

# No one respects me

By Jeff “Chief” Urbaniak  
COLUMNIST

DEAR CHIEF: I’m an owner and manager at a small convenient store. I supervise eight people and not one of them is worth the money they get paid. They’re lazy, come to work late, and they don’t heed my threats to fire them. How do I get their respect? I really can’t afford to fire them, though, because I have a hard time keeping the work force I have, as most quit after about four weeks. Where can I find good people to work for me? My store is in shambles!

DISRESPECTED STORE OWNER



DEAR DISRESPECTED STORE OWNER: Sounds like you have some serious challenges on your hand. It also appears you don’t think very highly of your workforce.

First, I recommend you evaluate your training and indoctrination programs and make sure you’re upholding your responsibilities of training and preparing your employees to perform required tasks. Be sure your employees are being properly taught and oriented on their roles in your store. Are you communicating your values and expectations and more importantly, are you sure they understand them?

Quite often, when someone doesn’t do a task correctly within established guidelines, it’s because they lack one or more of the following:

- 1) Knowledge
- 2) Skills
- 3) Attitude

Which ones apply to your employees? If one or more of them apply, it’s time to take action to improve your training and orientation program. If your program isn’t providing your employees with knowledge and job skills, then how can you expect them to know what they’re supposed to do or how to do it?

It is also important for you to make sure your employees are physically capable and have the necessary tools to perform required tasks. If someone can’t lift a

20-pound box over their head or doesn’t have the ability to type more than twenty words a minute, then you’ve placed the wrong person in the wrong job.

Additionally, make sure your employees are people with good character and that they have a good sense of responsibility and a desire to excel. These traits are generally exhibited by a good attitude. Hire people with good attitudes and don’t hire people with bad attitudes.

Furthermore, you should provide your employees with incentives for good performance and behavior. Praise them appropriately (when deserved) and reward them when they exceed your expectations. Rewards like a free meal, a day off, or a small bonus can have great dividends in return for you and your store.

If an analysis of your training and orientation program reveals you’re already doing these things then it appears you are the common denominator in your employees’ situation. Have you looked in the mirror and evaluated yourself? Are you lacking in leadership and/or management skills? Perhaps it’s time to hold yourself accountable rather than blaming and cursing everyone else.

People prefer to work for leaders who care about them, respect them, inspire them, value them, and like them--not leaders who continually threaten to fire them! It’s only natural, at some point, that employees will get fed up with mistreatment and disrespect and quit their jobs. And when they quit when you can least afford it, who’s left filling in for them until replacements are hired? You! Well, it’s time to take your head out of your hands and reverse this trend.

For starters, you’ll find your employees will respond to you in a more positive way if you simply get to know them a little bit. Learn about their families, their likes, dislikes, wants and needs. Establish bonds by talking with them about things other than work and soon you will have improved rapport with them.

Along with bonding with your people, you’ll need to inspire them in a positive way by demonstrating excellent leadership skills on a daily basis. After all, when you first hire people, they don’t really care much about your store other than the fact it gives them an avenue to collect a paycheck. However, in time, through effective leadership, they will begin caring if they are properly guided, respected, and cared for.

Leadership expert John Maxwell has been proclaiming for years that “Everything rises and falls on leadership.” If your store is in shambles because you lack leadership skills, then it’s time for you to get leadership training. SkillPath is a training organization that provides in-residence, on-site, and online training in leadership and communication skills, among other topics for an affordable rate. Check out what they offer at [www.skillpath.com](http://www.skillpath.com). Or you can engage in a personal reading program to self-educate yourself. A great book on leadership is John Maxwell’s *Developing the Leader Within You*. Either way you can certainly change and transform yourself into an effective leader if you sincerely desire to do so.

Wouldn’t it be great to turn your store into a highly profitable operation with employees who will respect you and work hard in achieving your objectives? In little-to-no time you can do just that!



*Are you someone striving to achieve your maximum potential, develop your leadership and/or management skills, enhance your professional development or self-improvement efforts, or improve your professional relationships? If so, then get advice from a proven leader and mentor. Jeff Urbaniak is a retired Air Force Chief and current Leadership Consultant with over 30 years of leadership and management experience. For an opportunity to have your issue or concern addressed in the Dear Chief column, go to [www.DearChiefAdvice.com](http://www.DearChiefAdvice.com) and submit your comments or email them to [Jeff@DearChiefAdvice.com](mailto:Jeff@DearChiefAdvice.com).*