

THE BLOG

The 9 Most Annoying Coworkers (And How to Deal With Them)

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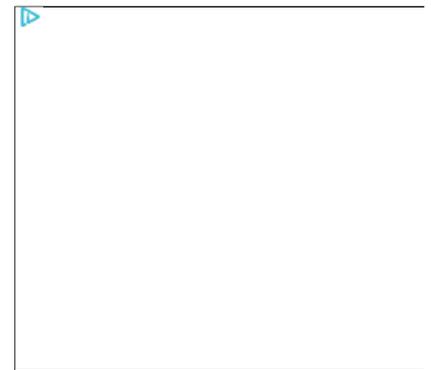
Being an extrovert, I consider myself a pretty easy person to get along with. I'm good at fitting into most situations, even when dealing with the many oddballs I've encountered throughout my career. No matter where you work, the industry, or the size of the company, I promise that you'll inevitably find yourself one day looking at a coworker and wondering, "What planet are you from? And how did you find your way here?"

After all, annoying coworkers are the reason "The Office" was such a hit. It's why we clip Far Side and Dilbert cartoons to hang on our cubicle walls. And as you're nodding in agreement, I bet one of these obnoxious characters has probably just parked themselves in your workspace to talk your ear off about their latest dating drama or their opinions about the casting of the "Fifty Shades of Grey" movie.

But just because certain colleagues make you want hit CTRL+Z on your latest conversation, doesn't mean you can avoid them. They're not going anywhere. And if you leave this job in hopes of having "normal" coworkers at your next, you're setting yourself up for disappointment.

While writing my new book, "[Reply All...And Other Ways to Tank Your Career](#)" (St. Martin's Press, September 17), I interviewed CEOs, entrepreneurs, and tastemakers in a variety of industries about the many strange characters and situations they experienced during their climb to the top. Turns out, getting along with coworkers was one of the most critical skills for success.

That's why it's essential to learn to get along with anyone. This skill takes time, experience, patience, and a sense of humor. You'll need to train your body like an endurance athlete to handle the oddballs you'll have to work with, travel with, dine with, or be stuck in the hallway with.



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walk away unaffected. They'll be annoyed that you aren't a pushover and move on to easier prey.

Annoying Coworker #4: The Gossip

The Gossip knows everything about everyone and makes it their mission to share the wealth with whoever will listen. You may not have asked, but you'll learn more than you ever wished to know about the intrigues of company life.

Like The Bully, The Gossip, comes in many forms. It's not always the perky extrovert who wants to know everyone's business. In fact, The Gossip is a chameleon that takes the form of whatever situation they are in and, like the sneaky little reptile, they're always waiting for someone to fall into their trap.

What seems like a casual trip down the street to get coffee with The Gossip can quickly turn into a Barbara Walters special of the "Ten Most Fascinating People in the Office."

How to Handle The Gossip: The best way to stay out of The Gossip's web is to avoid it altogether. If you're in a group setting and you see a wave of gossip coming on, step away for "an important phone call."

Annoying Coworker #5: The Loud Talker

Last week, Shawn and Gretchen broke up. Gretchen begged Shawn not to leave her but Shawn, who is from Connecticut but went to school in Florida and who works on Wall Street trading energy stocks, well, he's decided to move on.

I learned about this only because Gretchen has chatted with and cried for Shawn every day - over the phone, at work - for the past two months.

I get that you might have to have personal phone conversations during the workday, but just remember that your sneeze can often be heard rows away. Never mind that screaming phone brawl Gretchen and Shawn were having last Tuesday.

How to Handle The Loud Talker: The Loud Talker needs to be handled head on. Take them aside and explain that they're speaking way too loudly and becoming an embarrassment. If it takes you having to be a shoulder to cry on, suck it up for the sake of your colleagues. Plus, someone has to tell Gretchen that Shawn has also been seeing Abby in marketing for the past three weeks anyway.

Annoying Coworker #6: The Stud

The Stud walks into a room moving in slow motion, with the wind flowing through his hair, as paparazzi snap photos and women get lightheaded, their knees buckling.



the reality is often very different. The Stud's misguided, overly sex-charged, 14-year-old behavior causes a lot of friction (and not the fun kind). There's a little thing I like to call "Sexual Harassment" that the Stud does not seem to believe in. "Come on, I'm just playing around! Where's your sense of humor?" This will be his response when you mention that asking the intern in the mini-skirt to pick up papers off the floor isn't exactly kosher.

How to Handle The Stud: The Stud is actually an insecure ball of mush, surrounded by a thin layer of bravado. You should never encourage their behavior by laughing along. One quick, witty jab to his ego and he'll collapse like the stack of *Playboys* on his dresser.

Annoying Coworker #7: The Best Friend

Because you are so cool, charming, and generally awesome, one person in the office has decided that you're their new best friend, their BFF, their amigo, a member of their wolf pack. Lucky you!

The Best Friend will latch onto you like a 12-year-old girl to her life-sized One Direction cutout. This person will follow you to the copy machine, ask if you want to get coffee, email you pictures or funny articles that A) aren't funny and B) have nothing to do with work, and of course, they'll invite you to lunch every...single...day. And don't you dare try to make plans with someone else! Your new best friend has already booked you for the next five years.

How to Handle The Best Friend: There are only two ways to handle the best friend: politely reject their advances and, if it starts to affect your work, alert the boss.

Annoying Coworker #8: The Email Ranter

The Email Ranter is mild-mannered and inoffensive in person, but once they get behind a keyboard, they become the most influential, powerful, humorous, and creative mind to ever grace the internet. Whether it's politics, sports, or why there's not enough variety of salad dressings in the cafeteria, The Email Ranter grows more unmannerly with every exclamation point and emoticon. They're the first to complain and the last to help.

How to Handle The Email Ranter: Email Ranters are wimps disguised as over-confident imbeciles. If the ranting email is directed at you, then I suggest approaching the Ranter in person. Don't get confrontational; simply ask what is the goal of their rudeness? I promise you, they will quickly morph into a coward.

Annoying Coworker #9: Mr./Ms. Do-You-Know-Who-I-Am?

Who doesn't love to see a spoiled rich kid who, after taking six years to get their college degree, walks right into Dad's company, past the guy who has been there for decades, and finds a nice cozy corner office waiting? You may have seen one of these on a celebrity reality show where people are famous



founded a company a half-century ago, which they had the genetic luck to fall into.

In your professional career, you will undoubtedly run into a situation where someone has a plum position and countless perks simply because they knew (or are related to) someone at the top. This person feels entitled to a certain level of authority in the office and has no remorse about flexing their arrogance.

How to Handle Mr./Ms. Do-You-Know-Who-I-Am?: The key is finding a common interest. Whether or not you actually share his passion for cars or her zeal for gadgets is irrelevant. Use this insight to form a connection and that may loosen them up to become somewhat tolerable (or at least get out of the way so you can get work done).

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