

Are Employees Ruining Your Business?

4 Simple Steps to Identify & Change Employee Behavior

By Stephanie Frank

It's a brand new day. You wake up after a great night's sleep and get ready for work. You have objectives to meet, deadlines approaching and meetings scheduled - a very full day. After a quick breakfast and a cup of your favorite morning beverage, you head to work.

Then your day goes haywire.

Traffic jams make you cranky. The parking lot is full and it is freezing outside. You finally make it to the office, already tired and irritated from the commute. You walk in to find your employees, the same ones who are supposed to be helping you move forward, stuck in permanent water-cooler chatter. They scurry back to work just as you arrive.

Mistakes, apologies, Internet surfing and just plain goofing off are ruining your productivity and the productivity and profitability of your company. In short, you have C.R.A.P. – Confusion, Resistance, Apathy and Procrastination in the driver's seat. It's time for a new approach to getting things done!

Before we go any further, let's get real here for a minute. Do you really believe that people come to work saying to themselves "I wonder how I can mess up this company and get paid for it?" Probably not. Down deep, every human being wants to be a part of something they can be proud of. The rampant "what's in it for me" apathetic approach to work cannot be tolerated. At the same time, it's an almost insurmountable job for an organization or individual to be responsible for changing the attitude of every employee individually. While simple steps can be taken to reprimand employees, the root of the problem must be addressed as an organization before real change is to take place.

The root of the solution to the problem is a simple formula called F.A.S.T. In short, your employees need to have the right Focus, take the right Action, have the right Systems, and be on the right Team in order to provide your company with the most profitable return on investment.

So how does this formula work? Let's take a look:

1. **The Right Focus** – Bad employee behavior is rampant when employees or managers are isolated and do not know the "bigger picture." People need to know what is expected of them and why. If they are unsure how their job fits in with the company objectives, it can lead to resistance and procrastination.

Additionally, employees need to know the actual requirements of their job and what is considered success. For example, a bank teller may be required to process a particular type of transaction in a specified amount of time, or may be required to process 'x' number of customers in an hour. This sets a guideline for both employees and management/leadership of the organization by which success or failure can be measured.

2. **The Right Action** – Time productivity is a primary component of success, yet we are all bombarded with daily distractions, interruptions and “can you just fit this in now?” requests. Ill-equipped to handle the ever-increasing amount of information, email and phone messages, many employees are simply overwhelmed by the amount of work required and goof off because they can't handle it all.

In order to set people up for success, allow them to have an hour a day of “focus time” where they are not allowed to be interrupted. They will use this time to tackle those high priority items on their list of tasks to complete. This promotes a feeling of accomplishment and success and demotes the frustration of having too much to do.

3. **The Right Systems** – Take a look at how things are being done – do employees take the simplest and cleanest route to accomplishment or are they stuck in the process maze? The harder it is to get things done, the more your employees are apt to be confused, nervous or just plain resistant to going through the pre-established systems.

It may be time to do an internal systems check. Ask your employees which systems make it difficult to do their job in an efficient and timely manner. Prioritize those which are most often reported, and fix it. Create new and more streamlined systems that do the work with less effort, and employees will step up to be more productive.

4. **The Right Team** – We all know how important it is to have the right person for the job, and the right team to make it happen. Yet all too often, people are asked to step into doing jobs that have been vacated with disastrous results. Simple tasks to some people may be daunting to others, which leads to decline of the organization.

It may be time for an internal individual audit of each of your team members. Schedule a private interview with each one and ask them what they believe they contribute to the team, what is working for them and what is not working for them. Then ask them what they need to be completely successful in their position. The results may shock you, and when you take corrective action, they will also take corrective action, and profitability (not to mention productivity) will grow to new heights.

People have always been, and probably will always be the single most important asset to any organization. At the same time, those same people can be the biggest problem in any organization. By

putting this formula into place, you will immediately see where you or your organization can create a structure that enhances both employee happiness and productivity which eliminates confusion, resistance, apathy and procrastination – and all those wasted trips to the water cooler.

