



Techniques for Handling Employees With Poor Attitudes and Performance

Presented By:
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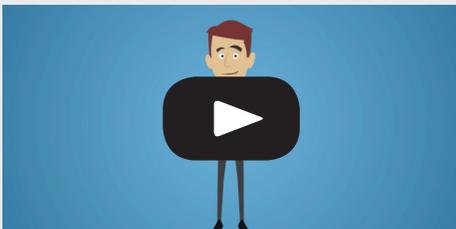
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Techniques for Handling Employees with Poor Attitudes and Performance

Presented by: Jackie Sexson

The Sexson Group

Identifying Employee Attitude Problems

- How is an attitude problem defined?
 - Laziness
 - Tardiness
 - Rudeness
 - Rumor mongering
 - Any other attitude or activity that lowers overall morale

Identifying Employee Attitude Problems

- What causes a bad attitude problem?
 - Fear of inadequacy
 - Personal problems
 - Conflicts with other employees
 - Workplace events such as firing, pay decreases or other business problems

Identifying Employee Attitude Problems

- Indicators of attitude problems in the workplace
 - Decreased performance
 - Unhappy customers
 - Absenteeism
 - Multiple instances of reporting time off
 - Excessive use of sick leave
 - Repeated absences following a pattern
 - Lack of innovation
 - Teamwork issues
 - Physical attributes such as eye rolling, derisive tone, aggressive body language

Getting to the Root of the Issue

- Step 1
 - Make the distinction between bad attitudes and bad behaviors
 - Attitudes are subjective
 - What seems like an attitude problem to one person may not seem all that bad to another
 - Determine how an employee's bad attitude is contributing to bad behaviors that are easy to describe and document
- Step 2
 - Document instances of the employee's bad behavior

Getting to the Root of the Issue

- Step 3
 - Share your documentation with other members of management or HR
 - There is a need for an unbiased look at the documentation
- Step 4
 - Schedule a meeting with the employee to discuss documented incidences of bad behavior
 - Involve an unbiased third party in the meeting to diffuse a difficult situation as well as protect the member of management from claims of discrimination or harassment by the employee with the attitude problem

Getting to the Root of the Issue

- Step 5
 - Discuss the documented incidents of bad behavior with the employee impartially
 - Do not assume the employee's problems
 - Avoid terminology such as "WE have a problem" or "what are WE going to do about it"
- Step 6
 - Develop a plan for change with the assistance of the employee
 - Give specific amount of time to enact the steps of the plan and set a time to reassess the situation after the time period is up
 - Let the employee know what the outcome will be if the steps of the plan are not enacted and if no change is observed.

Effective Communication

- Step 1
 - Observation of the employee's behavior
- Step 2
 - Schedule a time to meet with the employee near the end of the workweek
- Step 3
 - Ask questions about what precipitated the employee's behavior
- Step 4
 - Explain the consequences of having poor behavior in the work environment
- Step 5
 - Give the employee recommendations for improving attitude at work

Effective Communication

- Use active listening skills
- Make sure you hear the employee
- Don't make judgments on employee's issues
- Don't become part of the issue
- Reassure the employee that you will do your part to resolve any issues that are preventing him from accomplishing the job duties
- Put it in writing

The Manager's Role in Promoting Positive Attitudes

- The best teacher is a good example
- Learn (and teach) the power of positive self-talk
- Ban whining
- Teach people the art of “win/win”
- Dump the drama
- Learn, teach and reward “time-out” stress management techniques

The Manager's Role in Promoting Positive Attitudes

- Encourage people to live in the “now”
- Start of list called “The 10 Best Things about Working Here”
- Get psyched
- Don't work, be happy
- SMILE

How to Boost Employee Performance by Improving Attitudes

- Why it is important to separate personality from performance
- How to avoid the snowball effect with the team

Coaching vs. Counseling

- Coaching is an ongoing, performance-improving role
- Counseling is a non-punitive disciplinary process to turn troubled performance around and help the employee see the difference between the work he thinks he's doing and the work he's actually producing
- A mentor is more than a coach
 - He is a role model, cheerleader and sponsor

Establishing a Healthy Relationship Between Supervisor and Employee

- Establishing Healthy Boundaries
 - Supervisor needs:
 - Professional Distance
 - Employee needs:
 - Supervisor is the leader, not a friend, but a person who is responsible and accountable for the employee's job performance

Establishing a Healthy Relationship Between Supervisor and Employee

- Major communication problems stem from weakness
 - Supervisor's weaknesses
 - Employee's weaknesses

Establishing a Healthy Relationship Between Supervisor and Employee

- Weekly on-going supervision
- Give the employee the vision, set the standards and the quality
 - Needs to start at the beginning so that it establishes
 - Honest guidelines
 - Clear expectations
 - Role definition between supervisor and employee
 - A healthy communication relationship

Tips for a Successful Counseling

- Allow enough time; have a private place
- Have all documentation available
- Be specific, use examples of performance deficiencies
- “I” statements rather than “you” statements
- Stick to the facts
- Judge performance, not the person
- Allow the employee time to talk, but don’t be overly sympathetic (don’t become part of the problem)

Tips for a Successful Counseling

- Don't lose your cool
- Stay out of the drama
- Remember that it may require a number of discussions to improve the situation – always follow-up
- Get consultation/support as needed before, during and after

Steps for Effective Confrontation

- Cease assuming responsibility for solving an employee's problem
- Observe and document performance deficiencies
- Note behaviors in specific, detailed terms
 - Specific, observable, non-judgmental, timely
- Familiarize yourself with your people
- Refer troubled employees for professional assistance
- Offer to list
- Negotiate an action plan and follow-up date with employee
- Take time to utilize the performance appraisal process

Documentation Guidelines

- Adequate documentation will assist you in evaluating job performance and confronting an employee when necessary
- It is essential that documentation be:
 - Specific
 - Objective
 - Factual
 - Thorough
 - Timely

Documentation Guidelines

- What to look for in job performance
 - Absenteeism (most obvious)
 - Multiple instances of reporting time off
 - Excessive use of sick leave
 - Repeated absences following a pattern
 - Excessive lateness in the morning or upon return from lunch
 - Peculiar and increasingly improbable excuses for absences
 - Frequent unscheduled short-term absences

Documentation Guidelines

- “On the Job” Absenteeism
 - Presenteeism (less obvious)
 - At work but productivity and efficiency lacking
 - Continued absence from job location more than job requires
 - Frequent trips to water fountain or restroom
 - Long coffee breaks

Documentation Guidelines

- Accidents
 - Physical complaints on the job
 - Accidents on the job
 - Accidents off the job

Documentation Guidelines

- Observed changes in work patters
 - Current work assignment requires more effort than previously taken
 - Work takes more time to produce
 - Difficulty in recalling instructions, understanding officer procedures, etc.
 - Display of disinterest in work
 - Increased difficulty handling complex assignments
 - Difficulty recalling previous mistakes (although these have been brought to employee's attention)
 - Missed deadline

Documentation Guidelines

- Changes in employee's behavior characteristics
 - Appearance: sloppy, inappropriate clothing
 - Mood: withdrawn, sad, mood swings, suspiciousness, extreme sensitivity, frequent irritability
 - Actions: physically assaultive or threatening, unduly talkative, exaggerated self-importance, making incoherent or irrelevant statements on the job, frequently argumentative, outbursts or crying, excessive amount of personal telephone time

Best Ways to Manage Conflict Among Employees

- Do not avoid the conflict, hoping it will go away
- Do not meet separately with people in conflict
- Do not believe the only people who are affected by the conflict are the participants
- Mediate and resolve the conflict
 - Meet with participants together
 - Ask each participant to describe specific actions they'd like to see the other party take that would resolve the differences
 - All participants discuss and commit to making necessary changes
 - Let participants know you do not choose sides
 - Assure both parties that you have every faith in their ability to resolve their differences.

Example

- **Supervisor 1**
 - Average worker. Excessive absences. S/he often confides in you and tells you a lot of personal information about his/her life and the problems s/he's facing. You've tried to help him/her through difficult problems at home.
- **Employee 1**
 - You've missed a lot of days. Your work performance is average. You've already told your supervisor about the troubles you have at home, and s/he's been very understanding. It's true you have lots of family and financial troubles.

Example

- Supervisor 2
 - Long-time employee. Long history of good work and dedication to the department. Always helpful and willing to take on overtime when you needed someone. You know his/her spouse died 1 ½ years ago. The quality of his/her work has dramatically declined since then (many more errors).
- Employee 2
 - You're a well-liked person at work. You generally do a great job. Over the years, you've helped your supervisor out when s/he needed someone to cover or fill in. You're a nice, quiet, private sort of person. You never share much about yourself. Since your husband/wife died 1 ½ years ago, you've been drinking every day after work and you look forward to that drink.
 - You still seldom miss work, but the quality of your work has been affected. There is a noticeable increase in your errors. Your co-workers and supervisor have noticed the recent problems with your work, but no one has said anything because you're such a nice guy/gal!

Example

- Supervisor 3
 - New employee. Erratic worker. Has a lot of potential and can really be one of the most productive workers in the department and do a very good job. Coworkers have been complaining about him/her, saying that s/he leaves things undone and sometimes doesn't make deadlines. They also complain that s/he is uncooperative and irritable. Rumor has it that the worker uses cocaine.
- Employee 3
 - Your co-workers have been complaining. Your attitude has made it extremely difficult for them to work with you. Half the time your work is perfect, and you do twice as much as everyone else. The other half of the time, things don't get done on schedule.
 - You are sloppy and uncooperative. When your co-workers comment on your irritability and the loose ends you leave behind, you get furious. When your supervisor tries to address what's going on, **you get enraged. You get defensive! How dare s/he assume anything is wrong!**
 - You know there's a rumor in your department that you use cocaine. You feel that if you choose to do cocaine on the weekends, it's your own business. You never use it at work!

Example

- Supervisor 4
 - Long-time employee. Deadwood. Chronic poor performance and no improvement despite prior talks. Only three years to go until he retires.
- Employee 4
 - You're a long time employee. You've functioned minimally on the job – just barely making "satisfactory" on performance evaluations. You've been on the same job for 22 years. You constantly make careless errors and are very inefficient. You have not motivation to change.

Improve Employee Morale

- Treat all employees with respect
- Provide regular employee recognition
- Empower employees
- Offer open and regular communication about factors important to employees
- Provide feedback and coaching
- Mentor employees
- Manage employees positively within a success framework of goals, measurements and clear expectations

Using Social Media to Collect Information on Customer Service

- Savvy customers are learning the employees that manage interactions across Facebook, Twitter, etc. can also provide customer service functions.
- Many companies have employees responsible for viewing blog pages to see how customers feel about the company.

Employee Discussions on Social Media

- Considerations for your social media guidelines for employees
 - How does the use of social media affect employee productivity? Do you want employees accessing social media sites at work for either personal or business relations?
 - What legal issues do your company face regarding proper disclosure and/or advice?
 - What restrictions should employees have when interacting? Like it or not, they will be perceived as a representative.
 - How will you train them on the use of these social media guidelines?

Issues with Social Media

- Recent cases
- How companies are managing social media
- What employees are doing on social media
- How do you repair damage

Questions

For additional information, please
contact me
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Notes

