

God Forgives Mistakes; So Should Leaders

It's a mistake for leaders to focus on the mistakes of their teams.

At one time or another, we all work for a mistake hound. There can be 20 points of progress made in a day, but the nose of the hound will sniff out one mistake with laser-beam focus.

The last question we should ask is "Who did this?" The first question asked should be "Did we follow our checklists and systems?"

The minor point is that a mistake was made. The major point is that we discovered an Achilles heel in our system. We simply need to improve that system prior to the next project launch.

We need to hold systems meetings after a blunder. We don't need to schedule beatings and public floggings. Our focus must be people over process. We must not damage people in the quest for improved processes.

When we improve a process, we improve our people. A checklist brings peace of mind. Our coaching should be based on the processes listed on the checklist.

In the face of an oops, effective leaders show remarkable restraint. The most satisfying response for a leader would be to throw a hissy fit and make everyone on the team feel bad about the mistake. A leader with influence won't be doing a happy dance about the mistake, but the focus will be directed at system review. The leader will also bolster the self-image of everyone who touched the error.

The strength of a leader must not be on the bellow but rather, the mellow.

Yes, we want our team to own their mistakes. But ownership is equated with a systems check. The blame game has no winners.

“They are new every morning; great is Your faithfulness” (Lam. 3:23).