

# *Civility at Workplace*



**tutorialspoint**

SIMPLY EASY LEARNING

[www.tutorialspoint.com](http://www.tutorialspoint.com)



<https://www.facebook.com/tutorialspointindia>



<https://twitter.com/tutorialspoint>

## About the Tutorial

---

Workplace Civility has been defined as a set of policies that are practiced in workplaces to prevent any employee from exhibiting deviant behaviors with an intent to harm someone. Uncivil behaviors are characteristically rude and discourteous, displaying a lack of regard for others. In this tutorial, we will explore ways to avoid such situations from spiraling out of control.

## Audience

---

This tutorial is designed primarily for those professionals who have been promoted to a managerial position in a target-oriented job. This tutorial aims at teaching them the difference between being an achiever and an abuser.

## Prerequisites

---

Before proceeding with this tutorial, you are expected to have a calm mindset and be open to exploring the suggestions mentioned here.

## Disclaimer & Copyright

---

© Copyright 2015 by Tutorials Point (I) Pvt. Ltd.

All the content and graphics published in this e-book are the property of Tutorials Point (I) Pvt. Ltd. The user of this e-book is prohibited to reuse, retain, copy, distribute, or republish any contents or a part of contents of this e-book in any manner without written consent of the publisher.

We strive to update the contents of our website and tutorials as timely and as precisely as possible, however, the contents may contain inaccuracies or errors. Tutorials Point (I) Pvt. Ltd. provides no guarantee regarding the accuracy, timeliness, or completeness of our website or its contents including this tutorial. If you discover any errors on our website or in this tutorial, please notify us at [contact@tutorialspoint.com](mailto:contact@tutorialspoint.com)

## Table of Contents

---

About the Tutorial.....	i
Audience .....	i
Prerequisites .....	i
Disclaimer & Copyright.....	i
Table of Contents .....	ii
1. AGGRESSION AT WORKPLACE .....	1
2. INCIVILITY AT WORKPLACE .....	3
3. CAUSES OF WORKPLACE INCIVILITY.....	5
4. TYPES OF WORKPLACE INCIVILITY.....	6
5. DEFINING WORKPLACE CIVILITY .....	7
6. WORKPLACE CIVILITY – WORKSHEET .....	9
7. IMPORTANCE OF CIVILITY AT WORKPLACE.....	10
8. BALANCING SELF-INTEREST AND SELF-CONTROL .....	12
9. WORKPLACE CIVILITY FOR EMPLOYERS .....	14
10. WORKPLACE CIVILITY FOR EMPLOYEES .....	16
11. WORKPLACE CIVILITY – WORKSHEET .....	18
12. IMPORTANCE OF COMMUNICATION.....	19
13. NEGOTIATING UNDER PRESSURE .....	22
14. WORKPLACE CONFLICTS.....	24
15. IMPLEMENTING CIVILITY POLICY .....	25

# 1. AGGRESSION AT WORKPLACE

With increasing work pressure, approaching deadlines, and stressful client meetings, it is not uncommon for employees to exhibit aggressive behavior at workplace. We have listed here a few real-life examples to understand the causes of aggression and its grave consequences.

## **The Case of Patrick Sherrill**

It was the fateful morning of August 20, 1986, when the clock ticked 7 o'clock, and in walked into his office Mr Patrick Henry Sherrill, the 44-year-old mail carrier from Edmond, Oklahoma. He was in his uniform when he showed up at the post office.

Without having a word with anyone, he sealed off the exits, took out three loaded pistols and opened fire randomly at anyone who was unfortunate enough to cross his path. In just 15 minutes, he shot 20 employees, killing 14 and gravely wounding 6. When the cops arrived, Sherrill turned the gun on himself.

Patrick Sherrill had been badly reprimanded by two supervisors the previous morning because of his constantly misdirecting mails and being a poor performer. Of the 14 employees he killed, one was his supervisor.

## **The Case of Nidal Malik**

On November 5, 2009, Nidal Malik Hasan who was a U.S. Army major and psychiatrist, shot and killed 13 people while injuring more than 30 others at the US military base located at Fort Hood, near Killeen, Texas. This was the worst act of massacre at any American military base so far.

The United States Department of Defense provided evidence that Hasan had been radicalized by a foreign terrorist organization before the attack and his actions were motivated by the same terror group who had poisoned his mind against his seniors.

## **The Case of David Burke**

On December 7, 1987, Burke booked a flight at Los Angeles International Airport for Pacific Southwest Airlines Flight 1771 to San Francisco. Burke had managed to smuggle a .44 Magnum onto the plane and shortly after the plane took off, he started pumping bullets into the flight attendants, pilots, and crew members, killing all of them.

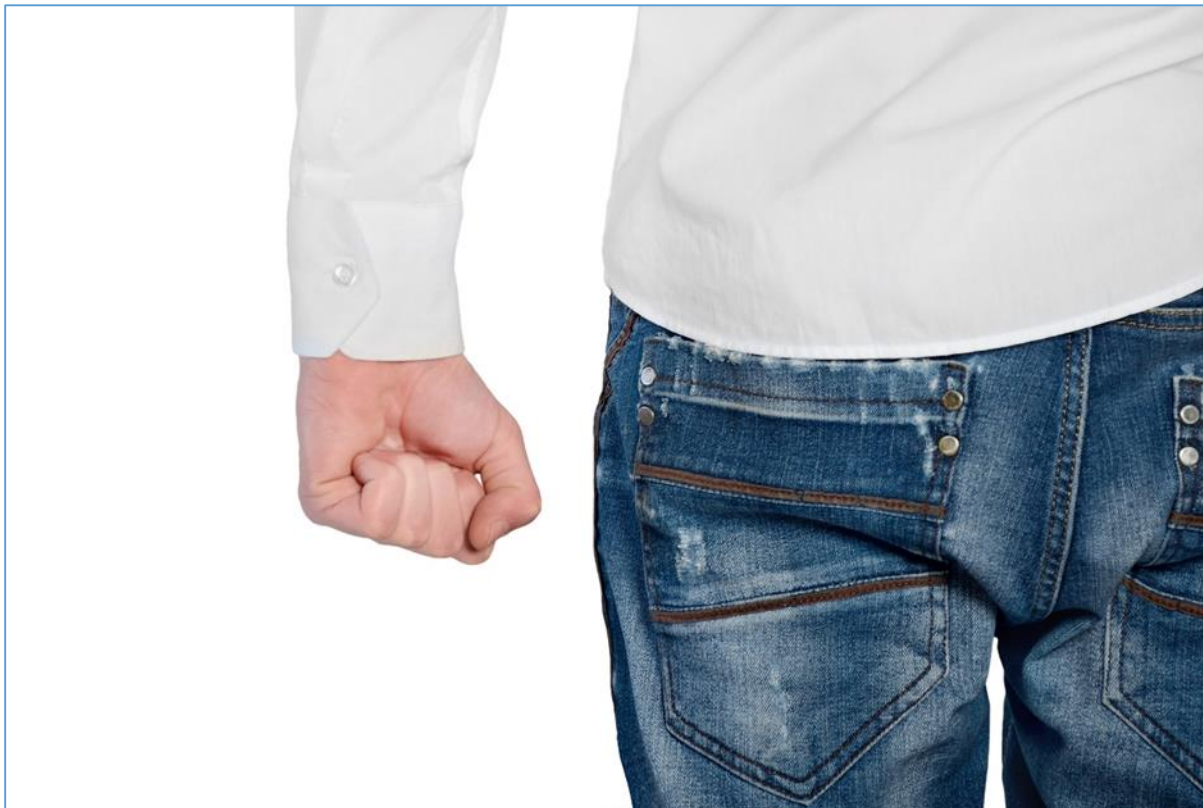
Flight 1771 crashed into a hillside in San Luis Obispo County, killing all the 43 people on board. Inside an airsickness bag recovered at the crash site, Burke had left a message to someone named Raymond Thompson which read: "I asked for some leniency for my family, remember. Well, I got none. And you'll get none."

David Burke was a ticket agent with US Airways until he was fired by his supervisor, Raymond Thompson for theft. Burke pleaded with his supervisor to grant him leniency, if only for the sake of his family, but his supervisor refused to give him another chance.

## What Causes Aggression

Many of you would strongly condemn these examples of **repulsive behavior** that led to the deaths of all these innocent people. Such extreme acts of violence undoubtedly have no place in a civilized society. However, if you were to look closely, you would notice that the stimulus of these unusually bloody actions were rooted in some very commonplace incidents. As a matter of fact, by the time you are done reading this sentence, millions of employees would have got reprimanded by their bosses, millions would have heard others bad-mouthing their supervisors, and millions would have been fired from their jobs.

Given the sheer numbers of such cases happening around us on a daily basis, that too in environments that are not so dissimilar to the ones involving Hasan, Burke, and Sherill — is it just some miracle that such homicidal incidents are not more frequent and bigger in numbers?



Are we to believe that our working class is a **ticking bomb** waiting to explode and we should count ourselves lucky that we haven't seen the worst side of it yet? That would be a very dangerous thought to entertain, as that would mean when we step inside our workplace, we are all under a potential risk of life and limb.

In a world that is run by large corporations and government institutions, there will always be a huge volume of employees who will have to report to their supervisors and will be held accountable while delivering under **crushing deadlines**. It's unrealistic to expect that similar cases of firing employees, reprimanding them or influencing them won't happen. Or maybe

those extreme reactions are the results of uncivil behavior and derogatory actions directed at them in their workplace.

## 2. INCIVILITY AT WORKPLACE

Experts have found out that Workplace Incivility is closely associated with employees who have to endure abusive behavior from their supervisors on a regular basis. In short, workplace incivility is a milder, more nascent form of the type of workplace aggression that we discussed earlier.

This abusive behavior includes but is not limited to supervisors ridiculing their employees, constantly berating them due to their past failures, ignoring them or avoiding conversation with them, not crediting them and praising them for their efforts and achievements, addressing them in bad mood or a fit of rage.

Many think that the easy solution to these kinds of work-related problems could be to either retaliate against such degrading behavior, or simply quit. However, with the employment situation being the way it is in this recession-hit world, more and more talented people are deciding to suffer the abusive behavior they face at the hands of their supervisors.



Such employees decide to weather out the stormy employment scenario so that they can quit the company when the time is right, however many of these don't manage to see the bright side of this picture and deviate into destructive behavior. Instead of quitting or retaliating,

they strike out against their employers by engaging in actions that are detrimental to the organization. This negative driving force is results in **uncivil behavior**.

When these employees are denied their due in the eyes of the management, they tend of think that the management owes them which leads to such abusing of office supplies. Because employees operate and utilize the majority of a company's assets, they tend to direct their frustration and anger by abusing the company's resources, using office equipment, even stealing them. They start reporting late, slacking in work, leaving early and delivering low quality output. This happens because their sense of commitment and obligation towards their employer is destroyed. When that line is breached, employees simply stop caring about the employer.

Worse still is the fact that these employees will gain approval from other equally-mistreated employees, snowballing the unproductivity and slackness even further into a huge loss for the company. Such behaviors are called **acting out**. This is the stage where people want to forget the cause of their unhappiness by taking part in destructive actions that they think justifies their ill-treatment.

Many employees who act out of anger cite **not getting enough respect** as the main reason behind their uncivil behaviors, closely followed by **not getting enough recognition**. While these two are the top reasons for minor offenses, they are not the reason behind severe offenses.

It is also found that while employees become less productive when they are not satisfied with their work or the work environment, the deviant behavior is not universal. Many organizations produce a sustained supply of quality output even if employees complain of longer hours, lesser pay and erratic schedules.



### 3. CAUSES OF WORKPLACE INCIVILITY

A case could be made that it's fair to the supervisors and managers to paint all of their subordinates and associates under them in a negative light, as all of them don't have the same managerial style and approach to work. Indeed, our very first premise began by wondering why extreme outbursts at workplace are not so common when there are millions of employees getting reprimanded, terminated and influenced every day.

There's no questioning the talent and team-managing skills that are employed by many efficient managers and supervisors all over the world, however, there are certain situations when even the most seasoned and adept managers are found at the end of their tether. Such situations are often caused when managers are spurred on to achieve **unrealistic targets** within **pressing deadlines**.

Such expectations force the managers to apply relentless pressure on their teams to extract the best performance out of them. While this might give positive results at times, but expecting a team to meet stiff targets every day is unrealistic and when a team does bad, it results in a **kick the cat** situation where the managers won't be able to vent their frustration on anyone other than the hapless subordinates, and the unwelcome actions they conduct on that particular day forms the basis of incivility.

After having a discussion with HR heads and disgruntled ex-employees, researchers identified the five major areas which were behind the uncivil behavior of most employees:

- **Pay-cuts** – It was found that making frequent pay-cuts was one of the biggest reasons many employees resorted to uncivil behavior.
- **Part-time Employees** – Employing part-time employees when there already is a full-time staff made the existing full-time employees uncertain about their job and career prospects, leading them toward uncivil behavior.
- **Freezing payments** – Freezing payments of staff and making budget-cutting makes the workplace extremely unfavorable for an employee.
- **Changing Managers** – Employees get used to the managerial styles of their supervisors and become productive over a period of time. Making sudden managerial changes significantly decreases the levels of employee engagement.

In addition to these administrative reasons, improper working environments like unhygienic workplace, high temperature, and poor ventilation also influence uncivil behavior.

## 4. TYPES OF WORKPLACE INCIVILITY

Different people have different levels of tolerance for mistreatment and ill-behavior at the hands of their employers or supervisors. Depending on these levels, they may exhibit different types of uncivil behavior.

Experts have studied these various levels of incivility. Let's discuss them:

<b>Verbal-passive-indirect</b>	No interest in clarifying any false rumors about oneself, or providing accurate information.
<b>Verbal-passive-direct</b>	Silent treatment of co-workers, not answering calls or replying to emails. Avoiding contact.
<b>Verbal-active-indirect</b>	Propagating lies and rumors about co-workers and belittling others' ideas and
<b>Verbal-active-direct</b>	Insulting people, giving condescending replies and yelling at co-workers.
<b>Physical-passive-indirect</b>	Influencing others to stop co-operating with specific people in the workplace.
<b>Physical-passive-direct</b>	Trying to be in groups with larger number of people, to camouflage underperformance.
<b>Physical-active-indirect</b>	Stealing office resources, destroying property, abusing equipment, funds misappropriation.
<b>Physical-active-direct</b>	Physically attacking people, verbally assaulting, sending cold non-verbal messages.

It has also been observed that the ones who exhibit the level of uncivil behavior do not stay at that level, but plunge to the next low level of increased passivity at work. A "verbal-passive-indirect" will have the tendency to quickly move down to the "verbal-passive-direct" stage, if proper counselling and intervention is not done at the right time.

Efficient managers always keep a look out for employees who are exhibiting the first symptoms of dissociation from work and have a frank one-to-one discussion with them, so that the employee can once again connect to the workplace and align himself with the work-flow.

End of ebook preview  
If you liked what you saw...  
Buy it from our store @ <https://store.tutorialspoint.com>