

# How to Handle a Negative Employee

You know the one: he comes in grumpy, and within minutes the atmosphere of the entire office has sunk like a brick. No one wants to work with him, no one likes to talk to him, and people go out of their way to avoid him in the halls.

Negative employees can wreak havoc on a small business. They not only decrease the productivity of everyone else, but they make your team dread coming into work. Negativity is like any virus: it spreads easily.

If you've got a toxic person on your team it's vital that you either try to turn them around or let them go.

## Start By Talking With Them

If you haven't approached them before, start by talking with them about their attitude. They might have a specific reason why they've been so unhappy, and if you can fix it easily this is the best way to turn them around.

Ask them specific questions. Is their attitude related to something specific at work? Are they having problems at home? Are they too stressed out with their tasks?

Finding the root cause is important. Of course, if they're just a negative person in general you won't be able to do much.

## Keep It Private

It's important not to chastise the person in front of others. When you talk to them about their attitude, do it in the privacy of your office. No one likes an audience when they've done something wrong, and making it public will likely make them act out even more.

## Clearly Communicate Your Expectations

Make sure the employee knows that their attitude is unacceptable. Everyone in your business should be treated with courtesy and respect. If they don't have something nice or constructive to say, then they should keep quiet.

Many negative employees start or perpetuate gossip in a company. And, gossip is incredibly toxic. If this person is contributing to the gossip mill then they need to stop immediately. Gossip creates animosity, tension, and stress, and your team doesn't need that.

## Communicate Consequences

It's important to be clear that there will be consequences if they don't change their behavior. If there's no improvement after a certain time period, you might have to let them go.

The threat of job loss can be a strong motivator for change, so if all else fails then make sure they know this is an option.

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