

For Terminations, Timing is Everything

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Timing is a critical part of the termination process. Employees can be volatile when they learn they are going to be terminated. Although employees are unlikely to choose to set fire to supervisors' cars after learning they are going to be fired, it is safe to assume that most will not receive the news cheerfully.

The first step is to ensure that employees do not learn they are going to be fired from a secondhand source. Each employee deserves a respectful setting for the termination. It is humiliating and potentially devastating for an employee to learn about their termination from someone else. Keep personnel discussions limited to a small group of managers who should be on a "need to know" basis and ensure that they understand the need to keep these decisions under wraps.

However, in many instances, an employee will be able to see the writing on the wall and will recognize that a termination is inevitable. These folks will walk around a supervisor's office waiting for the other shoe to drop at any moment. They might pick up on signs such as the way their manager is interacting with them or a reduced workflow.

For a number of reasons, it is best for employees to not be left in this employment limbo for long. It is unfair to the worker, and the employer is almost certainly not getting solid work productivity. From a company perspective, there is nothing more dangerous than an employee who knows the end is near. That employee could easily serve as a morale drain on fellow employees by displaying a negative attitude, wasting coworkers' time talking about their problems and making derogatory comments about the company.

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