

5 Signs You're Working in a Toxic Tech Workplace

UP ON THE BLOG



Is your workplace toxic?



Employees thrive in healthy working environments. If a workplace is supportive, collaborative, and engaging, team members are more likely to be more productive and happier in their roles.

Unfortunately, not all workplaces are naturally nurturing. In fact, Business Insider shared that around **1 out of 9** of US employees, today define their workplace as a “toxic” environment. In other words, they believe the company culture, management style, and overall structure of their working environment, are damaging their productivity, performance, and even their wellbeing.

Toxic workplaces gradually grind Tech workers down with passive-aggressive behaviour, poor communication, and problematic leadership. Eventually, you might find you’re no longer prospering professionally, simply because your workplace doesn’t allow you to thrive.

Today, we’re going to be pinpointing some of the clear signs of a toxic workplace for Tech team members and offering ideas on how to handle a harmful environment.

The 5 Signs of a Toxic Work Environment

Symptoms of toxicity in a Tech workplace can vary depending on a number of factors. Some people feel their workplace is toxic when their boundaries aren’t respected, or when they’re unable to progress or develop in their roles. Others struggle with workplace toxicity in the form of exclusionary behaviour and bullying.

Ultimately, any environment which makes it difficult for you to perform your best work, harms your mental health or conflicts with your boundaries, can be toxic. Here are some of the most significant signs of workplace toxicity to look out for.

1. Poor Communication

According to Salesforce, business leaders believe around 86% of workplace issues are caused by ineffective communication and collaboration. In any Tech organisation, excellent communication is crucial to keeping everyone aligned, synchronised, and working towards the same goals.

Unfortunately, there are many factors that can damage communication in the workplace. Employers may hire employees with different communication styles, then fail to provide each team member with the tools they need to connect, such as video, audio, and messaging software.

Poor communication can arise when certain employees use a lot of jargon in their language, making it difficult for other people to understand their meaning. Issues can even occur when companies fail to prioritise good listening skills and consistent respect between employees.

Watch out for issues like a lack of transparency in the workplace, passive-aggressive communication, or missing clarity in conversations.

1. Lack of Diversity and Inclusion

Diversity, equity, and inclusion have become some of the most important considerations for any workplace in recent years. Increasingly, the most talented people in the Tech landscape are looking to work in inclusive, comfortable, and welcoming environments.

Inclusive environments reduce stress and help employees to develop stronger connections with their colleagues. However, there are still many workplaces across the Tech environment that can suffer from issues with exclusionary behaviour. When companies fail to invest in building bonds between different departmental teams and personalities, cliques can form.

These cliques can cause some employees to feel isolated from the business and can even damage the flow of knowledge and information, creating a more secretive, gossipy workforce. While employees can avoid gossip and rumour mills as much as possible, an exclusionary workforce can quickly lead to issues with stress, anxiety, and burnout.

2. Problematic Leadership

There's a common saying in the Tech recruitment landscape that people don't actually leave bad jobs – they leave bad leaders. The reality is there are numerous reasons why talented professionals might choose to seek out opportunities elsewhere. However, a bad leader or manager can certainly increase the risk of turnover. Poor leadership in any environment increases the risk of workplace conflict, harms productivity, and creates frustration among employees.

Notably, there are many different types of “bad bosses”. Some leaders are ineffective because they're passive-aggressive, play favourites with certain members of staff, or spend too much time micro-managing their employees. Other bosses are problematic simply because they forget to invest enough time into providing feedback and guidance for their team members.

Ultimately, if you feel your manager isn't helping you to excel in your role, or may even be stopping you from reaching your full potential, this is a good sign your workplace is either already toxic or it's about to become a more significant issue.

3. Increasing Symptoms of Burnout

According to the APA, instances of workplace burnout have been on the rise since 2020. Today's IT employees are taking on countless new challenges each day, learning how to accommodate new working schedules, embrace new tools, and deal with countless other issues. It's little wonder many of us are starting to feel overwhelmed.

In an ideal business environment, employees and employers should be working together to tackle and eradicate burnout as much as possible. Staff members should feel comfortable asking for help and discussing options with business leaders and supervisors. At the same time, bosses should be on the lookout for signs of burnout in their team, so they can act fast to address issues.

While initial signs of burnout don't necessarily mean a workplace is toxic, worsening symptoms indicate the business leaders aren't taking enough steps to look after their staff.

If you notice your colleagues taking more sick days than normal, withdrawing from meetings, or complaining of poor health, this could be a sign burnout is on the rampage.

How to Deal with a Toxic Workplace

Toxic workplaces can occur in any industry. Even employers who were previously empathetic and supportive can overlook emerging signs of toxicity after a while. In some cases, you might be able to turn your working environment around, by speaking to your bosses, finding ways to cut down stress, and suggesting ways to enhance company culture.

However, if your suggestions go unnoticed, and the toxicity in your workplace continues to increase, the best option may be to start looking elsewhere. Working with a specialist IT recruiter to find a role in a company with a culture that will help you thrive, and flourish ensures you can continue moving forward, toward your professional goals.

After all, we can all encounter toxic workplaces during our careers. The key to success is ensuring a bad workplace doesn't poison your professional future.

Hope this helps anyone going through a tough time

All the best

Rachel

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