

SELF-BETRAYAL AT WORK

■ By DR. VICTOR S. L. TAN

IT is a common tragic story in the workplace. Workers who commit self-betrayal. Despite having good education and good skills, many sabotage their own career and growth prospects in organisations.

The irony is that many are not even aware what they are doing actually cause more harm than good in the long run.

The first step towards overcoming self-betrayal at the workplace is awareness. Here are seven most common areas where an employee usually undermine their own credibility.

1 Doing the Minimum - Many employees think they can get away by doing the minimum. They argue that they are not being insubordinate by doing just enough to get by. Some reason that since they are not getting paid as much as their superiors, so why should they do more. Yet there are others who think this does not matter as they and their peers irrespective of performance still get very similar increment and bonus each year.

The truth is quite different when stretch out over a period of time. An employee who always do the minimum is short changing himself from acquiring more knowledge and skills.

He has less opportunities to show his ability. He conveys a message of someone who is less capable and lacks initiative. This become his "brand" in the minds of his superiors. When a great opportunity for a bigger responsibility arise, he may be bypassed for lack of evidence of extraordinary performance. And of course when tough time comes along, his job is likely to be at stake and his prospect for future jobs may be dim due his lesser track-record.

2 Offending Others - There are employees who despite their good work, go about offending others. Some are hot tempered who explodes in the face of people. Others have habits of being rude or sarcastic or being too frank for their own good.

There is an art in getting along with people. It is not that people who are abrasive and hurt others feelings, do not know about interpersonal skills.

The problem here is not about knowing what to do, but it is about

doing what you know. Unless one is truly aware of the negative impact of his offending behaviour on his current and future prospect in the company, he will continue his self-defeating antics. He needs to know that every time he offends people, he is undoing his good work and sabotaging his image and good name.

3 Resisting Change and Learning - There is no question many changes be it a new system, a new structure or a new equipment takes some adjusting to. Many employees will initially resist, however most will eventually abandon the old, and adopt the new.

However, there are employees who continue to resist and boycott any kind of change introduced in the workplace. This kind of employees are often called the "hardcore resisters" who despite what the management does, communicating, training, motivating and providing support, comes to no avail.

These hard core staff is often

betraying their education, experience and talent. To resist the change not due to the lack of ability to follow the new way, but due to an attitude they take towards the change.

4 Self-Deprecating - It is bad enough when others try to discredit what one has achieved. What is worse is when one tries to run oneself down. Many may think an innocent self-deprecating remark is just a simple expression of humility.

As an example, an executive after putting his best in completing his assignment made a self-deprecating remark: "I am not good in writing and don't have the flair for numbers, I hope I have not messed things up to meet your expectation".

When things go smoothly, such remarks may be taken as modesty. However, when things do not go so well and when leaders are looking for possible causes of a problems, self-deprecating remark like this may create doubts about an individual's

ability or performance.

5 Having A Negative Attitude - An employee who has a negative attitude will eventually show it in all aspects of work. He will have nothing good to say about customers.

He will criticise his superior's decision. He will be cynical about others' behaviour. He will look for the slightest faults of others and blow it up. He will blame the company policies or procedures for hampering people from efficient doing work. He makes it difficult for people to work with him as he focuses on problems instead of solutions.

After a while, he will build the reputation of being negative and his superior will begin to see him as a problem person. His negative attitude is his No.1 enemy, and will do his career in.

6 Producing Poor Quality Work - We would not wear a shirt which has stains on it, as it will not look good on us. In fact it would reflect poorly on us as others may think of us as sloppy or careless. Likewise, poor quality work puts a stain on our credibility as it reflects apathy, incompetence, or poor discipline.

One's work is in fact, a reflection of oneself. As a person will take the effort to groom himself well to look good to others, it is important for an employee to also do his work well as the quality of the work reflects his image to others.

7 Clocking Up Downtime - Some employees think that they are doing things above board if they take medical leave or emergency leave occasionally. They argue that if they are not feeling well, it is genuinely alright to be on medical leave.

Likewise, they point out when there are crisis in one's life, having emergency leave to address is a normal thing to do. One cannot argue with the validity of such assertions.

However, the reality is that the frequent clocking of medical and emergency leave will tarnish the image of an employee. Others who depend on the said employee on work to be done, will start to form an impression of unreliability of the staff. In the future, they will avoid giving important assignments to the said staff.

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