

Chapter 1. Don't be a Dickhead

Except from "The Trust Matrix" A book written by Leon Poggioli. Available on Amazon.

The whole of the Bible can be boiled down to a single golden rule:

"Do unto others, as you would have them do unto you".

A similar rule is ever-present in Australian business culture:

"Don't be a dickhead."

It's been my observation that this is the most fundamental value which dictates appropriate behaviour in Australian corporate culture. The exact terminology may vary in other countries; nonetheless, it's a key guideline in deciding how you want to conduct yourself. Translation for the Americans: don't be a jerk.

What constitutes a dickhead?

Dickheads do self-serving things that nobody likes, like backstabbing, creating drama, and throwing people under the bus to cover for their own shortcomings. Dickheads often exhibit obvious deficiencies in their integrity.

A dickhead can be a man or a woman, the term is gender-neutral.

A lot of the time it's ok to be a mediocre performer, as long as you're not a dickhead. There are plenty of roles for non-star performers, but what teams won't have any room for, is dickheads.

Dickheads ruin everything by killing the energy in the workplace with their toxic vibes. If a dickhead is accidentally hired, you'd better make sure you get rid of them during their probation period, otherwise, you'll have a hell of a time fixing your mistake.

It is for this reason that many companies (or individual teams, with sensible managers) have an unwritten “no dickheads” rule.

The final stage interview with a senior manager is sometimes referred to as the “dickhead check” to make sure the candidate isn’t a dickhead.

You can get away with a lot in the Trust Matrix, as long as you’re not a dickhead. You can be flaky, you can sometimes not be on time. But if you’re branded a dickhead by the people who know you well, you will carry the title of “dickhead” wherever you go.

Here’s a real-life example: The character of Moe Szyslak in *The Simpsons* has been voiced by Hank Azaria since the first episode - but he wasn’t originally cast for Moe. Moe was going to be voiced by an actor called Christopher Collins. Collins’ work was great, but the other staff and actors found him so unpleasant to work with that he was booted off the show and missed out on the opportunity to play the voice of an iconic character in the greatest animated television show of all time.

So remember, don’t be a dickhead.

This excerpt is from a short book about trust in Human Networks called “The Trust Matrix” written by Leon Poggioli. If you would like a copy of the entire book, you can order a physical copy or kindle on Amazon. You can read more about Leon at leonpoggioli.com