



SPRING 2016

Memorial
Day Issue

U.S. VETERANS M A G A Z I N E

Providing Employment Opportunities

Larry Broughton: Warrior in the Boardroom

The 5 Costly Effects of Insubordination

Sure, when neglected among our military ranks, it can be deadly; yet unrestrained insubordination can tear any organization from limb to limb.

An insubordinate employee can have significant negative effects on your organization due to his ability to incite dissent among team members and frustrate executives and leaders by underperforming his duties, the needs of customers and clients. An employee who fails to follow directives leads to an inequity in workload distribution and a decline in workplace morale. The latter is particularly damaging to small organizations because the work of each team member is likely to be crucial to the company's success and income.

1 Lower Workforce Productivity

An insubordinate employee who disregards or refuses to comply with a leader's legitimate directives lowers his own productivity, and possibly that of his colleagues. For instance, if an insubordinate employee refuses to meet production deadlines, it may be difficult, if not impossible, for his co-workers to perform their work in a timely fashion. The same is true if the employee is habitually late or if he ignores protocols, or policies and procedures. The lost productivity that can result leads to lost sales or delayed deliveries, and possibly contractual penalties that impact business earnings.

2 Degradation of Morale

The insubordinate employee's

attitude, let alone his lack of productivity, can be troubling to his co-workers. The morale of those left to perform not only of their own work, but the work of the insubordinate colleague, suffers greatly. It's possible that these employees will become frustrated, resentful and angry; these are compounded if team members interpret the continued employment of an insubordinate as a sign of special treatment.

3 Decline in Reputation

When an employee publicly disrespects a leader, other employees begin to view the leader as ineffective and that reputation can affect his status with team members, board members, and business partners. Consequently, additional insubordinate behavior, assuming there will be little, if any, repercussions for doing so. In this way, the insubordinate acts as a chain reaction where other employees adopt a similar disrespectful attitude.

4 Increase in Workplace Stress

The frustration that employees and leaders may experience due to insubordination can lead to stress that interferes with intellectual, interpersonal and emotional well-being says David Lee, the author of "Managing Employee Stress

and Safety." Fellow employees may feel they're shouldering too much of the team's burden, and worse for a slacker are compensated for a slacker are uncompensated. Also, managers can become less effective due to their inability to improve the performance of the insubordinate employee. If this occurs, it's likely the manager's frustration will be compounded by the recognition that key executives of the organization are aware of his inability to influence the performance of the problem employee.

5 Customer & Client Dissatisfaction

The actions of an insubordinate employee might well have a negative effect on customer relations because a lack of performance can affect product and service quality, the prompt production and delivery of products, and the appropriate

follow-up to product or service issues. Customers may feel inconsequential, undervalued or that their needs or requirements are ignored, which can lead to a loss of business and possibly a court action.

Employee insubordination will negatively affect an organization in countless ways: the workload distribution becomes inequitable, which leads to a decline in workplace morale and a decline in productivity. Should this occur, it's particularly damaging to small organizations because the work of each team member may be crucial to their success and income growth.

Have you experienced or witnessed insubordination in your organization? What happened? What recommendations do you have to deal with an insubordinate team member? I'd love to hear about it. Now, go do something significant today. Go get 'em!

Have a question you'd like Larry to answer?

Log on to www.usveteransmagazine.com and click the "Ask Larry" link to submit your question, or send it directly to Larry at larry@usveteransmagazine.com.



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An insubordinate employee can have significant negative effects on your organization due to his ability to incite dissent among team members and frustrate executives and leaders by under-performing his duties, as well as his willingness to ignore the needs of customers and clients. An employee who fails to follow directives leads to an inequity in workload distribution and a decline in workplace morale. The latter is particularly damaging to small organizations because the work of each team member is likely to be crucial to the company's success and income.

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