

Tips for Turning Around the Bad Attitude of a Successful Employee

If you have a badly functioning worker with a toxic attitude, it is simple to just replace the person. However, if the employee is one of your top achievers, things may become a little more complicated.

Managers may overlook a good employee's bad attitude because of their performance in many cases, but this is unfair to the other employees and will most likely harm your organization. The following are some suggestions for dealing with a great employee who has a bad attitude.

Picture 1 of Tips for Turning Around the Bad Attitude of a Successful Employee

What kind of bad attitudes negatively impact the workspace?

1. Gossiping about other people's work, criticizing their coworkers.
2. Behaving as if they have superior knowledge and know what's best for a team project.
3. If they have specialist knowledge, this person may believe they are entitled to their selection of tasks. They may also believe that not all of the regulations in the office apply to them.
4. They might give off a vibe of 'too valuable to fire', as if they know you would have difficulty replacing their work value.

Make a distinction between 'bad attitude' and 'independent worker'

Employees that flourish in a collaborative environment and those who prefer to work alone fall into two categories. It may be difficult to know what to do with such a person if your employee performs well but isn't a great team player.

In the majority of workplace circumstances, the self-motivated worker who works best alone has good reason to do so. These reasons are typically related to their personality type. The 'lone wolf' might be socially shy, but incredibly self-motivated, and intensely focused on fulfilling their work obligations. This type of person could definitely benefit from exercises that focus on team building for work.

Employees who do not function well in teams typically spend more energy on their task than team players, according to research, since they do not waste energy on interpersonal contact and co-worker relationships.

To help independent-minded workers flourish, leaders must approach them differently. First and foremost, let go of the concept that lone wolves are bad. Make sure that everyone on your team has the same opportunities, and avoid micromanagement of this personality type, which will almost definitely backfire.

Independent workers may in fact have broader perspectives of team projects and efficiency, since they tend to observe more than participate in group meetings. This type of person could be valuable to take aside privately and ask their perspective on projects and goals.

This doesn't mean every shy wallflower personality type is a treasure chest of valuable ideas - its this type of personality combined with a strong work ethic and performance results that you want to watch for, and find different ways to nurture.

There's good reason to acknowledge the different types of employees and personality types, and how each individual can bring individual strengths to the whole, while being recognized for their unique strengths.

Encourage an attitude adjustment for toxic attitudes

Here are some pointers on how you conduct a successful performance review for a high-performing employee who might use some help in other areas:

Give specific examples of negative behavior

One method to make comments more precise is to bring up previous instances of the employee's bad attitude.

Give them advice on how they could've acted better

After giving examples of poor behavior, tell the employee exactly what he or she should have done so that he or she understands what you're looking for.

Recognize them for good work

Since the employee does an excellent job, please make sure you acknowledge it. You don't want the employee to leave a negative review because they believe it is unjust.

Final advice: Drop the HR lingo, and talk with them openly

Having a long, drawn-out conversation with this person using lots of HR lingo like 'company values' and 'interpersonal conflict resolution metrics' might not be a good way forward. In fact, having a frankly honest conversation can be much more transformative.

Results can be achieved with simpler statements like 'Listen Bob, you do awesome work and nobody could argue that, but people think you're rude and kind of a jerk, they don't want to work with you, and it ends up hurting our bottom line. We'd like to keep you because of your skill value, but we need to figure this out'.

It's not an 'HR approved' talk, but a good dose of reality could be helpful.

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