What’s the RIGHT way to fire someone?

“Firing someone is never easy, but you have to be prepared with what you’re going to say and not waver from that position. It’s unfortunate that, as an employer, you have to be wary about potential litigation when firing someone. That’s why it’s best to just keep it short and professional. It’s often a good idea to have a second person join you as a witness.”

Avoid surprises

“I make it a personal rule to be 100 percent sure that when I have to fire someone, he or she sees it coming. If I’ve done my job as a leader properly, the employee will know he or she is on thin ice long before the late Friday afternoon ‘touchbase’ shows up on the calendar. ”

Act promptly

“The best career advice I ever got from my dad was that the day you know someone is not going to be a long-term fit, you should let her go. It’s only fair to her and your company. Every day you work with her that you don’t want to be, you will not be working to improve her. You’re losing time you could be training someone who will be a long-term fit. Thanks for the great advice, Dad!”

Don’t apologize

“Employers have a habit of apologizing during a firing. If the employer was so sorry, he wouldn’t be firing someone! So stop apologizing. Get to the point and only give the employee the necessary facts.”

Implement warnings and coaching

“Firing is a shock, not only to the person being fired, but also to the entire team. Your role as a CEO is to coach your team about expectations. As much as possible, do not fire someone without first sharing how you need her to improve. If you fire a teammate after offering warnings and coaching, the team will understand why you had to take the action. This will lessen the impact on everyone.”

Be direct

“No one appreciates it when you are pussyfooting around during this emotional, life-changing event. Call a face-to-face meeting, sit the person down and give it to him straight. The whole conversation should be very brief – no longer than a few minutes.

Wish him good luck in his future endeavors and say goodbye.”

Consult your team

“It disrupts the entire team when someone is fired — and makes everyone a little worried he or she will be next. After you let someone go, make sure to meet with everyone else who worked with that person one-on-one. Explain the firing and reassure your teammates that they aren’t next on the chopping block. ”

Comply with the law

“First, be sure you’re complying with any federal and state laws. Create a paperwork trail. Creating a paperwork trail for an underperforming employee can take months, but it’s a necessity, especially in states that have specific regulations. This is the best way to effectively fire an employee and reduce your risk of an unemployment claim or a lawsuit.”

Automate It

“Much of business comes down to being efficient. That’s how you maximize profit and set yourself up for growth. To become efficient, businesses need to change the way they look at the process by which they fire someone. Rather than making it out to be some managerial black box, be transparent! Show key metrics to employees and say, ‘Here’s the line. If you’re below it for X weeks, you’re out.'”

Focus on ‘the right fit’

“The best way to fire someone is by leading him or her to the conclusion that he or she isn’t the right fit for the position or company. Show that you genuinely care about his or her life goals and motivations. It helps employees understand that you are doing them a favor as a friend, and maybe as a potential business partner. Never burn a bridge.”