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Middle Management
1 Main Street
Corporate America

Dear Middle Management,

Thank you for taking the time to read this, I understand your job is immensely difficult - it's no wonder you are always busy. In fact, it seems middle management is the glue that holds corporate America together, juggling a wide array of ever-changing responsibilities every single day. However, today I must address an issue facing entry-level employees. Managing the time of hourly workers is not a task that should fall on those very same hourly workers. This requirement makes us less efficient and lowers productivity rates. Most importantly, just because we are not near the top of the corporate ladder, does not mean we are not entitled to the same vacation and sick pay protections given to us by law (not management.) The law guarantees equal minimum paid vacation time and sick leave. But if some of us are required to find our own replacement to use it, is it really equal?

I submit to you that by requiring associate-level employees to find their own coverage to take time off, you are not only hindering the personal lives of your staff, but also decreasing their

efficiency and the overall productivity of your teams. Furthermore, this diminishes the hard-fought victories of worker's rights activists who gave their all to make sure policies like these end. As such, it is my duty not just as an employee, but as a citizen and as a human being to bring this issue to your attention. I will start by focusing on the quantifiable reasons why you should abandon the draconian practice because it is even more detrimental to the bottom line than to its employees.

As I am sure you will agree, happy employees are productive employees. Positive emotions have been proven to improve performance, memory & cognition and increase the capacity for innovation. A recent study led by Dr. Eugenio Proto and Professor Andrew Oswald at the UK Department of Economics shows that happy workers are 12% more productive and unhappy workers are 10% less productive than average. When asked if this can work in the real world as opposed to a laboratory setting, Professor Oswald said that "Companies like Google have invested more in employee support and employee satisfaction has risen as a result. For Google, it rose by 37%, they know what they are talking about. Under scientifically controlled conditions, making workers happier really pays off"(1). Not only were the results consistent in a controlled setting, they already proved to be just as robust in practice. If the 5th most valuable company in the world is investing into happier employees and seeing results, it may be time to stop testing the theory and start applying it.

Another point I feel compelled to mention is the emphasis businesses put on customer service, while neglecting the entry-level employees who hold the majority of customer facing positions. In today's highly competitive business environment, you simply can't afford to neglect customer

service. Without it, companies cannot hope to retain existing customers or cultivate the kind of loyal consumer base that markets them through word-of-mouth. According to a Salesforce Research study, “The majority of Americans have decided not to make a purchase because of a poor customer service experience”(2). This means that over half of all consumers have encountered a disgruntled employee and were upset enough to reconsider their purchase.

Is it wrong for employees to take their frustrations with their employer out on customers? Of course it is. Do disgruntled employees do it anyway? All the time. But, before you judge them, try putting yourself in that position. Would you be able to maintain a sunny disposition when a customer is yelling at you on your birthday because you could not find coverage to take the day off? Well, neither can we.

Finally, if you truly believe that the system of coverage is fair, management should adhere to the same standards. As we all know, upper management doesn't ask for anyone's permission to take paid time off. Sure, high ranking employees enjoy many perks that we do not, but paid holiday and sick time should not be among them. You see, even though holiday pay and sick pay are called “benefits,” they are not gifts from the company. Multiple generations of labor rights activists fought tooth and nail for the legislation that made employers cover these benefits. In fact, labor activism and unionization were first ruled criminal conspiracies and made illegal in 1806. It wasn't until 1842 that the ruling was overturned. And it wasn't until a century later that FDR and Frances Perkins drew up the first laws guaranteeing minimum wages and paid sick leave. How can today's workers let their sacrifice be in vain because of a loophole? Why should

today's businesses be able to circumvent the legislation by creating hoops for low-level employees to jump through?

References:

1. https://warwick.ac.uk/newsandevents/pressreleases/new_study_shows/
2. <https://www.salesforce.com/form/pdf/state-of-the-connected-customer-2nd-edition/?d=7010M000000uQVWQA2>