

11 energy-draining co-workers and how to deal with them

THIS WAY YOU CAN STAY PRODUCTIVE,
POSITIVE AND MOTIVATED



Introduction



Do you also suffer from energy-sapping colleagues? We all know that colleague that always interrupts you at the wrong moment. You are finally well on your way and focused, and here comes your colleague to ask for help once again. How do you stay productive, positive, and motivated when working with energy vampires?

It is always tempting to do nothing. When you're fed up with someone's behaviour, it seems easier to just let it go: to take a breath and think of something else. But that doesn't change the situation. It is better to do something about it right away.

In this e-book we show you how to recognise 11 different energy vampires and how to deal with them!

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The sarcastic know-it-all

All their suggestions seem to have a double meaning. "Wouldn't it be a good idea if we didn't take a lunch break for more than an hour? They are never the first ones to follow up on their suggestion themselves. But with their sarcastic tone of voice, their expectation is that you will.

How to deal with them: confront them with their implicit message. Make them aware that they are saying one thing, but you think they mean something else. Also elaborate on the reaction that follows, so that you can have a conversation about it.



The nitpicker



This colleague has a wealth of arguments, bullet points, and long presentations. Most of the time, however, it is far from clear where the story is going. A general meeting usually ends in a discussion of irrelevant details.

How to deal with them: stop this colleague in their monologue. "May I interrupt you for a moment...". And set rules for the meeting.

For example, how long everyone gets to speak or the opportunity to respond after every four points. And then stick to those agreements.



The bureaucrat



This critic is quick to point out when things do not go by the book. Given the chance, they will judge your work negatively. A bureaucrat is constantly resisting and pushing back and can seem quite cranky. They will not be self-critical, but they are very good at clipping your wings.

How to deal with them: go into the meeting well prepared; the bureaucrat is sensitive to good arguments. Add to this that you are both looking for the best solution. Ask bureaucrats what they need to reach a compromise.

The pessimist



They are full of negativity, complain loudly about work and gossip about colleagues. They expect everything from others, but never express these expectations explicitly. As a result, they are constantly disappointed in others, but never confront them directly to do something about it.

How to deal with them: let go of the immediate cause of the disappointment (e.g. not handing in the report) for a moment. "I want to talk to you first about how we work together". Talk about what you are not okay with and what you expect from the other person in the future. After their reaction, ask where the negativity comes from. In this way you open the door to working together more smoothly in the future.



The rival

They want to win. Above all, they want someone else to lose. They are poor listeners, preferring to talk about themselves or their achievements. Rivals can sweet-talk the boss and people in their network who can help them. They are more concerned with the next high-profile project or VIP client than their day-to-day work.

How to deal with them: talk to this colleague about the specific behaviour that affects you directly, such as poor listening. Make it clear that you don't think it's OK. Then put aside your own irritation for a moment and ask why your colleague thinks this project or client is so important.





The pushover



They tell people what they want to hear and always agree. They listen carefully, but you hardly get to know them as a person. You have no idea what they think or want. It takes them days to make a decision and even then, they are full of doubts and vague opinions.

How to deal with them: ask these colleagues lots of questions. And summarise their answers so that they feel heard. Then zoom in on the indecisiveness: "What do you need to make the decision?", "What are your objections?" and "Can I help you get started?"

The victim: 'yes, but'



These colleagues always have a dramatic excuse - 'yes, but...' - for missing a deadline or an important meeting. They bare their souls and tell you their personal, sad stories.

How to deal with them: don't address your colleague's excuse, but the 'yes, but...' behaviour. Make it clear that you expect them to come up with a solution or suggestion themselves, rather than handing over the work. And is it really the umpteenth time? Then, as a last resort, you can use sanctions: "If you don't meet the next deadline, I will go to my manager with this".



The clown



Everything is a joke to them.

They know how to create a good atmosphere with their witty personalities. But they are quick to delegate and rarely implement their own ideas or vision. They pretend to be in charge, but never take the responsibility that comes with it.

How to handle them: Compliment the jokers on their positive attitude within the team. But also make it clear that you don't think it's right for them to delegate too much to others. And that you think they are afraid to take ownership of their ideas. Finish by asking, "Do you recognise this?".





The idea machine



They enthusiastically contribute a flood of ideas. But even before they will implement one idea, they are already working on the next. What is more, their plans often have little to do with the goals and interests of others.

How to deal with them: before you shoot down their ideas, listen to see if there is one you can do something with. Look for common interests and see which idea fits best into this common ground. Then make concrete agreements and frameworks. "Let's decide on the framework together, then you can colour it in."

The pitbull

They never let go: everything has to be done NOW and perfectly. If something goes wrong, they explode and get carried away with their own emotions. They always apologise afterwards, but make you feel like you have to treat them very carefully.

How to deal with them: de-escalate the situation. Distance yourself from the conversation. Literally, if necessary. But also figuratively, by saying "My goodness, I'm shocked by your reaction, what's happening to you? Don't let yourself be drawn back to the content, even if the Pitbull explodes at first. Keep discussing the process: "What do you need to move forward?".



The procrastinator: saying 'yes' but doing 'no'



Saying "yes" but doing nothing. They regularly sigh "never mind" or "there's no point anyway". This is a way of avoiding work rather than doing it. They easily say 'yes' to requests but fail to follow through.

How to deal with them: if there is no point in setting deadlines, try to rekindle the energy. Look for common ground, interests, and goals. Let's do it anyway, then we'll finish in a few hours and have a drink afterwards".



Experiment with the possibilities



There are, of course, many more ways to deal with energy-sapping colleagues. Each approach will depend on the context in which you find yourself. Even so, there is one central theme that you should not avoid with these colleagues because their behaviour bothers you. Recognise your own dissatisfaction in time, speak up and at the same time ask what is going on the other side. This will make it easier for you to work together.





Working together smoothly



The Speed Up Your Collaboration training will teach you how to deal effectively with heated situations without letting emotions get the better of you. During this training you will be introduced to de Influence Style Bridging.

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Colophon



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