

Jealousy in the workplace

If the media is to be believed, envy of colleagues is a common affliction among those in the public eye. But envy also occurs in ordinary workplaces.

Lee Smith experienced a classic case of envy while working for a US company. The firm bought out another business, and Smith found himself working alongside someone much older who resented his position.

"I was given resources, but he wasn't," Smith says. "He took it upon himself to gradually erode my authority – he started contacting my staff directly to work on his projects without keeping me informed." As well as undermining Smith, his colleague's behaviour made life very difficult for other workers. "He gave them instructions and they didn't know whether they should follow them. It ultimately sabotaged what we were trying to do as a team."

"Eventually, I decided to go." Smith now runs his own business.

Tanya Menon, an associate professor of behavioural science at the University of Chicago Booth School of Business, has spent 10 years studying what happens when envy occurs in the workplace. She found evidence that envy can be a real issue for both employers and employees, dividing workforces and distracting people from the jobs they want and are paid to do.

"Although envy is an emotional response, our research shows how it can have real financial consequences," Menon says. "Envious people might refuse to acknowledge good ideas – this could undermine internal innovation in a company. And, rather than support internal ideas, an overtly envious person might even directly sabotage their co-worker."

Menon says she doesn't think it is possible for organisations to eradicate envy from the human mind, "but it is possible to manage it, and remove organisational incentives that encourage people to undermine talented co-workers."

Where a problem arises between colleagues, Ben Williams, a chartered psychologist who runs Ben Williams Corporate Psychology, says managers must speak to the workers who feel they have been treated unfairly. Psychologists also recommend tackling the problem head on. "Don't let problems grow, otherwise they become a magnet for other disharmony in the workforce."

When the envy is directed at you, how should you handle it? "The best thing is just ignore it. Distance yourself. It's their problem," Ben Williams says.

Adapted from *The Guardian*, 19 June 2010

A. Compréhension de l'écrit (10 points)

Vous rédigerez en français un compte rendu du texte. (180 mots maximum)

Vous indiquerez le nombre de mots utilisés.

B. Expression écrite : (10 points)

Vous êtes Charlie Soandso l'un(e) des assistant(e)s de Roger Feder, responsable d'une entreprise londonienne, **MTO**,
659 Exeter Road
London ON N6E 1L3

- Votre entreprise, **MTO**, vient de reprendre une entreprise concurrente, **London Messengers**.
- Richard Hendricks, l'ex-bras droit du patron de **London Messengers**, vient de vous être attaché en tant que collaborateur.
- La collaboration se révèle difficile, M. Hendricks étant plus âgé que vous et supportant mal son rôle de subalterne.
- Vous vous rendez compte que M. Hendricks nuit à la bonne entente entre les salariés.
- Vous avez déjà abordé oralement le problème avec M. Hendricks, à plusieurs reprises, sans résultat.

Rédigez un courrier en anglais (± 150 mots) à votre employeur en respectant les consignes suivantes :

- Expliquez la situation, en rappelant l'âge de M. Hendricks, son rôle dans sa société d'origine, et sa situation actuelle à **MTO**.
 - En vous inspirant des exemples fournis dans l'article, donnez deux exemples précis des répercussions négatives de l'attitude de M. Hendricks sur la **MTO** et/ou les salariés de l'entreprise.
 - Insistez sur la nécessité de régler au plus tôt une situation qui est préjudiciable au bon fonctionnement de l'entreprise.
 - Regrettez que vos entretiens avec M. Hendricks soient restés sans effet.
 - Demandez à votre employeur de bien vouloir intervenir directement auprès de M. Hendricks.
- Formules de politesse et présentation d'usage.