



Careers Newsletter

January 2021

Vol. 11 No. 7

The Secret to Working Successfully with Slackers

Working with someone who doesn't pull their weight at the office can create stress. You may be stuck putting in extra hours to cover for them. Even if you go home on time, you may feel resentful watching them text their friends and shop online while you're toiling away.

Whether you're a co-worker or a manager, you can start a constructive conversation to discourage slacking. Consider these tips for holding onto your peace of mind while promoting greater efficiency and teamwork.

How to Deal with Slackers When You're a Co-worker

Focus on productivity. Start out by putting your emotions aside and figuring out whether your colleague's behaviour really affects your ability to do your job. Otherwise, it's probably not worthwhile to pursue the issue.

Evaluate the context. Laziness isn't the only reason why employees neglect their responsibilities. They could be slowed down by a chronic illness or distracted by troubles at home. Adjust your approach accordingly.

Strengthen relationships. When you're ready to talk, focus on collaborating to find a solution. ***If you can build a connection with your team mate, they'll probably want to avoid letting you down.***

Revise the process. If discussions deadlock, you may need to act on your own. Can you restructure your job to bypass the co-worker who misses deadlines?

Fill in the gaps. Similarly, maybe you can cover the tasks that are slipping through the cracks. This may be feasible if it's minor stuff.

Speak with your boss. For more serious cases, consider notifying your supervisor if you and the other employee are unable to work it out yourselves. ***Document specific examples of how their behaviour is impacting the business.***

How to Deal with Slackers When You're a Manager



1. **Discuss the mission.** *Employees will feel more engaged and motivated if they understand the purpose behind their activities.* Talk about how their efforts contribute to the good of the organization and help others.
2. **Clarify roles.** Give staff members unique responsibilities to increase accountability. Design tasks that leverage their personal strengths.

Establish measurable goals. Employees may under-perform if standards are imprecise. Set targets they can aim for, like making 10 calls an hour or bringing in 12 new clients each year.

Reward progress. Follow up to let employees know that their accomplishments will be noticed and appreciated. Praise them for taking on a heavier workload successfully. Give the whole office an extra day off to reinforce a sense of teamwork.

Offer training. *If workers are falling behind because they're unsure of their abilities, provide resources to upgrade their skills.* Create online courses they can take in their free time, or pay for them to attend a workshop on business writing or accounting fundamentals.

Shrink work teams. It's easy to become lost in a crowd. Employees may work harder when their individual performance is more conspicuous.

Ask for input. If you're unsure how to proceed, enlist the employee's cooperation by asking them for their feedback. They may be able to suggest whether they need closer supervision or a quieter workspace. Just being consulted may help them to feel more engaged.

Control cyber slacking. Of course, the internet has spawned more ways to waste time. Set a good example by limiting your own non-work related browsing. Create policies that set reasonable limits and define appropriate sites.

Take action if office productivity is suffering because employees are loafing around. Dial down the tension by focusing on the positive aspects of your work, and develop strategies to help the whole team give 100%.

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