

“You’re Fired!”

Ten Ways to Lose Your Job and How to Avoid Them

Second Edition

Instructor’s Guide

“By respecting others, working hard, and acting with integrity, you’ll not only keep your job, you’ll excel at it.”

Overview

The reasons employers give for firing employees are numerous, but there are several that consistently rank as the most common. This video discusses those reasons, outlining specific actions and behaviors that often lead to job termination. More importantly, it presents strategies and suggestions for avoiding or correcting the problems that lead to job loss.

The top ten reasons for being fired are

- Poor job performance
- Poor relationship with supervisor
- Dishonesty
- Unreliability
- Inability to work with others
- Disrespecting others
- Misusing company resources
- Poor customer service
- Abusing drugs or alcohol
- Inappropriate appearance

Simply keeping a job is one thing—succeeding at that job is another. In addition to avoiding the common pitfalls that lead to getting fired, the strategies and tips emphasized in the video can help viewers assess their skills and value as employees and discover ways to improve, which can lead to increased job security and greater career success.

When leading any class, workshop, or discussion involving job loss, it’s important to keep the focus on self-improvement and proactive behavior. Job loss of any kind can be a

sensitive issue. While the video focuses on the pitfalls that lead to getting fired, the topics presented can and should be used as a starting point for establishing positive worker traits that can be beneficial now and in the future.

Presentation Suggestions

Ask participants to imagine that they are employers and have them list what general qualities and skills they would look for most in the people they hire. See if you can come to a consensus on what makes for a desirable employee. Then have participants list what they feel are the most common reasons employees are fired. Compare the two lists: the positive worker qualities and the causes for job termination—and discuss the relationship between skills, behaviors, and attitude and job security.

When you feel participants have begun to understand the connection, give them the **Anticipation Quiz** to complete prior to watching the video. If you wish, allow the students to state their answers and discuss them.

Show the video. Encourage students to make changes to the answers they put down for the Anticipation Quiz while watching the video. If you wish, allow students to do this section-by-section whenever the video suggests a pause.

At the conclusion of the video, ask students to discuss any changes they made to the answers on the Anticipation Quiz as a result of information in the video. Follow up the discussion with the **Activities**.

Use the **Discussion Questions** to request oral or written responses from students, or assign the questions as homework essays.

Give the **Quick Quiz** at the conclusion of class and correct the quizzes as a group.

Assign the **Homework Option**, if desired.

Anticipation Quiz

Directions: Answer these questions as completely as possible. You will revise your answers as you watch the video.

1. True or false: You are allowed to disagree with your boss?
2. What are some examples of dishonesty at work?
3. What does it mean to be a reliable employee?
4. List three strategies for getting along with coworkers.
5. What is harassment?
6. Name two ways that employees often misuse company resources.

7. What constitutes good customer service?
8. Name three things you can do to help ensure your long-term career success?

Answer Key

1. True. You should share your ideas for how to improve things, but you should also respect your supervisor's decisions and accept his or her feedback.
2. (Answers may vary) Overstating qualifications on a job application, trying to cover up mistakes, stealing office supplies.
3. Showing up every day on time and getting your work done on schedule.
4. (Answers may vary) Cooperate, keep communication lines open, maintain a positive attitude, acknowledge the contributions of others, be a problem solver.
5. Words or actions that others find personally threatening or offensive.
6. (Answers may vary) Checking personal email, making personal phone calls, online shopping, viewing inappropriate content on the Internet, making personal copies on the photocopier.
7. (Answers may vary) Treating customers with respect, giving them your undivided attention, understanding and fixing their problems, being prompt and courteous in your responses, a smile and a positive attitude.
8. (Answers may vary) Ask for additional responsibilities, offer suggestions for improvement, improve your skills, keep a positive attitude, track your achievements, build your network.

Activities

Activity #1

Title: The Consequences of Being Fired

Format: Small group

Time: 30 minutes

Materials: Role-play statements

Procedure:

1. Organize the class into small groups of four or more.
2. Give each group one of these statements on a piece of paper:
 - a. You were fired from your last job as a result of often being late due to child-care

issues.

- b. Your previous employer discovered inappropriate content on your office computer and fired you.
 - c. You were fired from your job because you constantly gossiped and complained about your supervisor.
 - d. You were fired because too many customers complained about the quality of the service you provided.
 - e. You were fired because you were caught stealing office supplies.
3. Ask students to take turns role playing an employer and job candidate in an interview (five minutes per role play). Have each employer ask about why the candidate left his or her last job. Candidates cannot lie and cannot refuse to answer the question.
 5. Have each group note how it felt to address the cause of their firing in a job interview. What would an employer's impression of a person with this job history think? What could the job candidate say or do to convince the employer that this behavior won't be a problem anymore? Discuss as a whole group.

Activity #2

Title: Workplace Survivor

Format: Group

Time: 30 minutes

Materials: Index cards, pen

Procedure:

1. Write or project the following attributes for the group to see. Have participants pick one and write it at the top of their index card. (If you'd like to ensure variety, you can assign them or come up with additional attributes as a group.)

Dishonest Unreliable Lazy Disrespectful Grumpy Careless

2. Ask each participant to create an imaginary employee (avoid using the names of anyone in the group). Then have participants each think of one negative action that this imaginary employee has done at work that fits the characteristic listed on their card. In other words, someone with "Dishonest" might write: "Lied about previous work experience on resume and during interview."
3. Have the participants form groups of three (or call on three at a time). Have each

group present their employees, explaining what the employees did. Ask the remaining participants to choose which of the three imaginary employees they would let go, if they were the employer or have the group vote as a whole. Participants should explain the reasoning behind their choice.

4. Use this to start a discussion of whether some workplace habits or behaviors are more detrimental than others. In the end, remind participants that none of the characteristics listed are positive, and each can be grounds for getting fired.

Discussion Questions

1. Look over the ten reasons discussed in this video. Which do you think is the most important and why? Think about your own personal work history and past performance. Which of the ten reasons do you think *you* have the most trouble with? What steps can you take to improve your skills, behaviors, and attitude to keep this from becoming an issue in the future?
2. You are hard at work and your supervisor comes by and praises *you* for something one of your coworkers did. Do you take the credit or do you speak up on your coworker's behalf? What if you pass the break room and see a coworker stealing a box of pens from the supply cabinet? Do you say anything? Or say your supervisor is out sick one day. Do you and your coworkers take an extra-long lunch break? What does it mean to *act with integrity*? Does it include more than simply telling the truth?
3. One of the keys to productive working relationships—whether with coworkers, supervisors or customers—is respect. Why is it important to respect the opinions, beliefs, and backgrounds of others? How does it affect your productivity and employability as a worker? How do you feel when others disrespect you?

Quick Quiz

Note: You may read these questions out loud, allowing time for students to respond, or copy and hand this out as a written exercise. If you read the quiz, write or project responses for the group to see.

Directions: Indicate whether each statement is true or false, according to the video.

1. As long as you are on your lunch break, you can use the company computer to do whatever you'd like.
2. It's okay to express your individual style in the way you dress at work, no matter what your workplace dress code.
3. Employers will often help employees combat an alcohol or drug abuse problem.

4. If your coworkers don't mind, it's okay to make off-color jokes on the job.
5. Employers cannot track what you do on your computer at work.
6. You should never voluntarily ask for feedback from your supervisor.
7. Overstating your successes on a job application is a form of dishonesty.
8. It's never okay to show up late for work.
9. Ninety percent of Americans have stopped doing business with a company due to poor customer service.
10. Maintaining a positive attitude at work can improve your relationship with coworkers.

Answer Key

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| 1. False | 6. False |
| 2. False | 7. True |
| 3. True | 8. False |
| 4. False | 9. True |
| 5. False | 10. True |

Homework Option

The end of the video suggests actions you can take to help pave the path toward long-term career success. Based on what you've just learned, make a "To Do" list of five steps you will take to enhance your overall employability. This can consist of short-term goals, such as asking your supervisor for additional responsibilities or making a list of contacts, as well as long-term goals, such as taking a class, attending a workshop, or putting together a career portfolio. As you make your list, think about your past work history, both positive and negative? What steps will help you to avoid past pitfalls? How will these actions improve your odds of not only keeping a job, but moving ahead in your career as well?