

108 Management Mistakes I Have Made or I Have Seen Made by Other Leaders

By Mahatma Das

1. When taking over a position, department, project, preaching center, temple, etc., to immediately begin making drastic changes.
2. To play favorites or to speak against or criticize certain sections of devotees.
3. To do or say anything that will instill a lack of trust in a devotee's spiritual master.
4. To not give devotees facility to offer suggestions and ideas, voice opinions, or express observations in a way that will be given attention and be responded to.
5. To expect devotees to be enthusiastic about a service that you either do not encourage or facilitate.
6. To breach devotees trust in you by not doing something you promised or by lying to them.
7. Not attending all the temple programs (and expecting others to attend).
8. To have a budget that exceeds your income.
9. To create overheads so large that to maintain the project minimizes the preaching.
10. To not take interest in devotee's spiritual and material welfare and to not have time to deal with their problems and needs.
11. To make it difficult for devotees to see you.
12. To give devotees very little association.
13. To deny women the same facilities given to the men i.e. to make women second class citizens in your temple.
14. To serve bad, insufficient, or unhealthy prasadam or to serve the wrong type of prasadam for a particular situation or time of day.
15. To allow devotees to live in the temple who are not either fully engaged, exemplary in behavior, or are overly critical of authority.
16. To make plans and not let all the devotees know.
17. To exclude devotees from participating in meetings or sections of meetings where they have special qualifications or experience in the area you are discussing.
18. To not hold regular istagosthis.
19. To not engage the congregation sufficiently, specifically those who are very materially qualified
20. To always try to do everything yourself or with a few of the same devotees and thus become overextended and overburdened. In other words, to not delegate, empower and train.
22. To make devotees feel they are incompetent or unintelligent.
23. To give a devotee a service, not train them, then expect them to be expert.

24. To not allow a devotees to engage in a service they are qualified to do because you feel they are too young, they haven't been devotees long enough, they are women or they are from an ethnic group you look down on.
25. To expect devotees to follow you only because of your position without setting a proper example and without developing love and trust.
27. To take advantage of others and to have special facilities that other devotees don't have.
28. To expand so quickly that devotees are so overworked and overburdened that they cannot peacefully execute their normal sadhana and hearing and chanting and that you as a manager are in a constant state of anxiety over how everything will go on.
29. To make an effort to make new devotees without creating proper facilities for them.
30. To minimize your sadhana and the time you spend hearing and chanting.
31. To not have regular departmental meetings with all the devotees in the department.
32. To not have clearly set goals and mission statements for the temple and its departments.
33. To not engage devotees in consideration of their asramas.
34. To not monitor the behavior of devotees who are preaching and distributing books in public.
35. To send a younger devotee to preach at a college or university without an older devotee.
36. To not train devotees how to appear and behave in public and how to deal with people as proper representatives of ISKCON.
37. To allow people to the Sunday feast i.e people who will make our regular guests feel uncomfortable (these include the homeless who do not bath regularly. Other facilities can be made to give them prasadam).
38. To not facilitate sufficient hearing and chanting.
39. To be enthusiastic about organizing programs without reference to a mission statement or long range goals i.e. organizing programs that do not help further the objectives of the temple or project.
40. To jeopardize relationships to accomplish service.
41. To not have an evening program.
42. To not have Krsna book and hot milk.
43. To not have regular readings of Nectar of Devotion.
44. To not have a daily thorough cleaning of the temple and asrama (this doesn't mean only the floors).
45. To have superfast and wild Sunday Feast kirtans chanted to melodies that are difficult follow and with excessive chanting of mantras other than the maha mantra.
46. To not listen to the suggestions of guests and members.
47. To not manage through a temple board i.e. to think you know everything and don't need input from others or to cancel or not hold meetings because you don't believe in or like meetings.
48. To preach in a way that discourages women, householders, or gurukulis.

49. To regularly be late for meetings and appointments.
50. To regularly and spontaneously change your plans.
51. To not make an effort to create good relationships with your neighbors.
52. To be stubborn.
53. To be inflexible and/or unreasonable.
54. To not properly facilitate book distribution.
55. To not foresee potential problems before they arise.
56. To push programs to make money that are not honest, could jeopardize our reputation, or that burn out devotees.
57. To stress “work now samadhi later” in such a way that it eclipses “purity is the force.”
58. To have the present gurus’ vyasa-puja celebrations on a grander scale than Srila Prabhupada’s or to minimize or not support their vyas-puja celebrations.
59. To make life members, but not take care of them or to preach only for the purpose of collecting money without interest in the person’s spiritual advancement.
60. To be attached to doing things a certain way only because it is always the way they have been done without considering whether it is actually best, proper, or what Prabhupada really wants.
61. To be conservative when you should be liberal and to be liberal when you should be conservative.
62. To not associate with your leaders in any other environment than work i.e. not eating together, hearing and chanting together, or doing something recreational together.
63. To not allow devotees to evaluate your performance as a leader and suggest ways in which you could improve your service.
64. To not be accountable for spending money.
65. To be spontaneous in your decisions and plans.
66. To regularly start and stop projects.
67. To allow temple devotees to be negligent about following the morning program
68. To inhibit or minimize the service of qualified devotees in order to maintain more control of the temple or project.
69. To invest a lot time, energy, money and men in a project or temple and then walk out on it in the middle.
70. To establish Deities when there are an insufficient number of brahmanas in the temple.
71. To allow people to stay in the temple as guests or bhaktas without running a police record on them.
72. To make major decisions based on an unverified assumption.
73. To base important programs or projects on devotees who have not proven themselves reliable, or who are not capable in that area.

74. To have devotees engaged in services they are not suited for.
75. To be negligent in setting all legal matters pertaining to the temple in order.
76. To do anything illegal.
77. To have someone cooking for the devotees who knows nothing about health.
78. To serve prasad that excites sexual desire.
79. To encourage people to live in the temple who would make more advancement living outside.
80. To discourage devotees from going to India.
81. To ignore things that are going wrong because it is too much trouble to correct them.
82. To not thank or encourage devotees for their special efforts or austerities or to thank some and forget to mention others who worked equally as hard.
83. To not resolve conflicts between devotees working under you, especially when they ask for your help.
84. To make non constructive criticism of devotees behind their back in a loose and casual way.
85. To act on what others say about a devotee without first discussing the suspected problem with the devotee.
86. To delegate another person to communicate something that to a devotee that you should tell that devotee yourself.
87. To utilize your position to take nectar services for yourself to the exclusion of others who are equally or more qualified and who are anxious to render these services.
88. To allow unfit people to move into the temple.
89. To not be selective enough about who gives class (ultra conservative or fanatical preachers) especially when many guests are staying at the temple.
90. To not insure that standard melodies are chanted at the appropriate aratikas.
91. To be closed to new ideas.
92. To not train devotees in Vaisnava etiquette especially in regards to relating to senior devotees.
93. To not invite senior devotees to visit your temple or to invite them but not provide them with the facilities they need or not organize sufficient preaching programs.
94. To not provide facilities for a dedicated temple devotee who can not render service for a prolonged period of time due to illness and/or to make them feel guilty for not being able to do any service.
95. To not observe commitments to devotees that were made by previous leaders.
96. To not clearly inform prospective devotees what is expected of them if they wish to live in the temple.
97. To give more importance to accomplishing the goals of your project than to the well being of devotees.
98. To not assume some responsibility for the causes of devotees leaving ISKCON.

99. To not learn, develop and practice effective communication and relationship skills.
100. To not have the capacity to work well with those you don't agree with (i.e. to operate under the paradigm that we must sufficiently agree to be able to work together)
101. To not be able to take complaints, criticism, etc. without either defending oneself or retaliating against those who complained.
102. To need to be right and prove others wrong.
103. To not have a written code of ethics (honor) for your management team (a code the team develops by which they operate).
104. To make plans or resolutions that will affect a large number of devotees or congregational members without first running those plans by them to see how they respond.
105. To make assumptions (beliefs you have that are not founded on actual proven facts) about individuals and base your actions towards them and opinions of them on those assumptions.
106. To not acquire the skills necessary to run a meeting efficiently.
107. To be resistant to change even when current systems, modalities, strategies, ways of thinking, etc. are not bringing desired results.
108. To believe that since things have always been a certain way that is the only way they can be.