

# How YOU Can Help Employees

Overcome Bad Habits Impacting Performance

Many problems supervisors routinely deal with as a supervisor are the result of habits. More appropriately, bad habits. Everyone has them, and we're constantly struggling to overcome them.

The formation of habits can be both good and bad. It's the mind's way of rapidly processing an enormous amount of incoming information. Through experience, we develop the ability to take mental shortcuts in dealing with the world around us, which leads to decisions made while operating on autopilot.

Here are some tips for helping employees overcome less than desirable behaviors associated with recurring habits.



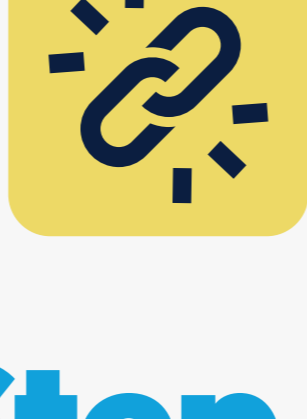
## Step 1

### Acknowledge the Habit

The first step in dealing with a bad habit is to acknowledge that it exists. As a supervisor, this requires you to provide specific examples of behaviors impacting a direct report's job performance.



Consider using a notebook to document concerns that you want to address with the employee.

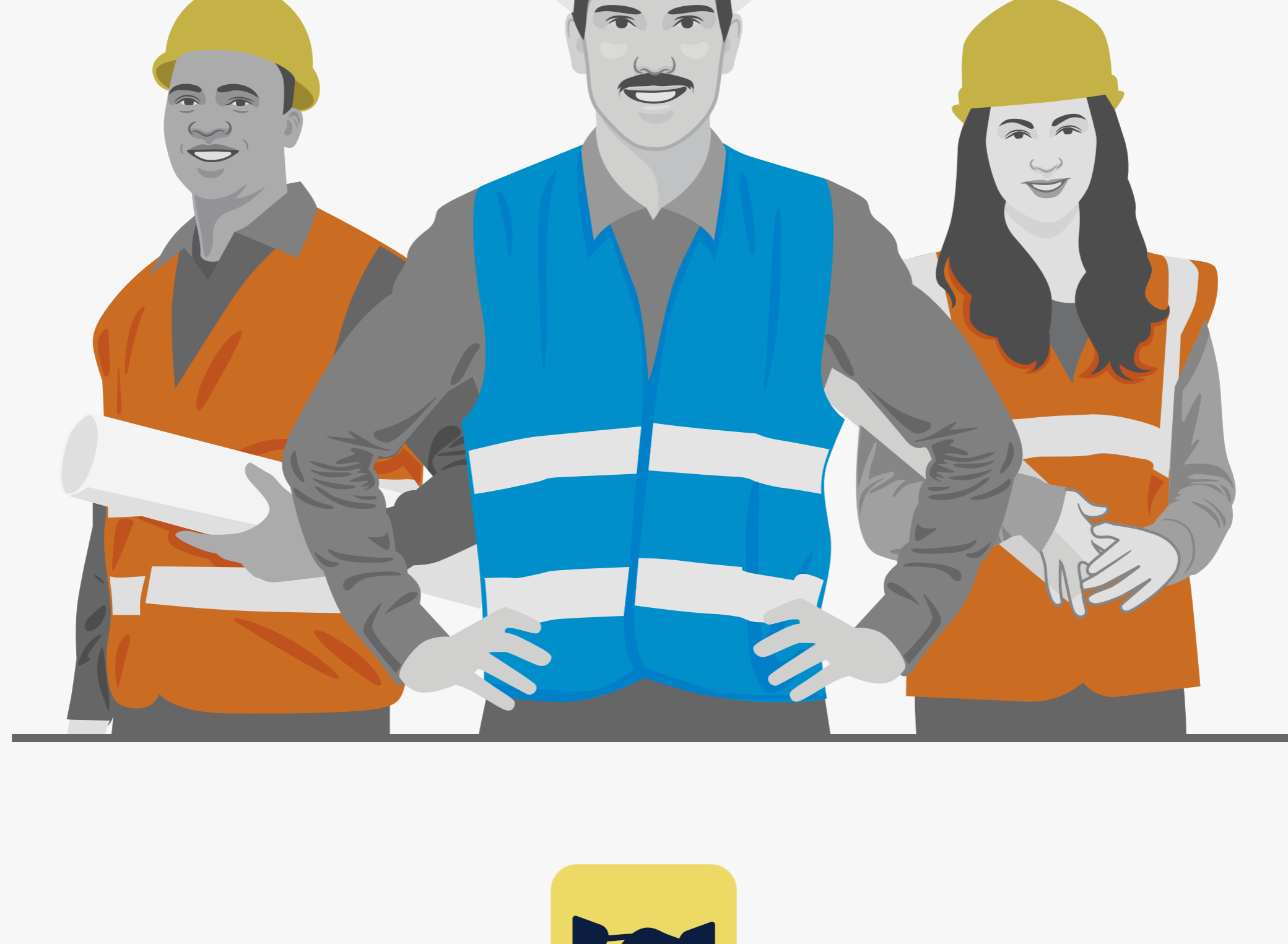


## Step 2

### Connect the Habit to an Adverse Outcome

The next step is to connect the habit to an outcome or potential outcome that has detrimental consequences. It could be injury, loss of production, or an adverse impact on valued clients.

Whatever it is, the cause for concern needs to be connected to something concrete, of obvious importance, and involving clear business objectives.



## Step 3

### Gain Commitment on Needed Changes

The third step requires dialogue with the employee to gain alignment, agreement, and commitment to needed changes.

This is a collaborative process and input from the employee is not only important, it's essential.



The terms of agreement need to be clearly defined, documented, and cast into motion with an old-fashioned handshake.



## Step 4

### Support the Formation of New Habits

A support system must be put in place for a period of **8 to 12 weeks**. This is the length of time it takes for most habits to form and for behaviors to become self-sustaining and automatic. This is also the point where most targeted development plans fail.



They don't consider that **85 to 95 percent of decisions** made and actions taken each day occur automatically – on autopilot.

These mindless deals with the bad ones, you must replace them with good ones.

Routine oversight and frequent touchpoints during this phase are critical to the outcome involving desired changes.



## Step 5

### Celebrate Improvement, Both Big and Small

Finally, celebrate any and all gains – no matter how small. While management is about maintaining status quo, leadership is about growth, transition, and improvement.

Helping others overcome bad habits is an attainable skill that will serve you well as a front-line leader.

