Expert Insight – 8 Signs of Incompetent Managers

This download document is an Expert Insight into identifying how your managers and leaders are performing, and how they could be helped to achieve great performance. It is produced by Profiles Research institute.

Success Train Ltd is a licensed strategic business partner of Profiles Europe and use their assessment products to support clients in making informed and valuable decisions about the people they employ.

For more information about what is in this document and how we can help your business, get in touch:

Success Train People

Jackie Casey
01384 402592
jax@successtrain.co.uk
www.successtrain.co.uk
Eight Signs of Incompetent Managers
Eight Signs of Incompetent Managers. Copyright 2009 by Profiles International. All rights reserved. No part of the report may be reproduced in any form or by any electronic or mechanical means including information storage and retrieval systems without written permission from the publisher.

Publisher
Profiles Research Institute
Effective managers do more than just supervise employees. They take responsibility for ensuring that an individual succeeds, and that the team, department, or business unit achieves expected results. Effective managers are like successful coaches who develop teams that win championships year after year.

Like winning coaches, successful managers are both talented and skilled. Of course, managerial skills can be developed through training, mentoring, and experience. But if a manager lacks natural talent, his or her odds of success will diminish significantly.

In our work, we have seen time and time again that these organisations are typically more proactive than their peers when it comes to identifying and developing effective managers. The most productive companies provide their managers with the information and tools they need to understand the capabilities and styles of their teams. This gives managers a solid foundation for more effective coaching relationships.

**Over the years we have identified eight signs of incompetent managers:**
1. Poor communication skills
2. Weak leadership capabilities
3. Inability or unwillingness to adapt to change
4. Poor relationship-building skills
5. Ineffective task management
6. Insufficient production
7. Poor development of others
8. Neglectful of own personal development

Sound familiar? Let’s take a look at each of the signs in detail, and then we’ll offer practical remedies to help your managers achieve greater effectiveness.
1. Poor communication skills

The problem with communication ... is the illusion that it has been accomplished.

Poor communicators forget that manager-employee communication is a two-way street. They talk (some more effectively than others), but they seldom listen. Often they don’t read subtle cues from other people’s gestures and tend to interrupt when others are speaking. Even when they don’t interrupt, they’re often too busy formulating what they’ll say next to listen to what other people have to say.

Instead of communicating clearly in writing, in person, and when using body language, poor communicators often work in a vacuum. They neglect opportunities to listen to peers, subordinates, customers, or vendors – even when the issue has a significant impact on these very same people. They don’t try to understand other people’s positions and are quick to dismiss other points of view.

Poor communicators demonstrate negative body language that discourages others from elaborating on their ideas, and rarely, if ever, give others their undivided attention. They often write inaccurately and don’t adequately prepare for public speaking, which means that they come across as disorganised, insincere, or lacking in confidence.

Did you know?

A 360° competency feedback system like Profiles CheckPoint 360° identifies performance gaps, and provides coaching guides and personal action plans for improving communication skills. How? By getting objective feedback from both manager’s employees and peers.
2. Weak leadership capabilities

Weak leaders are sometimes afraid to bruise egos – including their own.

Sometimes it’s tough to speak the plain but inconvenient truth when people really need to hear it – or to give direction to subordinates who don’t want to do what needs to be done. No one likes to be criticised, but that’s what makes organisations effective. Great leaders can set an example; they walk the walk and talk the talk. Weak leaders are sometimes afraid to bruise egos – including their own.

In addition to failing to provide clear direction, weak leaders:

- **Don’t instill trust.** They don’t keep their promises or respect confidences. When asked difficult questions, they tend not to respond forthrightly. Either they avoid taking responsibility or they’re quick to blame others for mistakes. They lack integrity – and their inconsistent actions and words prove it.

- **Neglect to clarify each team member’s responsibilities for accomplishing objectives.** They often fail to answer questions until expectations are perfectly clear.

- **Don’t distribute responsibilities so that all bases are covered.** They don’t bother to ensure that efforts aren’t duplicated. That may be because they are either ignorant of—or indifferent to—the workload of team members.

- **Fail to translate tomorrow’s vision into today’s activities.**

- **Don’t effectively delegate responsibility.** They may be insecure and reluctant to give up control for fear of being shown up. Or they want to keep others down as opposed to building them up. We’ve observed weak leaders who delegate without considering other people’s capabilities, interests or development needs. And we’ve seen those who micromanage, frequently “hovering” over their people, sapping creativity and motivation.

The **ProfileXT** helps you identify your current and future leaders by measuring the competencies of your best leaders and matching candidates against these criteria.
You cannot leap a twenty-foot chasm in two ten-foot jumps.

Change is hard. But effective managers know how to handle it. They can adjust to new circumstances. When things are ambiguous, they remain comfortable. In a crisis, they seek solutions. It’s often been said that the only constant is change. The trick is to keep a clear head, manage expectations and enable change. Strong managers are change agents.

On the other hand, those who can’t adapt to change:

• Panic when faced with unexpected problems and sudden crises. They expect the worst.
• Lose perspective of the magnitude of the problem. They tend to agonise over minor adjustments to a big plan.
• Get stuck in reactive mode instead of proactively anticipating issues and developing contingency plans.
• Don’t think creatively to overcome obstacles. They view problems as annoyances instead of opportunities to learn and improve.
• Are risk-averse when it comes to trying new approaches to solving problems. They’re reluctant to involve others in the problem-solving process, even when they have more experience or can bring a fresh perspective to the table.

You CAN measure a person’s attitude toward change. Profiles Performance Indicator, a 15-minute assessment, provides insight into 5 behavioural indicators including attitude toward change. Knowing how people process change allows your manager to identify challenges early, understand motivational needs of his employees and maximise team performance.
4. Poor relationship-building skills

Relationship building is an art, but not every manager is a natural relationship artist.

Relationships - professional as well as personal – require some work. For example, good communication is a cornerstone of a healthy, productive relationship. So are trust and respect. Good relationship builders respect people’s differences; they’re tolerant. They praise more than they criticise. And when they do criticise they focus on the behaviour, not the people. They’re always careful not to embarrass other people. And they say what needs to be said – even when it’s uncomfortable to say it.

Apart from neglecting to maintain strong personal relationships, poor relationship builders:

• Don’t seem to appreciate the impact of words and actions on others. They don’t understand about keeping morale up and making others feel good about themselves and their work.
• Fail to respect the members of their team by being consistent and fair, and by showing appreciation for their experiences and viewpoints.
• Criticise people instead of people’s behaviours. They sometimes scold people in the presence of others, and rarely offer specific, constructive suggestions for desired improvement.
• Don’t regulate their emotions well, especially during times of stress.
• Rarely facilitate team success; they tend to ignore conflict between co-workers, or they rush to judgment before listening carefully to all viewpoints in a disagreement. Poor relationship builders don’t establish team objectives or encourage cooperation to reap the benefits of a unified effort. And they fail to capitalise on each individual’s strengths and experiences.
5. Ineffective task management

When everything is a priority, nothing is a priority.

Effective task managers know how to establish priorities and make sure work gets done! They know how to say “No!” to activities that will divert them from priorities. They can see the big picture and break it down into specific tasks required to complete a project. They are skilled at assessing their resources, allotting time and materials, motivating people on the job, and ensuring that each and every milestone and deliverable is accomplished on time and on budget.

Ineffective task managers:

- Do not ask for help when they need it.
- Procrastinate, especially when a big project seems overwhelming.
- Work carelessly. They accept sloppy work from their team. They don’t set a good example by consistently delivering quality through their own work. And, not surprisingly, they maintain poor quality control procedures.
- Tend to blame others for their own lack of oversight.

Deming observed that 85% of all operational failures are the fault of fallible managers, not failing workers.
6. Insufficient productivity

Is your manager on track to achieve reliable results?

Insufficient productivity can have myriad causes. It could be a simple lack of resources or funding; it could be unrealistic expectations. Some managers lack the technical knowledge to ensure that production demands are met. And, of course, some people just seem to have a bias against taking action. They lack a sense of urgency and won’t take the initiative, even on matters that are critical to the organisation. They take a “wait and see” attitude when they should be taking concrete action.

These managers:

• Find plenty of reasons not to make a decision. They wait for more information; they wait to hear about different options. Some are paralysed for fear of making a mistake. They rarely consider making adjustments to plans later if necessary. Instead, they simply freeze up and stop producing.

• Waffle, remain indecisive and show insensitivity about holding up projects. They don’t see the big picture; they don’t think through the consequences of their team’s, department’s or business unit’s failure to produce.

• Fail to achieve reliable results. They are generally not clear about what they want or need to accomplish. They’re easily distracted, unreliable and erratic. They may lack the will to overcome adversity.

Profiles Performance Indicator helps managers better understand how to motivate each individual on their team. This helps them increase productivity, improve communication, and achieve results.
Cultivating talent and motivating others doesn’t always come easy.

Just like relationship-building, developing other people’s talents is an art – one at which not everyone is adept. Developing others can be hard work. Not everyone is naturally capable of delivering constructive criticism. Nor is everyone observant enough to make note of another person’s habits, including the habits that need to change. Being a role model or a mentor takes commitment. Unfortunately, not all role models and mentors recognise that. They think their protégés will simply observe and learn. But the fact is, developing skills and talents in others takes much more than just showing up.

Managers who face a challenge when it comes to cultivating individual talents:

• Don’t generally make learning opportunities available because they feel threatened by employees with greater skills than their own.

• Disregard the goals and aspirations of their team members because they don’t want them to get ahead. They give feedback on performance only when someone’s expectations haven’t been met – and only then in a negative and de-motivating tone.

• Seem more intent on breaking down than building up.

• Can’t motivate successfully. They fail to recognise or show appreciation for the efforts of their team, even when team members go above and beyond the call of duty.

• Have a negative influence in the work environment as a result of their pessimistic outlook and lack of enthusiasm.
8. Neglectful of personal development

Manager, improve thyself

It sounds reasonable enough, but we’ve observed many managers who fail to develop their own communication styles, organisational skills or work habits. They might claim that they’re committed to the organisation or the team, but unless they’re willing to continually improve their own skills and talents, how will they ever recognise how important personal development is for the whole team?

Managers who neglect personal development:

• Don’t build enthusiasm among their team members – and in general they are not very enjoyable to work with
• Give up easily
• Often possess a negative attitude
• Appear highly defensive when constructively criticised
• Have a low level of self-awareness
• Fail to learn from mistakes
• Don’t stay current on important developments in their field

Did you know?
Profiles CheckPoint 360° targets specific development needs. Managers become more effective by receiving feedback from a full circle of people with whom they interact and a complete report on steps to improve challenge areas. This process measures 8 management and leadership competencies and 18 supporting skill sets.
With the symptoms we’ve just identified in mind, would you say there is a degree of incompetent management within your organisation? If so, here’s a strategy for handling it:

**Determine if the individual has what it takes to be a manager.** That involves a thorough assessment of his or her behaviours and interests. ProfileXT and Profiles Performance Indicator provide insight into the total person, giving you critical information to improve management selection and team performance. These tools can be used separately or together.

**If yes, you should try to help them become aware of their weaknesses.** Honest, straight-forward feedback from peers, superiors, and subordinates can help open people’s eyes by revealing how others see them. But don’t stop with feedback – use it to create a targeted development plan to address specific needs. Profiles CheckPoint 360° does this for you by identifying performance gaps, and by providing coaching guides and personal action plans for improving communication skills.

**If no, then determine how they can best serve the organisation.** Some incompetent sales managers never should have been promoted from sales. In other disciplines as well, there are practitioners who, based on their performances, are promoted to management. But not everyone has the skills and talent to manage. In some cases, redeployment is a good solution for both the employee and the organisation. Profiles International’s unique job-matching process will help you take an underperforming manager and move him into a role where he can be highly successful, increasing morale as well as the bottom line for your organisation.
Like winning coaches, successful managers are both talented and skilled. Of course, managerial skills can be developed through training, mentoring, and experience. But if a manager lacks natural talent, his or her odds of success will diminish significantly. We identified and explored the following signs of incompetent managers:

1. Poor communication skills
2. Weak leadership capabilities
3. Inability or unwillingness to adapt to change
4. Poor relationship building skills
5. Ineffective task management
6. Insufficient production
7. Poor developer of others
8. Neglectful of own personal development

Recognise any of these symptoms in your management team? If so, we recommend:

• Identifying natural leadership skills and abilities within your organisation
• Evaluating current managers by using a 360° competency feedback system to gather feedback from direct reports, peers, supervisors, and managers
• Using reports with individualised action steps to create development plans for struggling managers
• Reassigning underperforming managers, who are likely to have less interest in, or aptitude for, leadership, to other positions in your organisation where they can be top performers
Profiles International – Who We Are

Profiles International helps organisations worldwide create high-performing workforces.

Through our comprehensive employment assessments and innovative talent management solutions, our clients gain a competitive advantage by selecting the right people and managing them to their full potential.

Where We Are
Profiles serves 122 countries around the globe and has material in 32 languages.

Contact Us
Profiles International
Via our Strategic Business Partner

Success Train Ltd
01384 402592
www.successtrain.co.uk
# How We Do It – Assessments and solutions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Your Business Objective</th>
<th>Our Solutions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>High-level Strategic Workforce Management</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identifying high-potential employees and managers</td>
<td>PXT CP360</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategic workforce and succession planning</td>
<td>PXT PPI CP360</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restructuring, reorganising and downsizing</td>
<td>PXT PPI PTA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-merger integration of organisations</td>
<td>PXT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Everyday Workforce Management</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basic pre-employment screening</td>
<td>SOS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Screening, interviewing and selecting job candidates</td>
<td>PXT CP360 CSP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bringing new employees on board</td>
<td>PXT PPI CSP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improving employee productivity and work quality</td>
<td>PXT PPI CSP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improving employee motivation and communication</td>
<td>PPI PTA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resolving conflict between co-workers</td>
<td>PPI PTA PWC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selecting and managing teams</td>
<td>PTA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluating management effectiveness</td>
<td>PXT CP360</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prioritising management development needs</td>
<td>CP360</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sales and Customer-facing Workforce Management</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Screening, interviewing and selecting job candidates</td>
<td>PXTS CSP PSI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retaining and growing customers and accounts</td>
<td>PXTS CSP PSI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improving sales performance</td>
<td>PPI CP360 PXTS</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Legend</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PXT</td>
<td>Profiles XT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PPI</td>
<td>Profiles PI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CP360</td>
<td>CheckPoint</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PTA</td>
<td>Team Analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOS</td>
<td>Step One</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PXTS</td>
<td>Profile XT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSP</td>
<td>Sales</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PSI</td>
<td>Customer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PSI</td>
<td>Sales Indicator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PWC</td>
<td>Workforce</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compatibility</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Eight Signs of Incompetent Managers | 15
ProfileXT® (PXT)

The PXT assessment measures how well an individual fits specific jobs in your organisation. The “job matching” feature of the PXT is unique, and enables you to evaluate an individual relative to the qualities required to perform successfully in a specific job. It is used primarily for employee selection, development and strategic workforce planning.

This assessment reveals deep, objective insight into an individual's thinking and reasoning style, relevant behavioural traits, occupational interests, and match to specific jobs in your organisation. It helps your managers interview and select people who have the highest probability of being successful in a role, and provides practical recommendations for coaching them to maximum performance. It also gives your organisation consistent language and metrics to support strategic workforce and succession planning, talent management, and re-organisation plans.

ProfileXT Sales® (PXTS)

The Profile XT Sales measures and reports on the same attributes as the Profile XT but in a sales context and the reports identify specifically how an individual will perform in a sales-related role.

Used to recruit and develop sales people it also plays a major role in projects designed to improve sales performance across an organisation.
Another key to driving performance is having a consistent company message. CSP – Customer Service Perspective measures key characteristics of exceptional customer service. How much easier is it to drive performance when the people engaging the customer on a daily basis are all on the same page? The CSP looks at our current and future employees’ definitions of good customer service, while at the same time showing us where they align (or not) with our company’s perspective.

Step One Survey II®
Superior talent management practices can help managers easily identify a potential need for additional people or for better use of existing resources. With efficient selection and on-boarding practices, both new people and incumbents become more productive in a short amount of time. SOSII – Step One Survey II® can help give new employees the head start they need from day one. By making sure that prospective applicants ‘fit’ our corporate culture before they ever join the team, we can know in advance how to assimilate a person into a work environment in the optimum amount of time. Insight into an applicant’s work ethic, honesty, integrity, propensity for substance abuse, and attitudes on theft (including property, data and the most expensive commodity, time), can give a much-needed preview into how well this person will mesh with a company’s current culture and climate.
About Profiles International

HOW WE DO IT – ASSESSMENTS AND SOLUTIONS

Profiles Performance Indicator™ (PPI)

The Profiles Performance Indicator is a DISC-type assessment that reveals aspects of an individual's personality that could impact their fit with their manager, coworkers and team, and their job performance. It is used primarily for motivating and coaching employees, and resolving post-hire conflict and performance issues.

The PPI specifically measures an individual's motivational intensity and behaviours related to productivity, quality of work, initiative, teamwork, problem solving, and adapting to change, as well as response to conflict, stress, and frustration. The output from this assessment serves as an "operator's manual" for an employee, which helps managers better motivate, coach, and communicate with the employee. It also helps to predict and minimise conflict among co-workers, and it provides crucial information for improving team selection and performance.

A powerful feature of the PPI is the Team Analysis Report, designed to help managers form new teams, reduce team conflict, improve team communication, improve their ability to anticipate problems, and enhance their team leadership skills.

It helps evaluate overall team balance, strengths, and weaknesses, as well as team members’ personality characteristics along 12 key factors: control, composure, social influence, analytical, patience, results orientation, precision, expressiveness, ambition, teamwork, positive expectancy, and quality of work. It also provides team leaders with practical recommendations and action steps to take in order to succeed in their jobs.
How We Do It – Assessments and solutions

CheckPoint 360°™

The CheckPoint Management System is a 360-degree assessment. It is used primarily to evaluate the effectiveness of your managers and leaders. This assessment combines feedback from direct reports, peers, supervisors, and even customers, with a personalised programme for developing specific leadership skills based on that feedback. This process highlights a manager’s job performance in 8 universal management competencies: communication, leadership, adapting to change, relationships, task management, production, development of others, and personal development.

The CheckPoint 360 helps managers identify and prioritise their own development opportunities. And it helps the organisation to better focus management training and development investments; proactively uncover misaligned priorities between senior executives and front-line managers; and surface management issues that could lead to low employee productivity, morale, job-satisfaction, and increased turnover.

Profiles SkillBuilder™

Profiles CheckPoint SkillBuilder is an organised, self-paced, self-study employee development system. The SkillBuilder combines CheckPoint Feedback, the right job activities and job knowledge, and a Personal Action Plan for accountability with a customised coaching guide. This links the participant to a third-party coach for reinforcement and follow-through.
Profiles Sales Indicator® (PSI)

The Profiles Sales Indicator (PSI) provides a means of selecting people who have the five qualities that make salespeople successful: Competitiveness, Self-reliance, Persistence, Energy, and Sales Drive. It also predicts on-the-job performance in seven critical sales behaviours: Prospecting, Closing Sales, Call Reluctance, Self-starting, Teamwork, Building and Maintaining Relationships, and Compensation Preference.

The PSI can be customised by company, sales position, department, manager, geography, or any combination of these factors. The PSI produces clear, readable reports that are direct and to the point. These reports can be used for selecting, managing, and training salespeople more effectively. This tool provides objective data for developing a more effective sales team, one person at a time.

Profiles WorkForce Compatibility™

Profiles WorkForce Compatibility is a powerful tool that measures critical workplace compatibility information between a manager (executive, director, supervisor, team leader) and his employees. PWC is used to increase productivity, identify and close compatibility gaps between manager and employee, improve communications between manager and employee, raise the level of employee engagement, and reduce employee turnover.
About Profiles International

A selection of the reports available in the Expert Insights series

- Expert Insights
  - Creating a Team-Building Culture
- Expert Insights
  - Seven Factors for Building Extreme Customer Loyalty
- Expert Insights
  - Four Essential Tactics for Optimising Organisational Talent
- Expert Insights
  - Eight Signs of Incompetent Managers
- Expert Insights
  - Why Smart Employees Underperform: 7 Hazards to Avoid
- Expert Insights
  - Six Crucial Behaviors for Customer-Facing Employees
Profiles International – Who We Are

Profiles International helps organisations worldwide create high-performing workforces.

Through our comprehensive employment assessments and innovative talent management solutions, our clients gain a competitive advantage by selecting the right people and managing them to their full potential.

Where We Are
Profiles serves 122 countries around the globe and has material in 32 languages.

Contact Us
Profiles International
Via our Strategic Business Partner

Success Train Ltd
01384 402592
www.successtrain.co.uk