

# How to Terminate a “Bad Fit”

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*Simple sample phrases to you can use when terminating an employee*

Sometimes new employees are not what you expect once they've begin working for you. They may have the rights skills, but perform duties in a way that doesn't complement the work flow of your organization. Sometimes personal traits, communication and work styles just don't click with the team. Or, there are times when your workplace needs simply change and one member is no longer the right person and you have to part ways. None of these are pleasant options but sometimes you have little choice but to say good bye to an employee who really has done nothing wrong.

## **Sometimes You Should Fit a Square Peg in a Round Hole**

In a multi-cultural and multi-generational workplace it can be beneficial to hire and retain employees from diverse backgrounds. Sometimes you can make changes that work with the strengths of a 'misfit' employee. In a large organization, you may be able to adjust an employee's duties to leverage his/her strengths. There is also value in recognizing that a 'misfit' employee may be a harbinger of necessary changes to help move the organization in a new direction.

However, there are times when the gap cannot be bridged and you have to make the decision to let the person 'go'. When the times comes to sever an employment relationship with an employee who did nothing in particular wrong, but who never-the-less must go, how you say goodbye can be important from a reputational and even a litigious point of view.

## **'You Are Not the Right Fit'**

Whether in a personal or a workplace relationship, the phrase 'you and I just don't fit' can leave the injured party bewildered. The person is likely hurt and wondering what went wrong. Successful transitions in life are very important. Moving through the three phases of transition, from the ending, through the journey to a new beginning can be facilitated with insights and knowledge. Helping an employee just a little with the ending and journey can mean providing more then a pink slip and the phrase 'sorry you no longer fit'.

Next time you find yourself terminating or even choosing not to hire someone and are tempted to drop the generic, **“you are not the right fit”** line, think about a more informative way to convey the same information. Providing something tangible to the employee may still hurt and may not bring them comfort but it can offer them something to work with as they move ahead.

Consider variations of these options...

- We are aware that you have made workplace contributions in the past. Unfortunately we no longer think that your strengths of XYZ will deliver what we need for you to be successful within our organization. We are sorry to inform you that your position has been terminated.
- We are changing course in some areas and need someone who is better suited to deliver XYZ tasks and these tasks are not the primary components of your position or skill set
- We need a person with a stronger voice to be heard in this particular team and that does not appear to be your style. We need to make a change on this team so there is better cohesion and we have decided to let you go.
- You seem disinterested and distracted in your primary tasks and this is holding your team back. We believe you are no longer able to contribute your best effort to this team and would be more successful working with an organization who would benefit from what you are good at delivering
- Your skills have not kept pace with the emerging trends in XYZ and we must act quickly to bring these new skills into the organization. Unfortunately, as a result, we have to let you go
- While your skills in XYZ are valuable they no longer fit the focus of our team, project or organization
- The team you are on has an XYZ approach to getting things accomplished. For sometime it has been a struggle for your style to mesh with the rest of the team. Unfortunately that has had a negative impact on your work performance and are sorry to tell you we have eliminated your position

### **Choose your words carefully**

You want to be certain that the differences you cite are not a factor of a protected human right such as age, gender, culture, disability or more. Whether you like the person or the person has contributed in the past they may be times when you both need to move on. Treating the person with dignity and respect can involve sharing honest information in a kind way.