According to our study of more than 950 people, 93 percent of employees work with people whose bad behavior or chronic poor performance should make them a target for outplacement, yet they get away with just about anything and are accountable for almost nothing.

The research also reveals the high costs of working around these “untouchables”—this kind of bad behavior damages morale, quality, and productivity. It also drives away valuable, productive employees. What’s more, 94 percent of respondents said the problems caused by the “untouchable” are widely known. Peers, direct reports, and even bosses are usually fully aware of what is going on.

This type of behavior has been satirized on popular TV shows like NBC’s hit comedy, “The Office.” Michael Scott, played by Steve Carell, is the infamous regional manager who remains on the payroll despite incompetence, vulgarity, and meanness.

The research reveals that less than one in four people confront “untouchable” coworkers about behavior or performance. Instead, they work around them, complain to others, or avoid their coworker altogether. So the real problem is not that ‘untouchables’ exist in organizations; rather the problem is that they are not confronted about their bad behavior. In fact, 91 percent say the problem has continued unaddressed for a year or more. More than half say the problem has continued for four or more years.

An innovator in corporate training and leadership development, VitalSmarts combines three decades of original research with 50 years of the best social science thinking to help leaders and organizations change human behavior and achieve new levels of performance. VitalSmarts has identified four high-leverage skill sets that, when used in combination, create healthy corporate cultures. These skills are taught in the Company’s award-winning training programs and New York Times bestselling books of the same titles: Crucial Conversations, Crucial Accountability, Influencer, and Change Anything. VitalSmarts has consulted with more than 300 of the Fortune 500 companies and trained more than one million people worldwide. www.vitalsmarts.com