

Dealing with Insecure Employee's

By

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Go ahead. Admit it. Any of you who have ever been in any type of leadership or management role know that people can sometimes be challenging to lead. It seems that the most difficult, though, can be those whom are insecure. It could be insecurity about their role in your organization or just plain insecurity about themselves and what they have to offer the world at large.

These individuals can be toxic to your workplace because they can easily infect others around them with their snide remarks and tales of woe. Here are some skills to help deal with this:

- Ensure that she understands that she is a valuable part of your team. Tell her individually and in front of others. Make it sincere and don't go overboard with this or it could backfire; she could begin to think she is irreplaceable and may end up embracing a "queen bee" attitude.

- Make sure you explain organizational changes before they take place. If there is one thing that can really bring about the insecurities in people, it's change. Especially change that has not been communicated with those affected. Once the changes have been explained and you see that someone is having an issue with it, pull that individual aside, after the meeting, to find out what he is feeling/thinking. Don't let it go. If you recognize, through body language, that something is an issue, ask about it and smooth the ruffles as promptly as you can. If you hear the rumor mill going, put a stop to it as soon as possible. If people know why something is happening, it will sometimes prevent insecurities from blossoming.

- Set clear expectations. You can't adjust others personalities and some people, believe it or not, are just going to be more insecure than others due to life experiences or natural characteristics that they have. If you see that your employee is creating issues, let him know that it will not be tolerated. If you find that one of your key people is questioning you behind your back, put an end to it. Let him know that his behavior is hurting him more than helping him, especially if it is a small business where things like this will be more evident.

- Have patience. Insecure people require more attention, patience and positive energy than those who know what they have to offer and feel secure about their abilities. High maintenance people can be challenging. If nothing else, view it as an opportunity for you to hone your craft of management/leadership.

No one ever said that leadership was easy or that management would be a consistent joy-filled experience. Find ways to ensure that insecure people do not prevent you from accomplishing your overall objectives as an organization. Work through it the best you can. Keep doing your part and you may just be surprised at what you discover along the way.

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Peggy L. McNamara works with Generation X Women who want to develop to
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