

FrontLine Leader

Employees — Your most valuable asset

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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.

Can Continuum EAP work with an employee who is having trouble as a proper “work culture fit” in our organization? Although hired with great expectations, things aren't working out well. We believe the employee will eventually leave because of not being in tune with our workplace values and style of work.



A

Employers are often concerned about work culture fit when hiring. There is a good rationale for desiring employees whose temperament complements that of the organization. However, when cultural fit does not appear after hire, working with the EAP may help discover whether issues of concern are symptoms of treatable conditions resolvable with counseling or coaching. Culture fit in many organizations is not well defined, and it can be a reason for loss of valuable talent. Many job interviews help identify employees who are adaptable, articulate, and able to persevere or show high energy, confidence, and passion for the products or services offered by the organization. If evidence of these attributes diminishes later, could an underlying problem exist that the EAP can help resolve? An assessment is the way to find out. Turnover is costly and disruptive, so it is a smart move to discuss your employee's performance issues and hope for an equitable solution that prevents loss of the worker.

Q.

I am a first-time supervisor. I am not well-versed in the subject of “supervisory skills.” Can you recommend important tips I should follow? I do not have time to read a bunch of books or attend external training.

A.

Here are a few tips to get you started, but they are not a substitute for more education.

1. Be sure you know what your job entails and the performance expectations your manager and her/his manager have for you.
2. Ask for a week to shadow a seasoned supervisor who is in good standing with your organization. This will allow you to model priorities, communication, and leadership style.
3. Think about who can mentor you later when the going gets tough.
4. Take time now to read company policies, the handbook, and the performance review system so later you are not caught off guard by violations, either employees' or your own.
5. Know who and where the experts in your organization are located, and create an easily accessible list of these individuals.

Utilize Continuum EAP consultants when conflicts arise and you need a listening ear or input. Your relationship with the EAP will be confidential, like it is for any employee.

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Q: My employee is late to work quite often, but I am helping him with ideas and suggestions, hoping to put an end to this practice. I know that lateness can be caused by personal problems, so how long should I wait before making a referral to the EAP?

In addition to offering tips to help your employee arrive to work on time, you should also be clear in expressing the problems his or her tardiness creates. It is important that the employee understands that arriving to work at the agreed upon time is an expectation and part of job performance. Once you have clearly identified your expectations then you can monitor the employee's follow through. If the employee continues to have difficulties, you can suggest that the EAP as a resource to help them identify barriers to timely arrival. If they continue to have concerns, a formal referral would be appropriate once you start corrective action. Chronic attendance problems are often associated with lack of enthusiasm, not severe personal problems, but the EAP can help address either of these concerns.

Q: Is it helpful for supervisors to discuss their personal problems with subordinates as a way of appearing more "human" and building rapport? The idea seems sound because showing oneself to be vulnerable allows employees to feel more at ease, right?

Management and supervisory skill development authors have debated the merits of supervisors sharing personal information with subordinates, and in particular, information related to personal problems or shortcomings. Employees may feel more at ease with such supervisors, but research does not show this translates to increased productivity. In fact, participating in this type of relationship can undermine the employment dynamic, which naturally includes a healthy sense of urgency to focus on one's essential job functions with due regard to the manager to whom one is accountable. When supervisors have personal problems, the best source of support and focused help is, of course, the EAP. Build rapport with employees by identifying needs, developing their talents, and helping them find meaning in their jobs. www.sciencedirect.com [keywords search: "self-disclosing weaknesses"]

Qualities of great LEADERS

Check back next month for another featured quality.

#5 commitment

Learn to appreciate the journey more than the destination and know how to face adversity with confidence.



You need to be bold and stand by your ideas.



The key to making things work, is hard work.



Show loyalty by nurturing key people to become leaders.

Source: Eliv8