



The Frontline Supervisor

Helping You Manage Your Company's Most Valuable Resource – Employees
Solutions Employee Assistance Program 1-800-526-3485

Q – When things go wrong with something an employee does, I'm not sure of the best way to approach the situation. I don't want to discourage them but I do want to correct whatever the problem is. Can you give me some suggestions on how to approach this?

A – When things go wrong it's best to start off by being genuine. It's natural to be afraid to hurt someone's feelings, but without honest feedback, he can't possibly improve or learn from his mistakes. Not letting someone take responsibility for their mistakes can rob them of a sense of personal control. Be specific about what needs to improve and how that can be accomplished and use those actions he has the power to change. Don't praise the effort unless the situation was a no-win one. Studies have shown this can lead to people feeling powerless. Praise instead aspects of their performance under their control, such as their planning, persistence, or creativity.

Q – As in many workplaces, there has been a great deal of uncertainty and anxiety in our company lately and I'm unsure of the best way to deal with it. I'd like to run away but don't think this is the solution. What can I do?

A – As a leader, how you deal with this will have a great impact on your employees. Avoiding the situation may feel less stressful, but now is when employees need to hear *more* from you, not less. Share whatever information you do have and share it multiple times. Don't assume everyone can take it in the first time. Also, find out what their questions are and do your best to answer them accurately. If you don't know something, tell them, and that you'll do your best to find out. Lead by example, be calm and continue to do your job. Actions speak louder than words and remember that your employees are always watching how you deal with things.

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Call Solutions EAP for free, confidential consultation regarding an employee you may want to refer to the EAP: 1-800-526-3485.

Look for Solutions on-line: www.solutions-eap.com

Civility at Work

It's not always easy being nice. Deadlines, conflict, difficult people all can make it stressful and harder to be polite. Workplaces work better when people get along. We can be more efficient when our energies are not distracted by friction at work. Just think of your own experiences. In an article by Tom Terez on www.BetterWorkplaceNow.com, he discusses ways to build a kinder workplace.

- ✓ **Say what you mean, mean what you say.** “And don't say it mean.” Be genuine.
- ✓ **Resist giving advice.** Seek it out instead.
- ✓ **Don't jump to conclusions.** Go to the source, get the facts, then decide
- ✓ **Find something positive.** Look for a positive quality in that person who drives you crazy.
- ✓ **Give a thoughtful greeting.** Skip the mindless how-ya-doing. Show genuine interest.
- ✓ **Say thank you.** Sincere appreciation is powerful stuff. If you're overdue, make up for it right away.
- ✓ **Share credit and compliments.** Include everyone who helped, because someone always has.
- ✓ **Promise only what you can deliver.** If you fail, explain why.
- ✓ **Don't assign blame.** When things go wrong, fix what's wrong, don't blame.
- ✓ **Widen your social circle.** Don't always mix with the same group, invite someone new.
- ✓ **Give a gift for no reason.** Give to the group in general, candy, plants, etc.
- ✓ **Don't pass along rumors.** Let them go in one ear and out the other.
- ✓ **Step outside of only work related conversation.** Inefficient chats can have good results.
- ✓ **Show interest in someone else's interests.** We all like to share our passions.
- ✓ **Admit when you're wrong.** It's hard to do but shows your integrity.
- ✓ **Involve others in decision making.** This is part of good teamwork, we all like to contribute.
- ✓ **Give the computer a rest.** Instead of an email, walk over with the message instead.
- ✓ **Avoid making judgments about others.** Try it for a day, its tough!

These suggestions can increase the civility in your workplace and therefore decrease the stress and conflict. Give it a try and see how it works for you.

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