

FrontLine Leader

Employees — Your most valuable asset

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April 2018

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In case you missed it...

This information is provided by Continuum EAP. If you would like more information on these or other topics, please don't hesitate to contact us.

Q: I should be more decisive, but I like to seek the opinions of my team. Secretly, I fear being wrong, so gathering opinions is a way to procrastinate with some of these tougher calls. How can I develop better, faster, and more confident decisions-making skills?

A: There are many reasons people hesitate to make decisions. Fear of being wrong is one, but what drives this fear? This question is one a Continuum EAP professional can help you understand more clearly. You must make decisions, of course, so your anxiety translates into stalling techniques with the information-seeking, which is a legitimate and responsible step that covers for your hesitancy. You are using it as a crutch. The rest of the problem about making decisions — the mechanics of the process — can be found in hundreds of resources.

In your journey of discovery, examine whether any of these decision-killers affect you:

- Perfectionism (it slows progress)
- Fear of disapproval
- Over-analyzing

Great decision makers have a history of overcoming mistakes. It's these mistakes that turn them into leaders who can trust their gut — an art that gets better over time. This is your goal: to be a great gut-level decision maker who is often right, but not perfect.

Q: My employee notified me that he has started working with Continuum EAP and was interested in signing a release so Continuum could alert me of his participation. No other information would be shared. I am glad he self-referred because I was considering a formal management referral for attendance issues. Should I still make a management referral?

You can still make a formal management referral, but you can also wait to see if the attendance issues clear up. The release signed by your employee is obviously limited and would only allow you to be aware of the dates of attendance. While in a formal referral, Continuum is able to coordinate with you to understand the performance concerns and attendance issues and work with you to help the employee make the behavioral changes needed to meet the workplace performance expectations. If you decide to wait and see if the attendance improves, you can still continue to manage performance and will have the option of making a formal referral or taking corrective action in the future, as you and your advisers deem appropriate.

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Q: I read that uncivil behavior in the workplace is getting worse. Is this overblown? Haven't people always shown a bit of rudeness periodically? If it is getting worse, what can supervisors do to over this sort of problem?

Q: I recently stopped checking my phone in meetings, after one of my employees called me on the carpet for it. It's a bad habit, I know! Now I'm actually sensing anxiety due to not looking at my phone. I'm amazed. Can Continuum help?

Rude behavior or incivility at work is a topic that has received increased attention because surveys show it has grown worse. Today, approximately twice as many employees complain about rudeness than they did 20 years ago. One poll showed that nearly half of employees intentionally decreased their work effort in response to rudeness, decreased time spent at work, decreased quality of work, lost time worrying about and stewing over incidents, avoided the rude person, and admitted declines in commitment to the organization. Twenty-five percent said they took out their frustrations on customers! Obviously, rudeness takes a toll on the bottom line. Reducing rudeness is not achieved by accident. A strategic approach that includes education, awareness, and proactive and supportive policies, like those that address other organizational risks, is worth considering. Start with an assessment with a Continuum professional to design a customized approach that fits your work culture. Learn more: <https://hbr.org/2013/01/the-price-of-incivility>.

Anyone can be guilty of this off-putting behavior and earn the ire of meeting participants, but when bosses do it, their status and authority, and the power of being a role model others want to admire, can have an especially negative impact on subordinates. Research on this topic discovered that supervisors who cannot resist looking repeatedly at their smartphones while meeting with employees risk losing their employees' trust. The productivity cost is loss of engagement.

Smartphone addiction is not a recognized disorder, at least not yet, but the problem can create distress. Consider whether your use of a smartphone causes problems but, despite your best efforts, you can't stop. If that is true, contact Continuum EAP. Check out this less-than-scientific, but humorous quiz on smartphone addiction: <http://www.quizony.com> (search "smartphone"). It is at least a good awareness builder. Also, see the study: www.baylor.edu (search "boss phone snub").

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With over 35 years in human resource administration, Doug McDaniel knows a thing or two about what makes employees and organizations successful.

Interested in learning more? Read this entire Continuum EAP blog feature at 4continuum.com — Search: "Doug McDaniel."

