

## In-the-Moment Mistake Recovery Process

*"Mistakes are a fact of life. It is the response to the error that counts".* **Nikki Giovanni**, American Poet, Writer, and Activist

*"If you have a process for handling mistakes in the moment, it takes the power from the fear of failure".* **Roger Engelau**, BS, MBA, Six Sigma Black Belt

You're the boss and you've made a mistake. You've misquoted a statistic, given an erroneous direction that cost the company. What you do in the next second, how you recover from your error, will set the example for how everyone else in your company will handle their errors.

We researched and compiled the best practices for handling mistakes from a dozen leaders and psychologists to create this 6-step **In-the-Moment Mistake Recovery Process**.

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1. OWN IT
  - a. Admit it immediately
  - b. Say it aloud
  - c. Don't blame; don't bring anyone else's name up
2. PAUSE
  - a. Leave a few seconds of dead airtime as you reflect
  - b. Shows your willingness to accept and consider
3. APOLOGIZE (Maybe)
  - a. Not necessary if you it's an honest and small error and hasn't caused harm to anyone
  - b. Briefly if it's a medium error and has caused confusion, loss of time
  - c. Profusely if it's a big lapse in judgment or a grave omission
4. CLARIFY or ANALYZE
  - a. Determine the nature or cause of the error
  - b. Give your rationale in the moment – briefly!
  - c. Listen, talk it out, engage in analysis if necessary
  - d. Let the other person have the final say
5. FIX (if necessary) or ADJUST (if necessary)
  - a. Create a game plan
  - b. Agree on solutions
6. MOVE ON
  - a. Don't dwell on it
  - b. Incorporate the learning

Still dwelling? Something deeper may be going on. Remind yourself that there are no mistakes, only lessons. Talk to someone: a trusted friend, coach, mentor, or therapist.

We've all got headtrash, tapes playing in our heads from well-meaning (or not so well-meaning) parents and teachers. Adopt these "healthy framing principles" for handling mistakes:

- You are not your mistake
- Allow yourself some time to feel bad, but not too long
- Be kind to yourself
- View it as a learning opportunity