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# How to Manage Problem Employees

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# Introduction

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**T**he last decade brought with it enormous changes to the workplace — and concomitant pressures for employers. In addition to huge technological advances, the advent of globalization and the proliferation of mergers have transformed the way we do business. As a result, motivating, guiding, *and keeping* employees who are part of a rapidly changing workforce and business environment have become monumental tasks for employers at the dawn of this new century.

At the same time, you must deal with record numbers of disgruntled, suspicious, and apathetic employees. Employee lawsuits have reached an all-time high and are *still rising*. Managing problem employees in the face of our increasingly litigious society is one of your most serious challenges today.

This report shows you how to manage more effectively — not just to deal with problem employees, but to *prevent employees from becoming problems in the first place*:

- be clear about your expectations from the beginning by creating and maintaining accurate **job descriptions**
- educate employees up front by planning and presenting a thorough **orientation** for new employees
- monitor and develop employees through effective, ongoing **performance appraisals**
- guide employee conduct by applying fair and objective **discipline**
- respond to employee **grievances** and carry out **investigations**
- end poor employment relationships through **discharges**

In addition, this report addresses the one employee behavior that affects every employer: **absences** — including late arrivals, long lunches, and early departures — and the most effective means by which you can decrease employee absences. The report concludes by examining the elements of employee **personnel files** and the rules that govern access to those files, as well as a reminder about the types of offhand and informal comments that a court may consider to be evidence — to your detriment.

# About the Author

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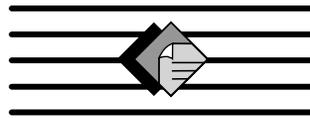
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Managing difficult employees takes time, yet it is still worth the effort in order to avoid additional hiring costs. Many super talented folks can exhibit behaviors that require assessments to help managers navigate these employees. Knowing how your employees respond in stressful situations or how they fit with a certain management style arms you with valuable information that can help you manage problem employees. Difficult employees are always going to be in the workplace. The way in which you manage these employees will not only affect your reputation as a manager, but also the organization's bottom line. Happy Coaching, Managers! Ms. Luba S. Sydor holds a Master's Degree in Human Resources and a BBA in Business. Almost every manager has employees who make work less than fun. Here's how to minimize the frustration and maximize your chances of success. If problem employees don't believe their behavior will have any real negative impact on them " why would they change? Work through the company's processes. Good managers hold out hope for improvement until the point when they actually decide to let the person go. Manage your self-talk. Throughout this process, make sure your self-talk is neither unhelpfully positive nor unhelpfully negative. Thinking to yourself, "This guy's an idiot and will never change," isn't useful, nor is thinking, "Everything will turn out fine, he's great, there's no problem." The Business Impact of Problem Employees. Problem employees aren't just an aggravation. They can be a real business liability. Recent research shows that underperforming employees can cost an organization \$6,000 to \$8,000 a day by reducing the motivation and effectiveness of the entire work group. In our leadership development programs, for example, we find that problem employees are never far from the thoughts of course participants. When we ask a group to reflect on a current problem employee as part of a module on conflict management, we are far more likely to hear "Can I choose more than one?" than to hear "What do you mean by "problem employee?"

### Characteristics of Problem Employees: What Our Study Has to Say.