

Supervisor/HR Newsletter

Helpful Resources from your Employee Assistance Program

Public Employee Benefits Alliance

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Building Trust in Your Business Relationships

In our personal and professional lives, trust is the glue that can either make or break a relationship. In business, trust can make you a better worker, a better manager and more valuable to your customers.

Author and Clarion Enterprises founder Bruna Martinuzzi offers advice to help you build trust in your business relationships.

- **Listen.** Be there for your co-workers, clients and customers by hearing what they have to say and listening to their needs. Always remember that people come before profits.
- **Be better.** Your customers and staff members are continuously evolving, so to keep up with their shifting needs, companies must evolve their practices and products. That means always working to improve offerings, from customer service and products to employee programs.
- **Start within.** Trust starts within companies. An organization that harps on mistakes and promotes competition among coworkers will create an environment of separation, inevitably destroying trust among employees. Instead, foster a positive environment that makes everyone feel safe.
- **Walk the talk.** If you say you're going to do something, do it. Nothing communicates trust like a person who keeps her promises and delivers on her word. If you can't keep a promise, maintain integrity by immediately explaining yourself to the person you made that promise to.
- **Commit to consistency.** You need to practice self-control and develop the emotional intelligence to keep yourself on an even keel. Bad moods spread fast and employees will always be on edge if they never know how you will treat them or react when problems arise.
- **Look for a win-win.** Avoid right-versus-wrong thinking and instead try to bring about a win-win situation for customers and employees when conflicts arise. Go the extra mile to make people feel valued and that value will fall back on you.
- **Keep learning.** Seek out resources on building trust and becoming a better leader. This will help you grow, build credibility and reliability.

Source: <http://www.businessmanagementdaily.com/37176/building-trust-in-your-business-relationships>

How to Improve the Engagement of Your Employees



Organizations that have an engaged workforce experience significant increases in the productivity and retention of their employees. Research has found that highly engaged workers believe that they positively impact the quality and service provided by their organization. In addition, one study reported that engaged employees are 35% more likely to stay in their current jobs.

Drivers of Employee Engagement

Below are several management practices that can drive increased levels of employee engagement in an organization:

- *Proactively connect with your employees* - Supervisors who prioritize spending quality time with their employees tend to have a more engaged team. Get to know your employees' needs and goals, so that you can assign work to them in the areas of their strengths and interests.
- *Communicate the importance of the work that they do* - An employee's perception of the importance of their job has a greater impact on loyalty than any other factor. Help your employees to see how their role is contributing to the organization's success and future (the overall mission, departmental goals, financial performance, etc.)
- *Give employees input into the work they are assigned* - Whenever possible, solicit employee input into department goals, project plans, etc. As you assign work, provide the "what" (project, task, goals, etc.), but let the employees decide the "how" (specific work plan, methods, etc.).
- *Provide consistent communication* - Keep your employees informed about what's going on in the organization-knowledge is empowering. In addition, give continual feedback about their performance, and regularly provide recognition & appreciation for their contributions. Recognition is a powerful motivator!
- *Maintain a positive workplace culture* - Create an emotionally safe environment for your team that is respectful and non-punitive. An environment like this encourages employees to be creative, share innovative ideas, etc.

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Ask Your EAP!

The following are answers to common questions supervisors have regarding employee issues and making EAP referrals. As always, if you have specific questions about referring an employee or managing a workgroup issue, feel free to make a confidential call to the EAP for a management consultation.

Q. How can I earn more credibility with my work unit and team? I know many of them are far more knowledgeable than I am, yet I hesitate to let on how much I don't know. It's a Catch-22: I know the least, but I must lead a team of employees who know more.

A. You can still establish credibility as a leader. Ironically, your first step is to admit what you don't know and ask for input. Many managers or supervisors have less knowledge about products, systems, and processes than those they supervise. Even if you were the one with more knowledge, the basics of supervision and leadership would be more important. Employees want you to show dedication to what they are doing. They want you to value their capabilities and help them strengthen their skills; they want to feel your passion about the job. Your employees don't want to sit in unproductive meetings; they want you to create opportunities for them and generally help them be happier on the job. Find out what your employees' unmet needs are and how to make their jobs more meaningful. You may be considered the best leader they've ever had.

Q. I am a "nice guy" supervisor. I've been with the company for 32 years. I don't hassle, chase employees, or watch them from the shadows. I admit to feeling less motivated these days to be proactive with them, but I can't decide if I'm getting lazy, experiencing depression, or what.

A. Does management have expectations for you to make tougher decisions involving your employees? If you are keeping up with their expectations, then your leadership is meeting their goals. Regardless, meet with the EAP for some consultative guidance on these issues. The EAP can provide an assessment to determine whether you are suffering from depression. You may need to establish work goals and involve your supervisor to help you reengage and get reenergized. In the meantime, be cautious. Employees who perceive supervisors as apathetic or unwilling to hold them to account are naturally incentivized to lower their productivity, increase absenteeism, and generally take advantage of that sort of leadership style. All of this increases risk on many fronts.

Q. There were a few employees I did not refer to the EAP in the past because I felt that they were too manipulative and dishonest. What's the argument for referring these employees?

A. The EAP has a programmatic approach to resolving performance problems associated with troubled workers. This perspective is lost when EAPs are thought of only as offices where employees go to get help. From the employer's perspective, the EAP approach always works. "Works" does not mean that an employee is always successfully treated and returned to his or her original state of competence and capacity, although that is the most desirable outcome. Instead, it means that every method has been provided to accommodate the employee toward the organization's goal of resolving the performance or conduct issues. The most important dynamic in this process, and the one that makes EAPs succeed, is when difficult employees accurately perceive organizational resolve and have clarity on what will happen if performance problems continue. When this happens, even the most difficult employees will often pursue wellness in their self-interest, motivated by the need to avoid job loss.

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