

## Dealing with Difficult Employees

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Most employees don't come into the office and think "I'm going to be a real pain in the butt today." So, why are they? It is frustrating, but keep in mind there could be many different reasons for this behavior. It could be a short-term personal issue going on in their life, or a coping mechanism they learned at an early age. Or, maybe it's due to a mental health issue? If it is, then this is something you should discuss with your Human Resources department before you address the situation.

So who are these offenders? They come in many forms:

Avoider

This individual will put more effort into avoiding work than actually doing their job.

Attacker/Defender

No matter how constructive you are with this person, they will be on the defense about most

everything. They will attack you and/or other employees and do whatever they can to avoid responsibility for anything.

### Mule

You can give this person all the valid reasons you want when it comes to changing policies, procedures or their role, but they will not give in or change how they act or work.

### Whiners

You could get a new system to make this person's life easier, but they will complain about it. They could earn a bonus, but it won't be enough. It's like nails on a chalkboard working with this person.

Why do these employees continue to act the way they do? Because their managers and co-workers enable them to do so!!! In many cases, they feel it's easier to let this behavior continue because thinking it will be more painful addressing the difficult employee. But instead of enabling this person, maybe they should ask, "How is this behavior affecting the other 99% of the good employees in the department or organization?". It's hard to ignore the issue when you look at it from this perspective.

Most of these employees can improve. It's not always easy, but it's doable.

1. When addressing the employee about their behavior, have a plan and decide on the outcome you want before you meet with them. If you don't have a plan of action, before you know it, they will avoid, defend, or whine their way out of the conversation.
2. Hold people accountable for their actions and let them know the expectations. More importantly, if expectations and they aren't met, the follow through on the consequences.
3. Model good communication skills and build awareness within your organization from the top down. Provide continual training and guidance on positive communication and behaviors in the workplace.

If you are in need of an outside, neutral source to provide guidance on employee issues, maybe it's time to utilize an Employee Assistance Program such as The Oasis Group for managers and employees. Feel free to contact Jim Printup at <http://www.theoasisgroup.net/>

Or if you are looking for additional teamwork or leadership development sessions for your organization, contact Chris Kelly at [This e-mail address is being protected from spambots. You need JavaScript enabled to view it](mailto:chris@relevantmovement.com) [This e-mail address is being protected from spambots. You need JavaScript enabled to view it](mailto:chris@relevantmovement.com) <http://www.relevantmovement.com/what-we-offer/program-menu.html>

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