

MANAGEMENT MISTAKE RECOVERY PLAN

Purpose

Rebuild trust and learn from leadership errors to strengthen team relationships.

Instructions

Use this worksheet when you've made a significant management mistake that needs addressing.

Part 1: Mistake Assessment

Situation Description

Briefly describe what happened:

Who was affected by this mistake?

When did it occur?

Impact Evaluation

How did this mistake affect:

The individual(s) directly involved:

The broader team:

Work processes or outcomes:

Trust and psychological safety:

Root Cause Analysis

What factors contributed to this mistake?

External pressures or constraints:

Process or system gaps:

Knowledge or skill gaps:

Personal triggers or blind spots:

Part 2: Recovery Planning

Acknowledgment Approach

How will you acknowledge the mistake?

To directly affected individuals:

To the broader team (if appropriate):

What specific elements need to be addressed:

Immediate Repair Actions

What specific steps will you take to address immediate impacts?

1.

Timeline:

2.

Timeline:

3.

Timeline:

Communication Strategy

How will you frame the discussion?

Key points to include:

What questions should you be prepared to answer?

Setting considerations (timing, location, participants):

Part 3: Apology Development

Effective Apology Elements

An effective apology includes specific components. Plan your approach for each:

Acknowledge the specific behavior and impact:

Take appropriate responsibility:

Express genuine regret:

Explain (without excusing) what happened:

Commit to specific changes:

Ask how to make amends:

Apology Pitfalls to Avoid

Check for these common pitfalls in your planned approach:

- ☐ Using minimizing language ("just," "only," etc.)
- ☐ Including qualifiers that shift blame ("but," "however," etc.)
- ☐ Focusing on intentions rather than impact
- ☐ Making it about your feelings rather than their experience
- ☐ Asking for reassurance or forgiveness
- ☐ Expecting immediate resolution
- ☐ Making promises you can't keep

How will you avoid these issues?

Part 4: Rebuilding Trust Plan

Trust Components to Repair

Which aspects of trust need rebuilding?

- ☐ Competence trust (belief in your capabilities)
- ☐ Reliability trust (consistency of your behavior)
- ☐ Integrity trust (alignment with stated values)
- ☐ Care trust (genuine concern for others' wellbeing)

For each selected area, specific actions to rebuild:

Consistent Behavior Changes

What ongoing behavior changes will demonstrate learning?

How will you ensure consistency in these changes?

How will you make these changes visible without being performative?

Recovery Timeline Expectations

Realistic timeframe for trust rebuilding:

Milestones that would indicate progress:

Patience needed (for yourself and others):

Part 5: Prevention Strategy

Systems and Process Improvements

What changes could prevent similar mistakes?

Workflow or process adjustments:

Decision-making approaches:

Communication structures:

Personal Development Plan

What skills or capabilities do you need to strengthen?

How will you develop these areas?

What support do you need?

Trigger Management

What situations tend to activate your management blind spots?

Early warning signs to watch for:

Strategies for managing these triggers:

Part 6: Learning Integration

Personal Reflection Questions

What does this experience teach you about:

Your leadership style:

Your values in action:

Your growth edges:

Team Learning Opportunity

How might this experience benefit the team if handled well?

What conversations could create collective learning?

How might this strengthen rather than weaken team culture?

Part 7: Self-Compassion Practice

Balanced Perspective

What's the difference between taking responsibility and harsh self-judgment?

How would you respond to a colleague who made a similar mistake?

What perspective helps you learn without diminishing yourself?

Recovery Support

Who can provide perspective and support as you navigate this?

What self-care practices will help maintain your resilience?

How will you recognize and celebrate positive steps in recovery?

Additional Context:

When you've been Sauron—when your management mistakes have caused harm or damaged trust—remember:

- **All managers make mistakes** - The difference is in how you respond and what you learn
- **Genuine recovery strengthens relationships** - Teams often respect leaders more after seeing them handle mistakes well
- **Quick acknowledgment beats perfect wording** - Promptly addressing issues is usually more important than crafting the perfect response
- **Changed behavior speaks louder than words** - Trust rebuilds through consistent actions over time, not just apologies

- **Growth requires vulnerability** - Being open about your learning process models an important quality for your team
- **Self-compassion enables genuine repair** - Excessive self-criticism often leads to defensiveness that prevents true learning

The goal isn't to never make mistakes—it's to respond to them in ways that repair harm, rebuild trust, and transform them into opportunities for growth and deeper connection.

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