

How-To Manage Your Employee's Time Off



If you're like most hard-working Americans, chances are you laugh at the idea of working 40 hours a week. The reality is that you probably are the first one to the office in the morning and the last to leave in the evening. You probably even show up on the occasional Saturday morning or Sunday evening because you have no other choice. "Time off" is probably laughable to you but it's vitally important. Not just for you, but your employees as well.

Your company is only as good as the people on the ground and in the trenches. Your expectations are high and your employees take pride in the job they do for their own sake and that of the company. You probably have great relationships with most of them and your culture is one of teamwork and inclusion focused on a greater goal. Even if all this holds true, the number one complaint from employees across the board is not having appropriate time off to recharge so they are able to maximize productivity and efficiency while at work. Such begs the question, how do you balance maximizing productivity while making sure your employees can be at their best each and every day they come to work?

Be Upfront About Paid Time Off Policies

In the modern workplace, employees see paid time off and benefits just as important as a competitive salary. If your competitors offer more attractive PTO perks, you'll struggle to hire and retain qualified people. It's paramount to make sure all employees know and understand PTO policies immediately during the

hiring process. These policies should be clearly stated in the employee handbook and readily available for access upon request.

Forecast and Plan Ahead

If you've been in business for any length of time, you likely have a good idea of when your busy and slow times are. This should directly affect how you manage PTO requests. If your busy time is the winter holiday season and all hands on deck are needed, your PTO policies and labor budgets should reflect that trend. Effectively writing, communicating and implementing these policies up front lets employees plan their time off in a manner that is best for them and also aligns with company needs and objectives.

Set Deadlines for PTO Requests and Approval

While time off is essential for every employee's well-being, it's important that they communicate their requests well in advance so managers can aptly plan for their absence. Communicating these deadlines to all employees at once creates transparency and ensures fairness.

If many PTO requests are made at one time, it's imperative to have a policy in place for the priority in which those requests are processed. Whether your policy is first-come-first serve, based on seniority or some other metric, it needs to be made clear to all employees so that everything is black and white.

Incentivize Employees During Peak Times

It's widely known that employees are tremendously more motivated by incentives than they are reprimand. Budgeting and forecasting for incentives like holiday pay and bonuses is a great way to offer a win-win for your employees without sacrificing productivity. For those that want to take time off, the deadlines and policies have been clearly laid out. For those that are motivated to make extra pay, times like these are a great opportunity to cash in. The key once again is effective planning, policy setting and communication.

Make Your Schedule Rotational

I'll say it again, transparency and communication are your best friends. Not everyone works Monday through Friday 9:00-5:00 on your team or in your organization. No one wants to be "on call" on a Friday night when they could be at happy hour or at their child's soccer game. This time is fleeting and spreading that responsibility equally and fairly amongst your employees ensures that everyone is on a level playing field.

Be Flexible

Any reasonable employer makes time for deaths in the family or illness. That only goes so far however. Circumstances come up in your life. It's unrealistic to expect every single one of your employees to stick to a regimented rotational schedule without any room for variance. Allowing employees to reasonably switch days or shifts goes a long way in building morale within your team knowing that you've got their back and the favor will be returned someday.

It's important that these schedule requests be approved by a superior however. Having an open and balanced conversation with your employees about last minute schedule requests is essential for the health and productivity of the entire organization.

Everyone in the modern-day workforce wants to feel valued for the job they do and compensated accordingly. While higher wages are great, managing time off in a favorable, but efficient manner shows those that work for you that you care on a human level. With proper planning, policy setting and communication, accommodating PTO requests can make everyone of your employees feel valued and empowered. Good news for everyone involved.

5 Signs that It Is Time to Fire an Employee



Hiring is challenging but firing can be even harder. Your employee's job could be the only income for the employee's family. Make sure to have a good reason for letting your employee go.

This article outlines signs to fire an employee and how to properly conduct the termination. If you find yourself in a position where you need to let an employee go, I can help find you high-quality and productive candidates after the termination occurs.

Reasons to Fire an Employee

Bad Behavior is Not Corrected

Every employee has occasional bad behavior. This could be checking Facebook or excessive bathroom or smoking breaks. As a business owner, small infractions can be overlooked. But what happens when small infractions become big problems or a consistent behavior?

Examples of Bad Behavior at Work

- Sleeping on the Job
- Consistently Late
- Gossiping
- Lied to the Boss
- Socialize Excessively

- Left Early without Permission

You should not be paying employees to gossip, socialize, or sleep. If they are a negative influence to other team members and have decreased productivity, it may be time to fire your employee before this behavior has an impact on other employees.

They Have a Bad Attitude

Everyone has bad days. In this situation, a bad attitude can be excused. However, if your employee's negative attitude is frequent and impacting the team, it may be time to let the employee go.

Speak to the employee about their bad attitude first. Maybe they have too much responsibility, problems at home, or a co-worker is spreading rumors. Try to solve the issue before firing your employee.

They Violate Policies

Policy violations should not be tolerated. To ensure that your employees understand the policies, have them sign an official Policies document upon being hired.

Depending on the severity, policy violations are often a "three strikes and you are out" clause. Have the employee read and sign the policy document if they violate the conditions. This ensures that your company has thorough paperwork if you need to terminate your employee.

You Receive Customer or Client Complaints

Happy customers and clients keep your company afloat, even if your employee's interactions are only with internal customers in other departments. If your employee is causing complaints then you evaluate their position.

The first step is to address the complaints. The solution could be as simple as further training in customer service or conflict resolution. However, if your employee does not enjoy their job or has a bad attitude, you may want to reassign them or let them go. A reputation in bad customer service can be extremely

harmful to your reputation or cause problems when working with other departments.

Job Quality or Quantity is Lacking

If your employee is making a lot of mistakes or is consistently missing deadlines, it could be putting a strain on your other employees. If that is the case it may be time to let the offending employee go to allow you to upgrade to a more productive employee. This may sound a little heartless, but if others in the department are left to pick up the slack or continually correct their errors, you may end up losing your better performers out of frustration and only making matters worse.

If it is time to let your employee go, it is important to proceed legally and courteously. Job loss is usually life changing. CNN Business explains five steps to professionally fire your employee:

1. Don't Surprise Them - Hold performance reviews so your employees know where they can improve.
2. Do It Face-To-Face -The phone, email, and twitter are not appropriate platforms to fire an employee.
3. Be Clear and Concise - Know exactly what you are going to say before you fire your employee and have the proper documentation.
4. Be Prepared for Emotions, but Keep Yours in Check - Show empathy and avoid using harsh words.
5. Give Them a Soft Landing - Have a prepared severance package, or offer consulting work, to allow them time to find a new job.