

Absenteeism is costing you a lot of money.
This is how you can solve it.

In your organisation, you are faced with employees wasting lots of time and managers feel they don't have control over it. You are not alone. The Gallup-Healthways Well-Being Index estimated the productivity lost due to absenteeism in the US is about \$84 Billion annually.

Absent does not only mean not being at work. Absent also means:

1. Arriving late (It is still absent as long as the employee is not at work.)
2. Leaving early (It is still absent if he is not at work)
3. Extended tea or lunch breaks - the employee is not at the workstation, and therefore absent.
4. Attending to private business during working hours - the employee is at work, but is not attending to his/her duties in terms of the employment contract - and is therefore absent.
5. Extended toilet breaks - same as extended lunch or tea breaks.
6. Feigned illness - thus giving rise to unnecessary visits to the on-site clinic, or take time off to "visit the doctor" - which they never do, because they don't need a medical certificate for less than 2 days off.
7. Undue length of time in fetching or carrying (tools from the tool room, for example, or drawings from the drawing office, etc)
8. Other unexplained absences from the workstation or from the premises.

When faced with a complex problem let us look at possible actions that you can take to make the impact less:

to the employees who take advantage of seemingly grey areas

Point 3: Prepare yourself to close these gaps in your management area with training

Point 1: Implement a mechanism to track and report the actual hours worked

Various mechanisms to track your employees' time and attendance are available, but we like AttendiMax to keep you informed while the system is supporting you. It makes you more effective at identifying and dealing with the exceptions to the rules you have in your company.

[Attendimax.com](https://www.attendimax.com) (free web based tool)

Step 1: Register at <https://www.attendimax.com>

Step 2: Identify where you are losing the most productivity and identify where you will be placing the tablets. The tablets are used by the employees to tick on their name and then where they are going or where they are coming from. It is quick and easy.

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Step 3: Load the users on AttendiMax and configure that the manager receives an email when an employee clicks on a button. If there is a camera then a picture can be taken automatically and included in the email to the manager.

Step 4: Place a computer screen in open common area where everyone can walk past and view where everyone is. Get visibility.

Step 5: Configure the receptionist to view where everyone is and to leave messages on the terminal or send an email. Train the receptionist that he / she has to identify where the person is first before putting the call through to the person's desk.

Step 6: Have a meeting with your employees and show them how it is going to improve communication and make it easier to find people. You will have employees that will not like AttendiMax because they were typically the ones being absent a lot. Be strong and push through it is your right to expect them to be at work and follow your instructions.

Company policies and procedures can also be updated to include using AttendiMax.

You can read more about AttendiMax at: <https://www.attendimax.com/howitworks.asp>

Point 2: React correctly to the persons who take advantage of seemingly grey areas

You need to handle your difficult employees effectively. Look at how these questions can help you to react in the right way.

Frequent Asked Questions (<http://www.labourguide.co.za/absenteeism>)

Question: If an employee arrives for work after the shift has started, can I send him home without pay for that day?

Even though the employee is late, he has still tendered his services and to send him home without pay could be viewed as imposing the sanction of suspension without pay without a disciplinary hearing. This could land you in hot water. However, what if the shift begins at 7 am and he arrives at 1 pm? Can he then say "I have tendered my services therefore you can't send me home without pay?"

Certainly not. It is best that you build into the employment contract a deadline - for example, "Should you arrive at work later than 1 hour after commencement of the shift, you will be sent home and you will forfeit that days wages. In all instances of late coming, the principle of no work-no pay shall apply." Then should the instance arise, you can listen to the reasons advanced for the late coming, and make a decision in terms of your disciplinary procedures.

Question: How do we handle the employee who is always late, but always has a real and valid Excuse?

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A real and valid acceptable excuse does not mean that the late coming is acceptable. Although you may be sympathetic to the circumstances and may even try to assist in some way, the ultimate responsibility to get to work on time rests with the employee. It is his/her problem - not yours. If the employee cannot carry out this contractual obligation - i.e., to be at work on time, then he/she may be in line to become an ex-employee.

Question: If an employee arrives late, can they be made to "work in" the time lost or can I take from overtime hours worked and offset this against any shortage on normal time not worked?

The answer is that the employee can "work the time in" but only if he agrees to do so. You can take overtime and offset it against normal time lost, but again only by agreement and on the basis of like-for-like. In other words, if the normal time is say short by 4 hours, and the employee has in fact worked 6 hours overtime (at 1 ½) you can't take 4 hours at 1 ½ and add the 4 hours to the normal time. Remember 4 hours at 1 ½ is in fact 6 hours normal time.

If you calculate correctly, you would deduct 2.66 hours at 1 ½ to make up 4 hours normal time. So if the employee has worked 41 hours normal time and 6 hours overtime at 1 ½, you pay him 45 hours normal time and 3.34 hours at 1 /2. But again, the employee must agree to this. However, experience has shown that the best way is that if an employee has been late during the week, you do not allow him to work any overtime for that week. He must clock out at the end of the shift and go home. In this way, he feels his late coming in a very material way - namely a shortage on his wages for that week.

By paying him normal time worked and then allowing him to make up any normal time shortage with overtime really achieves nothing. The employee in fact gains substantially, because instead of being paid normal rates for the 4 hours short on normal time, he makes up for it in overtime and is in fact enjoying the benefit of working only 41 hours normal time and thereafter overtime rates apply, instead of having to work 45 hours normal time before overtime rates kick in.

Question: What if the employee is late back from leave and claims he/she was sick?

Sick leave rules apply - the employee must justify the reason for the absence.

If a sick note cannot be produced, ask for the name of the doctor or hospital where treatment was obtained. Otherwise treat it as unpaid leave or impose disciplinary action for unauthorized absenteeism.

Question: What if an employee requests to work during his lunch break and leave early.

Strictly speaking, you cannot allow this because you would be breaking the law.

The law requires that the employee have at least a 30 minute break after 5 hours work.

Question: What if the employee arrives at work but is clearly unfit for duty - perhaps with influenza for example :

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It is clear from legislation that the employee is not only required to present himself for work - he is also required to present himself in a fit condition to do that work.

Therefore if he comes to work too sick to do the job, or smelling of liquor or clearly under the influence of liquor, he should be sent home. Obviously disciplinary procedures can be invoked where required.

Question: What if the employee clicks someone else's name for him with the knowledge of the other person who is absent?

Clearly this is fraud and must be handled accordingly. Both parties would be subject to disciplinary investigation, and where justified, disciplinary action and sanction. The picture that is taken would show the offending person.

Point 3: Prepare yourself to close these gaps in your management area with training

You need to practise your skills to handle employees effectively. The gaps in your handling of employees are visible by the problems you experience. If you experience the problem it means that you are unsure how to handle it effectively and needs training.

The next Management training courses:

https://www.isosolved.com/workshop_list.asp

We can also perform an in-house workshop.

More about the workshops:

Companies rely on managers many of whom have not received any training on how to manage! Let alone the management of Disciplinary Issues.

This practical workshop is a must for any manager in any managerial position to get the basics right.

Key Takeaways

- Understand the common misconceptions concerning management;
- How to create a movement as leader
- To understand the "Like Factor"
- How to recognise and reward exceptional performance of an employee

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- Apply Practical suggestions regarding the implementation of the 8 key areas of management;
- Conduct a practical counselling session;
- Measure output of employees;
- Use the free tool: www.attendimax.com
- Read and integrate body language, micro expressions and tone of voice when dealing with employees. Know when your employee(s) lie(s) to you;
- Exercise performing disciplinary hearings
- Exercise chairing a disciplinary hearing
- Handle CCMA matters
- All attendees receive electronic copies of all the documents provided in the workshop like Counselling forms, Disciplinary hearing step by step instructions.
- Framed certificates are handed out at the end

Let's minimise absenteeism!

Kind Regards
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