How to Discipline Badly Behaving Managers



The Process of Disciplining a Badly Behaved Manager

Workplace discipline is an unpleasant necessity of HR. It is even more challenging to use discipline to address the actions of a manager. Performance issues related to a manager's actions or lack of action impact the performance of the entire team, department or organization. Similarly, any discipline undertaken can have a trickle down impact on those who report to the manager.

Identify the Problem

Workplace performance problems fall into 3 categories:

1. Professional Work Quality
2. Personal Behaviour
3. Team Relationship/Leadership

If your manager's discipline is related to his personal behavior, you must consider how discipline will affect his position. Ideally, discipline that is more than punitive, which seeks to permanently change behavior, can have a better impact on the entire team.

Identify who is impacted by the problem and by the discipline

Before taking steps to discipline a manager, consider the impact discipline will have on members of the team. Progressive discipline can be useful, but the challenge with the application of discipline overtime is that it can leave employees vulnerable. Thus, progressive discipline at the managerial level may damage the performance of other employees.

The general process for progressive discipline includes:

1. Offering feedback and a verbal warning
2. Providing a written warning
3. Discipline that can include a suspension, loss of duties and a final written warning
4. Removal of supervisory duties, a demotion or termination

The implementation of these steps can take several weeks and during that time the performance and moral of your employees may be impacted. If a manager is being

disciplined because of his personal conduct his contact with and ability to provide constructive feedback to staff may suffer.

As you continue through the process of meting out progressive discipline to a manager consider adding these three components into the process

3 Components of Applying Discipline to a Badly Behaving Manager

1) ***Increased management oversight:*** HR or another manager can be tapped to provide regular oversight and observe interactions with staff. To implement this you can make structural changes such as having the manager report to a new team or new supervisor or simply increase current supervision. You can also implement this privately by adding daily or weekly supervisions meetings and reviews to the manager's routine. You may consider it necessary to continue this for at least 4 weeks and up to 3 months.

2) ***Employee survey and feedback:*** You do not need to publicly connect this to discipline, but implementing an ongoing management feedback process helps gather information and monitor positive or negative changes in the workplace. Provide an anonymous forum to allow monitoring of regular feedback.

3) ***Additional team supervision:*** Identify someone not directly involved in any problems, either from within the team or somewhere else in the organization, and add them in as an assistant manager or new team leader. Not only to you provide the team with an alternative leader but you also change the dynamics of the situation. You can identify this as a temporary 3 or 6-month training role or a secondment. Offering a few hundred dollars per month as a bonus for taking on these extra responsibilities can be an inexpensive way to possibly save thousands of dollars resulting from employee turnover or poor performance.

Disciplining a badly behaving manager can be more complex and require more oversight and monitoring but making these extra efforts can have an impact on the manager and an entire team.