

# employer tools & resources



**ISSUE:** Ongoing negative attitude at work. Some common signs and behaviours in an employee with a negative attitude include lack of eye contact, fidgeting, closed body language, unapproachable, manipulative, lying, deceiving, intimidating, recruiting backup support (triangulating), not interested in working towards a solution, prefers to complain, closed minded, will do the bare minimum of work required, low morale, stuck in their ways, self righteous, passive aggressive, bullying, competitive, controlling.

**THINGS TO CONSIDER:** As managers it may help to understand the different needs of multi-barrier employees which contribute to their on going negative behavior. Because of their past experiences, many have never had good role models, nor the skills and stability necessary to function in society, including the workplace. These employees have an underlying need for others to take care of them, they have a fear of failing, they can't see a way out, they have not learned responsibility, have low self esteem, and they find it "safe" not to change because it is familiar. They have an underlying loneliness, insecurities and possibly believe that the world owes them. "Hurt people will hurt people". It will take time and patience, however once this employee has decided to commit to improving their lifestyle, it is definitely possible that you will see the improvements/changes happening in them which will make your patience worthwhile.

- **Overwhelmed:** Many find it difficult to say when they are feeling overwhelmed either by work or their personal lives, or both.
- **Inadequate training:** It is easy to assume an employee can take on more responsibility when they have been showing commitment to their work. They may be eager to work and take on more but are they prepared to? It is important to clarify their comfort with taking on more and not assume this is the case.
- **Work overload/stress:** Giving extra responsibilities and multiple tasks without knowing if the employee is able to handle it will cause stress and/or anxiety if they feel they can't handle it.

**THINGS TO DO:** Whenever possible, spend time around your employees, walk through their work environment, knowing them and their work habit will make it easy for them to open up to you if they are feeling stress and pressures. Your presence will help in building a relationship of trust and understanding.

- **Show interest:** By asking how they are doing, giving feedback on a regular basis, tell them what they are doing is appreciated even if it is "their job" to do well. Everyone wants to be acknowledged for what they have achieved.
- **New responsibilities:** Can help a person feel confident when they are given at an appropriate time and kept to the level the employee is able to handle "comfortably". Gauge how they are managing tasks and ask for their feedback when you are considering giving them extra responsibilities. Including them in the process gives the employee a feeling of choice and also lets them know that you believe they can handle it. If it is something unfamiliar to them, be sure to provide the proper training or orientation.
- **Multitasking:** This is a skill that is acquired over time. Repetition of their job over time creates comfort and ability. Therefore, be sure to spread out the addition of new tasks and do not drop a large load of new work and responsibilities on the employee all at once.
- **Create new responsibilities:** Delegate these to the employee who would like to do more and feels they are not maximizing their capabilities. This employee is looking for more responsibility and more challenges so good to accommodate this desire where possible.

**For more info on Potluck Recipes for Success: Heather O'Hara - Executive Director**

**T: 604.683.0073 ext. 379**

**E: heather@potluckcatering.com**

**W: www.potluckcatering.com**



Find Potluck Recipes for Community Success at [www.potluckcatering.com](http://www.potluckcatering.com)

Potluck Cafe Society 30 West Hastings Street Vancouver, BC V6B 1G6 604.683.0073 x. 379 Potluck Tools & Resources Copyright 2007