

Managing Ineffective Performers

Essentials of Management 7th ed.
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Factors Contributing to Ineffective Performance

- Factors related to the Employee
- Factors related to the Manager
- Factors related to the Job
- Factors related to the Organization

The employee

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Insufficient mental ability, education | <input type="checkbox"/> Alcoholism, drug addiction |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Insufficient job knowledge | <input type="checkbox"/> Tobacco addiction, withdrawal symptoms |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Stress/burnout | <input type="checkbox"/> Conducting outside business on the job |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Low motivation, lazy, loafing | <input type="checkbox"/> Family, personal problems |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Technological obsolescence | <input type="checkbox"/> Physical limitations |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Absenteeism/tardiness | <input type="checkbox"/> Office romance |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Emotional/personality problems | <input type="checkbox"/> Fear of traveling, flying |

The job

- Ergonomics problems, repetitive motion disorder
- Repetitive, physically demanding job
- Built-in conflict
- Night-shift work assignments
- Substandard industrial hygiene
- "Sick" building

The manager

- Inadequate communication about job responsibilities
- Inadequate feedback about job performance
- Inappropriate leadership style
- Bullying or intimidating

The organization

- Organizational culture tolerates poor performance
- Poor ethical climate
- Counterproductive work environment
- Negative work-group influences
- Intentional threats to job security
- Violence or threats of violence
- Sexual harassment

Control Model for Managing Ineffective Performers

1. Define performance standards
2. Detect Deviation from acceptable performance
3. Define and assess the cause
4. Communicate with the substandard performer
5. Set improvement goals
6. Select and Implement and action plan
7. Implement the action plan
8. Evaluate performance after a time interval
9. Continue or Discontinue the action plan

Coaching and constructive criticism

- Coaching
A method for helping employees perform better; usually occurs on the spot and involves informal discussion and suggestions

Involves “constructive criticism”

Coaching Points:

- Focus feedback on what is wrong with the work and behavior rather than the employee’s attitude and personality
- Don’t attack the person’s self image
- Don’t exaggerate
- Don’t say things that would put the person on the defensive
 - Allow the person to “save face”

Coaching Points

- Listen actively and empathize
- This will give you a better understanding of the situation
- May point out the real problem and possible solutions

Coaching Points

- Ask good questions
- This will improve your understanding as a manager
- Will put the employee in a position of being an active participant immediately
- Ask open-ended questions:
 - “How could this company support your ideas for improvement?”
 - “What obstacles are in your way that keep you from accomplishing your monthly goal to improve customer service?”

Coaching Points:

- Engage in joint problem solving
- Constructive approach
- Employee may have good suggestions for solving the problem

Coaching Points:

- Offer constructive advice
- Ask it in the form of a question
 - “Do you think it might help to schedule your staff’s assignments and post them?”
- Suggest or tell, don’t ask the person to “try”
 - “We could finish our team meeting sooner if you would try to be on time.”
 - “I want you to be on time for our team meetings so we can finish by the end of the work day.”

Coaching Points

- Give the poor performer an opportunity to observe and model someone who exhibits acceptable performance
 - Examples:
 - Using a piece of equipment
 - Handling a customer sale

Coaching Points

- Obtain a commitment to change
 - Easy agreement may indicate apathy
 - No display of emotion may indicate reluctance to change

Coaching Points

- When feasible, conduct some coaching sessions outside of the performance review

Coaching points

- Applaud good results
 - Encouragement
 - Positive reinforcement

Employee Discipline

- Punishment used to correct or train
 - Summary discipline
 - Immediate discharge
 - Ex: stealing, drug use on job
 - Corrective discipline
 - Employees are able to correct their behavior before punishment is applied
 - Individuals are told they must make changes if they want to avoid discipline, or stay with the organization

Progressive Discipline

Sequence:



Confrontation, Discussion, Counseling

Oral Warning

Written Warning

Suspension or Disciplinary Layoff

Discharge

The red-hot-stove rule:

- Employee discipline should be the immediate result of inappropriate behavior
- Warning should be given
- Punishment should be immediate, consistent, impersonal

Effectively Using Discipline

- All employees should know the punishments that will be applied for the specific infractions
- Discipline should be applied immediately
- The punishment should fit the undesirable behavior
- Be consistent
- Apply discipline impersonally
- Document
- When discipline is over, return to usual work relations
- Be aware of employee rights

Positive Consequences of Punishment

- Punishment given in the right way can benefit an organization
- Affirms employees' belief in a fair and just world
- Employee that is punished may have had a very negative effect on others for a long period of time
- Just punishment informs employees that certain misconduct will not be tolerated

Dealing with Difficult People

- Difficult person:

Personal characteristics disturb others

Angry and see themselves as victims
Isolated
Passive-aggressive behavior
Whiners and complainers
Know-it-alls
Bullies
Cynics
Co-dependents

How to deal with difficult people

- Stay focused on the issues at hand
- Don't take their behavior personally
- Use tact and diplomacy
- Use humor
- Give recognition and attention
- Listen: then confront or respond
- Stand fast and don't make unwarranted concessions
- Boost the difficult worker's self-confidence

Dealing with Cynical Behavior

- Why are workers cynical?
 - Belief that organization lacks integrity
 - Negative affect toward the organization
 - Tendencies toward disparaging and critical behaviors directed at the organization that are consistent with these beliefs

How to handle the cynic:

- Ignore cynical comments
- Demand evidence to support comments and ask for facts

Team Member Codependency

- Codependency: a person tries to control another and be responsible for the consequences of his/her behavior
- Deal with this by focusing on particular problem areas. Confront the issue.

Termination

- Firing an employee because of poor job performance, unacceptable behavior, or interpersonal problems.
- This does communicate the message that adequate performance must be maintained.
- Documentation is crucial.

Wrongful Discharge

- Firing an employee for arbitrary or unfair reasons
- Due Process: giving a worker a fair hearing before dismissal

To remember:

- Never fire an employee when you are angry
- Never fire anyone based on second-party information
- Be direct and clear in your language