



By: Vicki Z. Lauter

“How to Solve the Problems Caused By the Employee Too Valuable to Fire”

Almost every company has one. It’s the employee who causes chaos in the organization but is just too valuable to fire. You keep telling yourself they’ll ‘come around’ and eventually stop their bad behavior. But so far, that’s not happening.

The truth is—you need them. They have a specialized skill set that’s hard to find in the marketplace. They are *good* at what they do. If you had to replace them, it would take quite some time, the team would struggle to complete projects and the business could be in serious trouble.

How would you feel if you had a more harmonious workplace? I’m not talking about singing *Kumbaya* in staff meetings. I’m talking about having good employees who show up on time every day to do a good job and take care of customers.

Envision your employees getting along and not causing any undue drama or stress in the company.

In this report we’ll explore some reasons behind the bad behavior, share some steps you can take to fix the problem today and explain ways to prevent the problem from resurfacing in the future.

Great work—but a monster to work with!

One of my clients dealt with terrible problems caused by an employee he felt was just too valuable to fire. She was awesome at her job, and her projects were always on time and under budget. But she had a shoot-from-the-hip, no-nonsense way of speaking to her direct reports. And her direct, sometimes harsh, approach was too much for her employees to handle. The CEO let this go on for over three years, while he looked the other way.

Then one day, several employees came to him threatening to quit. *That’s when he called me.*

The simple system I’m going to share with you is the same one I implemented for him. It worked for him and it can work for you!

Four simple steps to solving the problems caused by the employee too valuable to fire:

1. Start Where You Are
2. Uncover Harmful Behaviors and Motivators
3. Initiate the 3-Question Sessions
4. Enjoy Your Harmonious Workplace



1. Start Where You Are

I know from experience you probably haven't drawn a clear enough line in the sand. Your valuable employee also knows this because they continue to operate without boundaries. In fact, your valuable employee may secretly think you're crazy—because they realize that you and the other employees know they're hard to work with. But they will continue to push the boundaries until they are stopped.

That's the problem my client had. For years he let his valuable employee get away with her bad behavior. Sometimes he even felt she intentionally wreaked havoc in the office just to irritate him. Like many CEO's and executives, all he wanted was for her to work better with her team and get her job done, so they could all enjoy a harmonious workplace.

It may be that your employee has taken advantage of your good nature in the past and now you're frustrated and possibly ready to fire them. You may even be starting to hear rumors that others who work with or report to your valuable employee are thinking about leaving.

What will happen when several other members of the team walk out? How will projects get completed? Who will help your customers? How long before your business starts to fall behind? It probably won't take long because you can't replace all those people at once.

2. Uncover Harmful Behaviors and Motivators

It's time to explore and uncover why your employee has been operating the way they have. Then you'll be able to spot any harmful behaviors before they get out of control again.

Brain science shows that an individual's motivations are the reason their behaviors show up as good, bad or indifferent. It's difficult to take control or manage a situation if you don't have all the information behind the 'why' of someone's behavior.

I'll bet you also know it's not always just your one valuable employee with challenging behavior. The whole team and, in some cases, all company employees have had a hand in the harmful behavior by either egging the person on, by pushing their buttons or by putting their head in the sand and ignoring the bad behavior. So while you're at it, you're also going to want to understand the behaviors and motivations of the entire organization.

I recommend implementing the Talent Insights Behavior and Motivators Tool throughout the entire organization. This tool will show you how each employee:

- Responds to problems and challenges
- Influences others to their point of view
- Responds to the pace of the company environment
- Responds to rules and procedures set by others



In addition to these four main areas, this tool will help you understand:

- Each employee's value to the organization
- The best ways to communicate with each individual
- What may cause them to waste time
- Exactly what motivates them and how they like to be rewarded

Soon you'll understand the 'why' behind each employee's behavior. Once you're armed with this information, you can safely move on to the next step.

3. Initiate the 3-Question Sessions

I have recommended this formula to many clients, and they report good results from using it with employees on a regular basis.

Now that you and the managers of each department are armed with the information you got from using the Talent Insights Behavior and Motivators Tool in step 2, you are better equipped to begin implementing the 3-Question Sessions and be on your way to less drama, more trust and deeper conversations with your employees.

The 3-Question Sessions are held weekly between each manager and the employees within their sphere of influence. As the owner, executive or leader in the organization you have influence over the people who report directly to you. Those managers, in turn, have influence over the people who report to them.

It's important that you as the leader introduce this new concept to your employees, because they want to follow you, make you proud and work in an organization that utilizes their abilities and helps them grow as a person.

First, meet with your executive team and share with them your plan to begin using the 3-Question Sessions with each of them on a weekly basis. Getting them to agree to using this formula will be easy once you share with them the results your organization will soon enjoy. These weekly sessions will:

1. Empower department managers to be on top of any issues from an employee perspective, as well as a client or project perspective.
2. Put an end to the annual performance review dialogue that most employees think is a joke anyway. No more forced ranking because managers will know exactly what each employee is working on, how they are progressing and how to rate them fairly.
3. Create a more engaged workforce and a more harmonious workplace culture.



Now that your executive team is on board, introduce the formula to the managers. Once the managers are on board, bring the whole organization together so you can introduce it to the wider employee population. Share how the process is working with your own executives. Let them, in turn, share how it's working with their direct reports. Try to share some findings and examples. Funny or human stories always take the edge off and keep employees from thinking this is another eye-rolling initiative.

Finally, introduce the concept of the 3-Question Sessions to all the employees, sharing how the weekly discussions with their managers will unfold. Explain to your valuable employee, as well as the rest of your workforce, that every week they will meet with their manager and will be asked these three questions:

1. What did you do this past week that you are proud of?
2. What do you want to focus on next week?
3. How can I help you reach your goals?

This is an open dialogue between the valuable employee and their manager, as well as the other employees and their managers. By implementing this step across the organization, it empowers managers to be able to head off any employee bad behavior before the situation escalates and infiltrates the whole organization. This process also gives employees (including your valuable employee) an opportunity to edit their own behavior, because they are getting weekly feedback from their manager.

4. Enjoy Your more Harmonious Workplace

If you have completed the previous steps then you are on the brink of having a more harmonious office. But before you can get to your harmonious company future, you will need to initiate a verbal agreement with all individuals within the organization that they, too, want a more harmonious office environment, and that they will hold themselves and each other personally accountable to commit to their weekly meetings and nip bad behavior before it has a chance to get out of control.

Getting this small commitment from your executive team, then your management team and ultimately the rest of the employees means the change will stick, and brighter days will be more of the norm around your office.

Remember, when everyone understands the motivations that drive their behaviors, there will be less stress and bickering and you'll have an organization that meets and even exceeds its goals because everyone is working in sync. Having improved interactions with each other not only ensures a better company culture but it will help the organization thrive in the long run.

And that's it! These four steps will help you get your employee and organization back on track with more harmony and less drama and distraction.

If you've read this far, then it's quite possible you're ready to take the next step and implement some changes in your organization.



For this reason I'd like to offer you a complimentary ***Strategic Human Insights Strategy Session***.

The ***Strategic Human Insights Strategy Session*** is a phone conversation between you and me where we spend some time exploring your current situation and identifying strategies you can apply to your specific situation in order to begin moving in the right direction with your people challenges.

The strategies I offer have been developed to support your business as it grows. To schedule your complimentary ***Strategic Human Insights Strategy Session*** go to:

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