



WHY DON'T EMPLOYEES DO WHAT THEY ARE SUPPOSED TO DO?

As a manager, it can be frustrating when employees aren't productive and don't effectively complete the essential functions of their job. What is the underlying reason employees are not successful? To support employee's success and to hold employees accountable, there are some possibilities you want to investigate.

- They don't know what they are supposed to do
- They don't know how to do it
- They think they are doing it
- They think something else is more important
- They don't believe they are able to do it
- They are rewarded in some way for not doing it
- They don't have the capacity to do it
- They don't want to do it

Let's consider each one of these potential causes and consider potential actions we might take as their manager.

If an employee doesn't know what they are supposed to do, then they may not understand expectations. It is important to clarify expectations early in the life cycle of an employee, even as early as the initial interview. Inform candidates of all aspects of the job. The good, the bad, and the ugly. You want them to have a clear picture of the job before they start the job, so they know what they are getting into.

If an employee is lacking the skill to do the job, you must ask if they have received the proper training required. Did they state in the interview that they had the skill but upon hire they cannot perform the task? Skills tests are an invaluable tool to use to assess a candidate's ability for certain functions of the job and assist in developing a training plan for onboarding.

Sometimes miscommunication can lead to misunderstanding especially with job expectations. Managers need to "ensure understanding" when communicating expectations and specific tasks. Sometimes employees will say they understand when they really don't. Managers need to have a dialog to ensure the employee is on the same page with expectations and job duties.

If an employee believes something else is more important than what the manager believes then there may have been a disconnect in priorities. A manager might need to assist the employee with prioritizing tasks by letting them know which are high priority and which can wait.

If an employee believes that they can't do their job it could be either a confidence issue or a resource issue. Typically, coaching and experiencing success will increase the employee's confidence if their mistakes are treated as learning opportunities vs. punitive actions. As far as resources, it is the manager's responsibility to ensure the employee has the resources needed to be successful or understands the limits of available resources.

How can an employee be rewarded in some way for not doing their job? How many times, out of frustration of an employee's quality of work, have you said "I'll just do it myself this time? What does "this time" turn into? Every time! What is the employee learning? That they don't need to do the job because someone else will do it for them. There are times when a manager needs to let go and allow the employee to learn from their mistakes but only if the mistake isn't high risk.

What do you do if an employee doesn't want to or doesn't like to do a certain aspect of their job? If the aspect is an essential function of their job, they are required to complete the job in a fashion that meets expected standards. If they refuse to complete these tasks, they should be held accountable. We all have parts of our job that we don't necessarily enjoy but we are still expected to complete.

It is important that we hold employees accountable. Not holding employees accountable will at some point impact the rest of the team and eventually the service that we provide. In supporting our employees that are struggling, it is important that we don't just tell them the what and by when but help them understand the why. Finding the root cause of their issue is the first step in developing a plan of success.