

Productive and counterproductive behavior

Psychology, Behaviorism



Productive and Counterproductive Behaviors An organization will have employees with one of two behavior types. They can either be productive or counterproductive. The root cause of counterproductive behavior can be rooted in employee turnover, attendance issues, or lack of training. It is up to the organization to make an attempt to identify what the causes of their employees' counterproductive behavior and attempt to find a workable solution.

Productive Behavior and its Impact on an Organization

Employers want productive behavior out of their employees because productive employees create revenue for the organization. However, employees tend to think just because they are doing “ something” and not idle they are being productive. Their way of thinking would be incorrect. Productive behavior is “ employee behavior that contributes positively to the goals and objectives of the organization” (Jex & Britt, 2008). As we can see merely doing something to occupy ones time is not being productive.

Whether or not an employee is being productive can be measured by the cost associated with the employee's performance and how effective they are. For example, there are two employees in a shoe store with similar sales figures and they sell the same number of shoes each month. The only difference in these two employees is that employee A works ten hours per day and employee B works a six-hour day. Employee B is the more productive employee because employee B accomplishes the same goal in fewer hours. There is a lower cost associated with employee B making him the more productive employee.

Efficient employees are productive because they complete large amount of work in a short period of time. When employees are being productive they are concentrating on performing “ core tasks” (Jex & Britt, 2008) and are bringing in revenue for the organization. An organization with productive employees will see less employee absences and in their turnover rate.

Counterproductive Behavior Counterproductive behavior is “ behavior that explicitly runs counter to the goals of an organization” (Jex & Britt, 2008).

Employees who are counterprodtive may be employees who have issues with absenteeism or frequently tardy, substance abuse, they may steal from the employer, or simply have “ ineffective job performance” (Jex & Britt, 2008). Any behavior that prevents an employee from conducting their job and producing for the employer is considered counterproductive. An Employee who take all day to complete a task because they are there all day and getting paid by the hour is an employee that is counterproductive.

Another behavior that is counterproductive is an employee that uses unsafe practices at work. By not following safety rules employees can cause an injury to themselves or to another causing the employee to miss work. As previously stated, absenteeism is a counterproductive behavior. Strategies to Increase Productive Behavior To increase productive behavior in an organization and decrease counterproductive behavior an organization must investigate the cause. Sometimes the reason an employee is counterproductive are out of the employees’ control.

For situations that are within the employees’ control, the organization must clearly outline their expectations for their employees. An organization must

also outline the consequences for such negative behavior. Drug and alcohol testing and an attendance guidelines policy can be established. These policies will let the employee know what is expected of them and the consequences for not complying. The organization should also make efforts to understand why their employees are not coming to work (Associated Content, 2007).

There are times when a personal issue can have its affect on an employees' behavior. An organization can begin an employee assistance program that would offer counseling to employees if such a program were within the organizations budget. Lack of training and the appropriate tools for performing necessary job functions are factors that are out of the employees' control. The organization needs to ensure all of their employees have all the proper tools. They can easily do a visual survey and question employees asking them what tools they could use to better perform their job function.

Organizations must also ensure all of their employees have the proper training. If employees are not adequately trained they do not know how to perform their job functions. Organizations must adequately train or retrain if necessary any and all employees that require training. At times performing follow up training with all employees ensures employees are all on the same page as far as what their specific job functions are. Performance appraisals also need to be performed on all employees in order for them to know how they are performing in according with their job expectations.

These performance appraisals will also serve as a tool to help the employee improve their performance and productivity. A performance appraisal should also be used to praise employees and let them know what they are doing that makes a positive impact on the organization (hrVillage, n. d.). Both of productive and counterproductive behaviors have their impact on an organization. There are a number of reasons an employee can be counterproductive. Once the root cause has been identified an organization can begin to turn the counterproductive behavior into productive behavior.

References Associated Content. (2007). Call Centers: 6 Steps to Improving Employee Attendance and Performance. Retrieved, March 29, 2010, from http://www.associatedcontent.com/article/189770/call_centers_6_steps_to_improving_employee.html?cat=31

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