

11 WARNING SIGNS YOUR EMPLOYEES MAY BE RIPPING YOU OFF



1 Big-ticket purchases or significant change in employee spending habits or lifestyle

This is about the employee who buys a new luxury car even though he's always talking about barely having enough money to pay the bills and put food on the table.

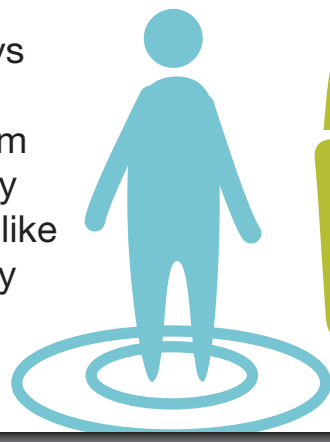
2 Change in work habits

You know the type. She breezes in every day at 8:27 a.m. If all of a sudden, she starts coming in before 8 so she can have some quiet time before everyone else arrives, make a mental note.



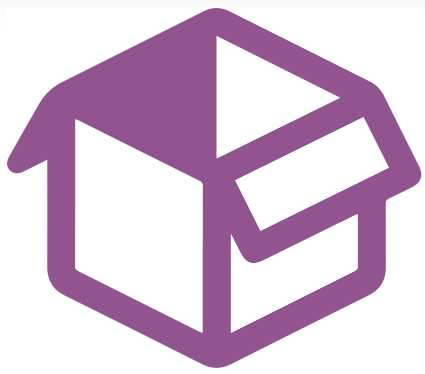
3 Purposefully trying to work independently or unsupervised

Be aware of an employee who always looks for ways to work alone. While volunteering to work in the back room or offering to organize out-of-the-way displays shows initiative and seems like a manager's dream come true, it may simply be a way for an employee to remain out of sight.



4 Problems with payroll, travel, and expense records

We all make mistakes. But accounting discrepancies should be tracked. Is there a question about hours worked versus hours paid? Did she lose a receipt? Did he forget to reconcile petty cash?



5 Missing items

Maybe you didn't have the extra printer cartridges you thought you did. But before you decide you're headed for early stage dementia, consider that your "forgetfulness" may be something else.

6 Excessive absences

Excessive absences from an otherwise steady and regular employee are an indication that something is going on.



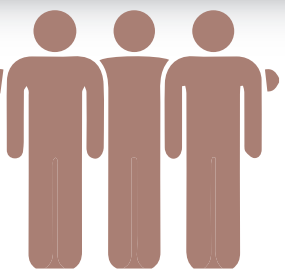
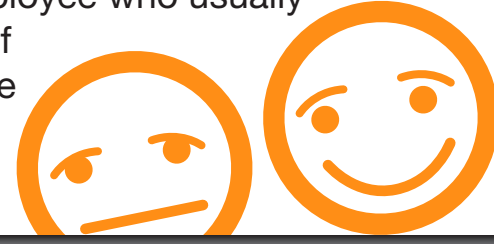
7 Suspicious cars, especially cars parked near back doors or dumpsters

How often do you drive around or look outside to see what's going on in the more isolated areas of your workplace?



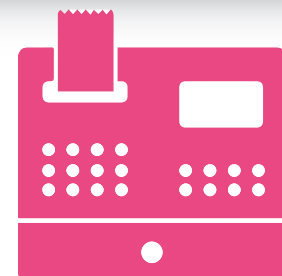
8 Change in employee behavior

We're talking about a noticeable change. There is a reason that your employee who usually shows zero initiative all of sudden is offering to take out the trash and work through his breaks.



9 Pattern of friends or family showing up, or insisting they only go through the employee's checkout line.

Internal theft isn't always a solo operation. Watch buddies who come in and only want to go through their friend's line.



10 Change in voids, over rings, cash drawer over/shorts, receipts, or invoices

A pattern of small overages may mean your employee is stealing by voiding a sale after the customer pays and pocketing the sale amount but not the tax.



11 An increase in damaged merchandise, misplaced product, or receiving discrepancies

Are your damages higher than usual? Are there more reported shortages during receiving? Is there a spike when certain employees are working?



Awareness is key to determining whether employees are stealing. But, there are things you can do to prevent employee theft, too. Consider these tips:

- Create strong hiring practices. Conduct background checks. Consider screening tools and other hiring instruments. Since drug abuse is strong motivation for stealing, consider drug testing.
- Make sure employees understand the company's zero-tolerance stance on theft, as well as consequences. Set up an anonymous tip line for employees to report suspicious activities.
- Install video surveillance.
- Audit your books regularly.
- Conduct ethics training. Make sure everyone knows your company values honesty and integrity. Establish a code of ethics and train employees and new hires on ethics. (Media Partners offers several titles in this space, including Moment of Truth.)

The bottom line is this: Trust your employees. Believe in them. Build a positive working relationship. But, pay attention. If something doesn't seem right, it probably isn't. Question it. Don't let your trust or your relationship cloud your judgment. Proving yourself wrong will validate your trust. Proving yourself right will protect your assets.

From the article "11 Warning Signs Your Employees May Be Ripping You Off"



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