Combating Apathy in the Workplace

Presented by
Pamela Jett, CSP
Apathy in the Workplace

The cost to the U.S. economy of actively disengaged employees is $370 billion a year.

One of the indicators that employee engagement is on the decline in your organization is apathy.
Apathy in the Workplace

- Apathetic people can be draining both emotionally and physically.
- In today’s program, you will discover specific strategies and tactics to combat apathy at work.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Signs of Apathy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lower productivity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower work quality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disorganization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wasted time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitude</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Absenteeism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Presenteeism”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turnover</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Our goal is to make a positive impact on apathy.

Do what you can, where you are, with what you have.
• Inner victories precede outer victories.
• You have the power to choose your attitude.
• “Most people are about as happy as they make up their minds to be.”
  — Abraham Lincoln
Why Are Happy People Happy?

- They choose to be.
- They get what they expect.
- Happy people make a proactive choice to have a good day.
I’m having a good day today.
Staying Neutral

• Most people don’t make any choice.
• Then circumstances take a toll and they have a bad day.
• Your most powerful tool is to stay positive.
• It doesn’t mean bad things won’t happen to you, but it protects you from the apathy of others.

Combating Apathy
Avoid Toxic People

Attitudes are contagious, and theirs is not worth catching.
Avoid Toxic People

Choose to be with people who focus on the positive, not the negative.

National Seminars Training
Avoid Toxic People

“I’m having a good day today.”

Train them to know that their apathy is not welcome near you.
Focus on What You Love About Your Work

Keep a gratitude journal.
- What do you love as a result of your work?

Ask yourself, “How is my life better because I work here, now, with these people?”

Make a list of things you like about your job.
- Where are opportunities to do more of what you love?

Identify your strengths.
- What makes you tick?
- When do you feel energized?

Be proactive.
- Take responsibility for your career.
- Focus on what you can do.

Keep a glory file.
- Fill it with your good stuff.
- Pull it out as a reminder.
Short-Term Burnout vs. Deeply Rooted Apathy

- Prolonged burnout typically leads to apathy.
- You can tell when you are dealing with burnout if you find it fairly easy to refire or reignite.
Root Causes of Burnout and Apathy

Ask yourself:

1. Is this me?
2. Do I want it to change?
3. If so, what actions can I take to make the change?
4. Where will I find the skills to make those changes?
5. Where will I start?
Root Causes of Burnout and Apathy

A continual increase in job responsibilities

Cause

Solutions

- Have you built time-management skills?
- Do you know how to say “no”?
- Have you asked for more compensation?

National Seminars Training
You have to put on too many faces for too many different people.

Solution

Create a personal mission statement.
You have a micro-managing boss.

Have you developed proactive strategies for keeping your boss informed?
Root Causes of Burnout and Apathy

Chronic, repetitive, boring work

Have you looked for opportunities to do what you love?

Solution
Root Causes of Burnout and Apathy

You’re required to work long hours.

Solution

Build time-management and assertiveness skills.
Root Causes of Burnout and Apathy

You feel stuck in your job.

Solution

Are you preparing for your ideal career?
Root Causes of Burnout and Apathy

You have a long history of loyalty to a company without receiving recognition.

How are your assertiveness skills?

Solution
Root Causes of Burnout and Apathy

You are consumed by your job.

Solution

Go back to your personal mission statement.
Taking action

Having a plan

Getting the knowledge needed for that plan

Identifying burnout quickly

We can minimize the likelihood that we will become apathetic.
Apathy of Others

Are you setting your team up for burnout and apathy?

What can you do to prevent apathy from affecting your team?

Do what you can, where you are, with what you have.
Apathy of Others

• If you want to make things better for those you lead, but you are not sure how — ask them!
• Ask those you lead what could be done to minimize burnout and try to make those changes.
• Asking and listening give you credibility.
We have 2 ears and 1 mouth. We ought to listen twice as much as we speak.
Listening

One of the causes of apathy is thinking that nothing you do makes a difference or that no one cares what you think.

When we practice good listening with others, we are countering that apathy-causing mind-set.
Check your ego.
• It’s not about you.
• They need to feel understood.

Try genuine listening.
• What are they afraid of?
• What is the core message?
• What do they want me to do?

Use encouragers.
• “That’s interesting … tell me more.”
• Nod, make eye contact, and smile.

Listening Dos
Interrupt

Overuse “I understand”

Condescend
- Don’t say, “You shouldn’t feel that way.”
- Don’t say, “I know just how you feel.”

Listening Don’ts

Not take action or fail to keep people informed
- Sometimes it’s just as valuable to try to take action and fail than succeed.
Counteracting Apathy

1. Stay focused on what you can control.
   • You will be less likely to be drawn into the drama and apathy of others.
   • You will stop feeding the apathy of others.
Counteracting Apathy

2. Consistently communicate the benefits.

- Validate them, and then offer a positive.
- In a way, it follows inoculation theory: Give the bad news and follow up with benefits.

“Well, I’m excited about …”

“You’re right, it will be hard. I’m looking forward to …”
3. Ask strategic questions that will help them rethink events.

- How long have you been feeling this?
- What have you tried to improve things?
- What specific events have caused you to feel this way?
- How would you like things to be?
- What plan do you have to handle this?

The answer isn’t as important as the process of asking the questions.
Counteracting Apathy

4. Spend time finding out what would excite them.
   - Where have they excelled?
   - When have they been energetic?
   - Familiarize yourself with the SELF Profile.
5. Keep people informed.

- Tell them about big-picture goals, the status of projects, and changes.
- When people give suggestions or ideas, keep them informed of the status.
Team Building

Ask your team for ideas, delegate projects, and let them set goals.

People are the most committed to things they help create.

Give them the opportunity to work together and create a support network.
Hold People Accountable for Projects

- Leverage the power of project plans.
- Make short-term deadlines and goals.
- Consider creating shared project plans.
- Talk about rewards and consequences.
- Talk about missed deadlines.
"The subject is not ... The subject is ..."

"Tell me more about ..."
"Help me understand ..."

"We are not discussing your coworker’s performance, we are discussing yours."

"What part of it do you think won’t work?"
Final Thoughts

Make a commitment to protect your attitude.

Engage in behaviors that discourage apathy around you.

You are now better prepared to deal with apathy in the workplace.

Use the strategies you learned today.
Welcome to Combating Apathy in the Workplace Q&A

With Pamela Jett, CSP
Thank you for joining us today!