

## 6 Ways to Prevent Sloppy Work

In this program, Psychologists Eve Ash and Peter Quarry, discuss why some staff deliver substandard work and offer practical solutions for managers to overcome the issue.

Examples of sloppy work can include: slow or late completion of tasks, mistakes, taking shortcuts that can lead to safety, quality and compliancy issues, incomplete work, unchecked first drafts, neglecting to return calls. Of course the reasons for these work habits can vary, but the consequences can be far reaching. A sloppy worker can present a poor role model for new employees. Team members can become resentful as they take on extra work. Delays and poor quality can lead to service complaints, which can impact on business success. This program offers six practical guidelines to support managers to understand employee work habits and to improve work performance.

### 1. Set standards

- Companies need standards and policies that are clearly laid out for all staff.
- If the company leaders have not outlined such standards, then Team Leaders can also implement standards as appropriate for their team. These standards can also move upwards or downwards.
- These standards or principles need to be understood by all.

### 2. Translate company objectives and standards to teams

- Managers need to clarify their expectations.
- Avoid being vague.
- Give full details.
- Ask staff to take notes and have them email their notes to ensure understanding.
- Give dates for completion of tasks.
- Agree on processes.
- Managers must take responsibility for providing clear instructions and ensuring they are understood.
- Managers and staff must review priorities.

### 3. Develop skills through training

- Consider individual training needs to ensure staff are appropriately skilled to complete tasks to standard.
- Coaching or training can be provided in many modes, depending on needs.
- People who are 'sloppy' by nature can be coached.

### 4. Monitor work and provide feedback

- Be specific in feedback.
- Always explain 'why' when giving feedback.
- Don't delay giving feedback.
- Get agreement to feedback and changes.

### 5. Manage mistakes

- Mistakes are a great way to learn and enable 'just in time' learning.
- Ensure a no blame culture.
- Implement a mistake feedback session in meetings where all workers are regularly asked to share a recent mistake they've made as a learning activity. This will enable open, honest communication within teams.

### 6. Reinforce and reward good work

- Positive feedback and encouragement boosts morale and contributes to creating a culture of excellence.
- Build rewards and recognitions systems into work practices and communication.
- Recognition needs to be at the formal and informal level.

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