

Ten Annoying Habits that Drive People Crazy

As an admin, a big part of your job is to collaborate effectively with others. That's tough to do if your colleagues and supervisors find you irritating. And it's easier than you might think to rub people the wrong way, even when you're sitting at your desk minding your own business.

Jen Star of The Jennifer Group, a New York City-based recruiting firm that specializes in placing and maintaining support staff, cites 10 surefire ways to become a workplace annoyance:

1. You're Unprepared: "Showing up for meetings, interviews or arranged work sessions without the equipment or data that you need demonstrates a lack of respect for your coworkers and yourself," says Star. "And it wastes time. Get off on the right foot, and make like a scout and be prepared."

2. You're Not a Team Player: "You have to be willing to pitch in when another member of the team needs help," Star says. "There's nothing more annoying than watching somebody do a crossword puzzle while you're buried in work." And if a coworker needs a little time off to run an important errand, be flexible and help out when you can, she suggests.

3. You're Not Self-Reliant: Only ask for help when you really need it. "Giving up on the paper jam after only one try and expecting a coworker to fix it because you know she can does not contribute to good team spirit," says Star. Try everything you can to solve your own problem before involving somebody else.

4. You, Umm, Smell: Your scent is important, especially when you're working in a small, poorly ventilated space with lots of other people around. Be considerate of your neighbors by taking care not to generate strong smells that will permeate their space.

For instance, don't eat eggs or onions in the office, Star suggests. And if you smoke, be sure you air yourself out before you walk back in the office. The same goes for colognes. "Fragrance is a very personal choice, so it should be reserved for those who are close to you, not 20 yards away," says Star.

5. You're Loud on the Phone: Loud telephone conversations can be offensive to your neighbors, so try to keep your voice low and even. And keep personal calls short. "Phone fights or, worse yet, phone foreplay can really drive one up a wall after a certain point," says Star. "Remember that you are not in your living room."

6. You're Unhealthy: If you're sick, stay home. If you have the sniffles or must come in, cover your mouth and do whatever you can to avoid infecting your coworkers.

7. You Walk Like an Elephant: Try to move around the office quietly to avoid disturbing the people around you. And if you must speak to another colleague, keep your voice down.

8. Your Cell Phone Is Always On: Unless absolutely necessary, cell phones should be turned off while you're in the office. If you need to keep your phone on, use a soft or silent ringer or vibrate mode.

9. Your Computer Volume Is Blasting: Nobody wants to hear somebody else's bells and whistles when they're trying to concentrate.

10. You Shake Hands Like a Fish and Avoid Eye Contact: "When somebody won't look me in the eye or give me some energy in their handshake, I feel like they're avoiding me or snubbing me in some way," Star says. "I like a firm handshake and a friendly smile."