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Whether it is a work, family or personal issue, LifeWorks is here for you and your employees. **Call us.**

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HANDLING CHANGE IN THE WORKPLACE:

Because of e-mail, change in your organization needs to be addressed asap.

You don't need to wait until you're sure of every detail before sharing information with your team. It's okay to communicate half the picture, if that's all you know, "Here's what I know now and it may change tomorrow, but I want to keep you in the loop." Employees can handle some uncertainty. But when big change is sweeping the company and they are hearing nothing from their supervisor, that's when they start to fill in the blanks with usually negative news. - The Motivational Manager

Managers



SUCCESSFUL MANAGING

Leading By Example ...

The best way to encourage professional behavior from your staff is to demonstrate it in your own leadership. Earn the respect of your staff by adhering to these dos and don'ts:

- **Do arrive on schedule.** Showing up for work or meetings on time tells your staff that you take them and your responsibilities seriously.
- **Don't leave early.** Refrain from taking long breaks and lunches or routinely leaving early while your employees labor at their work. Staff will notice if you shirk your duties or seem to put in fewer hours than your share. If circumstances, such as an off-site meeting, keep you from reporting as scheduled, be sure your staff knows you were on the job.
- **Do respect boundaries.** You may be friendly with direct reports, but don't try to be their buddy. Avoid exchanging deep personal information with your staff.
- **Don't play therapist.** If employees are having relationship, financial, or substance-abuse problems that undermine their productivity, refer them to

your EAP. But don't try to take on those counseling duties yourself. You are qualified to advise workers on how to improve their job performance, not how to live their lives.

- **Do be discrete.** Keep your own personal issues out of the workplace. Employees will have a hard time thinking of you as their leader after they've heard you doing battle with your significant other over the phone or seen you flirting with a company vice president in the hallway.

- **Don't let your hair down.** Just because you're enjoying an after-hours activity - company softball game, department happy hour - with your staff doesn't mean you can throw caution to the wind and whoop it up. You're still the boss, no matter the occasion.

- **Do lend a helping hand.** One way to win staff loyalty is by offering to pitch in when workers are struggling with a heavy load. Your willingness to help workers will make them more receptive to going the extra mile for you.

- Motivational Manager

MAKING LIFE WORK FOR YOU & YOUR EMPLOYEES

WE'RE HERE FOR YOU

Q & A

Q: *As a new supervisor, I began playing the tough guy and often threatened employees with their jobs in order to demonstrate control. I realize I was wrong to take this approach. Is there any hope that I can win back the trust that I lost with my style?*

A: Employees and supervisors prefer harmony and will work to avoid the stress that your past management style produced. This desire for a harmonious workplace provides the hope that you can turn things around. It is likely that you have important personal issues to address to ensure the fundamental changes you desire. Your EAP can assist you with these goals so you do not return to your former supervision style.

You will need to fix one relationship at a time. If practical, meet in private with each employee to acknowledge your supervision style and the changes you have committed to make in order to improve morale. Although you will feel vulnerable with this approach, it is the one that will accelerate regaining the trust you desire. You will soon discover that most employees respect authority and respond favorably to a more supportive supervision style.

—Adapted from *The Frontline Supervisor*

For more information about managing styles, contact:

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EFFECTIVE MANAGING

Finding Your Comfort Zone When Confronting Poor Performers

Some managers have passive personalities. They cringe at the idea of confronting workers about performance issues. Others have the opposite problem: They're aggressive and struggle to be tactful when offering criticism. But like Goldilocks, managers must find a happy medium between too hot and too cold. To develop a feedback style that's just right:

- ✓ **Devise a plan.** Think about the specific changes your employee must make, then develop a timeline for helping the employee achieve that goal. Creating a firm strategy for performance improvement will make it easier for passive managers to muster courage to approach an employee, and will help prevent aggressive managers from demanding too much too soon.
- ✓ **Give specific examples.** If you get nervous when confronting workers, you may become tongue-tied when trying to clarify what they're doing wrong. And if you tend to be brusque, you may be tempted to say, "Just do it," rather than explaining why. Both problems are easily resolved if you approach the worker with a prepared list of two or three examples of the inappropriate behaviors along with suggestions for more effective alternatives.
- ✓ **Connect the dots.** Whether you're passively sighing in frustration or aggressively grumbling aloud, one key to motivating improved performance is demonstrating what employees have to gain by modifying their behavior. Explain how their work benefits customers, the company, their team, and their career ambitions.
- ✓ **Address issues promptly.** Whether you're passive or aggressive, the one thing you can't afford to be in confronting performance problems is delinquent. A problem avoided is a problem quickly magnified. Without your guidance, workers will continue to get it wrong and everyone in their orbit—colleagues and customers—will suffer the consequences. Other workers may become resentful of those who seem to get away with murder and begin acting out—or they may be influenced by the erring worker to get it wrong themselves. Soon you'll find yourself having to confront more performance problems. Make it easier on yourself by acting promptly to resolve these issues.

—Adapted from "Truth or consequences: How to give employee feedback," by Judith Lindenberg



ENHANCING MANAGEMENT SKILLS

Increasing your people-management skills:

- ◆ **Release stress.** When you carry around pent-up stress and frustration, you're an explosion waiting to happen. Maintain your professionalism—and increase your happiness and longevity—by looking for ways to reduce everyday stress.
- ◆ **Cancel conflict.** Take a class in conflict resolution. Learning how to be a good mediator will make you a more effective leader and enhance your profile within your organization.
- ◆ **Foster cooperation.** "Because I said so" doesn't work on kids, and it definitely won't work on employees. Instead of issuing orders, work with employees to gain cooperation. And don't be too quick to ladle rewards to get buy-in. Strengthen your negotiating skills by discovering how to get workers to embrace new directives without being bribed.

- ◆ **Promote independence.** Help workers further their own professional goals by letting them make decisions about how to proceed with their projects. Offer guidance as needed, but give them the opportunity to make some calls on their own.
- ◆ **Address issues.** Beware of letting problems fester because you're uncomfortable dealing with them. Small problems left unattended may quickly escalate and draw in additional combatants. Quickly respond to employee complaints.
- ◆ **Boost esteem.** Learn to encourage workers by praising their accomplishments rather than just doling out kudos for the heck of it. If you overpraise, workers will come to expect applause for every task and positive feedback will lose its meaning.

—Adapted from "The top 10 best tools for improving relationships at home AND work," by Jody Johnston Pawel