Boosting Employee Morale

PAS
Personal Assistance Services

High morale reduces turnover, improves performance, creates loyalty, and generally makes for a more pleasant work environment. Nothing makes a manager's job easier than supervising a group of people who enjoy coming to work.

What many managers don't realize is that the best ways to boost morale are free.

Your Role

Multiple surveys show that wages and benefits rank relatively low on the list of things that influence employee morale. So what does influence it? You. An employee's relationship with his supervisor is a prime determinant of job satisfaction. Here are some cost-free ways to start building morale today:

1. Encourage open communication and allow for respectful disagreement. Make your expectations clear. Share information, future plans, and company direction.

2. Solicit advice and input on changes, procedures, or plans that affect your employees. Pull opinions from timid employees by asking direct questions like, "Brad, what are your concerns?" and "Cheryl, do you have anything to add?" Admit that you sometimes make mistakes and don't always have the right answers.

3. Give frequent feedback. Report the wins as well as the losses. Tell your employees what they're doing right at least as often as you tell them what they're doing wrong. Use an outstanding performance as an example of how to do things the right way.

4. Praise your employees publicly for their successes. Praise them to others when they're not around to hear it. There's no greater compliment than hearing from a third party that someone has been saying good things about you.

5. Concentrate on helping employees learn and grow from their mistakes rather than on assigning blame. Create a culture of continuing education. Admit that you also have room to grow.

6. Manage disruptive employees. One person can poison an entire culture if left unchecked. Start by addressing the disruptive employee's concerns. If you can't come to a mutually satisfactory solution, termination may be necessary.

7. Discipline privately and discreetly. Don't allow disciplinary action to become personal. Be brief and to the point, and then let it go. Never humiliate or demean an employee. Never bad-mouth your employees to others.

8. Build trust by backing your employees, protecting their interests, and shielding them from unfair criticism.

9. Address employee concerns promptly, and give verbal status reports on issues that you are still working to resolve. If you can't resolve an employee concern, be up front about why. It's important for employees to know that you didn't forget about them due to lack of interest.

10. Use small perks like allowing an employee to knock off work a few hours early after completing a big project. This reinforces to employees that hard work is recognized and appreciated.

11. Learn something about each employee's personal life and show an interest in it. Share some part of yourself with them. Loan an employee one of your favorite books, share a recipe, or swap tips on the best places to shop.

12. Give employees control over their work space, desk, decorations, lighting, and other small matters. Everyone needs an occasional win.

Developing good employee morale is a matter of developing your own personal and managerial skills. Employee morale, your own included, can fluctuate as workplace dynamics change over time. View your attempts to lift morale as an ongoing process rather than an ending point. No one gets it right all the time, but the more thought and effort you put into it, the greater your success will be.