



Dealing with Difficult Employees

Presentation Slides

Table of Contents

Handling Difficult Employees	3
Sources.....	4
Handling difficult employees	5
Positive drug use tests	6
Indiscipline detected during electronic monitoring.....	7
Handling office romance.....	8
Absence/ poor attendance	9
Poor performance.....	10
Managing issues with telecommuting	11
Insubordination.....	12
Managing insubordination.....	13
Workplace bullying	14
Types of workplace bullying.....	15
Managing workplace bullying	16
Specific strategies to manage workplace bullying	17
Specific strategies to manage workplace bullying (continued)	18
Specific strategies to manage workplace bullying (continued)	19
Alcohol related misconduct	20

Principles of HRM

Handling Difficult Employees

Aradhna Malik (PhD)

Assistant Professor

VGSoM, IIT Kharagpur

Sources

Cook, N. (2014, June). Bullying in the workplace. *ROSPA Occupational Safety & Health Journal*, 17-19.

Gomez-Mejia, L. R., Balkin, D. B. & Cardy, R. L. (2012). *Managing human resources (7th Ed.)*. New Delhi: PHI Ltd.

HR Specialist (2012, September). Avoid the perception of bullying, 6.

Security Director's Report (2010, October). The next step in curbing workplace bullying. 2-4.

Teller vision (2015, May). Dealing with workplace bullying. 4-5.

Handling difficult employees

(Gomez-Mejia, Balkin & Cardy, 2012)

■ Issues:

- Positive drug use tests
- Indiscipline detected during electronic monitoring
- Office romance
- Absence/ poor attendance
- Poor performance
- Insubordination
- Workplace bullying
- Alcohol related misconduct

Positive drug use tests (Gomez-Mejia, Balkin & Cardy, 2012)

- Find out if the employee's behavior has been disruptive to her/ his own work or anyone else's work in the workplace
- Legitimacy of drug use, and false positives, e.g. pain medication or poppy seeds (khus khus)
- Treatment of positive drug use test – rehabilitation & counselling vs. discharge
- Security and confidentiality of test results

Indiscipline detected during electronic monitoring (Gomez-Mejia, Balkin & Cardy, 2012)

- Necessity of electronic monitoring
- Communication of electronic monitoring to employees
- Casual browsing of harmless websites and occasional personal emails vs. disruption of work due to habitual electronic loafing
- Confidentiality of information regarding detection of indiscipline

Handling office romance

(Gomez-Mejia, Balkin & Cardy, 2012)

- Clarity of policies regarding office romance – allowed or not allowed, and allowed under which conditions (among peers, supervisor-subordinate, etc.)
- Impact of office romance on official work and output of employees involved
- Confidentiality regarding discovery of office romance

Absence/ poor attendance

(Gomez-Mejia, Balkin & Cardy, 2012)

- Reasonability of the attendance rule: Allowance for emergencies and flexibility regarding diverse needs of a diverse workforce
- Warning regarding the consequences of poor attendance
- Giving the employee a chance to defend her/himself - Reasonable assessment of situation
- Confidentiality of meeting details

Poor performance (Gomez-Mejia, Balkin & Cardy, 2012)

- Reasonability of performance standards
- Provision of reasonable accommodation for exigencies
- Communication of the organization's performance standards to all employees
- Documentation of poor performance followed by counselling and remedial measures before punishment
- Confidentiality regarding need for corrective action and punishment

Managing issues with telecommuting

(Gomez-Mejia, Balkin & Cardy, 2012)

- “Select telecommuters with care, considering the work habits of the employee & the type of work involved.
- Maintain schedules & make sure telecommuters stick to deadlines.
- Make sure that the technology works.
- Have phone based workers come in to the office on a regular basis so they can attend meetings & interact with managers.
- Develop a well-planned telecommuters plan that includes performance expectations with measurable results.
- Don't make telecommuting a term of employment.”

Insubordination (Gomez-Mejia, Balkin & Cardy, 2012)

- “Insubordination [is] an employee’s refusal to obey a direct order from a supervisor, [and] is a direct challenge [to] the management’s right to run the company”
- “... also occurs when an employee is verbally abusive to a supervisor”
- Permissible only when:
 - Orders relate to an illegal activity
 - Orders put the employee in some kind of dangerOnus lies on the employee to prove the reason for insubordination

Managing insubordination

(Gomez-Mejia, Balkin & Cardy, 2012)

- Written vs. oral orders
- Proof of insubordination
- Seriousness of issue
- Reason for insubordination
- Confidentiality

Workplace bullying (Gomez-Mejia, Balkin & Cardy, 2012)

- “Workplace bullying [is] a form of harassment that results in employees experiencing mental distress, physical illness, loss of productivity, & a higher propensity to quit to avoid being in a toxic workplace.”
- “... consists of persistent, offensive, abusive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behavior, abuses of power or unfair penal sanctions, which makes the recipient feel upset, threatened, humiliated, or vulnerable, which makes the recipient feel upset, threatened, humiliated, or vulnerable, which undermines their self-confidence & which may cause them to suffer stress.”

Types of workplace bullying (Teller vision, 2015)

- False accusations
- Ignoring/ dismissing comments/ inputs
- “A different set of standards or policies [...] used for the worker”
- “Gossip spread about the worker”
- Constant criticism by the boss or coworkers
- Belittling comments made about the worker in public or in private
- Yelling at the subordinate
- Purposeful exclusion from projects or meetings
- Giving credit of targetted employee’s work to other workers or denying credit to targetted employee
- Personal comments

Managing workplace bullying

(Teller Vision, 2015, Cook, 2014, HR Specialist, 2012)

- As detailed documentation as possible
- “Consider talking to the bully”
- “Always focus on the resolution” or a way forward
- “Devise & implement a workplace bullying & harassment policy”
- “Promote a culture where bullying & harassment are not tolerated”
- Be aware of the organizational factors that are associated with bullying & take steps to address them”
- “Follow procedures laid down in their organization’s bullying & harassment policy”
- “Be sensitive, objective & seek information”
- Know what is bullying and what is not
- Focus on the issue and not on the persons involved
- “Don’t single out an employee for discipline”
- “Don’t respond to employee mistakes with an accusing tone & loud voice”
- “Be cautious of jokes”
- “Keep reprimands private”
- “Don’t be hypersensitive”

Specific strategies to manage workplace bullying (Security Director's Report, 2010)

- **In response to the relational aggressor (bully):**
 - “Act quickly”
 - “Notifications & sanctions: Inform the relational aggressor that the behavior is not acceptable, first verbally, then in writing”
 - Change job responsibilities primarily to avoid contact between aggressor & victim
 - Supervision: Monitor closely after informing employees about monitoring
 - “Training: Include relational aggression as part of awareness education of bullying behavior, including the consequence of these behaviors upon victims & their colleagues”
 - Performance review

Specific strategies to manage workplace bullying (Contd.) (Security Director's Report, 2010)

■ For the victim:

- “Relocation or reassignment” primarily to avoid contact with aggressor
- Mentoring
- Individual treatment and support
- Group treatment and support

Specific strategies to manage workplace bullying (Contd.) (Security Director's Report, 2010)

■ For the organization:

- *Hiring practices:* Review job candidates' applications carefully, including directly questioning potential applicants' references regarding any history of bullying & relationally aggressive behavior
- *Firing practices:* Willingness and ability to fire aggressive employees
- *Policies and procedures:* Development and implementation of anti-bullying policy that addresses identification of bullies and lays down procedures for dealing with them
- *"Reporting:* Create a formal, nonjudgmental reporting procedure for victims to identify relational aggressors without fear or retaliation"
- *"Naming the problem:* Employees should be given an opportunity to discuss workplace bullying in all forms & to identify the mechanisms that perpetuate the behavior"
- *"Education:* Provide employees information to illuminate bullying and relational aggression within the workplace, including definitions & examples of bullying, its effects on bullies, victims & organizational culture, & strategies for addressing the problem"



Alcohol related misconduct

(Gomez-Mejia, Balkin & Cardy, 2012)

- Chronic alcoholism vs. inebriated employees in the workplace vs. use of alcohol at work
- Severity of misconduct – disruption of work – self & others
- Public nuisance issues
- Counselling and remedial action leading to discharge
- Confidentiality