

Cat's Away: This manager might need to hire a babysitter

Written by Julie Desmond
Wednesday, 26 March 2014 14:50



Who Works when the Boss is at the Beach? Everyone except the boss, right? They should, anyway. But sometimes, it does not work out the way the manager hopes. Sometimes, in smaller companies or in standalone departments, people forget that even while the boss is away, everyone else has a paycheck - and possibly vacation days of their own - to earn.

Roy works remotely with a team that predominantly resides in the bricks and mortar of cuberville. Most days, the manager sits in an office adjacent to the cubes, door wide open, the whole place bubbling with productivity. But what happens when the manager tries to get away for a while?

Theoretically, nothing different. It's a team of adults, everyone pushing for personal and corporate success. Right? Maybe not. For Roy, who is not a manager, his boss' vacation caused Roy some frustration. His co-workers signed on late to the system, meaning they took their time getting to the office. They asked Roy questions like, "Are you working today?"

"I work every day," he told me. "Why would they ask that?"

Talking it through, Roy mentioned that these were new hires and alone in the office. No one was "watching" them, so they were kicking back. Roy, who, again, is not their manager, wanted to know what he should do about it.

"Nothing," I told him.

"It's distracting," he complained.

"Ignore them."

"I can't."

"You can."

The underpar performance of an employee is never your problem, unless you are the manager or unless you allow yourself to be lured into the party. Let the manager figure it out when he returns. The truth always comes out. Every employee, from CEO on down, has benchmarks and goals. There will be numbers that were not met, projects not completed, customer

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complaints, orders lost. The manager will know and will manage the damage.

As long as they haven't burned the place down or caused physical harm to other people, the world just might continue to spin on its axis. If a deal falls apart, a document is misfiled, or a customer gets fed up, the manager will notice, and after a week at the beach, will be well rested and able to deal with it. After helping Roy to see it my way, I just had one more bit of advice for him: Get back to work.

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