

# 10 behaviors that cause low employee morale

Low employee morale is, unfortunately, a common issue in the workplace. However, it's also something that should never be accepted. Low morale and low employee engagement can quickly lead to poor productivity, low employee retention rates, and major hits to profits. To run a successful business, it's vital to avoid behaviors that harm employee morale and to support employees however possible.

In this BusinessManagementDaily.com article, we cover:

- 10 morale deflators that burn out employees.
- The dangers of micromanaging.
- Promoting employee health and wellness.

There are many different factors contributing to unhappy employees, and good managers want their employees to be healthy and happy. If you want to enhance employee experience, we recommend you consider eliminating these 10 morale deflators from your company culture.

## 10 behaviors that lower employee morale

### 1. Thinking too much about money

Money isn't the only factor in people's professional lives. Hands down, unhappiness with management is the leading reason why employees quit jobs.

Employees obviously also care about money, but personal fulfillment allows them to be happy with where they're at.

### 2. Not backing up your team

Develop trust with your team, and don't lose it. You should run your team in such a way that your employees want to come to you with their problems. Be open-minded, listen carefully, and don't forget to constantly remind employees that you support them and want them to be successful.

Teamwork should be management's number one priority. There are countless team-building activities that can be used as a strategy to help team members come out of their shells and interact more with each other. However, team-building activities won't mean much if your actions don't also reinforce your commitment.

Closely observe your team members' interactions to get a feel for who works well with who — this helps build future productivity and prevent conflict. It's okay to separate employees who don't seem to like each other and pair up the employees who work well together.







# 10 behaviors that cause low employee morale



- 1. Thinking too much about money
- 2. Not backing up your team
- 3. Keeping the doors closed
- 4. Only oiling wheels that squeak
- 5. Ignoring rumors
- 6. Assuming decent pay is all that's needed
- 7. Catching employees off-guard
- 8. Instilling fear in your team
- 9. Not delegating
- 10. Micromanaging: why you're doing it and how to stop

## 3. Keeping the doors closed

Give your workers the time of day instead of cutting them off to take phone calls. While it's ok to have time to yourself to work and focus, effective communication is a leading attribute of workplaces with high morale. Frequent positive employee engagement is the heart and soul of every [successful business](#).

## 4. Only oiling wheels that squeak

Let's be honest, some managers are incredibly bad at reading the emotions of their employees, and failure to do so results in high employee turnover and low employee satisfaction. Don't just address problems when they blow up, and don't assume employees who don't complain often don't have concerns.

One way you can check in with employees is by regularly scheduling one-on-one meetings to discuss individual progress. Be prepared with a set of questions for each employee, and record their answers for additional analysis later on. It's fine to use a voice recorder to track conversations, especially dealing with conflicts where a legal case could be involved.

Playing favorites isn't conducive to a strong team, so make it your main goal to maintain a smiling staff environment where every employee feels their needs are being sufficiently taken care of.

## 5 . Ignoring rumors

Don't ignore toxic rumors circulating through the workplace. Sure, some gossip is bound to happen, and could even in some cases be healthy. However, malicious words and toxic gossip create an unhealthy work environment for everyone.

Treat every employee equally by genuinely caring about how they feel and function at work. Address large rumors by calling meetings, sending group emails, having one-off conversations, or whatever seems appropriate for the situation. Such issues can escalate to harm morale, productivity, and the mental health of employees.

Stay aware of drastic changes in employee attitudes as this can be a sign that something is going on. The manager's job is to constantly monitor the wellness of employees, and communication is key. Simple questions, like "How are you feeling today?", go a long way with employees.

## 6. Assuming decent pay is all that's needed

Let's face it, most employees wouldn't be at work if it weren't for the pay. However, paying your employees, even if it's well, isn't enough to keep an employee happy and engaged in the workplace. Positive reinforcement, and saying "thank you" does more good than you might think. It doesn't matter how much money someone is being paid; if an employee has to spend their day dealing with poor management or dealing with poorly delegated tasks, they'll likely get tired of the job and start looking for something new.

Even worse is if an employee's pay doesn't match the value they bring to the organization. Many employees are more valuable than what they're being paid and because the workplace can be driven primarily by competition and profits, negotiating pay can be difficult for employees. Employers who pay poorly typically always have a general feeling of low morale in the workplace. It's human resources' job to ensure each employee is paid a liveable rate.

Acceptable pay varies from location, but MIT has a living [wages calculator](#) to help understand how much workers need to survive. Just type any US location into the calculator, and it will spit out some legitimate numbers for reference when establishing pay rates. Though keep in mind that these suggestions are a floor, not a ceiling, and may not quite reflect a high standard of living.

Don't forget that underpaying employees creates a lack of trust on top of creating morale issues. Your team's morale should be worth more to you than extra short-term cash. Instead of maximizing earnings, you should work on building a strong team and solid staff morale. Building a tight-knit team that sticks together will benefit you much more in the long scheme of your business.

## 7 . Catching employees off-guard

Don't surprise your employees with a poor performance review. It's your job as a leader to immediately address issues with team members to make them aware of short fallings.

Let's face it, you can't afford to beat around the bush as a manager. If you want productive employees, you've got to be persistent with them. Give employees their space, but kindly check in frequently if you want to maximize productivity.

## 8. Instilling fear in your team

Although leading by fear can get results, it has some toxic consequences. There's no reason to make your employees feel scared or bad about themselves. The power of positive action and thinking promotes high employee morale among staff members, so you should make it a general rule of thumb to eliminate negativity from the equation.

Encourage employees to ask questions as much as possible, and don't react negatively when an employee doesn't understand. Besides, it's your job to ensure employees fully comprehend their responsibilities in the workplace. In fact, the manager should feel responsible for employees who underperform due to incomprehension.

That doesn't mean that you shouldn't address poor performance and behavior, but doing so in a constructive way will get you much further.

## **9. Not delegating**

There's nothing more degrading to an employee than having to constantly stand and watch their manager not trust them to take care of things.

Giving employees more ownership over projects allows them to become more engaged in their job. That being said, the better you can train your employees to handle the hard jobs, the more fulfilled they'll feel, and the easier it will be to delegate the work.

You may feel that you can do something better than another employee, but that doesn't mean you should make stand on the sideline for more time than necessary. Sure, it's important to demonstrate the correct way to do the job, but it's also vital that you free up some of your own time by allowing the employee to become excellent at their job. After all, practice might not make perfect, but it certainly improves performance.

## **10. Micromanaging: why you're doing it and how to stop**

Micromanagement in the workplace is a huge moral deflator because employees feel either overwhelmed or undervalued by a manager who constantly stares over their shoulder. Not to mention it's a huge waste of time for a manager to be doing other people's jobs. Since the manager's job is to assign work and help with workflow, it's beneficial for them to avoid micromanaging at all costs.

Good managers see their employees as diverse and valued team members they can delegate almost any task to. It's a constant balance between providing hands-on supervision without excessive monitoring.

**Are you a micromanager? Here are a few traits to look out for and avoid when running your ship:**

### **The belief that you need to excel better than all employees**

The 'alpha' manager exists in almost every field. While a confident manager can be a strong leader, a manager who thinks they can do everything better causes the workplace to suffer due to poor delegation and low employee morale.

One of the most important things to understand is that *it's okay* for employees to outperform their managers in some fields. Managers who can't share workloads end up exhausted and cranky, while organized managers end up not having to worry about much. Managers look good when their employees look good. Each person's strengths are an asset, not a threat.

### **Low tolerance for mistakes**

The worst thing you can do as a leader is to degrade your employees when they don't perform sufficiently. In actuality, the first thing you should do as a manager is to evaluate whether or not your poor-performing employee is insufficiently working because of bad management. Oftentimes, the best way to prevent future mistakes is training. If your employees are properly trained, the chances of them making a mistake are greatly reduced. So consider mistakes as learning opportunities, and remember that everyone learns differently.

Additionally, employee recognition is something managers should practice at any opportunity. Simple notions like a lively "nice job!" or "you've almost got it!" are great ways to produce positive productivity in the workplace. Even if they make a mistake, if the intention was good and they put in a lot of work, recognize it.

### **You rarely delegate tasks**

Trying to do everything yourself as a manager is pointless. Thinking of your employees as resources will help you delegate tasks better. A good way to be a good delegator is by breaking down and identifying each employee's strengths.

Have confidence in your employees. Part of gaining the confidence to delegate difficult tasks to employees is by hiring a strong team. Managers should be extremely selective about who they hire. However, you can also train employees on certain tasks. You probably weren't a pro at every job duty when you first started out. Employees also need practice.

### **Requiring Frequent Updates**

It's vital for a manager and their employees to stay connected. However, people who are good at their jobs might resent the fact that their supervisor feels the need to babysit them. At the end of the day, if your employees are getting their work done satisfactorily, then there's no need to check up with them so often.

However, being organized about work completion is perfectly okay. In fact, using spreadsheets and checklists is a great way to ensure work gets done from afar without your employees feeling like they are being studied. Lots of project management tools can keep the team up to date, without feeling micro-managed.



## Physical and mental health

### in the workplace is vital

The manager's job isn't to complete the task but rather facilitate a [healthy](#) way for employees to complete their daily work. That being said, a good manager should evaluate the physical and mental health of workers and also make an attempt to influence both for the better.

*Actually caring* about employees involves closely monitoring their physical and mental health to decide if they're doing okay. Think of it as a way to selflessly promote productivity in your workplace. Although you can't control what your employees do, but you can control their work environment and promote healthy behaviors.

**Here are a few ideas for promoting healthy and productive workers.**

#### Provide healthy snacks

You can't control what your employees eat inside or outside of work, but placing healthy options is always a good idea. Harvard University studies show that [healthy eating keeps energy levels high](#), so it's a no-brainer to put foods like bananas, nuts, whole-grain crackers, etc. out on the table. You don't want your workers going hungry.

#### Encourage gym membership/regular exercise

Exercise boosts oxygen circulation inside the body allowing it to use energy more efficiently. If you notice an employee who constantly drags, you might use [positive influence](#) like a gym pass (or some other outdoor activity) as an incentive for good performance for the whole company. Do be careful not to offend employees in the process.

#### Ensuring a good work/life balance

Hard work is good, but burnout is bad. You don't want your workers going too hard. Yes, there are some all-stars who you could let work overtime occasionally, but you'll get a higher retention rate in general with employees if you give them plenty of time to live their lives outside of work.

## **Constant motivation is the bottom line**

Maintaining good employee morale isn't something that you can pass off as a once-a-month chore. Avoid high turnover rates by cultivating happy and healthy employees. Well-being is much more important than productivity in the long run, but the funny fact is that healthy employees do the best work.

Lastly, don't forget to ask for employee feedback for help identifying causes of low employee morale in your workplace.