

10 Management Mistakes That Impact On Performance In The NHS

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Being in a management role in the NHS is tough. Most NHS organisations have significant numbers of staff, huge demand for services and big budgets.

Good management is part and parcel of any successful organisation. The NHS is no different in that respect.

There are however some significant differences in managing in the NHS compared to other sectors. There are high numbers of highly bright and talented professionals. The funding comes from the public purse. Demand for services is not known with certainty. There is a huge drive to make better use of resources.

In the NHS **how managers approach managing can have a huge impact on performance, on reputation, on services, on patient satisfaction and results.**

In this report I share 10 common management mistakes. Some of these mistakes I have made myself when I worked in the NHS. Some I see my clients making and hear about through training, coaching and consulting within the NHS.

Enjoy the report.

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Mistake #1: Failing To Engage Staff

There are huge variations in the levels of staff engagement in the NHS as the NHS Staff engagement survey shows.

One of the hardest groups to engage are the doctors. Yet in truth they are the very group you have to engage if you are going to achieve results.

When training doctors one of the most common concerns raised is that management are disconnected from what goes on in the front line.

Being visible, being supportive, having empathy and understanding what life is like at the coal face all make a huge difference to levels of engagement.

As most know **when you get engagement you get all the benefits that go with it.** Productivity increases, morale improves which leads to increased patient satisfaction.

Mistake #2: Micro Managing

You might think that you have to have your finger in every pie. The reality is that this is just not feasible.

When you micro manage you actually become part of the problem. By that I mean because you are spread so thinly, things ground to a halt because you don't have the capacity to deal with everything on your plate.

Another disadvantage of micro managing is the message you communicate. Basically you are saying that you don't trust others. If you don't trust others, why should they trust you?

Mistake #3: Not Listening

You might have heard the phrase big eyes, big ears, and small mouth. What this means if you watch and listen, you will learn more.

Obvious if you think about it. On the other hand how often do we ignore the obvious and instead do the complete opposite.

You might feel pressure to have an answer to everything. The good news is you don't have to. That is why you have a team after all.

When you listen you get ideas, insights and increase the chances of getting the buy-in of others because you understand others perspectives.

Mistake #4: Listening But Not Acting

It is important to listen as a manager. **Listening but never acting on what is suggested just creates resentment.**

After a while people just switch off. They stop suggesting. Before you know it you have half the organisation focusing on their own interests with little or no regard for the wider organisational agenda.

Mistake #5: Playing The Blame Game

In any organisation where you have high volumes of activity, things are going to go wrong. It might not be what managers want to hear but it is reality.

Good managers will accept responsibility for what has happened. They will support others, encourage them to learn and avoid them making the same mistakes again.

Poor managers will look to blame someone else or make others the scapegoat. This type of behaviour simply destroys morale.

If you are unwilling to take responsibility, don't even bother taking on a management role.

Mistake #6: Spending Excessive Amounts of Time In Meetings

In publicly funded organisations like the NHS there are always going to be meetings that must happen such as Board or Annual General Meetings.

There are however often a huge raft of meetings. **Attendance at these meetings is often expensive in terms of both time and money.**

If there was going to be this level of investment on anything else you would want to measure the return on that investment.

Lengthy periods in meetings also impacts on the time you have to take action and support your staff.

Take a bit of time to calculate how much time you are spending in meetings and assess how this is impacting on your performance.

Mistake #7: Setting Themselves And Others Up To Fail

Ask any manager what their biggest challenge is and chances are too much to do and too little time will come high on the list. You will rarely finding someone saying they are struggling to fill their time.

Managers can end up setting themselves and others up for failure. They do this by putting too much on their own and on others to do lists. You can only do a handful of significant things in any one day.

Mistake #8: Losing Sight Of Your Core Purpose

The NHS exists to serve patients. When times get tough and there are many demands on people it is all too easy to lose sight of this. You start to see waiting time targets, financial performance, length of stay and other targets as the priority.

Before you know it you have lost sight of the patient and doing what is best for them. As events at the Mid Staffordshire NHS Foundation Trust show, this can have major consequences.

Mistake #9: Trying To Make Too Many Changes All At Once

People in the NHS are extremely busy. Delivering the day to day agenda is tough enough at times. Making change and improvement is another big challenge.

Like every organisation there needs to be innovation and improvement. On the other hand if you are not careful you can end up with change overload.

When you have change overload it is really easy to have a whole host of projects in progress and nothing completed.

Focus on achieving one or a handful of changes at any one time rather than trying to do everything all at once.

Mistake #10: Failing To Utilise The Potential In Your Teams

People are at the heart of everything in the NHS. People make things happen, deliver services and results.

While most managers understand this, there is often a big difference between understanding and what actually happens in practice.

If you want to be a high performing organisation in the NHS and healthcare more generally you have to make sure that you utilise the full potential of your teams.

As they say **TEAM stands for Together Everyone Achieves More.**

About Goals and Achievements

Goals and Achievements help healthcare organisations to achieve sustainable improvements in performance, service delivery and reputation through better leadership, management and team working.

To arrange a no obligation consultation please contact Duncan Brodie, Managing Director by e-mail duncan@goalsandachievements.co.uk , by telephone on 01273 772570 or visit our website www.goalsandachievements.co.uk