

FRONTLINE SUPERVISOR

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Summer
2015



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800.451.1834

Employee Appreciation



Q. What are the best ways to help employees feel appreciated and motivated if there is no extra money

to increase pay? Unfortunately, I need every employee to pull his or her weight, even if we don't have one extra dime.

A. The following will have a lasting impact:
1) Periodically praise an employee in front of others, especially if the audience includes people the employee looks up to or feels are important. 2) Keep the employee aware of and included or involved in organizational matters that concern his or her job. 3) Keep your eyes open for things the employee does well and make a positive comment about them. (This is called "catching the employee doing something right.") Use the same moment to ask your employee how things are going, and whether he or she needs anything from you to do his or her job. 4) Give an assignment or project that by its nature shows how much you trust the employee with something important or significant. These four strategies combined will cause an employee to feel appreciated more than almost any other approach.

Causes of Dissatisfaction

Q. I know that poor communication is the No. 1 key complaint in results of surveys administered to employees at work organizations. What other common problems lead to employee dissatisfaction with organizations?

A. Other problems ranking up there but not as high as communication complaints (which are mostly related to information flow from the top of the organization down) are lack of recognition and praise, lack of training and educational opportunities, lack of flexibility in work schedules, and lack of authority given to employees. Having "more authority" is associated with a human need to want more control of one's work in some fashion or form. The key is avoiding feeling like a cog in a wheel. Target this need and you'll be on the right track. Consider how to improve communication, feedback and recognition, and offer ways to insert training and educational opportunities into your employees' experiences at work. Stumped when it comes to how to do so? Create a peer advisory or brainstorming group to discuss the issues. You'll be amazed at the ideas that will emerge from such an approach.

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

Employee Services

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- Depression
- Family Issues
- Stress Management
- Work Concerns

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Employee Personal Problems

Q. I don't think I should reject an employee who brings a personal problem to me. There needs to be some recognition and processing of the problem for a few minutes. I think this increases the chance of the employee accepting an EAP referral later when it is recommended.

A. You should not reject an employee who musters the courage to come to you with a personal problem. You're right; to do so would decrease the likelihood of an EAP referral being accepted. Here's one approach: Listen and give some indication that you understand what is being shared, then 1) Praise the employee for coming to you, (e.g., "Mary, I am glad you felt comfortable coming to me with this."). 2) Reflect what you heard or summarize the details (e.g., "So, the bottom line is that your landlord is forcing you to leave and you have nowhere to go?"). 3) Set the stage for referral using this logical path: (e.g., "Mary, a lot of personal information is needed to help solve this problem. As your supervisor, I am not the best person to hear and retain this information, but the EAP is ideal. Can I help you arrange an appointment to see them?"). 4) Allow the employee to phone without delay while motivation is high.

Lone Ranger Syndrome

Q. What is the "Lone Ranger Syndrome" with regard to a supervisor's role?

A. The Lone Ranger Syndrome is a construct originally conceptualized by U.S. Department of Human Resources HR specialist Art Purvis in the mid-1970s, when EAPs were in a growth boom. In his work with supervisors, he often observed their reluctance to deal with their own personal problems of depression, anxiety or struggles, which were made worse by the isolation of their position. Although they might refer employees to the EAP, supervisors often believe they have to tough it out. Hence, the tendency for supervisors to help others while suffering in silence and going it alone led to the coining of the term. The message for supervisors is clear: Do not allow the job and its special stress to cause you to neglect your own health and wellness needs.

Leadership Vision

Q. I know that leadership has little to do with what I know or say, and is instead about what I can do to influence others. Can you give an example of a common leadership failure, and clarify how the EAP can help leaders be more successful?

A. Successful leadership is first grounded in competence, so there must be a foundation in your ability to do something well. But where are you leading your employees and the work unit? One common key failing of leadership is the failure to establish a vision. Effective leadership requires a vision of where you want to go. Without this vision and a set of goals to match, you lack something to rally your employees around. You can't point to the mountaintop and get people behind you. A lack of vision can cause a leader to drift, making day-to-day decisions that feel unconnected to anything larger. It becomes difficult to organize details, and the leader feels unsure of what he or she is trying to accomplish. Problems will mount, such as unhealthy coping behaviors. The leader will use fear to control employees, insisting on the importance of his or her role, but may actually feel insecure, withdrawn, depressed, and resistant to seeing the growing negative reality. The EAP can help a leader face changes that must be made, examine personal issues making problems worse, overcome fear, and offer support as a turnaround plan is implemented.



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