



# Dealing with the energy vampires

Bởi:

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*“When we don’t feel safe, fear drives our actions and interactions. Fear causes us to not be ourselves as individuals. In organizations, fear holds us back from performing at the level we’re capable of. When we’re afraid, we’re guarded, cautious, and restrained, and we do everything we can to regain a feeling of security.”*

Jim Haudan: *The Art of Engagement: Bridging the Gap Between People and Possibilities*

Are you old enough to remember the days when people could smoke everywhere? How one person lighting a cigarette would instantly pollute the lungs of everyone else in the room? It’s the same thing with energy vampires, the aggressively disengaged employee who sucks the energy out of a room and the people around them. It’s not just their lack of energy that hurts the business, it’s the way they suck the energy out of everyone else.

When he’s giving a speech, my good friend Roger Looyenga (retired CEO of Auto-Owners Insurance, with whom I co-authored the book *Take the Stairs*) will often illustrate this point by holding up two clear coffee cups – one half full of coffee and the other half full of water. He takes a teaspoon of water and dumps it into the coffee, but there is no visible difference. That’s about what happens when one positive employee is injected into a toxic negative environment. They eventually quit, hibernate, or flip over to the dark side.

Then Roger takes one teaspoon of coffee and pours it into the water. Instantly, the water in the cup discolors. A second and a third teaspoon and the cup of previously clear water begins to look a lot more like the coffee, and certainly not like something you would want to drink. That can be the effect of one toxic negative emotional vampire who is not effectively dealt with by the management team.