

Managing a disrespectful employee

Question: "I am a fairly new manager. One of my employees thinks he knows everything and frequently talks back to me. Every morning, I have a short staff meeting, and so far this guy hasn't shown any signs of wanting to attend. I told him that I might need his input and asked if he's ever going to join the meetings. He replied that he saw no point in it. What should I do?" — *Baffled Boss*

Marie's Answer: Like many new supervisors, you've learned that a manager title doesn't automatically produce respect and compliance. Tolerating insolent behavior sends the message that you're a doormat, so consider these suggestions:

- Assert the authority of your position to control disruptive employees. When you "ask if he's ever going to join the meetings," you sound like you're begging, not managing.
- Replace your weak request with a strong statement. Example: "Even though you don't like attending our daily meetings, I need you to be there. I'll expect to see you at the meeting on Monday."
- After clearly stating your expectations, tell him what will happen if he fails to show up. (Before talking with him, agree with your boss on an appropriate consequence for missing meetings.) Then end the conversation without giving him a chance to argue.
- If this obstinate fellow is absent again, impose the promised consequence without delay. And if he continues his rude and rebellious behavior, consult with your human resources manager about appropriate next steps.