

Are Your Employees Disgruntled? Eight Clues That You Should Address Immediately

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Small Business *Easy* HR

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All organizations have at least one disgruntled employee. ALL companies. Despite how progressive a company may be. Regardless of all of the employee benefits and perks a company may offer. Despite having the most open and accessible supervisor, every organization is faced with this issue. Oftentimes, the fact that an employee is unhappy is obvious. Other times, it's less transparent.

How to you deal with an unhappy worker? The first step is to take stock of the obvious clues and then determine the best approach to salvaging the working relationship.

Common behaviors of a disgruntled employee include:

- 1) Arrives late to company meetings, or misses meetings altogether.
- 2) Attends meetings but is quiet, agitated, or bored.
- 3) Frequently misses deadlines.

- 4) Employees' work quality changes from strong to mediocre or poor. Has trouble keeping up with the pace of the work.
- 5) Frequently leaves work early, arrives late or calls in sick.
- 6) Spends time surfing the Internet or on the phone.
- 7) Responds in a confrontational, angry, or overly aggressive way to simple requests or comments.
- 8) Always negative; finds fault with everything.

The first step is to determine the reasons for the change in behavior if possible. If the negative change in behavior is work related, is it because the workload has increased? Is your employee feeling overwhelmed or not supported? Are there issues with other members of the team that are negatively impacting your employee?

Make it a part of your business best practices to check in with staff on a regular basis, both at group meetings and in "one on one" meetings. Let your staff know that you or others if appropriate are available to talk if there are concerns relating to the work.

Sometimes an employee's unhappiness has nothing to do with the workplace and everything to do with something happening in their personal life. Although it can be a slippery slope to venture down the path of personally helping employees deal with personal issues, you can offer

support by allowing the employee some time off or the ability to leave early to focus on issues that are likely distracting them from their work. If your company has an Employee Assistance Program, refer the employee to it, or remind employees' to take advantage of mental health support as part of their medical plan if your company offers one.

A little compassion and a lot of communication are the first steps in turning a worker who is unhappy into a more motivated and engaged partner in your business.

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