

How To Motivate a Lazy Co-Worker

When you care about your job, it can be frustrating to see co-workers:

- **Playing solitaire for long periods of time**
- **Talking on the phone (personal calls) for long periods or frequently**

Even more frustrating is when their laziness interferes with your work or performance.

Steps in managing a lazy co-worker:

1. Talk about your concerns with a person outside the situation-

- This helps to keep you objective and think the situation through
- Keep all conversations about this private – never go public.
- Always speak respectfully – never in put-downs.
- Don't wait until you are ready to explode onto your peer before you speak up (keep the stress level within yourself low)

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2. Make your lazy co-worker feel valued.

- Maybe he/she is goofing off because he/she doesn't think that her job is important.
 - o Maybe she has too much busy work to do
 - o Maybe she is bored
 - o Maybe other people ignore her and she doesn't feel important
- Ask him/her her opinion on important matters and they may surprise you with renewed interest in work.

3. People get into the habit of being lazy when they have lots of down time.

- When they are finally handed a job to do – inertia is already present.
- Keep people busy with tasks suited to their skills.
- Keep people learning new things.

4. Mention once and a while that lay-offs might be on the horizon.

- Sometimes this lights a fire under people.

**5. Raises/bonuses should always be based on performance-
mention this to your co-worker:**

- Performance reviews should determine salary increases
- This is a proven strategy to motivate employees to put on their A game.

**6. If after praise, quality tasks, recognition, etc. the person does
not respond:**

- Tell the supervisor
 - o Be prepared to give specific examples of laziness
- Don't complain or slander.
- Just give the details.

7. Try to talk with your co-worker about the problem.

- After you try – try again and then talk with your supervisor with details.

**8. Always keep a note or journal with the dates and summarize
what you discussed with co-worker or supervisor.**

**9. If your co-worker get hostile and argumentative – keep your
cool.**

- End the conversation gracefully and assume he/she will not change his behavior.

**10. Go back to the supervisor – it's his/her ultimate
responsibility.**

Handout – How to Manage a Lazy Co-Worker:

Steps in managing a lazy co-worker:

- 1. Make your lazy co-worker feel valued.**
- 2. People get into the habit of being lazy when they have lots of down time.**
- 3. Mention once and a while that lay-offs might be on the horizon.**
- 4. Raises/bonuses should always be based on performance- mention this to your co-worker:**
- 5. If after praise, quality tasks, recognition, etc. the person does not respond:**
- 6. Try to talk with your co-worker about the problem.**
- 7. Always keep a note or journal with the dates and summarize what you discussed with co-worker or supervisor.**
- 8. If your co-worker gets hostile and argumentative – keep your cool.**
- 9. Go back to the supervisor – it's his/her ultimate responsibility.**

Ticket 1

Welcomed Rehab Ed Group this morning. Brief announcements. Continued group with a discussion and illustrations of how to manage a lazy co-worker. Examples of laziness used excessive personal phone calls, playing games on computer or i-Pod, standing around gossiping, etc. 5 tips on managing these problems were discussed and illustrated with honest and fair communication emphasized. Another important strategy was to show how valuable the employee is so that this might stimulate the co-worker to see their performance in a different light. Also, communicating concerns and frustrations with one's direct supervisor is always important – especially if the co-worker is unresponsive or ignores you. Managing control and not letting frustration and temper explode were emphasized.

Individual Note:

Client asked good questions and seemed interested in today's topic. Able to give examples of own experience in working with lazy people who were just putting in their time. Willingness to engage high.

Plan:

- Continue on selected topics to assist in positive work experience and positive management of work frustrations.

Ticket 2

Welcomed Rehab Ed Group this mornings. After brief announcements continued discussion and positive collegial management of peers who lack energy, ambition, and/or motivation to work. Discussed additional tips on positive management:

- Talk with supervisor about concerns
- Talk with co-worker again about concerns
- Keep notes or journal with dates/summary of talks
- Stay calm and cool
- Ultimately take it back to supervisor

Group members offered personal examples of each of these tips and how they helped or did not help in their situations.

Individual Note:

Client willing to engage with group process. Willing to offer own experiences and positive management styles. Good attention.

Plan:

- Continue work on positive peer/collegial interactions in the workplace.
- Continue work on learning and integrating positive work ethics.