

TIPS for TALKING TO A “SCROOGE” COWORKER

- **Work on you first.** Get your emotions in check by looking for how you may be adding to the problem. It isn't that your co-workers don't have faults; it's that most people tend to exaggerate others' problems and ignore how they may be contributing.
- **Start with safety.** It can be tough to tell one of your coworkers that he or she seems to be dropping the ball on assignments. But it is completely possible to do so without rupturing the relationship if you can help him or her feel safe. For example, start with, “I have a concern I'd like to discuss. It's important to me, but it's also something I think will help us work more effectively. May I discuss it with you?”
- **Facts first.** Don't start with your harsh judgments or vague conclusions. Instead, strip out any judgmental language and start with the facts. For example, “After you told me you would complete the proposal by this Friday, you left at 2 P.M., and I had to stay late to finish it.”
- **Share concerns and invite dialogue.** Having laid out the facts, tell him or her why you're concerned, and encourage the other person to share his or her concerns, even if he or she disagrees with you. Remember to share your concerns as opinions, not accusations.

ABOUT THE RESEARCH. The study collected responses via an online survey in December of 2005. Margin of error is approximately 3%.

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According to our research, approximately three-fourths of employees are stressed out during the holiday season by coworkers who dump on, abandon, or fail them.

Specifically, 73 percent of respondents say their holidays are more stressful because of four Scrooge-like colleagues:

- The Dumper – Drops big projects or tasks on you with very little notice and lots of year-end pressure
- The Missing – Takes unplanned leave without finishing his or her tasks and leaves the rest of the team to take up the slack
- The Dawdler – Comes in late or leaves early requiring colleagues to compensate and cover
- The Flake – Misses deadlines in a way that keeps you from finishing what you need to do

KEY RESULTS

More than **75%** of employees are stressed out during the holiday season by coworkers who dawdle, dump on, abandon, or fail them

93% don't discuss the tough issues and end up feeling stressed

The research showed that the 93 percent of survey respondents who don't discuss the tough issues end up doing one of two things: 1) sneaking out of work when they shouldn't and feeling stressed about what is not getting done; or 2) staying at work too long and feeling stressed about dwindling family time.

But the good news is that your level of stress isn't necessarily predicted by how busy you are at work or how many “Scrooges” you may work with. The survey showed people who experience the least amounts of holiday stress at work are capable of candidly and respectfully discussing the support they need with their boss, spouse or coworkers. In short, the problem is not that we have problems. The problem is that we're incapable of confronting, discussing, and resolving these problems with others.

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