

JANUARY

WORKPLACE
SOLUTIONS, LLC

1-800-327-5071

www.wseap.com

Frontline Supervisor

EMPLOYEES - YOUR MOST VALUABLE RESOURCE

TOPICS COVERED THIS MONTH:

- Employee's needs vs. Employer's needs
- "I should've referred them to the EAP..."
- Getting Organized
- Keeping Enthusiasm on the Job
- Job Stress and Your Health

Q: I have discovered since being a supervisor that it's sometimes difficult to meet my employees' and my employer's needs equally. I try to draw a balance, but it is clearly not always possible. How do I straddle the fence of loyalty between these two groups better?

The workplace must not be a "them versus us" game. A good supervisor knows that the first responsibility is to develop a productive relationship with employees so they can get the work done. A productive relationship includes fairness, clear, good and frequent communication, and recognition and reward for productivity. Timely feedback and the willingness to listen, not necessarily agree with, employees are also essential. There is nothing wrong with looking out for your employees, but if the needs of the organization are pushed to second place in the process, you will not serve either. Management consultations with Workplace Solutions are included in your EAP contract and you may call as often as needed to discuss difficult employee situations.



One of my employees came to me and I promised her confidentiality in exchange for her

Q: telling me about her troubles at home. I should have referred her to the EAP, but now I feel I have information about her life at home that I should not keep confidential. What should I do?

You could still refer her to Workplace Solutions by saying, I've thought about what you told me and I recommend that you talk to a professional about your personal situation. The EAP is free and confidential; they have a lot of resources. They have helped many of our employees and you can reach them at 800 327 5071.

You could also call the EAP yourself to discuss ways to handle this awkward situation.

Your experience demonstrates the importance of remaining in the role of supervisor versus counselor. It's extremely difficult to do both well.



“To reduce job strain on employees, try reducing psychological pressure of work demands, by increasing the employee's control and decision making.”



Did You Know?

Supervisors, managers, HR professionals can contact Workplace Solutions® for consultation on difficult workplace situations.

Call 800.327.5071 today!

Q: I am not an organized person. I forget things, lose things, and keep a sloppy desk. I am good at what I do, however, and I have climbed the organization's ladder rapidly. Now I need to hire an assistant. How do I hire someone whom I won't drive crazy?

It sounds like you are a creative spirit but could use some skills and coaching in how to organize yourself and delegate properly. Plan now to talk to the EAP for assistance and resources. Making some key changes and setting goals now will set the stage for a gratifying relationship with your new hire. You will want to communicate clearly your

expectations and standards for performance. This may be a golden opportunity to enhance your management skills if you are willing to reflect and invest in your self.

Q: I have hired many employees, and most are enthusiastic go-getters in the beginning, but after several months their energy diminishes and they become just so-so in their productivity. What causes this, and should I refer them to the EAP when I see this happen?

If you are recognizing a pattern in your work group with many of your employees, the loss of motivation may be related to the company culture and or your style as a supervisor. New hires may be receiving higher compensation than they had at their previous job, or may have been unemployed or under-employed for some time. Learning new skills and meeting new people can be highly stimulating. The attention, from you as a supervisor and from other employees, that is required to get a

new employee up and running can also be motivating. As the employee adapts to the new job, work may become more routine and behavior more mundane. If your attempts to fire up enthusiasm in the group are not successful and productivity standards are not satisfactory, consider consulting with your Workplace Solutions account manager to problem solve and develop resources.

Q: One of my employees has returned to work following a heart attack. Is there anything I can do to help him not have another one? This is a pretty high-stress environment. Should I talk him into reducing his hours?

Your employee should let you know if he needs any help from the organization to support his recovery, but you can also ask how best to support him. You can remind him of his EAP benefit which includes free, confidential counseling and other benefits that may be helpful in his transition back to work.

Almost all jobs include stress. Beyond stress, is a concept called "job strain," meaning high psychological demand with little ability to control it. Some research has shown job strain as a factor

in the recurrence of heart attacks. In Japan, the word "karoshi" means "death from work." It is a widely studied social concern.

To reduce job strain on employees, try reducing psychological pressure of work demands, by increasing the employee's control and decision making. What about the long hours? Long work hours alone were not associated with recurrent cardiovascular events. (Journal of Occupational Health, No. 45, 2005.)

FRONTLINE SUPERVISOR