



## The Danger of Being Too Nice at Work

**In order to understand the impact that being too nice at work has on a business as well as on individuals, one first needs to understand workplace ethics. Workplace ethics is a combination of personal beliefs and practices and how those beliefs and practices affect the individuals and the business.**

By definition, ethics are the “moral principles or values governing or distinctive of a particular culture or group,” or “complex of moral precepts held or rules of conduct followed by an individual.” In layman’s terms what this basically means is that a person’s ethics is what that person does when no one is looking. How does this move into the work environment is simple. Workplace ethics are set up and ruled by the personal ethics of those in authority, the executives, managers and supervisors.

What does this have to do with being too nice? People who are too nice cost businesses time and money. They also cause a breakdown in the efficiency of a business and they decrease the effectiveness of management. To get a better idea of what is meant here let us take a look at a survey that was done by Russ Edelman. He is the author of “Nice Guys Can Get the Corner Office.” Note that the title is nice guys, not people that are too nice.

What Mr. Edelman did was survey 50 top CEOs. In this survey he asked them what the cost to their business was for being too nice. The response was that by being too nice the business had lost 8% of their gross revenues for the year. Which means had the business been more aggressive they would not have lost out on so many opportunities. Remember that we are talking about workplace ethics here. And in the workplace, those in power need to push the company forward. It is very often seen that the CEOs who are too nice are causing their business to miss out on numerous opportunities because they do not take the initiative to go after being a better business. They can also underhand the efforts of aggressive managers because they don’t want to hurt the feelings of other managers and supervisors on staff.

**Managers** that tend to be too nice hesitate to make necessary decisions. They would rather have other people take part in the decision making process. Managers should be able make decisions on their own, which should be in the best interest of the company. He or she needs to be responsible and assertive.

When you are too nice you wait to get the feedback from your employees or customers. You basically let them make your decisions due to the fact you are too concerned with hurting their feelings. This process wastes precious time and can cause individuals and businesses to miss out on opportunities.

Effective managers are not afraid to take a stand. On the other hand “too nice” managers tend to hide and avoid confrontations. Which means that problems, which are hindering a business from working and running efficiently and effectively, are ignored. Managers who are too nice tend to take the ostrich approach to management. This then leads to subordinates losing respect for their manager, they have no confidence in their superior’s abilities either.

The issues with being too nice are not limited to supervisors and executives alone. The average employee who is looking to advance in a company also runs into problems when he is too nice. Employees who are too nice are focused on making everyone around them happy. They are therefore seen as doormats, and are often taken advantage of.

Quickly we will run down the pros and cons of being too nice at work. It should be evident by now that there are more cons than there will be pros.

### Cons to Being Too Nice

1. Costs the Company Time and Money – this is due to the fact that people who are too nice lack the initiative to make decisions on their own. They want to get the opinion of the group before they move forward. They defer making a decision until they have consulted all of the people they feel need to be included in the decision making process. Getting everyone’s opinion takes time. The more time it takes, the smaller the window of opportunity becomes. Many companies that are looking to having a need fulfilled by another company cannot wait for a group consensus. They want to talk to the decision-making person in the business, and they want a decision now.



## Career Tips

2. Lack of Confidence with Employees – Employees look to their superiors to take their concerns and needs seriously. When a problem arises they want the person in charge to take the necessary action to solve the problem. When managers and supervisors are too nice they tend to stick their head in the ground and avoid dealing with problematic issues.

3. Talents of the Individual are Overlooked – you could be the most talented person in the company for a certain position, when you are too nice though you can be passed over for promotions or let go because your talents are overshadowed by your lack of assertiveness. To succeed, a business needs go-getters, a business needs aggressive people who will make a decision quickly and get the results that are desired. A business needs leaders.

## Pros to Being Too Nice

1. People are On Your Side – nice people rarely stand alone. It is easier for people to like you when you are nice as opposed to when you are not nice.

2. Getting Your Foot in the Door – this does not just mean for the job. If part of your responsibilities is dealing with customers then your niceness can help smooth over tough situations and can help the business get new customers and clients.

There are advantages and disadvantages to being nice. When it comes to workplace ethics though it is far better for a person who is assertive and aggressive to be in charge of how the company runs than a person who is too nice.

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