

HOT SHEET

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Full-Circle HR

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"It may be a difficult position to fill. We need to hire a brilliant person who isn't smart enough to know we're underpaying him."

Did you know that:

- Employers are using creative ways to assist employees (students & parents of students) with their student loan debt by cashing out paid time off?
- According to SHRM, the Monday after the Superbowl sees a big increase in the number of employees who unexpectedly call in for an unplanned day off?
- According to a survey by KPMG, while 70% of women are willing to take risks at work, these risks are more often than not on behalf of the group but much less frequently on behalf of themselves (go to https://info.kpmg.us/content/dam/info/en/news-perspectives/pdf/2019/KPMG_Womens_Leadership_Study.pdf for the full study)?
- Congressional democrats recently introduced a bill that raises the Federal Minimum Wage to \$15 by 2024?
- More organizations are experimenting with shortened workdays on Friday during the Winter months to improve morale?
- In some instances when an employee becomes Medicare eligible, the employee can opt out and continue to make HSA contributions?

Coaching an Employee

You work hard to keep your business operating at its best and you try to hire the right people to accomplish this. You take your responsibility for their livelihood seriously and you depend upon them to work with you to keep the business going. But then comes a situation where you have tried everything to help this one employee that just doesn't seem to be working out. This difficult situation is emotionally and mentally draining. This is particularly true when the employee used to perform better or has not really violated any policies, but just isn't measuring up to what you need from him or her. Default mode is to wait it out, hoping it turns around. But delaying a decision and failing to take immediate action is ill-advised.

Particularly if you are already considering termination, it is time to take some action. First of all, consider

what may be causing the problem. Some questions to ask are: Is there a mismatch between the employee and the job? Does the employee lack some set of skills? Is there a misunderstanding of the expectations? Are you and the employee seeing priorities differently? It's also critical to contemplate how you may be contributing to the issue. It is rare that a problem is 100% the employee's fault or 100% the supervisor's fault.

The next step is to solicit another perspective. Talk to a previous supervisor, talk to someone else who has worked with the employee, or consider doing a 360. Any of these options should be conducted with an attitude of exploration and understanding that you are trying to rectify the situation, not with an attitude of confirming your belief that this person needs to go. If you believe this, then this step could do more harm

than good for the employee and for how others perceive your objectivity. Consider an approach such as, "I am worried that my frustration may cloud my objectivity and I would like to get your perspective so I can maybe see something that I am missing."

Once you've broadened your perspective by talking with others, it's time to talk with the employee. Share your observations, how the team is affected, and that you want to help. Then ask for their view of the situation. This could go something like, "I am seeing problems with your performance. I know you can do better and I believe I may be contributing to the problem—how do you think we might improve?" Brainstorming is a great way to approach this. Remember, though, that the employee may be surprised by this conver-

sation and may need to some time to take it in and think of some actions that may help. They may have to get back to you. On the other hand, if the employee cannot see the problem, they may not be coachable – if this is the case you may either decide that you can live with the issue or begin a process of talking about consequences.

The next step in coaching is to create a plan of measurable actions and provide any additional resources the employee may need. Meet regularly to follow up with the employee. Maintain confidentiality of your plan, but you can let others know you are working the issue and invite them to be supportive.

If, after a reasonable time, you don't see improvement, start talking about consequences, "This is the third time this has happened and we must see improvement. But if you do see improvement, be sure to offer praise!

Sick Days and Working from Home

Technology has provided convenience for employees and employers when it comes to being able to work from home on critical assignments when it would be difficult to get to work. But has it undermined the health and well-being of our employees by keeping them from using sick time when they should legitimately do so. The "always on" mentality that many of us have acquired due to the ability to continue to work no matter where we are has begun to undermine healthy practices for our employees. There are times when it makes perfect

sense to work from home when one might be out for a sick day without the capability of technology—one might be when a broken leg would make it impossible to get to work but working from home is quite doable or when someone is on the tail-end of a cold, still contagious, but able to work without compromising their health. When someone is seriously in need of downtime and refuses to take that time or their boss continues to call on them because technology allows them to be "always on," this is a different situation that is very short-sighted

for the well-being and morale of our employees. Paid sick time is a benefit that truly is more of a necessity when it comes to keeping our organizations and staff viable for the long-term.

Employers must take the lead on this and set the tone for taking sick time rather than creating a culture of working without regard to long-term well-being. Manager and supervisors can help with this by taking time off themselves when they are ill or in need of a break. Tell employees that you expect them to take time off when ill. Talk about taking sick time and mental health days

Do in your heart what you feel is right—for you'll be criticized anyway.
—Eleanor Roosevelt

when needed. Encourage them to do this for their families as well to reduce stress and assure the health of their families. Additionally, encourage staff who work remotely to be sure to take midday breaks, to not work into the night nor continue to work over the weekend. Talk about this in your staff meetings and invite staff to support each other in encouraging a balanced and healthy behavior.