

**Enough is enough!**  
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With the New Year underway many of our clients tell us that they're not going to put up with certain staff behaviours in their business in 2011. 2009 and 2010 were difficult years and many business owners carried staff but simply don't want to tolerate less than 100% performance by staff this year. So what can you do when you have an employee that isn't bad enough to fire but their behaviours are impacting on the effectiveness of your business?

We all know that some people are a joy to work with and others are not. As a manager, you can't stand idly by and watch as difficult people disrupt your work environment, because it certainly won't make your business a success!

Firstly you might want to take a look at how the behaviour is actually taking shape in your business. What do you see the employee actually doing (or not doing is often the case)? Are they moody, upsetting customers and co-workers, abdicating responsibility, not completing their work accurately or generally just a toxic employee? It's important to have a good grasp on what's actually happening before you can tackle it. We often hear "they just have a bad attitude"....we might agree with you but you will need to focus on behaviours, facts and evidence before you can take action.

What makes problem employees think it is okay to behave in such destructive ways? After all these people are happy to put their hands out every week or fortnight and collect their pay. You would think they would perform well, if for no other reason than to ensure job security and keep those wages rolling in.

You might be surprised to discover that some difficult people actually think their managers are the difficult ones! More on that in a later article! For now, let's focus on what you can do to improve performance. Here are some basics you may want to review:

- Revisit job descriptions and performance standards with your employees to make sure they clearly understand what you expect of them.
- Review your staff handbooks and employment agreements to make sure they support the outcomes you expect of your staff. In particular you may want to consider adding non-performance clauses to your agreement and your disciplinary procedures so that you can act in the future if you have to.
- Hold people accountable for achieving what's been agreed – ignoring bad behaviour, performance or conduct send so many signals to other employees that it can be more destructive than actually confronting the problem employee.
- Be consistent – if you going take action over a matter with one employee, then you need to be prepared to take similar action for others in the future.
- Sit down and tell your employee how you feel, what you see them doing and what you expect them to improve. Often employees don't even know that they are not meeting their bosses expectations. This is not disciplinary action but an honest attempt at improving performance.

We applaud business owners who want to improve performance in their workplace. Getting the best out of staff doesn't have to be surrounded by legal action. Sometimes it is as simple as clarifying expectations, being consistent and not ignoring those difficult employees.