivators for leaders to engage positively and set the example for employees. When fear, anxiety and worry are rising to the top, employees are likely to succumb. A positive attitude for leaders is essential. - [Rachel Namoff, Arapaho Asset Management](#)

## **16. You're more of a 'manager' than a 'leader.'**

Leaders often confuse leadership with management. Management is figuring out who has to do what and when. Leadership is helping folks understand why they should be doing it and convincing them that it's relevant and important. Leaders also need to maintain personal and professional bonds with those whom they lead, while not being their "buddy." - Brent Foley, TRIAD Architects