

FrontLine Leader

Employees — Your most valuable asset

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In this issue:

Trusting your instincts with employees

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Shutting down gossip and backbiting

*

Supervisor's role after traumatic events

*

What supervisors are doing well

*

Qualities of great leaders
#3

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.

I don't want to ignore my gut if I think an employee is struggling with a serious personal problem. I know I can't probe, diagnose, or cross boundaries, but what compromise can be made so I don't ignore signals of what might be a significant unaddressed need?

?

A

Supervisors may naturally come to know their employees quite well as they discover their work goals, ambitions, personality styles, and whatever personal information they choose to share about their lives. It follows that the same supervisors will notice when things are not quite right. It is then appropriate to ask — and supervisors should ask — how employees are doing. These meaningful conversations

with supervisors may lead to employees getting help for personal problems. Seeing an employee at his or her desk all day, not interacting with others, should concern you if it is uncharacteristic. Showing concern could lead to the discovery of a serious matter and recommendation to contact Continuum EAP. Domestic abuse is an example of an issue that is sometimes spotted this way.

Q

I think most companies suffer from gossip and backbiting in the workplace, and few are completely successful at eliminating this problem. I am certain it erodes morale. What can supervisors do to effect change in this area?

A.

Organizational psychologist Glenn D. Rolfson, Ph.D., discovered through working with over 200 companies that gossip and backbiting are indeed stubborn problems. And he documented that eliminating these problems will increase productivity, reduce absenteeism, and improve morale. The tactic he discovered, after failing in other attempts, was to change behavior associated with gossip, which helped employees acquire new habits of personal awareness to change the behavior. Beyond being personally aware, he calls this "new consciousness."

He did three things that produced the result he wanted:

1. Educated employees about gossip's toxic effects.
2. Had everyone sign a commitment to eliminating it.
3. Perhaps most importantly, he discovered a way to keep that goal in front of everyone effectively to achieve "top-of-mind awareness."

See his TEDx presentation on this achievement and consider what may fit with your situation. Also, remember that Continuum EAP is a resource and can assist with your initiatives to improve morale and develop a positive workplace.

Source: *YouTube.com* (search for "Glenn D. Rolfson, TEDxOslo")

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Q: We had an employee experience a major heart attack. It was dramatic and frightening. As the boss, I was unsure what action to take the next day other than responding like everyone else to the shock and processing it. Should I have done something more?

When tragedies like the one you describe strike the workplace, the immediate response is usually obvious — engaging first responders and addressing immediate needs. Days later, supervisors wonder, “What’s my role in helping everyone? What do I say? How do I act?” You will make a huge impact on employees with the simplest things: Being more available, being empathetic, engaging Continuum EAP, being a good communicator, making it easier for others to spend time discussing or processing their reactions, finding ways to lighten the load, and being flexible with work demands. You will be surprised how employees will thank you later. You may think to yourself, “Wow, I didn’t do much.” But in fact, you really did all that was needed. Supervisors represent the organization, and tragic events are always remembered in terms of how “the organization responded.” That’s you.

Q: I’ve read the biggest complaint employees have about supervisors is lack of communication — that supervisors are inconsistent with rules or don’t praise enough. So, let’s hear what bosses are doing right, or what is complained about the least.

In one study of over 2,000 employees were surveyed about complaints regarding their boss, one of the least-mentioned complaints was sexism. It appeared as No. 49 on the list, just above “bores people with vacation photos.” So, on this front, sexism in the workplace on the part of supervisors appears to be less frequent than many people may believe, or perhaps awareness in the media has had a major impact in reducing it.

On the other hand, one significant and common complaint that appeared to be overlooked by the survey was, “Being called by my supervisor when not at work.” This complaint appeared in many variations: Being called on vacation, on weekends, after hours, etc.

See the full list at <https://spana.org/blog/bossing-it/>.

Qualities of great LEADERS

Check back next month for another featured quality.

#3 self-awareness

Understand and manage your emotions, as well as the emotions of other people.



Control your actions to positively affect outcomes.



Inner calm and outer resolve comes down to self-control.



Understand how you handle emotions and how it affects others.

Source: Eliv8