



SUPERVISOR NOTES

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A NEWSLETTER OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT IDEAS

Employee Assistance Program

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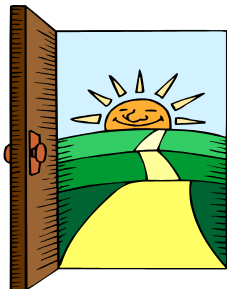
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Q. I want to make a good impression on my employees now that I am their new supervisor. What will employees focus on most as they "size me up" over the next several months?

A. Your employees will pay attention to what you say and do, but what they see will make a stronger impression. Many supervisors make the tactical error of focusing on impressing employees with their knowledge in the quest to gain respect. However, rule number one is to be a visible worker who puts in a full day and comes to work on time. If you demand excellence from employees, be sure to hold yourself to the same standards. If you are not a visible supervisor, communicate frequently with employees so they can understand the goals and objectives you are pursuing. Listen to them; solicit their opinions and feedback as you develop and share your vision of the future. Whenever possible, avoid starting off by dictating changes. By engaging employees in the process, you help them to take ownership of the decisions and increase the likelihood they will follow you. Gaining respect works on the law of attraction, and this "pull" strategy will work more successfully than a "push" strategy that demands or attempts to impress employees into recognizing you.

Q. I have many employees and I must ensure that they stay motivated. I know employees have to motivate themselves and that I can't do it for them. So what is my role in the process? How do I play an influential part in motivating employees?



Q. I see a fair amount of disrespect between coworkers on the job—things like backbiting, name-calling, gossip, and being inappropriate with jokes. I attribute it to stress and the economy.

A. It's been said that motivating a large group of employees can be like herding a group of cats. Each one is an individual, and therefore you must look at employee motivation in much the same way. Motivating the employees you supervise starts with getting to know them as individuals. This doesn't mean you probe them for personal information. Instead, it means spending time with them individually, getting to know them at work, and discovering their likes and dislikes in the general course of a workplace relationship. This will help your employees recognize that you care about them, which is crucial to creating an atmosphere where motivation flourishes. Additionally, by engaging them in the development and planning for goals, you create a shared responsibility where people are more willing to voluntarily contribute as they feel personally invested in the outcome. Add a generous dose of praise when ever possible.

A. Don't be fooled, it isn't the stress. If backbiting, name-calling, gossip, and general nastiness are the norm where you work, then you've got yourself a respect problem—one that you need to get a handle on yesterday, if not sooner. Few things brew trouble like excusing bad behavior. Left unchecked, disrespectful interactions feed on themselves, growing into a culture of personal conflict and simmering resentment. Respect is an group mind-set that must be promoted and practiced from the top down. By not actively confronting negative behavior, you are condoning it. Demand respect from those you supervise in their dealings with each other. Model respectful behavior and make an issue of anything that crosses the line. Groups generally take on the values of the leader; use your influence and control to change the norm.

Call the EAP for a confidential consultation about supervisory concerns, job-related issues or personal problems.

Information contained in *Supervisor Notes* is for general information purposes only and is not intended as specific guidance for any particular supervisor or human resource management concern. For specific guidance on handling individual employee problems, consult with one of our Employee Assistance Program professionals.