

## Make it Work Q &amp; A

## Head office is not listening



Coach Vera Held's verdict on difficult situations at work.

Vera N. Held, Special to QMI Agency



**Q: I've successfully managed a high-end factory outlet woman's clothing store for several years. But management still sends us many items at regular retail prices. I tell them our stock must be priced at a 30% discount to start but they refuse to listen.**

A: You know your clients, what they're buying and how much they are willing to pay for things. Don't let your frustration continue to mount. Find an ally at head office and share your valuable consumer data. Meanwhile, continue to cater to your

customers.

**Q: A married colleague knows that I'm available on Friday evenings; that's when my boyfriend goes out with the boys. He texts me every Friday night looking for support with his unhappy marriage. I don't know what to do.**

A: This chap is an opportunist of the very worst kind. He's coming to you to fill the gaps in his life; meaning, you're the go-to girl for all that he's not getting at home. Tell him to contact you only during work hours and on work-related items. Also recommend that he get marriage counselling; make it clear that "counsellor" is not in your job description, nor are you qualified. Don't waste your valuable personal time helping this guy with his personal problems or he could well become the biggest problem in your life.

**Q: I work medical reception for a family practice physician and I love it. However, we have a few patients who refuse to tell me what the problem is when they call in (some are embarrassed because it's personal) and they demand to speak directly to the doctor.**

A: The doctor needs to explain to these patients that they must follow the professional protocol of the office. Meaning, the patient first tells you the problem, so you can consult with the doctor to prioritize the help (appointment, telephone advice, referral, etc.) that's needed. If a patient states that it's "personal" ask, "Personal Medical?" This should clear the path for the patient to confide in you despite feeling embarrassed. However, if there is a patient who consistently calls and asks to speak to the doctor without first going through you, consider discharging that patient. There's no way you can efficiently run a busy medical practice unless you can rank priority medical issues. Patients need to know the doctor who is seeing booked



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patients is also consulting with you, giving telephone advice and speaking to specialists in between appointments. Plus you have to accommodate walk-in emergencies. Demanding job. Good luck.

Vera Held ([www.veraheld.com](http://www.veraheld.com)) is a coach, facilitator, speaker, writer, PR consultant and the author of *How Not to Take it Personally*. Send your workplace questions to [vera@veraheld.com](mailto:vera@veraheld.com).

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### Your Opinion Matters

#### What justifies faking a sick day?

- feeling self-entitled
- being stressed out
- undergoing a family emergency
- having a difficult medical condition
- awaiting a new Apple product release
- camping out for concert tickets
- sitting an interview for another employer
- hearing the local ski conditions
- cocooning with your partner for the day
- it's never justified

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