

# CORPORATED MANAGEMENT / HUMAN RESOURCES

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## Motivating your staff

An effective manager will resolve the problem of an employee's poor performance.

**T**ERMINATING a problem employee may seem like an easy solution. However, if you believe the employee's performance can be altered, counselling him is an intermediate step before firing.

Counselling employees requires a firm attitude and a plan of action. Your plan of action must effectively change your employee's behaviour such that his work performance improves.

Too often, however, employers mistake disciplinary action for disciplinary counselling. Simply handing your employee a letter of reprimand may improve his work performance, but often, it won't have a lasting effect. This hinders your business as it places a need for further disciplinary action later. By fixing the problem the first time, your problem employee's behaviour may improve.

### Dignity and discipline

One of the most important issues when disciplining your employees is saving their dignity. This is important because when they have been rehabilitated, they will still have a sense of pride about working for your business.

If you are unhappy about a staff member's behaviour, give him feedback but be discreet. You should avoid telling off an employee in front of his colleagues. It will embarrass him and make him resentful. Angry people are not in the best frame of mind to listen anyway.

### Plan of action

As a manager, your role is to coach and motivate your problem employees so that their performance improves.

First, you must ensure that your employee knows what the problem is. This is where a letter of reprimand



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may come in handy, but it shouldn't end here. Your letter should detail exactly what happened and why this behaviour was unacceptable. It should also set up a time for you to meet with the employee.

Gather as many facts and as much information as possible. This will aid you in your discussion.

Once the meeting starts, you should outline the current problem and allow the employee to respond. The information you collect from him during this meeting will help you set the tone for the next set of actions you take.

After the meeting, you should get back to your employee as soon as

possible. Look at all the information you have collected, and decide what steps to take next.

If you feel the employee is sincere and his behaviour is correctable, then you should prescribe the course of action to improve and motivate him. This should involve a time frame stating when his improved performance is expected.

On the other hand, if you feel that he is insincere and his actions are likely to harm the business, then it is time to start the termination procedure.

### Reviewing behaviour

When giving a difficult employee

a second chance, you have to be clear about what you want him to achieve. Next, you may assign him a project or a series of projects that is aimed at improving job performance. The projects may include revisiting employee training procedures, extra training procedures, or shadowing experienced and high-performing colleagues to gain further knowledge.

Finally, after you have carried out all the steps, you should review his performance again. If his behaviour has improved and meets the expectations that were discussed in your last meeting, then you don't have to take further action.

However, if his behaviour remains poor, then it is time for formal disciplinary measures that will likely lead to his termination. While this may seem harsh, the employee's termination is usually best for you and your company. It may also present the problem employee with an opportunity to look for a job that is more suited to his skills and motivations. - Singapore Straits Times/Asia New: Network

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