

FRONTLINE SUPERVISOR

Summer 2012



In this issue:

- Supervisor Approachability
- Helping Employees Find Fulfillment
- Bullying Behaviors
- Workplace Politics
- The EAP Consultation

Supervisor Approachability

Q. Is being “approachable” important for a supervisor? I keep an open-door policy and am always available. Doesn’t this mean I am approachable?



A. Approachability is a valuable strength for a manager, and usually means he or she is an effective communicator. Being approachable reduces risk to the organization and

increases the likelihood of solving problems earlier, because employees are more willing to come to you with issues and concerns before they grow worse. Approachability is closely associated with two other traits - vulnerability (openness) and authenticity - that employees are naturally attracted to. These personality traits directly influence your reputation, likeability, and the appearance that you are approachable. Typically, such traits are also associated with warmth, patience, and the willingness to respect employees’ views, collaborate with them, and be a good listener. Do you struggle with any of the above? If so, your EAP can help you acquire the necessary skills to become more approachable.

Helping Employees Find Fulfillment

Q. How can I help my employees find greater meaning and fulfillment in their jobs? I suspect that some of my employees feel their lives are slipping away because they can’t pursue other occupational interests.



A. Your employees are no doubt thankful to have jobs, but any employee who feels unfulfilled will experience frustration. Everyone is exceptionally good at something, but not everyone has a job that plays to their strengths. To remedy this, encourage employees who demonstrate frustration to identify the things they love to do, then discover how their current job functions could be tweaked to meet those needs. The EAP can help your employees with this examination of needs. Another approach: imagine a frustrated accounting clerk—who really wants to be a school teacher—organizing a money literacy event for grade-school children, sponsored by your company. This idea may improve job satisfaction, create publicity for your organization, and positively affect productivity. Many employees fear growing old and never having a job that will make a difference in the world. This need can sometimes be achieved in other ways - the task is simply to discover how.

MIIA
Employee
Assistance
Program

800.451.1834

Available 24/7

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



Bullying Behaviors

Q. What are the most common bullying behaviors in the workplace? I want to become more familiar with bullying in order to easily identify it or believe employees who come to me with complaints



A. According to one study, the most common bullying behaviors in the workplace include: falsely accusing someone of errors; staring at, glaring at, and nonverbally intimidating the person; discounting the person's thoughts or feelings; making statements such as "Oh, I can tell you're new here," "Duh," or "Everyone knows that"; giving a coworker or subordinate the silent treatment; and making up rules up on the fly. Other common bullying tactics include backstabbing, assigning undesirable work, and socially isolating the victim from coworkers. You can learn more about bullying behaviors from the EAP, but a comprehensive list is also available from the Workplace Bullying Institute. Educating employees about bullying has a major impact on preventing it. Some bullying behaviors are difficult to measure, but knowing what they are will help you hear complaints with an open mind and be less likely to minimize their significance.

Source: www.workplacebullying.org.

The EAP Consultation

Q. How can I use the employee assistance professional as a consultant? I refer employees to the EAP, but am a little unsure as to what the EAP can do for me regarding supervisor tips, process, problem solving, etc.

A. When employees and managers think of the EAP, they usually think of solving employees' personal problems; however, EAPs offer much more. EAPs have unique relational advantages in organizations based upon their trustworthiness, patience, approachability, and listening skills. They gain these strengths through training and experience. EAPs can therefore consult with you on dozens of topics and concerns associated with behavior in the workplace. A few of these include: steps you can take to improve communication with your employees; simple coaching tips to help employees resolve conflicts; managing your stress; how to attain goals; techniques for developing teams; effective and positive constructive confrontation techniques; motivating and inspiring your employees; guidance on intervening to deal with nonproductive behaviors you may witness with employees; and facilitating positive work cultures.



Workplace Politics

Q. I don't like workplace politics. I like to come to work, stay out of controversy, and go home. I also encourage my employees to watch out for politics. Is politics in an organization ever a good thing?

A. Workplace politics is how decisions in business organizations are made using relationships, influence, and power. Workplace politics can be a stressful part of any work environment, but like conflict, politics is a normal occurrence in organizations. It is therefore better to understand and manage this phenomenon for positive change. Many people confuse politics with other problems, such as gossip, unethical behavior, unfair distribution of resources, game playing, and manipulation. Any of these undesirable behaviors could be associated with workplace politics, but they don't have to be. Politics in the workplace can be a positive force for networking. As a result, materials, opportunities and intangible resources can be obtained by way of influence and association with others when these needs would not otherwise be met. This valuable use of politics can bring about positive change for the benefit of your work unit, as well as improvements in productivity.



MIIA
Employee
Assistance
Program

800.451.1834

Available 24/7