



SUPERVISOR NOTES

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A NEWSLETTER OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT IDEAS

Employee Assistance Program

278-5018 ↔ eap@csus.edu

Webpage: www.csus.edu/eaprogr

Douglas Adams, LCSW, EAP Clinician

Cathy Connors, Psy.D, EAP Clinician

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Q. Can you describe in simple terms how to meet and confront an employee with performance problems so the interview is effective?

A. Meet with your employee in private about the issue or concern. Describe what happened from your perspective. Never become agitated or aggressive with your employee. Ask the employee for his or her account or explanation of the behavior, action, or performance shortcoming. Inform the employee about the negative effects of the performance issue on efficiency and/or on the workplace. Ask the employee if there is anything else that explains the continuation of performance problems. Provide feedback or make a statement regarding what is commendable about the employee's performance. (This piece is often overlooked by supervisors, but can motivate employees to improve performance.) Inform the employee that his or her current performance is not acceptable. Describe what you want done differently, what must change, and when those changes must occur. Ask what resources or assistance the employee may need to meet the expectations. Let the employee know the ultimate outcome if performance does not change or improve. Remind the employee about the EAP or incorporate a supervisor referral as appropriate.

Q. My employee does not follow through on assignments that I delegate. When I ask why, the employee says it is "busywork". Perhaps I have delegation all wrong. How do I know for sure?



Q. How can I support employees who remain during these trying times? People who leave are not replaced, so more is expected from those who are left. Frustration and stress are growing. Perhaps I should make myself scarce because I represent management, the target of their frustration.

A. It's not hard to determine whether you are delegating work to your employee or simply piling on tasks that you need done. Many supervisors do not know the difference. Employees often do, as signified by their reaction to what and how things land in their laps. Ask yourself if the assignment you are delegating frees you up to do what matters most. Do you spend time training and motivating employees regarding the assignments given to them? If you're just anticipating a due date, that's not delegation. Delegation will test your communication skills. Encouragement; delivery of praise for a job well done; and provision of tools, resources, and authority are often necessary in the delegation process. What about goals, timetables, and expectations? Have you explained the importance of the assignment and how you will measure success? With delegation, both you and your employee grow from the experience. Although not part of your question, the manner in which your employee raises their concern (simply not following through) should not be acceptable.

A. Do not make yourself scarce. You have the ability to influence employee attitudes and improve morale by what you say, do, and don't do. If employees are angry and upset, you will ratchet up their feelings of resentment by avoiding them. Likewise, coping with your stress by hiding out will also backfire. Adjusting will take time, but remember that you and your employees want the same thing—a happier workplace. As a manager, you take center stage and employees are waiting and watching to see if you demonstrate compassion and understanding. This is crucial to their coping. Employees can then move to the next stage of adaptation and acceptance of change. Never declare that employees should "get over it." Instead, look to build a common view based on prioritizing your shared goals.

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.