

A big mistake

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So much time and so many dollars could have been saved with only one simple action: admitting a mistake, not to mention the avoidable anger, resentment and frustration.

What is a mistake? The definition of the word includes a misunderstanding, inadequate knowledge, inaccurate comment, a miscalculation, a *faux pas*, an oversight, a misinterpretation and a misreading among many other definitions.

We all make and will continue to make mistakes. Certainly, some will be minor and others major. One imperative for all of us is that mistakes need to be admitted, which no doubt often takes some courage to overcome our egos that can hold us back from taking that step.

Many times we are not aware of the mistake when making it. It is in retrospect that we realize we made a mistake. We probably had good intentions and thought we were doing the right thing, but a mistake it was nevertheless.

The first step in correcting a mistake is admitting it as soon as we become aware of it. By doing so, we demonstrate self-confidence and self-respect. We demonstrate our ability to learn from our mistakes and move forward stronger than before. In doing so, we abide by many of our core Bentley values: learning, honesty, respect, caring and collaboration. We also are true to ourselves and avoid any internal conflict.

I recently served as the mediator for two colleagues. It was very apparent to me, that both parties were responsible for the dispute they now faced.

To jump start a possible resolution to the conflict, I asked each party one question in confidence. I assured them that I was not there to judge, but to help each resolve the conflict. I also expressed to them that often the biggest lessons learned, including for me, are triggered by acknowledging a mistake.

I asked each the following question: In retrospect, if you were to undo one action that may have contributed to your conflict with your colleague, what would it be?

Their answers usually serve as an opening for an effective mediation. Those who can find no action that caused the conflict should reevaluate their answer. Perhaps they may not be at fault because of their actions, but how about their reactions?

Admitting a mistake is a critical step in resolving a conflict. One of the biggest mistakes is not admitting the mistakes we all make.

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