

# The Biggest Employee Gripe and How to Eliminate It

Ross Blake, Conversations at Work

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**O**ver the past 25 years, I've conducted hundreds of consulting and training assignments in many different types of organizations, including manufacturers, service providers, professional practices, the military, and non-profits including churches.

I've met or trained thousands of employees in different occupations, in different size organizations, and who worked for hundreds of different bosses.

Yet there's one employee complaint or gripe I've heard more than any other.

The single biggest complaint employees give me is this one: "my boss doesn't acknowledge me or even say hello to me when he or she sees me."

That's it.

When and where does this happen?

The first thing in the morning. Or, when the boss is walking through the office or plant with or without a visitor. When one of them returns from vacation or a sick day. Or, when the boss is on the way to a meeting, and so on.

Let's look at this a little deeper.

Why is this so important?

Think about the people you don't acknowledge or greet when you see them.

They're likely to be:

1. People you don't know.
2. People you don't want to know.
3. People you don't like.

If this is true, then what message do you think a supervisor, manager, or executive sends to an employee when they don't acknowledge or greet them when they see them? (I'm not suggesting greeting someone you see 20 times a day every time you run into them!)

Right, it sends them a message that they must be one of the 3 people mentioned above.

I'm probably one of the few management consultants and trainers out there who truly likes office and plant tours, and will ask for one if it isn't offered.

You see, an office or plant tour reveals far more about the organization than many managers tell you-or are even aware of.

*Without exception*, I always observe and listen to whether or not the manager or executive taking me on the tour greets or acknowledges employees as we pass them.

*Almost without exception*, I find more problems in organizations where managers and executives don't greet or acknowledge their employees than in those where they do.

In fact, I'd be willing to bet money on this.

How does this relate to motivating and retaining capable employees?

It's no secret that the single largest reason good employees leave is because of the relationship they have with their immediate boss.

If the biggest complaint employees have about their boss is that they don't acknowledge or greet them (when it would be so easy to do so), how does this impact their work relationship with their boss?

Negatively; in effect, it says the employee is a non-person.

How motivated are employees who think their boss sees them as, and treats them as, a non-person?

The employees with any real self esteem and capabilities find new employers.

Management needs to remind its supervisors, managers, and executives to use good human relations skills with employees.

This requires acknowledging them, greeting them, and calling them by name.

What do you need to do so this biggest employee complaint doesn't occur in your organization?