

Supervisor/HR Newsletter

Helpful Resources from your Employee Assistance Program

Public Employee Benefits Alliance

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Embrace a Less-is-More Approach



For many executives, more is better. They see themselves as productive when they launch more initiatives, develop more products and engage in more activities.

The constant push to add new projects can stymie your team's success. Adopting a less-is-more philosophy can free up time for those high-priority tasks that merit the most attention.

Use this mantra: Do the right things for the right reasons at the right time.

One way in which Steve Jobs saved Apple was to revamp its product development. He limited Apple's focus to 10 items that he deemed "insanely great products."

Other tips to maximize your time and energy:

- Weigh lots of options, but commit to just a few. Explore projects with an open mind, but don't get caught up in those that lack promise. It's fine to show curiosity and research myriad possibilities, but know when to move on.
- Welcome naysayers. If an employee tells you, "No, I prefer to devote my time to something else," don't flinch. Listen and dig for information. Perhaps your staffer has a better sense of what priorities produce bottom-line benefits.
- Invite input. Every three months, gather your team and ask, "If we could only achieve three things over the next three months, what should they be?" Their responses can help you harness everyone's energy on what matters most.
- Reject freely. You may think you'll gain popularity by endorsing every reasonable request. But if you try to please everyone, you'll spread yourself—and your staff—too thin.

Source: <http://www.businessmanagementdaily.com/40544/embrace-a-less-is-more-approach>



The Importance of Emotional Intelligence for Supervisors

The ability to manage our emotions at work is an important skill for every employee. Unmanaged emotions can lead to overreactions, poor judgment, and unprofessional behavior in the workplace. This skill is particularly important for supervisors and managers who are responsible for objective decision-making and modeling professional behavior for their teams.

Characteristics of Emotional Intelligence

Managers and supervisors with significant levels of emotional intelligence typically share common characteristics such as emotional self-awareness (the ability to know what you're feeling), the ability to rationally respond to strong emotions (the ability to think before reacting, etc.), and a tendency to use emotion for self-motivation (i.e., use fear of failure to take positive action to improve the situation).

Those with Well-Developed Emotional Skills are more Likely to be Effective Managers

A study done by Dale Carnegie Training revealed that a "caring" manager is one of the key elements of employee engagement. Supervisors and managers with well-developed emotional skills are better able to show that they care for their employees. This produces a more engaged and productive team.

Leaders who manage their emotions well also tend to make better decisions in the heat of battle. They have the ability to remain more objective in difficult situations, even when they're feeling powerful emotions like frustration, fear, or anger.

Supervisors and managers with well-developed emotional skills will also have the ability to recognize and be sensitive to the emotions of others, allowing them to tactfully and skillfully interact with an employee who is angry, upset, etc.

How to Enhance Your Emotional Intelligence

Below are several strategies you can use to enhance your emotional intelligence skills:

- Stay aware of what you're feeling throughout the day – when you are aware that you're feeling a strong emotion, you can manage the emotion instead of having it manage you which can lead to overreacting, making poor decisions, etc.
- Think before you speak – in stressful or challenging situations, everyone experiences the fight or flight response which includes the release of adrenaline and often the experience of strong emotions. In these situations, it's important for leaders to take a step back and think rationally so that they don't overreact emotionally.
- Have compassion for your employees – the world is a stressful place, and our employees need managers and supervisors who care about them and are committed to their success.

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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. I am a new boss and would like my employees to consider me a good one. I am not charismatic, but what can I do? How can I act to inspire and motivate them to believe in me and follow me as a leader?

A. Charismatic leaders typically demonstrate strong beliefs and are passionate about work goals. They imagine magnificent outcomes that their peers often consider unattainable. However, their genuineness and passion inspire others. This level of enthusiasm is infectious, creates engaged workers, and contributes to a positive work unit. This is what employees want. They want to be excited, and they want leadership demonstrated. You can adopt this leadership style without charisma. Commit yourself to your role and aim high. Seek input from outside resources, mentors, and personal sources of inspiration so that you can pass this energy on to your employees. This is crucial. If you remain a manager who is open-minded, teachable, and hungry to learn, and you are excited to share that energy with others, then you'll have a hard-working, dedicated team that will talk about you in positive terms for years to come.

Q. I got angry at an employee who has been doing a lousy job, and I'm sure I was pretty intimidating. How can I keep my emotions under wraps in the future? Do I need anger management counseling?

A. To reduce your risk of becoming angry in a performance counseling session, spend time planning the meeting and what you want to focus on. This will help you create the proper mind-set. A lack of structure will predispose you to act emotionally because of your feeling that you have little control over the process. This feeling will be made worse if your employee is provocative or shows indifference. Avoid feeling pressured by time in such meetings. This adds to your anxiety. Maintaining a constructive tone and calm, professional demeanor flows from proper planning, not from the practice of anger control techniques. However, if a pattern of anger reveals itself in such meetings, consider contacting the EAP to consult with a professional on how to best handle the situation and manage your emotions.

Q. It's difficult initiating conversations that an employee will find alarming and disappointing — things like dismissals, transfers, moving an office, reduction in hours, or other shockers. My problem is procrastination. How do I act sooner?

A. Recognizing the problem of procrastination indicates you're halfway to solving it. Procrastination is the number one roadblock and compounding issue that makes any difficult conversation more stressful and is the best predictor of an undesirable reaction. Almost universally, difficult conversations are delayed for one reason: waiting for the perfect time. (Example: It would be easier to tell an employee their job was being eliminated after he or she won the lottery.) To make difficult conversations easier, don't delay. It is not necessary to rehearse in front of a mirror. More helpful is knowing the answers to all the questions your employees might ask. This will reduce your anxiety the most. If you feel overwhelmed by the prospect of the meeting, call or meet with the EAP to discuss your concerns. You'll feel more empowered, and be better prepared to be of help to your employees, regardless of their reactions.

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