

Understanding Employee Performance Shifts

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By Russell B. Berger and Sarah M. Sawyer

In this episode of OK at Work, attorneys Sarah Sawyer and Russell Berger of Offit Kurman discuss balancing consistent performance-management policies with EQ and common sense when managing people. They explain that when a previously strong employee's performance declines, it may signal personal struggles rather than a work-related issue. Building trust, training managers, and holding regular check-ins can help identify issues early, reducing the need for PIPs or reprimands and limiting negative cultural or reputational impacts. Drawing lessons from the pandemic, Sarah and Russell emphasize that employees are often dealing with stressors. Thoughtful support from their managers can help employees get back on track.