



## 12 SIGNS YOU'RE ABOUT TO GET FIRED!

When you wake up to the sound of your alarm and prepare to face another day on the job, do you dread the idea, feel good about it or are you somewhere in between? If you crawl into a fetal position and pray for an excuse to stay home, you may have a problem with job security.

For the most part, we know deep down inside when your time is up. You can deny, deny, deny, but if you were smart enough to get the job in the first place, you should be able to spot a potential pink slip headed in your direction. Here are 12 signs you're about to get fired, and if you recognize one, you could be on the street soon. Just hope you read the signs in time to reverse your fate.

1. **You received a bad review**

Taken another way, a review could be a positive step in your career development. Not when the focus is negative, however. From your boss' breath on your neck to the regular scrutiny, his attention is unwanted. You can sense that your future in the company is being evaluated and there is no escape. The fact of the matter is that, if you were a prized commodity, you would never be put under the microscope.

Worse yet is a negative review, for the sheer permanence factor alone. A formal corporate review process is the one chance you have to quantify your hard effort and overtime...or lack thereof.

2. **You're no longer asked to attend "power lunches"**

You were going to lunch with all the heavy hitters in the company and suddenly the invitations have stopped coming.

3. **Denied access to key customers**

Your boss has asked you to hand over contact information from your largest client without any notice or explanation.

4. **You're told to train a new hire**

You are introduced to someone they just hired without your knowledge and are unsure about the person's role until you're requested to train that person.

5. **No longer part of the loop**

You used to get the latest scoop. When Allison had an affair with the new administrative assistant, you were one of the first to hear about it. Now you are the last to find out any company gossip.

Because of your position within the company, you should have access to crucial financial information. That used to be the case. Last year, you knew about a pessimistic sales forecast from executive management before most did. But things have changed, and you have rea-



son to be concerned about potential cuts. Now you seldom communicate with executive management, except to offer a lame compliment or make an effort at pleasant banter. If you're no longer in the loop, it may be because you're about to get fired.

6. **You've been told to "take a vacation"**

There is no way to put a positive spin on the phrase. The implication is that you have not lived up to your job description and have become expendable. This is not the "take a vacation" you hear after a month of overtime punishment you endured to complete a project. This is not the "take a vacation" you hear at the end of the fiscal year when you have yet to take time off and a company policy is in place that you must do so. This is the "take a vacation" you hear from an exasperated boss who would prefer not to have you around the office.

7. **You need an attitude adjustment**

On more than one occasion, the suggestion has been made that you could use a personality transplant. You thought the comment was a joke but you have begun to notice how people recoil when you open your mouth.

For some reason, you either insert your foot into your mouth or say the first thing on your mind. Your best friend or brother may appreciate your lack of tact but at work, the stunt has yet to fly. In fact, your ship is about to sink unless you apply for a sensitivity seminar fast.

8. **You made a major mistake**

This is the real world, not a cartoon. When Homer Simpson is accountable for the meltdown of the nuclear power plant, Mr. Burns does not can him. The incident is somehow comical. The hilarity of television, however, does not translate into your career.

Incompetence may be rewarded in the world of Dilbert, but when you screw up, you could lose your job. So rather than dismiss your blatant error as a minor slip in the shadow of the AIG and Lehman Brothers collapses, think again. Executive management may not agree and if you recognize another sign on the list, your mistake could be combined to cause your removal.

9. **New blood has taken over**

You arrive at work one day to discover that half of your department has been replaced with a hotshot MBA from Stanford. Ouch. The new employee is quick to impress and has a real Midas touch.

No matter what you do, you fail to win support or positive feedback from management. Your relationship with the MBA is icy and his rapport with the team is weak. Your VP, however, is in love with him. Not good. That ring you hear in the background could be your death knell.



10. **Bad fit with corporate culture**

Some firms are famous (or infamous) for their corporate culture. When you were hired, you were elated to have a job and forgot to distinguish between the two. The human resources manager asked whether your personality fit with the corporate culture and you glazed over and faked a response.

Now you realize that, with the entire department and company, you stand out like a nun at a rave. You knew you were an individual at heart who was paranoid about group indoctrination. When a corporate slogan is shouted at a conference, you cringe. You were “sick” for the team retreat and refuse to engage in any shameless promotion of your company. Bad sign for you.

11. **Your company is on CNBC**

A good sign under normal circumstances, but we live in the era of monumental corporate collapse. If you hear a layoff rumor or hint of a financial indiscretion on the part of executive management, run for your life. Where there is smoke, there is fire.

The same advice is germane in the event of a takeover, corporate merger or personnel shuffle. You could get lost in it and find yourself without a job.

12. **New management**

In the same vein is a change at the top. You may have been a star before but now that slate is clean. New management has been given a directive to shake it up and stir the pot. Like a new football coach to guide a dormant team to the Super Bowl, they want to wake up the talent and trim the fat. Where do you factor in?

Now that you have “seen the signs,” it’s time to TAKE ACTION fast because your job may be at risk. If you sit idle and await your fate, you may get burned. Consult pages 323-339 of THE EMPLOYEE RIGHTS HANDBOOK to help you fight back. Steps to take include:

- Review your contract
- Accumulate and save copies of all pertinent documents and records
- Maintain a diary
- Consider meeting with a lawyer before resigning or being fired
- Remove personal documents from your office
- Analyze your financial situation
- Talk to fellow employees
- Start looking for new employment
- Suspend payments on loans, if possible
- Consider your eligibility for a bonus, stock options or commissions before acting
- Avoid resigning!!