

DTD Episode 20 Show Notes

But **WHY** is Your Employee Annoying You? 2 Simple Steps to Find the Why and Take Action



Too often I run across leaders who say an employee (or two or three) is annoying them but they haven't stopped to figure out why.

I once had a client share that she was doing all that she could to avoid an employee that she just could not stand.

"What is she doing that's so annoying?", I asked.

Upon further investigation I learned that the employee was a whiner. She complained about her life, her work, and her co-workers constantly.

I quickly pointed out that ignoring her was problematic on many levels. Here's what I shared:

1. She was probably annoying the rest of the team as well and creating lots of drama. By choosing to ignore rather than address her whining the behavior would continue unchecked. Fellow employees, not empowered to actually do anything about her or for her may end up leaving out of frustration. At a minimum she was wreaking havoc and frustrating her team. You can't have such energy busting behavior at work!
2. Think of all the wasted time! Every minute she is using during paid time to complain without problem solving is productivity time lost. And you are not just losing the time of the annoying employee. You are also losing the time of the co-worker she's talking to. And, if anyone is complaining ABOUT her after the fact, there's some more

productivity time down the tubes!

3. Think of all the wasted money! Consider the hourly rates of all of the people who have engaged in complaining with her or about her for 5, 10, 15 minutes or more. Add up the time and multiply by the pay per minute. Staggering, I promise you!
4. What if there are some nuggets of value to some of her complaints? It's the boy who cried wolf syndrome. She complains non-stop and now no one actually listens to a word she says. There may be times when there is valuable insight mixed in with all of the garbage coming out. You are missing the opportunity to gain anything from her perspective. She has become a silent and yet loud force in your organization. If she focused on communicating just what was most important and relevant you might gain value.
5. She doesn't realize it.....Probably. People politely listening and a boss who listens or avoids all reinforce her belief that it's okay to air all of your grievances constantly at work. You've all become the shoulder she can cry on or the listening ear. It might be her way of getting attention or feeling important. It's all misguided. I have also seen more than once that, believe it or not, people who talk a lot often do so because they feel unheard. It becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy. I'm not heard. Let me speak more or speak louder. And then they are heard even less. She doesn't realize that she's minimizing her ability to be successful and driving everyone crazy. She is also diminishing her ability to have real and valuable impact.

So, my wonderful listening leaders, please, please please, figure out exactly why that employee is annoying you. Then create an action plan for them and communicate it. Give that annoying employee, your team and your business a fighting chance!

Your annoying employee may not be a complainer. Perhaps your annoyance is lacking the right skills to do the job well, or is too hyper or too bitter. Maybe he makes too many mistakes or she snaps her gum or has an issue with body odor.

Choosing to ignore or avoid is a decision to allow or maybe even encourage the annoyance. I encourage you to get clear, create a plan and take action instead.

Here are the steps to take to get in action. Either start with the annoying employees or just go for it and analyze your entire team. It's time to diagnose why and create a plan.

In a simple Word Document create a column to document specifically what the issue is. Then determine whether the employee issues are an attitude or aptitude issue. Are they both willing and able to do the job?

If it's an attitude issue, there's really no process other than to document and then communicate the new expectation. If it is a complaining problem I recommend a conversation that will help the annoyer gain insight about what they are doing and the impact it is having on themselves, the team and the business. Be empathetic rather than overbearing. They may have the best intentions with the wrong execution. Help them hone and redirect some succinct communication efforts with a new emphasis on creating solutions along with identifying issues.

If it's an aptitude issue, you have to get specific. Which knowledge, skills or abilities are they missing? Is there a plan that can get them to perform the way they must? Should they shadow a co-worker or take an online class? Or is the investment doable or too much?

Employee Name	Job Title	Attitude and/or Aptitude?	KSAP's	+, -, =	Action

Get Clear with this simple form. Create a plan, communicate it and support them in taking the required steps.