

*Recently, one of our employees was killed in an automobile accident and I am at loss for what to do. I just need some idea about the best way to help the other employees deal with this.*

There is no simple answer because everyone has a unique way of mourning. Those coworkers who were close will go through the usual stages of grieving as they come to grips with the loss and adjust to the absence. Depending on the circumstances, some may feel guilt and helplessness while others could become angry or depressed. These are all normal reactions. There is no right or wrong. You may not be comfortable with any of this, but that is common as well. Do not let your uneasiness interfere with your attempts to reach out. To demonstrate your concern, you may encourage the employees to do something for the family or create a memorial in the community. The coworkers may come up with a unique way to memorialize their friend. Here you can offer your support and participation.

It is important to recognize that some people will have little or no reaction because they did not know the person well. In some cases there is no sense of sadness, because the relationship might have been conflicted. These responses are normal too. No one should be forced to join in anything that does not fit a personal style or react in a disingenuous manner.

If the despair does not abate, you can call in a professional, but be sure that this person understands how to work with groups who have been through a traumatic loss. Some employees may not want to participate in a group experience because they are private or actually feel compelled to say things that they do not mean for fear others will think they are unkind and reject them. Again, this is normal.

As long as you encourage everyone to deal with this process as each feels is best for him or her, the workplace will adjust. Of course, someone might react in unexpected ways that could cause work-related problems. This individual should be encouraged to seek professional help so the rest can go on with living.

*During the past couple years we have hired a bunch of recent college graduates who are in their twenties. They don't seem to be motivated and won't give extra time when the job demands it. When they make mistakes they don't seem to care and you better not be at the front door at five o'clock or you might get killed in the stampede. Even worse they think they know everything. It's driving me crazy. Anything I can do?*

Hopefully, you will be comforted to know you are not alone. This is probably the most common complaint made by today's business owners and managers. The new

generation is different, because many believe that things should happen immediately without much effort. The poor performers actually may not be aware of the demands of the real world or may never have developed behaviors or attitudes that produce high performers.

This is not a hopeless cause, because you will find some raw talent that can be shaped. It is best to employ people with the understanding that they will be on probation and that they will be judged. It is important that you set and hold onto clear expectations for performance. Ongoing and immediate feedback is essential. Once a new employee proves they are worth the effort, mentoring will be another critical factor as you model desired behaviors, which includes for both good and bad efforts. Those that take criticism and use it to grow are keepers. Others should be asked to look for new opportunities.