



Personal Interests Can Hurt Your Business

By Dr. Linda Hancock

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dr. Hancock has written a regular weekly column entitled "All Psyched Up" for newspapers in two Canadian provinces for more than a dozen years. Over the years, her readers and clients have said that they have benefited from her common-sense solutions, wisdom, and sense of humour. Dr. Linda Hancock, the author of "Life is An Adventure...every step of the way" and "Open for Business Success" is a Registered Psychologist who has a private practice in Medicine Hat. She can be reached at 403-529-6877 or through email office@drlindahancock.com

Published

April 3rd, 2011

My daughter was managing a large company with over fifty employees. One day she told me how frustrated she was about the way that staff members were more focussed on personal interests than on their assignments. She was hurrying through the office when a fellow behind the computer screen stopped her to ask advice. She said that she was happy to help. Then he asked her to recommend a good lunch restaurant where he could take the woman he was chatting with on the dating site he had running. She was stunned!

First of all she couldn't believe that he would be focussing on dating when he had job responsibilities that were being ignored. Secondly, she was shocked that he would stop the manager to help him with this personal problem on work time.

Many businesses are suffering because staff and management are draining the time and energy that should be devoted to their jobs into personal interest activities. More and more companies are therefore banning use of social media sites on their networks and setting up filters to prevent employees from viewing pornography during their shifts.

There are dozens of ways that personal interests can hurt your business and often these are the result of small things that accumulate into large losses for productivity.

I remember working at a place where coffee breaks did not have firm timelines. People would sit in the coffee-room for long periods of time without feeling accountable or the need to return to their waiting tasks.

Some companies disregard any type of guidelines for lunch and extend their socializing far longer than the company policy might indicate is acceptable.

Managers and supervisors are not exempt and, in fact, might even set bad examples for others. They perhaps take sick days when they want to participate in a personal interest without using their holidays. Some set up golf times during work hours and call this customer relations. Others might spend a great deal of time on personal telephone calls or projects that use company time and resources.

If you want your business to be more productive you perhaps need to examine the ways that time is leaked out of the day. It isn't easy to have to remind yourself and staff that you expect to give a day's wage for a day's work but if you don't, you will be part of the problem. You see, when you are at work, you need to focus on work. You can still enjoy the designated breaks but make sure that any personal interests are taken care of in your time off and not during the times that are designated for doing tasks on your job description.