



Ego blow: What if you were at the receiving end of Donald Trump's cold and curt "You're Fired" in the TV series *The Apprentice*?

You're fired

The manner in which a company fires employees impacts those who continue to work there, says **Vandana Ramnani**

Be it the recent unceremonious tele-termination of Yahoo's CEO Carol Bartz in the US, reported through her own iPad, or the laying off via email of over 400 employees of an electronics retailer Radio Shack way back in 2006 - both incidents seem to signal that tech-terminations as opposed to 'difficult' face-to-face conversations around dismissals are the order of the day.

The trend of unceremonious exits has come under fire with many HR experts describing it as a "new low in management style," with many even going so far as to term it a "cowardly" act and poor etiquette. The manner in which an organisation fires its employees has a bearing on its brand and impacts other employees of the company who continue to work there. They are sure to wonder if the same could happen to them too.

Besides, it also sends out a wrong message to the future incumbent, who may feel that safeguarding his/her 'hot seat' may be more important than executing the job.

According to Ronesh Puri,

TOP STORY

Firing etiquette

- Remember that dismissing an employee is a difficult decision though it's best not to put it off or act in haste. Have a face-to-face conversation and try being direct and quick

- Never make the mistake of emailing, texting or calling up an employee with the news. Most important, never copy the email to other employees. Show respect

- Before you fire an employee, try and get his views. If it is something to do with his performance, provide the necessary support to improve. Give him time

managing director, Executive Access, this is a case of summary dismissal. It gives an impression of whimsicality. Such an act can demotivate the entire organisation.

"The only time when one can justify firing of this kind is when there are integrity issues

involved and the management needs to take swift action. However, if it is a performance issue, it needs to be handled gracefully. The more gracefully these things are done, the better it is for the company's brand value," he says.

Exit etiquette calls for a frank chat with the candidate, get his viewpoint so that he does not feel bitter or cause fear psychosis among other professionals. "Don't forget the person being dismissed is also in a way a brand ambassador for your organisation. How a company handles these issues reflects the organisation's culture. Companies need to be more humane about these things," he adds.

Interestingly, there have also been firms that have even gone to the extent of making an effort to outplace their employees in other firms. "This incident is an aberration. Many companies are far more humane. At the end of the day, companies need to protect their image as good employers," adds Navnit Singh, partner in Heidrick & Struggles.