FRONTLINE SUPERVISOR

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**MIIA
Employee
Assistance
Program**

800.451.1834

Holding Employees Accountable

Q. How can I do a better job of holding my employees accountable?

A. Most supervisors know that accountability includes asking employees to answer for their results. But it means a lot more. Accountability is not just an after-the-fact assignment of credit or blame. When it is truly a part of the work culture, accountability becomes a workplace expectation in the forefront of everyone's minds. A culture of accountability is not difficult to establish, but you have to nurture it. It starts with defining accountability at the most basic level, so that no employee is confused about his or her role in the organization or what it takes to do outstanding work. With this clarity, employees are compelled to reach for outstanding results, and demand the same from their coworkers. Think of it as a pull strategy rather than a push strategy for results. Meeting with employees to troubleshoot barriers to achievement propels them to accomplish more. Later, holding employees accountable with proper rewards or consequences completes the loop. Accountability can backfire when a foundation for it has not been laid: employees may resent it, and supervisors may be hesitant to assign it.

Fear-Based Workplace

Q. What is a fear-based workplace? Do I work within one, and how can I make a difference to improve the work environment for my employees?

A. A fear-based workplace is one marked by significant employee anxiety, insecurity, and trepidation. In such an environment, productivity is a result of motivation driven by fear, rather than by what employees might gain or achieve. Fear-based workplaces are usually characterized by toxic relationships that flourish, with drama, infighting, turf wars, and warring over resources, money, or power. Most workplaces don't remain fear-based very long before a crisis erupts and opportunity for change appears. At the supervisory level, you can prevent the birth of a fear-based workplace by 1) encouraging work-life balance; 2) keeping open communication among employees to help shut down rumors; 3) encouraging collaboration among employees; 4) not making everyone only "live by the numbers," but also recognizing human-istic and intangible forms of success; 5) encouraging information sharing and decision making; and 6) communicating with the ranks. Don't make decisions mysteriously in unexplained closed-door meetings.

Management Consultation Services

- Employee Performance
- Change Management
- Workplace Trauma
- Conflict Resolution
- Layoff Support
- Lunch & Learn Seminars
- Management Trainings
- Organizational Stress

Employee Services

Confidential Counseling
- Addiction
- Anxiety
- Depression
- Family Issues
- Stress Management
- Work Concerns

Resources & Referrals
- Legal
- Financial
- Child Care
- Elder Care

MIIA MASSACHUSETTS BASED MEMBER DRIVEN

Developing Strong Team Players

Q. What are the most important skills for developing employees into strong team players? Can the EAP be a resource for me in acquiring or improving these skills?

A. Your relationship with employees is your most important tool for helping them grow into productive and satisfied workers. Being a good reviewer and evaluator, along with knowing how to provide useful feedback, are the skills you seek. To do these things well, keep in mind the following: 1) Create an environment where employees expect feedback. 2) Train employees to perform self-assessments well, so they can challenge themselves. 3) Know what you want to measure, and don't keep it a secret. 4) Encourage your employees to come to you early with concerns, and praise them for it with a welcoming attitude. Recognize that this is one of the most powerful yet underappreciated dynamics of effective supervision. 5) Think about how you want each of your employees to develop, based on his or her temperament and skills. 6) Always plan feedback, so it is given effectively and well-received. 7) Use the EAP to help you develop and enhance your relational skills in any of the above.

Personality Clash

Q. How do I get two employees whose personalities clash severely to get along? The EAP is great, but I think these two are beyond help. These employees have significant differences in their backgrounds, energy levels, values, attitudes, work styles, and more.

A. Despite the serious differences between your employees, it is not practical to say all hope is lost. Realize that employees in severe conflict usually evolve to the point of impasse they are experiencing. The conflict may appear to be an instant phenomenon, but unacceptable behavior, sabotage, withholding of information, territorial disputes, and complete unwillingness to sit down and iron out problems typically come with time. What fuels growth of this toxic relationship is a perceived lack of consequences by the warring parties for continuing their dispute. Indeed, managers often back off, tolerate the conflict, hope for the best, and only intermittently get involved during brief crises. Your first step should be to meet with the EAP to discuss the problem privately. Then examine your commitment to making improvement of the working relationship nonnegotiable, plan the referral, and make decisions about how you will respond should a resolution not be forthcoming. Predictably, both employees would like to be in less pain. This reality offers strong assurance that the EAP will be able to help.