

## Building Morale in the Workplace

**"If your actions inspire others to dream more, learn more, do more, and become more, you are a leader."**

**- John Quincy Adams**

Everyone knows that morale impacts how we function in all aspects of our lives. When it's up we are efficient, enthused, focused and positive about where we are and what we are doing. When it's down we aren't efficient, focused or enthusiastic about much of anything.

Management sets the emotional "tone" of the workplace environment. As a manager increasing your awareness of how you impact your staff's morale will improve your effectiveness dramatically and decrease the causes of low morale. Low morale in the workplace can lead to poor attendance, lack of motivation, employee attrition, poor productivity, overall dissatisfaction among staff, and a disconnection between employees and management. In the current stressful times employees may also be concerned about job security and their financial welfare.

The key to improving employee morale in the workplace starts with enhancing **communication** between management and staff members. This may involve not only informing them of what the **expectations** are regarding job performance, accountability and communication, but also providing a consistent mechanism for **feedback**. Employees need to know that they can go to management and that someone will listen. Once a person voices their thoughts and contributes to the solution they will feel involved and valued by management. Remember communication is an exchange of thoughts, ideas, and perceptions and always includes active listening!

Let's look at other important ways to improve employee morale. **Fairness** is something that is important to all of us. In settling a dispute, always evaluate **all** sides, set the criteria and then, you must make a decision/judgment. If you remain undecided it will be seen as a lack of management's decisiveness and the absence of clear goals and expectations, which will not be readily received by the parties involved. **Trust** is another important element in improving morale. Don't micromanage, it implies distrust! When you give employees the power to do their jobs you are showing you trust them. Provide employees with **constructive feedback** and **support**, but let them do their job. Be **candid** about how things are going. If things aren't going well, address the problems early on and nip any gossip in the bud. Gossip is the enemy of a happy work place and candor is the best way to fight it. **Acknowledge** even the smallest successes. Any kind of success will improve morale. Recognize individuals, as well as the whole department or office. This will give all involved a boost and will begin a positive movement towards improving morale. Provide positive **feedback**, both publicly and individually. Express your **appreciation** in both verbal and written communication. **Rewarding performance** is another way to acknowledge successes. Rewards can span the range of monetary and non-monetary recognition.

Fun and inexpensive ways to improve employee morale might include, gift cards, gift baskets, acknowledgement in your company newsletter, or posting on a bulletin board, recognition at company meetings, team building activities, Friday breakfasts, or lunch, and outside company activities which may include family members such as, bowling, beach party, miniature golf,

something that will be interactive and fun.

As you implement these suggestions, not only will you be a better manager, you will also begin to notice improved attendance, increased motivation, a decrease in attrition, productivity will improve, and finally, overall satisfaction among staff and management.

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