

Deal With Back-Biting in Office



Typically in his situation, people would be partying. But ever since Arth Saikia got his promotion a month ago, he is sulking. The new AVP in a Kolkata-based manufacturing company was the only one in his team to get promoted. Somehow that didn't go down well with some of his peers, and he has been facing problems from the time he took charge in his new role. His immediate boss even called him for a chat to discuss if things were fine in his team, but Arth is too shocked to react. Back-stabbing colleagues are common at workplaces, and Shreya Biswas lists some ways to work with them.

Don't Tell Them All

Don't reveal too much about yourself at the workplace. Discussing every detail of your life with 'office friends' may someday be used against you. Bragging about your presence in the best party in town, your network of friends or how you are able to sometimes give work a slip; problems with the boss, co-workers or issues at home could be picked up by people who might be uncomfortable with your presence in the company or the position you are in. "Too much of information-sharing might be harmful. It is better to maintain that professional line to avoid unnecessary problems. Don't give others a chance to show you down or use your information against you," says Ronesh Puri, MD, Executive Access.

Verify Your Facts

Don't jump the gun every time you hear anything negative about yourself. Verify the source of your information. If you know that you have a colleague who's talking behind your back, try figuring out the truth behind it. Talk to others to find out. If you go to your boss or initiate a private conversation about the team mate based on hearsay, it could backfire. You could be blamed of spreading negative vibes. Connect the dots, and have solid proof before you speak up.

Focus On Company Goals

Once the personal interest becomes greater, it inevitably gives rise to back-stabbing and politics at the work place. Therefore, it is imperative to remind employees about the values the organisation stands for and encourage them to work together to accomplish the predefined goal. At the time of joining, employees must be told about the organisation's values and purpose.

Have A Concrete Plan

If there is back-stabbing in your organisation, acknowledge it. Work with HR and have a plan in place to deal with the situation. "A written directive (manual), in a polite tone, focused on improving the workplace, containing rules and policies, should be provided to the employees," says Sanjay Gupta, global head, HR, EXL Service.

Interact With Employees

One of the most important steps to deal with any interpersonal behavioural problem in an organisation is talking to your employees. "Make strong requests: ask them to show civility to each other, encourage them to help each other, remind and request them to remember the values your organisation stands for, and instill team spirit so that they stand for each other and work for the common goal," says Gupta.