

# The 5 Biggest Mistakes Founders Make



*“Being entrepreneurial doesn’t automatically make you a great leader.”*

BY ALIGN<sub>360</sub> CONSULTING LLC



ALIGNING LEADERS, PEOPLE AND STRATEGY



## Say it with me: Your business will not succeed if your people strategy sucks.

---

Founders are visionaries. They're bold, driven, and wired to build. But the truth is, being entrepreneurial doesn't automatically make you a great leader.

Most founders aren't trained in how to run high-performing organizations. They excel at ideation, but often overlook the infrastructure and people strategy needed to sustain growth. Building a product is one thing; building a company where performance thrives and people want to stay is something else entirely.

**As a result, many founders make costly missteps, often unknowingly. Here are the five most common (and most damaging) mistakes we see.**

“

*Are you ready to look in the mirror?*

*Alicia Catatao*

[The 5 Biggest Mistakes Founders Make](#)



# 05

---

## Hiring for Speed, Not Fit

Early-stage founders often scramble to “fill seats” without clarity on organizational structure, role scope, or long-term needs. They lean on referrals, rush the process, and bring in people without the experience or competencies to actually perform.

The result? Mismatches that damage culture, waste cash, and slow execution. Hiring fast feels like progress until you’re cleaning up the mess.

### Key Takeaways

#### **SLOW DOWN.**

You don’t need more résumés, you need the right roles, the right structure, and the right leaders making the right calls.



# How Align360 Can Help

## Org Design & Role Scoping

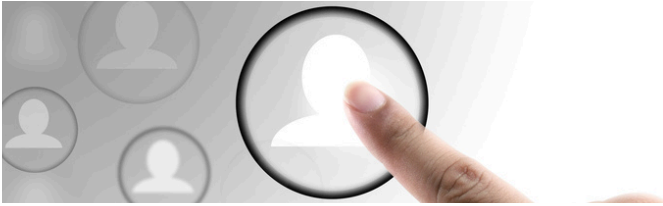
We clarify what your business actually needs then architect a structure that increases efficiency and productivity, enhances accountability and optimizes communication channels.

## Job Creation & Leveling

We help you scope roles with intention, establishing clear responsibilities, desired competencies, experience requirements, and a compensation analysis to ensure your pay will attract the desired candidate.

## Manager Training for Hiring

We provide tailored manager training on effective interviewing techniques and how to assess for skills and culture fit to hire the right candidates and reduce turnover.



## *BOTTOM LINE*

*You're not just filling seats, you're building the business.*

*ALIGN helps founders slow down, think smarter, and hire like a company that plans to win.*



# 04

---

## Disconnecting From Your Business

*You've got a strong #2 in command or a solid upper management team and think you can be completely hands off? Big mistake. Taking your eye off the ball is the fastest way to lose control.*

Effective leaders maintain visibility without getting in the weeds. That means establishing effective communication cadences, reporting structures, and feedback channels so you're informed at a high level and know exactly when to step in.



# Two Guiding Leadership Principles Apply Here:



## Top-Down Leadership:

You set the tone. If you're disengaged, your team will mirror that energy. The message becomes: "If leadership doesn't care, why should I?"



## Ownership Mentality

Everything in your business is ultimately your responsibility. If you're not paying attention, small issues compound—and that's how companies unravel from the inside out.

### Key Takeaways

Delegating is healthy.  
Disengaging is fatal.

Never abdicate responsibility  
for your own company.



[The 5 Biggest Mistakes Founders Make](#)



# How Align360 Can Help

## Executive Coaching

We work 1:1 with founders and senior leaders to sharpen leadership presence, strengthen decision-making, and reinforce accountability—without micromanaging.



## Org Health & Culture Pulse

We'll give you the real read on what's happening inside your organization—what's working, what's breaking, and where you're needed most.

## Leadership Calibration & Accountability Structures

We help you build a leadership team that can actually lead, while keeping you informed, engaged, and in control of the bigger picture.

### BOTTOM LINE

---

You don't have to do everything, but you do have to lead. Align360 will help you do it with clarity, control, and credibility.





# 03 Making Commitments You Can't Keep

---

*Your word is everything. When you make commitments that impact employees, such as bonuses, promotions, severance, and equity—  
You must deliver.*

*If you can't, you break trust. Once trust is broken, your team will stop following you. Even with good intentions, unkept promises can seriously damage trust and disrupt your business.*





# How Align360 Can Help

## ★ Executive Communication Coaching

We coach you on how to communicate tough news clearly and empathetically, without overcommitting or over-explaining.

## ★ Policy & Process Design

We help you build frameworks for promotions, bonuses, severance, and equity, so decisions aren't ad hoc, and your commitments align with reality.

## ★ Sounding Board for Big Decisions

Before you hit "send" on that announcement, we're your gut check. We'll help you think it through with strategy and people impact in mind.

### BOTTOM LINE

*Align360 transforms Founder or CEO chaos into credible leadership. We help you lead with intention, follow through with discipline, and protect what matters: your reputation, your people, and your business.*

[The 5 Biggest Mistakes Founders Make](#)



# 02

---

## Hiring Friends and Family

*That old saying “Don’t mix business and pleasure” exists for a reason. In my 15+ years of experience, I’ve seen exactly why.*



- (1) Nepotism - or even the perception of it, is toxic and will kill culture in any size organization. It breeds resentment, demotivates employees, subsequently negatively impacts performance and reduces productivity.
- (2) The personal relationship often ends ugly. Very few can bifurcate between personal and business. Business challenges bleed into friendships or family, and friendships and family compromise business judgment.

### Key TakeAways

Keep personal and professional lines clean. Hire for skill and culture fit, not convenience or familiarity.



# How Align360 Can Help



## Policy Design

We craft practical, values-aligned policies around personal relationships, hiring protocols, and conflicts of interest so you're not navigating awkward gray zones when things get messy.



## Design a Merit-Based System

We build compensation, promotion, and performance frameworks grounded in fairness, transparency and measurable impact, not familiarity or favoritism.



## Navigating the Fallout

When a favor hire becomes a performance liability, we guide leaders through the delicate process of managing them out with documentation, coaching, and tact that preserves working relationships and protects leadership credibility.

## BOTTOM LINE

*Align360 brings structure and strategy to unwind nepotism, favoritism, and any other conflicts of interest before they erode trust, morale, and performance at every level.*

[The 5 Biggest Mistakes Founders Make](#)



# 01

---

## Failing to Hire a Senior HR Leader

Founders consistently underestimate the power of People. They delay investing in senior HR leadership, thinking it's an “add-on” for later. This is the most tragic mistake Founders make!

Without a strategic HR partner, your company will lack the right infrastructure, coaching, policies, benefits, compliance and performance frameworks that enable great leadership, prevent liability, build a healthy culture, and enable growth.



# How Align360 Can Help

Our mission is to empower businesses by providing tailored HR executive and functional level support. We believe that the key to a Company's success is aligning leaders, people and strategy to drive performance, culture, and sustainable growth.

We partner with companies in the following core areas:

## Design a Scalable People Strategy

Clarify org structure, define job levels, set performance frameworks, and align people goals with business goals.

## Protect Leadership's Bandwidth

We act as a frontline filter for people issues resolving challenges before they reach your executive team. Your leaders stay focused on strategy and growth, not HR triage.

## Coach and Enable Your Leaders

We coach your managers into confident, capable leaders or help you find the ones who can be.

## Diagnose and Solve People Problems

Whether it's poor performance, messy org dynamics, or high turnover, we help you fix the root issues, not just the symptoms.

## Level Up Your HR Tech Stack

Identify and implement HR systems that are intuitive, budget-conscious, and tailored to your growth stage.



[The Biggest Mistakes Founders Make](#)



ALIGNING LEADERS, PEOPLE AND STRATEGY

## Establish a Strong Compliance & Ops Foundation

From handbooks to policies to internal processes - we build systems that align to your culture and protect the business and your people.

## Oversee Payroll, Benefits & Total Rewards

We source cost-effective vendors, create equitable compensation strategies, and streamline admin across the board.

## Develop Talent Acquisition Strategy

We build a thoughtful, forward-looking framework that includes workforce planning, hiring process design, and onboarding systems ensuring you're attracting and retaining the best talent.

# *Bottom Line*

---

Don't wait until it's a mess. Align360 brings executive-level HR horsepower without the full-time expense so you can stabilize, scale, and set your business up to succeed.

✉ Reach out for a consultation and start leading with Align360!

[LET'S TALK!](#)

[The 5 Biggest Mistakes Founders Make](#)



# About Me



Alicia Catatao, Align360's Founder, brings over a decade of experience leading people strategies through hypergrowth, organizational change, and complex business challenges. Her work has consistently delivered progressive people solutions that drive performance, strengthen culture, and impact the bottom line.

Alicia is a seasoned coach, collaborative strategist, and trusted business partner with high emotional intelligence and exceptional interpersonal skills. She's mastered the art and science of balancing people and results - and sets herself apart from the average HR pro with a no-BS approach and a sharp sense of humor.

*Alicia*

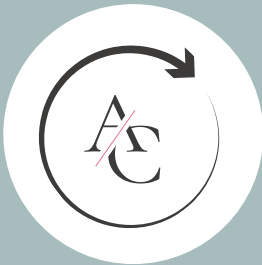


[The 5 Biggest Mistakes Founders Make](#)



# HR Solutions Customized Your Business

For ambitious businesses ready to lead better, Align360 Consulting delivers fractional HR leadership and functional support that drives results, strengthens culture, and turns people strategy into business strategy without hiring a full-time HR Executive..



Schedule Your Free Session with  
Align360 Consulting

[LET'S TALK!](#)



[aliciacatatao@gmail.com](mailto:aliciacatatao@gmail.com)  
[www.align360consulting.co](http://www.align360consulting.co)



ALIGNING LEADERS, PEOPLE AND STRATEGY