



PETRA PEOPLE

HOW TO TURN EMPLOYEE COMPLAINTS INTO A WORKPLACE BENEFIT



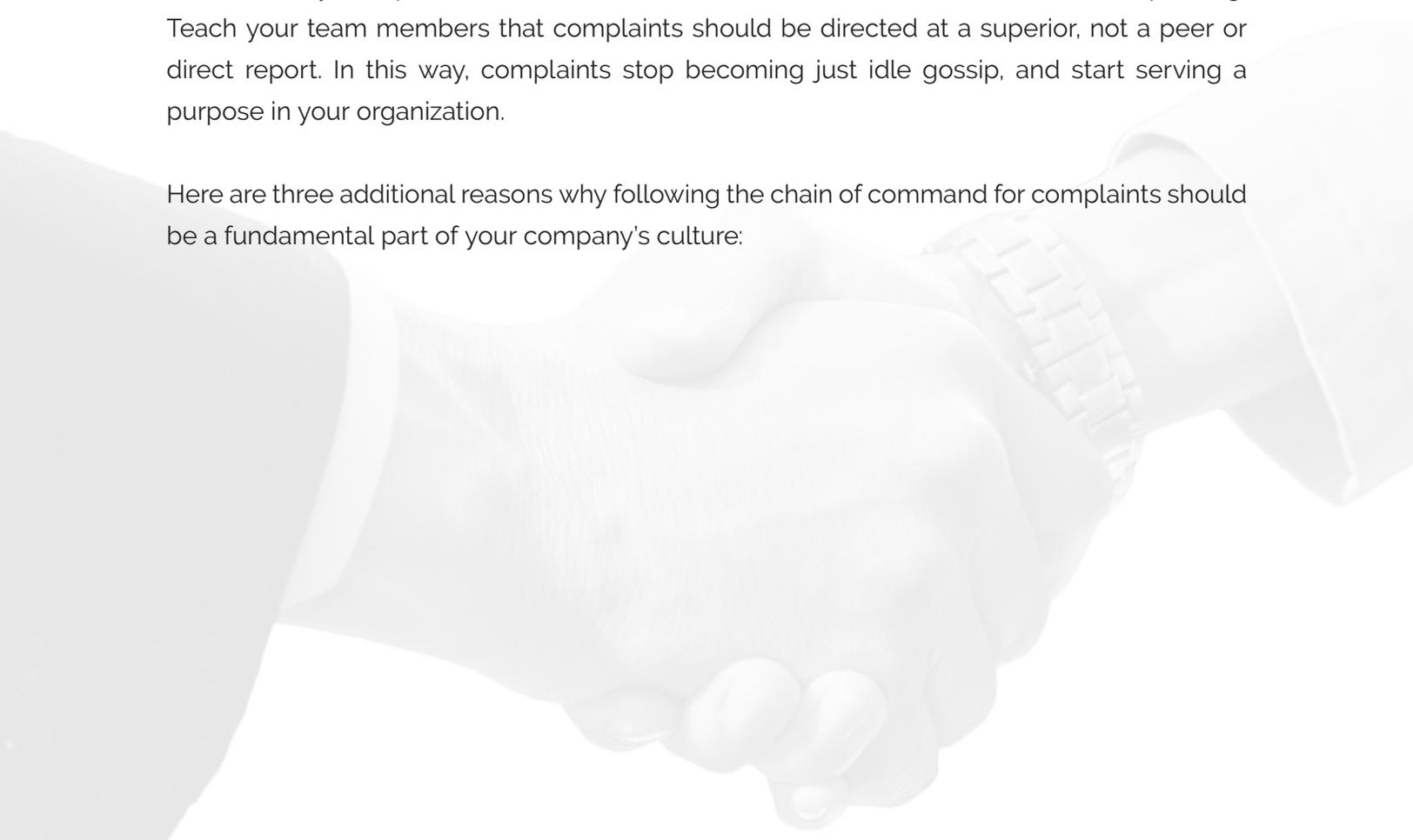
HOW TO TURN EMPLOYEE COMPLAINTS INTO A WORKPLACE BENEFIT LIFE LESSONS for BUSINESS OWNERS

There's always at least one person in every organization known as the "office gossip." The first to spread information, this person is usually at the front of the line to vent to coworkers as well. And while complaining can undoubtedly bring down the mood in any office, it may also have a place and time in work culture.

Author Guy Winch shares this concept in his book *The Squeaky Wheel*: "Our complaints should be more than the mere airing of grievances; they can be tools we use to bring about significant improvements in many aspects of our lives."

But how can you implement this at the office? Introduce a chain of command for complaining. Teach your team members that complaints should be directed at a superior, not a peer or direct report. In this way, complaints stop becoming just idle gossip, and start serving a purpose in your organization.

Here are three additional reasons why following the chain of command for complaints should be a fundamental part of your company's culture:



1. The chain fosters respect.

Complaining to peers essentially tags someone as the office gossip; similarly, going straight to upper management with a complaint is childish and can make a person seem like a tattletale.

Tell employees they should take any concerns they have to their direct manager in a responsible way. This shows that they respect the processes that are put in place and aren't just complaining for the sake of it.

If the issue is big enough to warrant the attention of the CEO, COO, or another C-level executive, their manager can handle it from there. Anything less than this, and they may seem like they're acting "above the rules."

2. The chain creates change.

Complaining to someone who is in the same role, or lower, won't do any good. The chain of command exists to spread information from every team member to the top. It's efficient and ensures that the decision makers receive valuable feedback they can use to make positive changes in the company.

Employees need to understand if they are only voicing their complaints to those around them, instead of above them, they may never see results. Why? Because no one but their lunch table knows they're upset.

3. The chain lifts morale.

Even just one complainer can turn your office culture into one of discontent or bitterness. The chain of command gives team members an outlet to effectively address concerns in a way that doesn't bring down the entire team; it also builds a culture of trust and openness within your organization

Instill the "complain up, not down" mantra into your company culture, and you'll open the door for honest, productive communication. Bonus: It will become glaringly obvious to your organization which team members have a pattern of complaining and may need to exit the company.

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