

(U) Ask Zelda: The Disappearing Boss

FROM: 'Zelda,' Dispenser of Advice for SIGINTers.

Run Date: 03/17/2011

(U) Editor's intro: The below "Ask Zelda" advice column is entirely unclassified:



Dear Zelda,

[My] supervisor/Org Chief is frequently MIA. I work in a small organization, so folks easily see who is doing what. Our supervisor is a 15 and I am a 15. He does not follow any of the PMM procedures for time away from work. We never know if he is coming in or not. He frequently leaves work in the middle of the day to run routine errands. I overheard him tell a co-worker "This place is last on my list of priorities." Other 15s have talked with him about the appearance of an "I don't care" attitude and it has not changed his behavior. Our next level up management is new -- do they notice? How do I/we bring this to their attention in a politically correct manner?

-- Signed, Headless in Headquarters

Dear Headless,

Sometimes an MIA supervisor is not such a bad thing.... ask anyone who works for a micro-manager! But all kidding aside, this is a tough situation. It's hard enough for a manager to deal with an AWOL subordinate, but it's especially hard in the reverse.

Take care how you approach this since the blow back on you might be bad. If your supervisor learns that you've been complaining about him to his boss, your work life could become quite unpleasant. It's also possible that the MIA supervisor, whom I will refer to as Waldo, has permission from his boss to be away from the workplace. (An employee must inform the supervisor of his whereabouts, but a supervisor doesn't necessarily have to tell his workers -- although it's a good idea.)

You mention that Waldo works for a new boss -- let's call her Alice. Often when a new boss comes in, she will meet with members of her workforce to get to know them. If Alice meets with you privately and either asks directly or seems open to hearing about problems in the workplace, you have an opportunity to bring up the issue at that time. I would only do this if I had Alice's assurance that she would not reveal to Waldo where she learned about his frequent absences and I-don't-care attitude (see the aforementioned "blow back" warning).

Is there a situation where you needed Waldo and he wasn't around to make an important management decision? If so, it would be logical for you to go to the next manager in the chain -- Alice. If Alice gets enough visits from you and the other members of Waldo's staff, she might catch on that Waldo isn't around very much. To give Alice some credit, she may catch onto Waldo's habits all by herself if she is worth her salt as a manager.

Another recourse for you is the Office of the Inspector General. The IG is responsible for investigating waste, fraud and abuse, and has a **hotline** where you can report such cases (either anonymously or

not).

One last tip: be sure your own attitude and attendance practices are above reproach; Alice may be looking for a replacement supervisor for your team in the near future!

Edna
