



# Four Things to Do When You Make a Mistake at Work

We all make mistakes. Whether we're just starting in a career or have been in the game for a while, it will happen. In many situations, making a mistake is a normal part of life, and you can simply correct your error, learn from it, and move on. However, making a mistake at work is different from other areas of our lives. There will be small mistakes in your day-to-day on the job; that's just life. However, when you make a significant mistake, there may be severe repercussions that could cost you your job, jeopardize a business deal, or other consequences. Therefore, when you make an error at work, you need to be prepared to address the problem—and do it right.

Here are four things you must do if you make a mistake at work.



## Acknowledge The Mistake

When you notice a mistake, it's best to tell your manager right away. If the error is small and easy to fix, then correcting it should be your first priority. However, if it's not, take the time to discuss the mistake with your manager without putting off the discussion. Being upfront about what happened will demonstrate professionalism and trustworthiness, which your employer will value and most likely take into account.

Determining the best way to approach your manager depends on the severity of the error and when it happened. For example, if you misplace an important file, report it and ask for advice on where to look for it. However, if you disrespect a customer or make a mistake that hurts the business, meet with your manager as soon as possible to discuss corrective measures. If your supervisor (or another member of staff who makes decisions) is unavailable, write an email and point out the issue. Don't make excuses; just reiterate what happened and present a solution.

*Continued*





## Make a Plan to Fix the Mistake

It's easier to deal with mistakes if you have a plan to fix them. Putting yourself in the position of having nothing to offer but excuses and regrets can be detrimental to your professional reputation. If you make a mistake, you will need to rectify it and present your corrective plan to your supervisor as soon as you can. Reassure them that you are working on a solution and feel confident in your ability to fix the situation.

Once you know what you need to do, talk to your manager about the steps you will take. Be clear about what you think you should do and what the results might be. Explain how long it will take to implement your plan and any associated costs. Ensure that you have a "Plan B" ready if your supervisor disapproves of "Plan A." Don't let a mistake stop you from showing off your ability to solve problems. Finally, don't be afraid to ask for their advice or counsel on the issue as well – you never know, they may have gone through a similar situation in their past they can give you insight on.



## Don't Blame Others

It's important to realize what happens if you don't own up to your part in the error. It's easy to want to pass the blame on others instead of admitting you made a mistake. You should avoid this at all costs; it almost always will come back on you negatively; plus, it'll make you look worse to your supervisor when the truth comes out. You may want to shift the blame on others, but you'll be seen as someone willing to throw colleagues under the bus - it's not a good look.

Be upfront and honest with your manager when you make a mistake. Act with integrity and be responsible for what you did. Your supervisor – and coworkers – will take notice, and no matter the outcome, you'll know you did the right thing.

*Continued*



# Four Things to Do When You Make a Mistake at Work



## Apologize, But Don't Overdo It

It's natural to feel bad when you make a mistake. But it's important to distinguish between recognizing that you messed up and beating yourself up over it. Once you've done what you can to repair the damage, apologize, and move on. If you keep talking about your mistake, it will be what people remember. After a mistake, highlight and focus on how you will continue to provide value to the organization – just be careful not to overdo it and come across as arrogant or smug.

Mistakes are bound to happen, but people are more understanding than you might think. If you don't take steps to fix your error, it could have consequences — especially if it affects others. To save your professional reputation and move forward, admit to your mistake, present a plan to fix it, try to correct it yourself, do not blame anyone else, and apologize.

### About EG Workforce Solutions

We've been in this business for decades and have developed a deep network of professional connections. Whether they're companies looking for talent, job seekers looking for work, or an up-and-coming store in need of some temporary help, we know the right people to bridge the gap between the hiring and the hired.

But what's more, we get to know people. From employers hiring to candidates looking, we take the time to listen and learn. We hear your likes, talents, and needs. We gain an understanding, and with it, we're able to facilitate lasting relationships between businesses and people.



Workforce Solutions  
HELPING PEOPLE SUCCEED.