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What did you do now? What did you say that got you into hot water? Did you accidentally insult the boss? Did you blame a co-worker for work that went undone? Did you praise the competition too much during the marketing presentation to top management?

We are going to make mistakes, and we must have strategies to identify them quickly, and to implement a recovery plan. Itâ€™s essential that we quickly determine when we erred. We must know what to fix.

Incompetent people are sometimes described as those who donâ€™t know that they donâ€™t know. For these individuals, mistakes are common because they are unwilling to accept that they could be wrong.

While we are professionals, we are not pro athletes. We are not going to miss a last-second shot, throw an interception, or swing-and-miss at strike three. When the clock hits 5:00 pm, we can keep going. Itâ€™s time to put it in overdrive, and not worry about the pressure of overtime.

Here are three strategies to recover from a mistake at work:

#1: Accept responsibility for the mistake, and develop a plan to resolve it.

Your boss will appreciate that you accepted responsibility for the mishap, and you went a step further to fix it. Avoid having others remind you of the problem. The sooner you determine what went awry, and how it can be corrected, the sooner you can put it behind you.

#2: Convert the mistake into a long-term benefit for the organization.

In many cases, mistakes are made because we are careless. For example, we failed to have a checklist in place, which means that the customers were not informed of the change in venue.

Once you fix the mistake, pull together a team to discuss how you can avoid this problem in the future. In essence, you are creating a quality control measure that will help the organization in the future. In quick order, your mistake has led to process improvement, and your leadership team will recognize the importance of this effort.

#3: Do whatever possible to avoid making the mistake in the future.

You must ensure that mistakes are not repeated. If you failed to make an important meeting because you forgot to add the item to your calendar, make sure that you have a back-up notification plan for future meetings. You can have your assistant text you 30 minutes before the scheduled meeting. Itâ€™s important that you have a plan in place. Making the same mistake continually is a sign that you lack professionalism, and it will eventually lead to bigger problems.

Weâ€™re not perfect, and thatâ€™s for sure. The fact that we are imperfect makes us human, and provide us with a chance to showcase our wherewithal. We also learn the unpleasant feeling of doing something silly, and its immediate impact on our business operations.

However, once we assume accountability, we can find a solution. The leadership team respects those who identify the problem, implement an immediate fix, and seek a long-term solution. In fact,

perseverance is an important trait for successful leaders.

The lesson here is to avoid fretting about mistakes. Unlike pro athletes, we have more wiggle room to get out of a pickle.

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