

FrontLine Leader

Employees — Your most valuable asset

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In this issue:

Motivating
employees to
achieve

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Encourage
resignation or
refer to EAP?

*

Coaching
employees
away from
negativity

*

Sustained
performance
improvement

This information is
provided by
Continuum EAP. If
you would like more
information on these
or other topics,
please don't hesitate
to contact us.

Q: Is there a way to not just motivate employees to do their job but also have them really go to the next level and become excited and proactive about their role and the company's mission? Or is it just pure luck if you get an employee who can motivate him- or herself like this?

Some employees do motivate themselves because they know the value of being energized. They've learned that love of the job comes by engaging the organization, understanding their role and its importance, and seeing all the possibilities before them. Other employees must be inspired and shown what lies over the mountaintop. Your ability to inspire this latter group is a critical skill that can reduce turnover and attitude problems and boost productivity.

To inspire employees, spend time with them and demonstrate your own enthusiasm so they can see it. They will be compelled to model it. Help them get clear about their role and your performance expectations. (A common complaint heard by EAPs from employees is a lack of understanding of what the supervisor wants from them.) Help employees understand the company's strategic plan and direction, their role in it, and the value of their work. Always let employees have some say in what they would like to accomplish, and set goals, evaluate, and give feedback toward that end during the year.

“IF YOUR ACTIONS
INSPIRE OTHERS
TO DREAM MORE
LEARN MORE
DO MORE and BECOME MORE
YOU ARE A LEADER”

JOHN QUINCY ADAMS

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Q: Is it ever appropriate to encourage employees to quit their job versus referring them to the EAP? I think some employees would do better with another employer and would be happier and healthier as a result.

Q: How do I coach an employee with a negative attitude? Until now, I have ignored or avoided the employee. Should I continue this approach and coach others to do the same, or intervene? If I intervene, what steps can I use before finally referring to the EAP?

The goal of Continuum EAP is to help organizations and employees work better. Oftentimes this is done by helping employees resolve personal problems that may be affecting job performance or job satisfaction. It would never be advisable to encourage an employee to quit as a solution to his or her personal issues before reminding them that Continuum has resources available to help. It would be improper for the EAP to endorse or discourage disciplinary or administrative actions, but certainly consulting with a Continuum EAP professional should be attempted early in the process. If you have not done so, reach out. Continuum can help guide you in the next best steps. If the employee chooses to meet with an EAP professional, rest assured that they will help your employee make the best decision based upon all the issues discovered in the assessment interview.

Negativity is an attitude issue within the definition of job performance. Other factors include quality of work, quantity of work, attendance, appearance, behavior and availability. Meet with your employee and discuss the negativity. Continuum recommends sharing examples so there is no dispute over what you observe. Negative attitudes can stem from many causes. Some are benign, but off-putting, like a cynical sense of humor. Others are more serious, like major complaints about the organization or supervisor or dislike of one's job. Your conversation will probably yield a good explanation for the negativity, because most employees are aware of their personality issues gained from past confrontations or relationship struggles with others. Ask your employee how your relationship with him or her can facilitate a more positive disposition. Do not tell others to cope better. Negativity has a contagious influence, so address the situation rather than risk morale problems.

Q: A couple of weeks ago, I met with an employee to discuss attendance issues and suggested the use of Continuum EAP. The employee dismissed the need for EAP intervention, and surprisingly, attendance has been perfect ever since. Should I continue to encourage use of Continuum?

A: The goal of your meeting was to help your employee make behavioral changes, specifically to improve attendance. Let your employee know you appreciate his/her efforts to meet attendance expectations. You can remind them that if they should start to struggle in the future to meet those expectations that the employee assistance program continues to be available to them.

Sometimes employees are able to make short-term changes after being given feedback, but struggle to sustain the behavioral changes. Continue to monitor your employee's attendance and provide positive feedback when they are meeting expectations. Should they fall back into missing work, contact Continuum EAP to consult about whether making a formal management referral would be appropriate.