Dealing with the Problem Employee

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Reasons to address problem behavior

- Negative impact on productivity
 - High quality employees will become frustrated and lose confidence in your ability to manage
 - They may stop working at their highest levels and may even look for other jobs

Distinguishing between an employee with a problem and a problem employee

Reasons to address problem behavior

- Negative impact on customers/clientele
 - · Customers/clients talk
 - A negative experience with one employee can be a disaster
 - Word will spread and your company may get a bad reputation

Reasons to address problem behavior

- Negative impact on team morale
- $^{\circ}$ "One bad apple can spoil the whole bunch"
- Other employees will come to dislike the negative work environment
- Other employees will come to resent having to pick up the slack

Reasons to address problem behavior

- Changing a problem employee is less expensive than recruiting, hiring, and training a replacement
 - A company's most valuable resource is their employees
 - A "rehabilitated" employee can often become one of your better performers and an asset to the company

Types of Problem Employees

- > The Grumbler
- The Underperformer
- The Conflict Creator

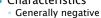
The Underperformer



- Characteristics
 - Have the capability but not the desire to do a good iob
 - Tend to be slackers
 - Do the bare minimum
- Go through the motions but never put any real effort into their work
- Tend not to respond to change unless forced to do so
- Punch the clock and do what is required but no more
- May spend long hours on meaningless activities (such as cleaning out the storage closet)

The Grumbler





- Never smile
- Never laugh
- · Always in a bad mood
- While competent in their jobs, they make negative comments about you, their coworkers, their customers, and the company
- Not open to new technology or new procedures
- Always shoot down new ideas and point out all the problems with new ideas
- · See themselves as victims

The Underperformer

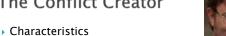


- How to respond
 - Respond immediately to complaints of someone slacking off
 - Respond in private and with tact
 - Offer training if the issue is the employee not having the skills or being fearful of change
- Be supportive and understanding but communicate clearly that the behavior will not be rewarded in the long run and could jeopardize their job

The Grumbler

- How to respond
 - · Never let negativity take hold
- · Respond quickly and privately
- Discussions should be private to reduce the impact on other employees

The Conflict Creator



- Characteristics
- These people thrive on creating conflict
- Might be the result of a personality clash
- These employees cause anxiety, anger, intimidation, resentment, and morale problems
- They intensify problems, challenge decisions, are territorial, and engage in power plays
- If mangers, they display favoritism, micromanage, yell, and talk down

The Conflict Creator



- How to respond
- Try to turn these people around. Other employees will appreciate your efforts
- Try to find what motivates them
- Address the issue immediately and in private

Insubordinate Employees



- How to deal with insubordination
 - Evaluate whether the order was clear and direct
 - Decide if the employee recognized that they were breaking a rule or policy
 - · Evaluate whether the rule is the problem
 - Consider the employee's record

Insubordinate Employees



- Definition of insubordination
- "An unwillingness to submit to authority either through an active refusal to obey an order or through failure to carry one out."
- Actively challenging or criticizing a supervisor's orders
- Interfering with management
- Showing open disrespect
- Making threats, using coercion, physical violence
- Using abusive language or malicious statements
- Ignoring instructions

Insubordinate Employees



- How to deal with insubordination
- Inform the employee that they have violated a rule or engaged in conduct that is unacceptable
- · Explain that the improper conduct must stop
- Identify the negative consequences of failure to change and the positive consequences of changing
- Identify the reasons for the unacceptable behavior
- · Develop an action plan that you both agree on
- Address problem behavior only; never allow personal feelings to come into play
- Do not make idle threats; follow policies

Insubordinate Employees



- Company policies on insubordination
- Generally, employees cannot decide for themselves what instructions they will or will not obey
- Your employee handbook or personnel manual should state that insubordination is against company policy and that violations will be addressed with disciplinary action up to and including termination
- The policy should also state that if an employee has a complaint about management they should follow the employee grievance process

Ten ways to help problem employees

- Take action
- Maintain privacy
- Identify the problem
- Describe expected standards of performance
- Determine the cause

Ten ways to help problem employees

- Request solutions from the employee
- Offer solutions
- Agree on specific actions and a timeframe to implement
- Arrange follow-up meetings
- Document, document, document

Progressive discipline policies

- Be familiar with your company's policy and procedure manual
- Utilize Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs)
- Determining when termination is necessary
- Steps to avoid a lawsuit