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Learning From Mistakes: 10 Things Beginning Leaders Should Know



Forbes Coaches Council

Top coaches offer insights on leadership development & careers. [FULL BIO](#) ✓

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POST WRITTEN BY



Forbes Coaches Council

Top business and career coaches from [Forbes Coaches Council](#) offer firsthand insights on leadership development & careers.

You've probably heard that old saying, "hindsight is 20/20." Those words could never be more accurate than when it comes to mistakes made early on in a career. When you have the drive, the tenacity and the knowledge to make a mark in your current position, it's all too easy to think you've got it all figured out.

But experience matters and mistakes happen, no matter what your stage in life and in business. And while not all of them are avoidable, knowing where some of the dangers lie can help you cruise around some of the more common mistakes by learning from those who came before you. [Good business advice](#) is hard to come by, so try not to ignore it when it is offered freely.

Below, 10 members of [Forbes Coaches Council](#) discuss advice they wish they'd known about earlier in their careers, something that they now regularly share with all their clients. Here's what they said:



Photos courtesy of individual members.

Members share a few mistakes beginning leaders can make.

1. Be Careful How You Present Yourself

We communicate more with eye contact, facial expressions and tone than we realize. In face-to-face interactions, a play on Ralph Waldo Emerson's quote comes to mind, "How you present yourself speaks so loudly I can't hear what you say." - Thomas Larkin, [Communico Ltd](#)

2. Utilize Your Mentors To The Fullest

While I was lucky to have wonderful mentors, I didn't deliberately look for them or fully utilize them. People love to help and to share their wisdom. Asking questions, keenly listening, requesting radically honest feedback and implementing feedback with crisp alacrity are all behaviors that lead to great growth and success. I do all of that now as often as I can, and I recommend my clients do so. - Amie Devero, [Amie Devero Coaching and Consulting](#)

Read more in [Seven Proven Insights Into A Powerful Mentoring Relationship](#)

3. Don't Allow Failure To Wreck Your Future

We are not defined by yesterday, but rather by how we shape tomorrow. Too many times we allow failures — i.e., lost accounts, slammed doors, relational failings or wrong decisions — to wreck our professional futures. It doesn't have to be that way. Each day we have the ability to do a "gut check" and embrace what's ahead. To be successful we must intentionally define our tomorrow. - L. Lavon Gray, PhD, [Lavon Gray Consulting Group, LLC](#)

4. Be The One Who Makes The Difference

The best advice that I give to anyone, no matter what stage of their career or business they are in, is to develop the confidence to explore new options and create their own opportunities. The successful person is the one who takes the initiative to look past the obvious and find the treasures that remain hidden to those who don't put forth that extra effort. Be the one who makes the difference! - Shelley Hastings, [Synergy Empowerment Coaching, LLC](#)

5. Take Time To Think

A piece of business advice that I wish I had followed earlier in my career is to use the 24 to 48 hour rule when something is about to evoke an emotional response. I advise my clients to use this "rule" because the world and one's perspective can change in a day, so it's often better to just think about the response for a short time versus launching. - Karen Dee, [Accendo Leadership Advisory Group](#)