

A Guide to Managing Difficult Employees (The 3 “Es”)

Casino Manager Responsibilities

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I have worked 20 years in the Casino Industry after retiring from police work as a detective. During my policing career I managed some difficult employees then as I have during my second career as a Casino Surveillance Manager. I have always sought out ways to successfully manage these types of employees. The main theme which continually occurred was the egos of these individuals was the main roadblock to them being successful and as a manager finding a path that would help them improve. Also, the Casino Surveillance Room is a generally a small area that is cloistered in a separate area of the Casino, and it is important in this area the environment and culture is one of acceptance and respect.

One of the main issues that continued to arise while managing the Surveillance Department was spending 80% of my time handling employees' personality issues that was an impediment to these individuals being successful. These individuals were less than 20% of the people I managed. The issues I found were associated with people's way of thinking, a selfish center. What I found through the course of 15 years of management was these issues revolved around three personality types. The reason for this article is to provide new and current surveillance managers with a vehicle to mitigate disruptions and time spent resolving issues with these individuals.

The aspects of the personalities I dealt with were people's Egos, their expectations, and their sense of entitlement. The focus on the “3-Es” came to fruition when our management team was given the opportunity to receive training from Alex Lee a consultant from “Trinity Consultants and Analytics”. She introduced the concept to our team.

It was very helpful in coalescing what I have always known but did not have a defined concept. It was my boss and mentor COO Jovica Perovic and the owner of the casino Stan Walt that hired her. It was to assist the management team to become better at what we do together as a team, and it worked.

I did my research afterwards to see if this concept of the “3-Es” or as Alex put it the 3 Evils had been developed elsewhere and it had not. This was a unique perspective on handling employees who were difficult. As you will see from the bibliography reference list there were no other direct references to this concept.

What I have put together here is a Readers Digest or Coles notes version to applying this concept to a surveillance manager's responsibility managing employees to get the best outcome for the company. It's interesting to note that during the 15 years as manager applying these basic rules for mitigating problematic employees has resulted in no labour relations complaints from staff who have been terminated or left of their own accord.

Following these basic guidelines will assist in developing a culture of inclusiveness, respect and collaboration. The benefit in the long run is less turnover of staff, and an applied assurance of a department that works towards the goals and objectives of the company. It is an ethical approach that helps mitigate disruptions in a cloistered environment and promotes solidarity in the differences between employees. So, this is what I have learned.

The 3 “Es” that Affect the Efficiency of Surveillance Operations.

The concept of the “Three Es”



Ego, Expectations, and Entitlement—has been discussed individually by various authors and thinkers, each offering unique perspectives on how these factors influence personal well-being and interpersonal relationships.

In a 2018 article on YourTango, Naseem Khalili refers to the “three Es” as envy, expectations, and entitlement, discussing how these emotions can lead to negative self-comparison and diminished happiness.

Additionally, in a 2024 article in Psychology Today, Steven Stosny explores how entitlement inflates the ego to unrealistic levels, making individuals vulnerable to negative feedback and emotional distress.

While these discussions highlight the detrimental effects of ego, expectations, and entitlement, there doesn't appear to be a single individual credited with putting the three traits together and coining the specific phrase “Three Es” in this context.

The concept of “Ego, Expectations, and Entitlement”

As three interconnected challenges appears to be a synthesis of themes explored in psychology, self-help literature, and even spiritual teachings. These ideas are frequently emphasized in frameworks designed to promote self-awareness, humility, and emotional resilience.

In this case it's about us as managers in how to deal with these negative traits constructively and with respect. With the intent to help the person be successful and provide a valuable resource to the company. Turning the thinking process from what the company can do for me, to what I can do for the company.

- **Ego:** Often discussed as the barrier to self-growth, the ego can create a distorted self-perception, prioritizing one's own needs above others'. This concept is rooted in ancient philosophies, such as Stoicism and Buddhism, and further popularized by thinkers like Eckhart Tolle in *The Power of Now*.
- **Expectations:** Unrealistic or rigid expectations, whether of oneself or others, often lead to disappointment and conflict. Many self-help experts, including Tony Robbins, discuss the importance of managing expectations to cultivate inner peace.
- **Entitlement:** Often seen as an outcome of inflated ego and unrealistic expectations, entitlement fosters a sense of deservingness without effort. Modern critiques of entitlement frequently emerge in discussions on resilience and gratitude, such as Carol S. Dweck's work on the growth mindset.



Applying the Concepts of the Three Es”—Ego, Expectations, and Entitlement—to

Manage difficult employees

A casino surveillance manager can apply the concept of the Three Es”—Ego, Expectations, and Entitlement—to address disruptive or difficult employees effectively, fostering a healthier workplace environment. Here s how this concept can be can be used:

1. Addressing Ego

Problem: Employees with inflated egos may resist authority, undermine teamwork, or refuse constructive criticism.

Approach:

- **Promote Self-Awareness:** Schedule private meetings to discuss behaviors objectively. Use specific examples to highlight how their actions affect the team and outcomes.
- **Encourage Humility:** Assign responsibilities that require collaboration and emphasize the importance of collective success over individual performance.
- **Model Leadership:** Demonstrate humility in your own actions to set an example and show how ego can be a barrier to professional growth.

Practical Steps:

- Provide ongoing training focused on emotional intelligence and conflict resolution.
- Reward behaviors that exhibit humility and teamwork, not just individual success.

2. Managing Expectations

Problem: Employees may hold unrealistic expectations about roles, recognition, or workload, leading to frustration and negativity.

Approach:

- **Set Clear Expectations:** Clearly communicate job roles, responsibilities, and the standards of behavior expected in the surveillance department.
- **Offer Consistent Feedback:** Conduct regular performance reviews to realign expectations and provide constructive feedback.
- **Be Transparent:** Address workplace realities openly, such as why promotions or shifts are allocated, to reduce misunderstandings.

Practical Steps:

- Create a structured onboarding program that sets clear expectations from the start.
- Regularly revisit team and individual goals to keep employees grounded and focused.

3. Combating Entitlement

Problem: Employees with a sense of entitlement may resist tasks they view as beneath them or demand special treatment, causing tension among colleagues.

Approach:

- **Foster Accountability:** Emphasize that everyone is equally responsible for maintaining a professional work environment.
- **Cultivate Gratitude:** Encourage employees to focus on opportunities and benefits the job offers rather than perceived shortcomings.

- **Enforce Standards:** Hold all employees accountable to the same policies, ensuring fairness and consistency.

Practical Steps:

- Rotate assignments to ensure equal distribution of tasks and responsibilities.
- Recognize and reward employees who display a strong work ethic and positive attitude, discouraging entitlement-driven behaviors.

Additional Strategies for Negative Attitudes

- **Engage in Active Listening:** Sometimes negativity stems from feeling unheard. Give employees space to voice their concerns and address valid issues.
- **Provide Resources for Personal Growth:** Offer training or counseling to help employees manage stress, negativity, or interpersonal challenges.
- **Lead with Empathy:** Show understanding while maintaining firm boundaries. This balance often encourages attitude changes over time.

Example in Practice

If an employee consistently brings a negative attitude to work, the manager should:

1. Meet privately to explore the root cause of their behavior without judgment.
2. Highlight how negativity affects team morale and the importance of contributing to a positive environment.
3. Set measurable behavior goals, such as “contributing one positive comment in team meetings” or “avoiding gossip for a month.”
4. Monitor progress, provide feedback, and enforce consequences if necessary, such as reassignment or disciplinary actions.

Conclusion

By using the “Three Es” framework, casino surveillance managers can create a workplace culture that values self-awareness, clear expectations, and accountability, reducing tension and improving overall team dynamics.

In conclusion, don’t forget to utilize your HR team in the process for they are an invaluable resource to ensure the direction you are taking with the difficult employee is compliant with current legislation.

Also, remember to document all the actions taken with the employee concerning their behaviour, for it will become important if the employee files a complaint about how they were treated or had their employment terminated.

The other consideration is to use your legal department when it comes time to release the employee from employment with the company because of their behaviour.

Remember documentation, documentation or it didn’t happen when it comes to the legal process.

Bibliography

The concepts of ego, expectations, and entitlement have been explored by various authors and thinkers, each offering unique perspectives on how these factors influence personal well-being and interpersonal relationships. Below is an APA-style bibliography of sources that discuss these themes:

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These resources offer comprehensive insights into how ego, expectations, and entitlement can impact workplace culture, employee engagement, and organizational effectiveness.

