



Don't Let the Door Hit You

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A good friend of mine was recently let go from a reputable company. Although he was told that the decision was an economic one, and not due to poor performance, he was still escorted to his desk where he could get only his coat and then escorted to the elevators. He was told he could come back on the weekend to collect his other personal belongings.

This treatment made him question what he was told about this being an economic decision. Instead, he wondered why the company didn't trust him to collect his items and make his own way out. Did they think he would steal something?

I told this story to a couple of other friends and discovered this is a regular practice for some companies. Some friends said the same things happened to them, both during this economic downturn and also in the past.

One of my friends said the reason it's done is that the company doesn't want the employee to bad mouth the company while they are collecting their things. The irony is, being treated like this results in the very activity companies are trying to avoid. People feel disrespected, and they immediately tell their friends what happened. I would guess these people also tell others, as I'm doing now.

If you hire people you trust, and they don't give you a reason not to trust them, then why is this the practice for letting them go? Has any employer ever taken the time to ask employees how this practice makes them feel? Do they even care?

In this economic downturn, I have coached many people who feel inadequate after being let go. Losing a job is something many people take very personally, despite the fact that it's often simply a business decision. Escorting someone to the elevator only exacerbates this feeling, leaving employees feeling as though they have done something wrong.

I understand using this procedure of escorting to the door when you fire someone for theft or incompetence. I don't see the logic in using the same procedure when you let a valuable employee go for only economic reasons. I implore business owners to reconsider this method so employees can leave with the same dignity as when they started.