1. **Refuse to Accept Personal Accountability**
2. **Fail to Develop People**
3. **Try to Control Results Instead of Influencing Thinking**
4. **Join the Wrong Crowd--the We/They Syndrome**
5. **Manage Everyone the Same Way**
6. **Forget the Importance of Profit**
7. **Concentrate On Problems Rather Than Objectives**
8. **Be a Buddy, Not a Boss**
9. **Fail to Set Standards**
10. **Fail to Train Your People**
11. **Condone Incompetence**
12. **Recognize Only Top Performers**
13. **Try to Manipulate People**



Book Review by Lisa Shea

I always dislike it when books sensationalize problems. To call these errors "Fatal" as in YOU COULD DIE!?!?! seems extreme to me. Very few errors in life are fatal, and surely managers have enough stress in their worlds without having to worry about FATAL errors to deal with. Let's just call these "errors" and begin working on them.

The first question is, of course, what ARE the 13 errors. They are: Refusing to accept personal responsibility, failing to develop people, trying to control rather than influence people, joining the wrong crowd, managing everyone the same way, forgetting about profit, focusing on problems instead of goals, being too friendly, not setting standards, not training your employees, condoning incompetence, recognizing only the top performers, and trying to manipulate people.

You can say that many of these are common sense - but that's true for any management book. Dealing with human beings IS common sense. Still, many of us forget that sometimes - or need a few tips on dealing with a specific situation. For example, some managers feel that the issues are all with the employee and that the employee should just "fix themselves and do the job, dammit". We've all worked for a BAD manager though and know that a lot of how well an employee does his/her job is based on the management. Another aspect of this is that the book talks directly about achieving good results. It reminds you that your aim should be good results. Not in a "burn the villages and get the gold" way, but in a "it's better to reach your goal efficiently rather than waste 12 hours doing it in a poor way".

I think that's an important distinction for people to make. Many managers have long, complex procedures and work tons of hours - then pressure their employees to do the same and "measure up". Instead, of the managers made their lives more organized and simplified, they could have the same end results with far less stress and time. All humans need time to rest and relax - managers AND employees. It's important to focus on that goal, vs trying to seem as busy as possible in inefficient ways.

On the other hand, the book has some areas where it's very theoretical but not directly helpful. They say that if you expect your employees to do well and give them training, then they naturally will do well. That we managers just have to "get out of the way". This certainly isn't always true! There are employees who simply will look for ways to avoid doing work or shunting work to others even when they know what they should do and how to do it. To ignore these realities is to be frustrated.

There's a section where they say an employee's self motivation and self esteem are important - but truly, how many managers could "retrain" an adult who is set in his or her ways? Sure, it's good to know that an employee has low self esteem in order to talk with him in an effective manner - but managers will rarely have success in "fixing" an adult employee's personal psyche problems.

Another section talks about how managing isn't always easy. I do think this is an important lesson for many managers to learn. Yes, it sucks to have to make some decisions - but you have to do it. It's hard to discipline an employee you like - but you do it the best way you can. If you simply avoid doing certain things, everybody suffers as a result. This topic is covered in several different ways - you have to set up guidelines, you have to enforce those guidelines and give specific, direct commentary if someone is slacking off. You can't let it slide because it's easier on you. You have to step up and address it so that you manage the problem.

While many of these issues may be common sense for established managers, the tips can prove quite useful for new members. I do find a few gems in here that even older managers might find helpful to add into their arsenal.

A good book to at least read at the library. If you get it for yourself, lend it out to a few friends - you might be surprised at how long it takes for them to choose to return it to you.