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5 Signs It's Time to Fire an Employee

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Firing (<https://Sba.Thehartford.Com/Tag/Firing/>)

When you're a business owner, eventually you'll have to decide whether it's best for all to fire a problem employee. You have to protect your small business (<https://www.thehartford.com/business-insurance?cmp=XXC-SC-Content-00971324>). Though a termination is a tough decision, keeping problem employees can drain a small business owner's time, money, and energy. But how do you know when it's time to let an employee go?

Here are five telltale signs that it's time to fire someone, plus what to watch for when you're serious about terminating an employee (<http://www.thehartford.com/business-playbook/employee-termination>).

They're Always Late

This employee is always late getting to work and often takes extended breaks and lunches. Though they always have an excuse, their behavior may cause negative ripples in your business because they'll be seen as unreliable by your other staff

members. Even worse, other employees may believe this individual gets preferential treatment if their habitual lateness isn't disciplined, which may lead to even bigger headaches for you as the boss.

They're Often Absent

Constantly requesting last-minute sick days

(<https://sba.thehartford.com/managing-employees/always-out-what-to-do-when-an-employee-keeps-calling-in-sick>), or quickly using up all allowable sick days and vacation days could signal an attendance issue. This, combined with other issues, could indicate a potential termination.

Or maybe you have a “vanishing” employee. You know the one whose productivity decreases while his or her unexplained absences increase. This employee could be looking for another job, and attending interviews while you are paying for their time. Again, their co-workers notice such behavior. How you deal with this individual matters to them.

They Don't Fit Your Company Culture and Disrupt Other Staff

While an employee may have great credentials, exhibiting behavior that doesn't align with your brand and company culture may indicate a future of continued workplace problems, plus issues with how they're representing your business in public. And repeatedly poor behavior (inappropriate comments, loud or offensive language, etc.) that distracts others in the workplace and impacts everyone's work performance could mean it's time to cut them loose.

They Don't Meet the Requirements of the Job Description

Problem employees don't get the job done, even after completing training and probation periods . They produce shoddy work, hand in incomplete assignments, and are the cause of customer complaints. If you or other members of your team must constantly fix or finish their projects, it could be a sign that it's time to fire them.

They're Constantly Instigating and/or Spreading Gossip

Continually starting or spreading harmful gossip about your business, employees, customers or competition in person or on social media is another indication this employee isn't someone you want on your team. Their dissatisfaction could become infectious, as spreading gossip may contribute to a negative workplace atmosphere and less-than-professional reputation for your business both online and off.

Before Terminating An Employee

Before firing anyone, consider talking to a legal expert. Government regulations on dismissing employees (<http://www.thehartford.com/business-playbook/employee-dismissal>) are complex, and the last thing you need is a time-consuming and expensive wrongful dismissal suit. If you suspect the employee you're about to terminate could accuse your business of firing them because of age, sex, religion, disability, nationality, or race, get legal advice before proceeding.

Firing an employee could be the hardest thing you'll do as a business owner. But remember, between lost sales, lost time, workplace morale issues and their salary, keeping a problem employee could do more damage to your business than terminating them.

Next Step: *Are you looking to manage your employees more effectively but don't have time to keep up with the latest research and trends in talent management? We've got you covered with the weekly Small Biz Ahead Newsletter (<https://www.thehartford.com/business-insurance/sba-subscribe>). Sign up today and start receiving the weekly newsletter chock full of the latest tools and resources to help you run a successful business.*