

# FRONTLINE SUPERVISOR

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Winter 2014

## MIIA Employee Assistance Program

### 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

## Poor Performer Feedback

**Q.** It is easier for me to give feedback to a good performer than to a poor performer. I know the poor performer needs more feedback from me, so why do I resist? Is this a problem for other supervisors too?



**A.** Giving feedback to good performers is pleasant and easy, but it's often difficult to do with employees who are poor performers. The stress of confrontation and fear of what may follow

explain the resistance. A checklist or method for giving negative feedback will help you approach poor performers more frequently. You'll also avoid nasty surprises for the poor-performing employees at their annual review. One approach: 1) Create a list of the performance issues you wish to discuss; 2) Discuss the impact of each, and the employee's awareness of that impact; 3) Share what will or could ultimately happen if the performance issues are not corrected; 4) Decide on a follow-up date and what should change by then; 5) Avoid diminishing the seriousness of performance problems with statements that relieve tension, such as "This is not a big deal, but you need to start making changes to..."); 6) Always offer help, resources, and the EAP to support the changes you require.

## Managing Procrastination

**Q.** My employees procrastinate. Can you coach me as a supervisor in helping them get their work done on time? There must be things I can do to help them dispose of this habit. I know badgering, threatening, and cajoling won't work.

**A.** Although we all procrastinate and everyone knows what procrastination is, resolving the procrastination problems that your employees face is not a one-solution-fits-all situation. There are many resources to help employees with this problem, but each employee's procrastination problem is unique. While one employee may be easily distracted, another may need better organizational skills. Some employees may have health or mental health issues such as depression that contribute to low levels of productivity, and others may have a substance abuse issue. Dozens of reasons exist, but procrastination in each case is a symptom. When you have troubled employees, contact the EAP to discuss each one separately. Then, with the help of the EAP, decide on the approach you wish to take.

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## Preventing Relationships From Deteriorating

**Q.** Employees sometimes come to me with complaints about difficult coworkers, but too often it is late in the game, when the relationships have deteriorated. How can I encourage employees to deal with their issues sooner?



**A.** Most problem relationships grow difficult because coworkers fail to sit down and hammer out differences early on. Here's a prevention strategy: 1) Have more frequent contact with your employees in a group setting where you can model appropriate communication, set a tone for cooperation, and allow employees to see you interacting with their peers. Over time, your style will establish a nonverbal, almost unconscious standard of communication that employees will emulate. 2) Have more one-on-one interactions with employees so you learn about emerging conflicts and can offer guidance sooner. 3) Increase employees' motivation to address their issues sooner. Disavow the "fix-it" role. Instead, explain that when interpersonal conflicts arise, the conflicts will not be dissected in order to establish who's to blame. Instead, conflicts will be resolved in the most expedient manner, and both parties could find that solution undesirable.

## Establishing a Culture of Innovation



**Q.** What can a supervisor or manager do to facilitate the establishment of a positive work culture that promotes collaboration, innovation, and risk taking by employees to maximize their productivity?

**A.** Terry Jones, the founder of Travelocity.com, recently gave a keynote address at an annual meeting of corporate executives. His presentation focused on how to create a work culture that generates enthusiasm for innovation. Summarized below are key points he imparted to his audience. See which ones you can institute in your work unit: 1) Don't be afraid to fail. "If you don't fail, you're not having enough at bats." 2) "Kill the project, not the person" if an idea doesn't work. 3) Study your failures like football teams review tapes of unsuccessful plays. 4) Don't dismiss out of hand ideas of line staff and lower-level employees. This is where many great ideas originate. 5) Surround yourself with diverse talents that can synergize.

Source: University of Texas Press Release  
<http://bitly.com/terry-jones-1017>

MIIA  
Employee  
Assistance  
Program

800.451.1834  
Available 24/7

### EAP Management Consultation Services Highlight: Critical Incident Stress Debriefing

Companies are often faced with an occurrence that causes stress and impacts employees in adverse ways - whether it is an on-the-job accident, a sudden death, or a major illness of a fellow staff person. It has been found to be extremely beneficial to intervene shortly after such an occurrence to minimize the impact on employees. The EAP provides consultation to management, group and individual meetings with employees, and follow-up services. In addition, the EAP offers training to Human Resources and other company personnel about critical incident stress in order to prepare for such occurrences and develop appropriate protocols.

