

ST APPOINTMENTS

MAKING OPPORTUNITIES KNOCK ON YOUR DOOR

Motivation and solving office conflicts

THE CONSCIENTIOUS and well-meaning owner of a small business cannot seem to get his work force motivated, despite a good benefits package and pleasant working environment. "I am coming to the conclusion that it doesn't pay to be nice to people," he says. "Maybe if I fired a few of them I'd get better results."

The supervisor of a 100-employee division of a large company says his employees are demoralized; he wants to know ways to increase their motivation.

An office manager is stunned to find out that two of her best employees told another supervisor she did not like them. "They are both top performers, and I can never remember being dissatisfied with them in any way," she says. "What's happening?"

These managers are discovering that managing means managing people. In the course of consulting and column writing I have found the two major problem areas for managers are how to motivate and how to reduce conflict.

Take the owner who is contemplating firing some of his employees. It is not that he is doing something wrong by giving them a handsome benefits package and good working conditions. He is just not doing enough.

If you are in his situation you should ask yourself these questions: Do your employees participate in decision making? Do they have promotion opportunities? Do you think you have made promises you have not fulfilled? Do you reward them for initiative and superior performance?

People will work for money, but except in extreme circumstances, they resist working for money alone. They also want recognition, security and opportunity. There is, accordingly, a simple solution for the supervisor of those 100 demoralized employees: Tell them "thank you."

It is human nature to like praise and to be motivated to work for it. I often tell my clients, "Do you want to make \$1,000 in five

minutes? Go and give an employee a word of praise. His work rate will increase, and he will pass along his good mood to others."

And you must be aware that all the good work and good feeling you build up can be destroyed in ways you little expect. Take the supervisor who was amazed to find out that her two best employees thought she disliked them.

It can happen like this: The manager is worried about a procurement problem. Frank, the employee, passes the manager in the corridor and greets her with a smile. The manager, engrossed in her problem, looks up briefly and mumbles a reply. Frank's mood drops. He wonders why she is angry with him, what he did, whether he is doing a good job.

The next day, the procurement problem takes a turn for the worse. Frank tries again. This time the manager does not even respond. Frank's worst fears are con-



firmed. And the manager does not even realize it.

Why does this happen? Employees are constantly gauging their job security and

their employer's satisfaction with their performance by the expression they see on the manager's face.

OFFICE CONFLICT at its worst is caused by a deliberate troublemaker. Here is a typical case:

"I work with a manager who constantly criticizes me and the other managers. He likes to show my boss how knowledgeable he is and how he is the only guy who can get anything done around here." The boss lags it up, and the two of them have lengthy conferences discussing all the employees. This guy is bent on climbing to the top over our bodies. What should we do?"

These professional conflict makers create morale problems, credibility problems and eventual productivity problems. They can be cunning and vicious, but they flourish only where the boss is a willing participant.

Professional conflict makers devote so much of their energies to criticizing oth-

ers' performances that their own tasks are neglected. You can find subtle ways of pointing that out to their superiors.

Worth noting is that professional conflict makers rarely confine their volleys to employees. Their highly critical appraisals usually include disparaging remarks about the boss and his management style. At the appropriate time, you might wish to share with your boss your concerns about the damage being done to the boss' own image in the eyes of the employees. By the way, bring along a witness or two. It will enhance your credibility. Keep your remarks dispassionate, and your boss will see the light.

A high level of employee motivation can make a company grow and flourish. Human conflict can reduce productivity and increase turnover. Business owners would be well advised to regularly monitor both. For a business they can spell life or death - findarticles.com

Personal development: Why work?

How many people do you know who are happy with their jobs? Perhaps you are one who is working to survive and make ends meet, deriving little satisfaction from your employment. Those who find fulfillment, joy and contentment in their work do exist, but they are not the majority. One thing is sure: to be fulfilling and ultimately satisfying, work needs a long-range goal and an overall opportunity for personal development.

The many books, articles and reports that address the state of various national workforces testify to the fact that something is fundamentally wrong with the modern approach to working life. Note this comment from an anonymous essay on the Internet: "Work as we know it tends to make us unhappy because we do so much of it, because it is so repetitive, because we don't get to choose what we do, and because what we are doing is often not in the best interest of our fellow human beings." Many of us could echo that observation.

Of course, a number of factors contribute to the sense of well-being we can draw from our employment. Similarly there are specific causes for the dissatisfaction that workers experience. Identifying them may provide some helpful insight.

HARD QUESTIONS

Do we have the courage to ask ourselves whether it's possible that people weren't intended to live and work as we do today? Of course, there are implications behind such a bold question; namely, that we did not evolve from a primate life form but were created by a divine Being. Could it be possible that work has become such a burden today because we are not "working" in the way the One who created us intended?

Let's take a moment to put aside any preconceived notions we might have and explore this line of thinking to see whether there is a relationship between the purpose of human existence and where we are today in terms of work. The Bible simply says that man was created in the image and likeness of God. Religion and the Bible describes the human form but also addresses the purpose of life. In the first chapters of the Bible God reveals Himself not as a singular entity but in a family relationship—Elohim in Hebrew. In the first chapter of John's Gospel we learn that Jesus Christ was known as "the Word" before He came in human form. As the Word He was with God and He was God. So, long before the earth and human life existed, there were two Beings who have always existed. **free-articles-zone.com**



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