

# What do you call me when I work for you?

*Words matter.*

*Relationships in the workplace are influenced by the labels we use.*

## ● Staff

A staff is a homogenized, subservient group of people that are compulsorily obligated to their superiors. In this paradigm, there is no consideration of the individual: staff members have no intrinsic value other than as part of the whole. This contributes to a strong undertone that staff members may be discarded and replaced on a whim.

## ● Worker

Slightly less demeaning, this term is often used in 100-year old legal texts. While it may seem intuitive, this term actually disconnects a person from the organization's vision, while simultaneously sapping any independent initiative. The person's value is reduced to an interchangeable machine part.

## ● Subordinate

This term is great for leaders who are self-important and better than everyone else. Referring to people as subordinates is the perfect way to create an artificial power imbalance. It lets everyone know that you demand respect, even if you have not earned it or shown it to others.

## ● Associate

Calling someone an associate displays a lack of effort and an air of uncaring. It is equivalent to saying that I am someone you currently work with.

## ● The Help

Don't. For real. It's not colloquial or quaint. It's just condescending and offensive.

## ● Personnel

This term is militaristic in origin. It was originally used in contrast to matériel. It considers people as a resource. It is a somewhat dated term.

## ● Employee

"Person employed." The verb "employ" can be traced back to the Latin word *implicāre*, which means "to engage". This term recognizes the person, the organization, and the relationship between the two.



*Unless you are writing a formal document, though, just call me by my name. I feel good when people know me by name.*

**If you are having trouble relating to your workforce, Blue Ivy can help.**