

The Bad Apple At Work May be Your Best Apple - Employee Productivity

By: Shaun Stevens

It is often said that one bad apple can spoil the barrel of apples. The same can be said of employee morale at the work. One employee with a poor attitude can ruin your whole carefully plan campaign of motivation and productivity at the jobsite.

Dealing with difficult employees is perhaps the hardest part of running any operation. In the end after all your careful choices and planning, hiring and training it all comes down to the employees on the job. Everything in life is communication and interaction with others. In the same manner learning how to deal with difficult employees should command extra emphasis and effort in your human resources efforts.

Consider the following. It is ironic that often the most difficult employees are often the most productive. Put it another way – perhaps that employee who is draining morale is doing such as he is a lone wolf with high expectations of others. It is often said that everything is team work – rah, rah. However it can also be said that suicide bombing is a collaborative team effort and that suicide bombers are good team players. However this is not a result or kind of team that you want in your organization.

It is often noted that in any planned effort that 85 % of the results come from 15 % of the efforts. For example in real estate sales usually 85 % of the sales come from 15 % of the sales employee agents. Said another way 85 % of the other sales employees are just dead weight.

In the same manner this employee who can be singled out as “the troublemaker” and diminishing productivity and motivation at the workplace may be the one keeping your business in the black.

Perhaps this employee is dissatisfied with the work and efforts of the other workers. Perhaps he or she is fed up with the slackers on the job and tells them so. Or just maybe this person is a “lone wolf” who prefers to work alone and is the most productive when put in this type of workplace setting.

In the end what can you. You have several options. First identify and measure the productivity of the specific employee. Are they a major production or profit center? Are they perhaps lowering moral because they are insisting on high performance of others and antagonizing the other working personnel?

If so is there a way to make these efforts more productive and less negative. While it is unlikely that promoting this person to a level of management or supervisor may make sense as it may antagonize the situation further perhaps other avenues can be entertained. Perhaps all this person needs is recognition of their good efforts and attempts to elicit a

discussion on the merits of their efforts and a slight redirection for better purpose. Perhaps specific training can be of help. For example a communications improvement program such as toastmasters or a Dale Carnegie course.

If the above turns out to be of little use and are indeed hopeless perhaps it is best to recognize the “lone wolf” tendencies and inherent productivity of this valued employee. Not all people like to be “team players”. Perhaps they should be left alone to prosper on the job. Perhaps they can be promoted or moved to a job where they are unsupervised and work alone – to the better avail of the organization.

In the end it may well be said that one bad apple may spoil the barrel. However that apple may be your best apple.

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