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## How to Handle Working with a Lazy Colleague

A lazy colleague can be a pain because his productivity can affect team productivity and attitude, and also indirectly affect the achievement of your targets. It might be difficult to discern, but there's a lot of difference between a happy-go-lucky sharp performer who takes life easy and a habitual procrastinator who hamstring team efforts.

As long as the laziness of your colleague is not becoming an impediment to your achievements, you might think you can ignore it, and you can. However, a lazy worker who does only a fraction of work expected of him or her brings down the security of an entire group because in these days of cutthroat competition you don't want to see 'loss' on the books of the company.

When layoffs start due to lack of profits, employers rarely sift case history to find who had worked hard and who did not. Expulsion is universal; retention depends upon many factors including social relationships. There is little to show that outstanding workers with appreciable track record have greater chances of being retained when wholesale layoffs are scheduled.

So, the question is what to do with the lazy colleague when his/her performance is negatively influencing your targets and achievements? That's difficult to ignore.

Let's consider the options:

- Avoid social conflict and try to finish your colleague's work by discussing things with other members and sharing, or shouldering things individually by yourself. The latter option is better and comes first, and then one should move to the second option if the lazy colleague shows no embarrassment or intention to improve.
- Open a dialogue with him/her, be candid, ask about whether he/she was facing any particular problems, and get assertive. Say it out loud that his/her laziness is affecting your performance. It's better to do this one-on-one without bringing others into the picture. Be polite and don't let your emotions get the better of you.
- Do not argue. If your colleague fails to see reason in a private talk, the next option is to include others who might be sympathetic to your cause. However, it is extremely essential to keep people in the know of what is happening even if you have a private talk, because more often than not lazy workers would try to preempt you with fanciful complaints to superiors. This is a common response because the guilty always attempt to reduce the credibility of those who might complain of their errant behavior. So, do not start something individually without keeping superiors or other honest colleagues in the loop.
- Do not jump to conclusions. Your colleague may not be lazy at all, but overcome by undiagnosed

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physical or mental illness. You'd be surprised at how many times people who were perceived as lazy were found suffering from diabetes or thyroid problems later on, and treatment changed their lives. It's difficult to be critical without being judgmental, but with a colleague, that's the way to do things.

- Help out with tips to get your colleague organized. Your colleague may simply be suffering from lack of experience, knowledge, or effective habits. Sit down with him/her and diagnose the difficulties that are keeping him/her from delivering in time. Try to make positive contributions to help your colleague overcome lack of productivity. Though people commonly relate the two, lack of productivity does not necessarily connote laziness, but inefficiency. Consult superiors when everything else fails. Try to keep superiors in the know from the beginning of the process, but also do not misinterpret or paint events more negatively than they are. Superiors do not usually like people who arrive with complaints and without solutions. Respect the time of your boss, he/she has his/her own worries and responsibilities to take care of, and you should be very sure before adding another task to his/her list.