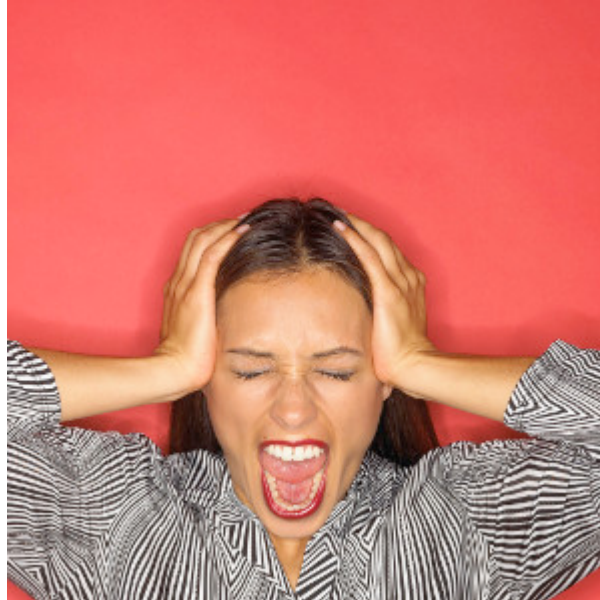


Five Tips To Working With The Office Drama Diva

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We've all seen her. The world revolves around her. She's never wrong. Mistakes are personal affronts. And if you invade her space, you'll get to see a Hollywood-worthy melodrama.

Regardless of your skills or efforts, this diva picks relentlessly at your outputs. While it was entertaining in "The Devil Wears Prada," it's energy-draining to experience her in your work environment. While you try your best, it seems you can never meet her expectations—and you pay the consequences!

What to do? By following these five guidelines, you have a much better chance for a positive working relationship with a Drama Diva—and perhaps saving the theatrics for the movies.

1. Develop Rapport: Overtly confronting a Drama Diva is risky. Often, she'll react disproportionately to any attempts at constructive criticism. Instead, build a relationship with her before initiating a difficult conversation. Study her behaviors, attitudes, and willingness to receive feedback. Invest the time up front to be able to give input later.

Specific Tip: Demonstrate your support and trustworthiness, especially during challenging times. Drama Divas are known for staying calmer with allies and rewarding loyalty.

2. Clarify Expectations: As a poor delegator, a Drama Diva will often give vague or incomplete instructions. She assumes you'll know what to do and then reprimand you when your deliverable differs from her expectation. Consequently, you must clearly define goals and time frames up front. She may become irritated at your persistence or "ignorance." Nevertheless, insist on explicit agreements. Better to risk her frustration early in the game than to miss deadlines or fail to meet her expectations.

Specific Tip: Establish crystal clear agreements about deliverables and time frames.

3. Deliver Results: A Drama Diva's most explosive displays often revolve around missed deadlines or

something that has her look bad. She expects you to perform well so that she'll stay in a positive light. Focus on delivering quality work on time and, if appropriate, share the kudos.

Specific Tip: Make her look good, so she earns external recognition. Whenever appropriate, let her have the limelight.

4. Appreciate their Value: Compliment the Drama Diva for what she does well, whether efficiency, creativity, or bold action. Since she will likely be sensitive to false praise or fawning, keep the appreciation short and specific. Deliver it with sincerity and in a matter-of-fact way.

Specific Tip: Praise the Diva, especially for things that work well for you, for instance sharing responsibility or for displaying trust toward you or others.

Suppose none of this works...

5. Stay below her radar: If you work for a Drama Diva who resists coaching or leadership development, understand that the probability of authentic interactions is low, and that your best coping strategy is to stay below her radar screen. If you're willing to take the risk, you might go over her head to seek reassignment or upper-level backing for your role. This is usually a high-stakes move, so be prepared for the Diva to react with swift, angry retaliation, which may mean the situation worsens for you.

Specific Tip: If she micromanages you or overrides your best ideas, put on a smile and let her have the last word. Then find a place where you can thrive and work to get out of the Diva's way and into another environment.

The Drama Diva is a specific type of office Controller. By following these guidelines and tips you can position yourself as a responsible team member and colleague, whom she can trust to understand her goals, ask good questions, and deliver results. You can be allies, rather than a victim of the "Diva Show."

Kaley Klemp and Jim Warner are the authors of [The Drama-Free Office: A Guide to Healthy Collaboration with Your Team, Coworkers, and Boss](#). The book contains additional tips on how to manage Controllers – whether your colleagues or your boss – as well as insights on the three other drama types most commonly found in offices. To take a free online drama diagnostic (an excellent tool for narrowing the type of drama in another person), go to www.dramafreeoffice.com. You can get a free sample of the book on Facebook, www.facebook.com/kaleyklemp, follow Jim and Kaley on twitter, www.twitter.com/kaleyklemp, and watch their videos and interviews on YouTube, www.youtube.com/kaleyklemp.