

The Five Hidden Causes of Employee Absenteeism – and What You Can Do About Them

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Welcome! Before we get started...

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- Audio for today's webinar will come through your computer speakers. Please be sure your speakers are turned on and you have the volume turned up
- If you are signed on more than once, please locate the duplicate log-in and close it. This will create a better audio experience
- All attendees will receive a link to the presentation and slides in a follow up email

Learning Objectives

- Five hidden causes for chronic absenteeism
- What you can do to solve the problem
- How to get employees back on track

Hidden Reason #1

Poor Screening



Background Screening for New Hires

- Background screens ensure you hire high-quality, responsible workers
- Use state-specific job applications to capture information not found on resumes
- Make sure your applications are compliant with state and local laws
- Know your state laws for legal process and timing of background checks

Tips for Interviewing

- Ask applicants questions about the negative aspects of their previous jobs
 - **What didn't you like at your previous company?**
 - **Why did you leave your last job?**
 - **How would previous managers describe your work?**
- These answers may reveal disengagement or poor attitudes

Contacting References

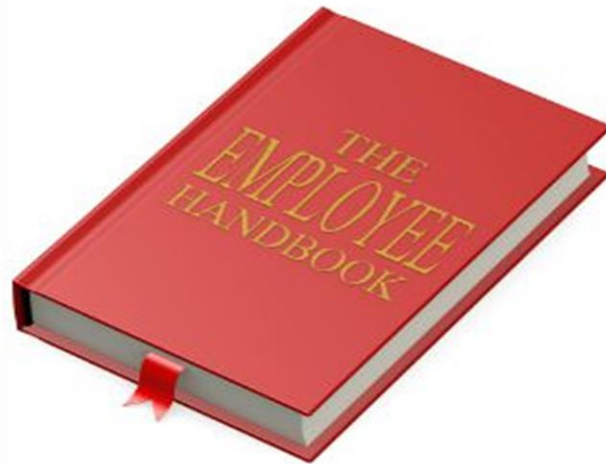
- Contacting previous employers is essential
- Call every reference until you can reach at least one person to talk to
- Ask candidates for additional references if no one has additional information

Criminal History, Credit Checks and Drug Tests

- Criminal history checks: reveal an applicant's previous arrests and convictions
- Credit checks: verify applicant's credit history and public record information on bankruptcies, liens and judgements
- Drug tests: drug usage *may* contribute to absenteeism
- Know the laws that apply: FCRA and local laws

Hidden Reason #2

Unclear Policies



Unclear Policies

- Employees may be accidentally abusing the rules without knowing it
- Create clear policies and consequences, and communicate them to employees in writing
- Attendance policy should include
 - **Typical work hours**
 - **Definition of “late”**
 - **Paid or unpaid holidays**
 - **Time off policies**
 - **Consequences or disciplinary measures**

Restrictive Policies

- If policies are too restrictive, employees may resort to abusing system to get the time off they need
- Restrictive policies like “no-fault” or “three strikes” rules may be illegal if they interfere with FMLA rights
- Remember: Employees will need *some* time off from work to deal with personal needs

Hidden Reason #3

Unidentified Medical Issue



Identifying Medical Absences

- Supervisors should avoid discussing these topics with direct reports
- Don't ask for details, specifics or diagnoses
- Keep conversations high-level and focused on work
- Make sure medical information is kept confidential
- It's *your* responsibility to know when FMLA or ADA obligations are triggered

FMLA Leave

- FMLA only applies to certain businesses and certain employees
- Eligible employees are entitled to 12 weeks of unpaid leave during any 12-month span for serious health conditions they or their immediate members face
- You can create your own FMLA policies, but if they differ from the law, you *must* follow the rules that are more favorable to the employee

A Reasonable Accommodation?

- Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) lets workers with physical or mental disabilities request reasonable accommodations, including time off, to perform their jobs
- ADA applies to businesses with 15 or more employees
- ADA's definition of a "disability" is broad and could potentially cover most major illnesses

Establishing Undue Hardship

- Employers don't have to accommodate if doing so causes undue hardship
- Records of employee workloads, job descriptions and financial reports can help prove undue hardship
- Amend handbooks to include attendance requirements
- Explore other options for accommodation

Hidden Reason #4

Unreported Harassment



Harassment by the Numbers

- Sexual harassment is the most widely known form of harassment
- In 2017, the EEOC received 6,696 sexual harassment allegations and obtained \$46.3 million dollars in monetary benefits for victims
- Race, color, religion, national origin, age, sex and disability are legally protected
- Some local laws prohibit harassment on other characteristics, such as marital status and political affiliation

What is Harassment?

- Harassment includes all forms of physical or verbal conduct that show hostility toward another person
 - **Physical:** invading someone's space, damaging property, making offensive gestures, etc.
 - **Verbal:** unwelcome comments, jokes, threats or insults, negative stereotyping, or possession or display of derogatory pictures or other graphic material
- To be *illegal*, harassment must:
 - Be related to an employee's protected characteristic
 - Be unwelcome
 - Be severe or pervasive enough to interfere with performance or create an offensive, hostile work environment

Harassment Training

- New employees should be trained on the definitions and consequences of harassment
- Provide training for ALL types of harassment
- Train managers and supervisors separately on additional responsibilities
- Separate harassment training from other onboarding
- Review harassment training regularly

Harassment Policies

- Put zero tolerance harassment policies in writing
- Explain types of conduct that are illegal and prohibited
- Outline complaint procedures
- Include no-retaliation disclaimer
- Post in common areas or include in handbooks

Hidden Reason #5

Inconsistent Recordkeeping



Attendance Tracking

- Helps you see who's supposed to be out and who's not
- Software makes submitting and handling time-off requests easier
- Lets employees know how much PTO they have and whether their requests were approved

Time Tracking

- Time clock software is more accurate than pen-and-paper timesheets
- Helps you spot patterns and problems
- Easier to submit and approve time-off requests
- Employees always have access to schedules, so no excuses for missing work

Quick Review

- Use standardized job applications and conduct thorough background screens to ensure you hire responsible workers
- Clarify and communicate attendance policies
- Listen to your employees and buzzwords to determine if repeated absences are due to medical conditions
- Provide workers with harassment training and written no-harassment policies that cover both sexual harassment and other forms of illegal harassment
- Track time and attendance to identify any patterns

HR Solutions



I-9 & W-4



Job Applications



Time Off Request



Employee Records



Attendance Calendar



Progressive Discipline

- Web-based solutions
- Easy-to-use and implement
- Affordable for small businesses
- Comes with FREE Employee Records App

For more info visit www.hrdirectapps.com



Essential Workplace Policies

- One-off policies

Gradiance Handbook Manager

- Handbook creator
- Both federal and state
- Automatic updates

Both products contain Attorney-written policies

For more info visit www.hrdirect.com

Questions



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