

Making the workplace a better place to be

dohr:

by Donna Obstfeld

If you are in a sales environment, be it car sales, recruitment agency, estate agency or product sales, if you don't like the cut throat environment, the drive to hit targets and the penalties for failing to do so, then you are probably not in the right job! If you are happy picking up the phone, speaking to strangers, following up religiously and persevering when the going gets tough, the benefits can be highly rewarding. But what happens when the phone doesn't ring, when the sales fail to materialise and when you can't hit your targets? In some organisations this will mean that your job is on the line! What does your contract say? What does your company's policy say? What is custom and practice?

The key to managing the situation is to be very clear. Know exactly what is required of you and over what time period. Is it absolute or is there some flexibility i.e. averaging. Are your targets realistic and accurate? How are others performing? Are there changes in the external environment which are impacting on your ability to perform? These might include government policy / legislation, an economic downturn, a problem with the product or bad press.

As with many things at work, it is the way in which you deal with a situation which will generally help resolve any problem. As soon as you anticipate a problem, it is essential you flag it with your manager. Clearly identify the issue, the gap between target and actual achievement and the suspected causes. Discuss these with your manager, evidence your activity and it's impact, compare activity and outcomes to the previous period(s), put a plan in place for remedying the situation and get agreement from your managers (In Writing).

If a policy says you can be fired for failure to hit targets, then at the end of the day, there is not a lot an employee can do, but the company can not just fire you. They must follow a legal process and their own policy for dismissal, they should have held a number of meetings with you to discuss performance and there is a duty on employers to act reasonably. If you can prove that you have done everything possible, and the reason for the missed targets are outside of your control, you May have a case against your employers if they were to terminate your employment.

[www.dohr.co.uk](http://www.dohr.co.uk)

01923 504100