

Missed Deadlines

Deadlines may be missed for a variety of legitimate reasons. Do not assume that corrective action is the correct intervention until you have thoroughly explored alternative courses of action. Listed below are actions that address the most common issues underlying missed deadlines.

Suggested Actions

- Assist employee in determining priorities.
- Help employee recognize need to act:
Make sure employees know when specific activities or behaviors are to be performed.
Help employees recognize what precedes the behaviors you want them to show.
- Remove or eliminate distractions.
- Implement mechanisms to assist memory:
Anticipate that people do forget, particularly jobs done occasionally or sporadically. Use technological solutions, such as an automated calendar.
- Redesign the position:
Make sure the work load of each job is sensible and not designed around the unique skills of the last incumbent. Delegation is another method to simplify a job.
- Establish reasonable time limits and convince the employee that there is enough time.
Make every effort to be fair in your assessment of time requirements. Your expectations may be unrealistic. If the time frame is fair, you need to demonstrate that the job can be completed by modeling how the job is done at the pace or within the time you want. Do not shorten the time frame believing that will speed up an employee--the tactic could backfire because a major factor influencing motivation is the expectation that the job can actually be done. To be motivated the employee must believe it is possible for the job to be done in time.
- Communicate deadlines clearly.
- Establish mini-deadlines to help keep a project moving toward completion. Put follow-up on your calendar:
Delegation does not mean "dumping and forgetting." You have the responsibility to check in with an employee at designated points.
- Establish and communicate consequences for missed deadlines.

If the situation still exists, begin the corrective action process.