

FEBRUARY

WORKPLACE  
SOLUTIONS, LLC

1-800-327-5071

www.wseap.com

# Frontline Supervisor

EMPLOYEES - YOUR MOST VALUABLE RESOURCE

## TOPICS COVERED THIS MONTH:

- Hiring people with passion
- Communication skills at work
- Diversity awareness
- EAP Referrals—When to refer your employee

**Q:** I want to hire employees with good skills, but passion is something I value even more. How do I spot passion in a potential new hire?

Hiring the right people is a challenge; it can be difficult in the interview to accurately assess motivation and on-going, long-term enthusiasm. During your interview, note whether verbal and non-verbal behavior are consistent. Ask your employee the reasons for applying for work here. Did she/he check out your web-site and do homework before the interview? Does she/he know someone who works here and so wants to be part of this organization? Ask why. Under all circumstances, check the applicant's references and listen between the lines. While references must be cautious, if you hear a statement like We were sure sorry to lose this one, it may mean that your potential employee has qualities like enthusiasm and people skills that all organizations need. You could probe further. In addition, use your 90-day review

period purposefully: set up regular meetings with your new hire, and observe work in a group setting. Your organization's policies and your management practice can support (or dampen) passion. Communicate frequently with all your employees and include them in decisions about setting goals and ways to meet them.



*My employee tends to be stubborn and unable to see others' points of view. She is too blunt;*

**Q:** *for example, she'll say, "You're wrong!" rather than "I believe that..." She talks down to others. I correct her, but any changes don't last. I think she is insecure. Would counseling help?*

Your employee has a habit of communicating with others that may be difficult to change, but it's doable. There could be many reasons for her communication style, but your focus should be on correcting it, not guessing its cause. You need to use more leverage than asking her to be different. A planned, proactive approach is important. Consider holding her accountable by incorporating the change in her performance reviews. Clearly articulate how her communication style impacts her

relationships with co-workers and the productivity of the work group. Offer help, including a referral to Workplace Solutions EAP. Meet regularly to reinforce your expectation. When she has made progress, praise her. Other leverage may include corrective action to reinforce accountability. The referral to the EAP should be strongly suggested, not mandated; EAP sessions may help speed and reinforce her progress. Call Workplace Solutions to discuss your referral.



## Did You Know?

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

*Call 800.327.5071 today!*

**“Hold employees accountable, and act quickly to discourage anything less than a respectful workplace.”**



**Q:** We have a diverse workforce, and there is tension among some groups of employees that I think is race-based. I dealt swiftly with a racially inappropriate remark recently. Should I have the EAP in to do diversity awareness training, or will this make things worse?

Most organizations provide regular training on harassment as part of an affirmative defense regarding discrimination. Workplace Solutions can train both your management staff and employees regarding federal and state laws, as well as discussing the impact to morale and productivity. Contact your account manager at Workplace Solutions to discuss your observations, context and history within your work unit. Not every

problem requires a training or seminar solution. Sometimes the best intervention is a direct, zero-tolerance approach by management to address inappropriate behavior, including corrective actions, up to and including discharge, depending on the frequency and severity of the offense. Hold employees accountable, and act quickly to discourage anything less than a respectful workplace.

**Q:** I had a meeting to discuss my employee’s tardiness. She said personal issues with her husband were to blame, but she was getting counseling. I decided against a supervisor referral at that point. She’s doing great now, but should I have referred her to the EAP?

You could have made a referral, even though your employee had plans. Regardless, your employee’s tardiness has stopped. That means your corrective interview with her was successful. EAP referral is not required to solve a personal problem. It’s not a replacement for community resources and other professional resources that employees may wish to use. Hopefully, the issue of her tardiness has been resolved. From the organization’s viewpoint, that’s the bottom line. If your employee starts coming to

work late again, then you should pick up your discussion where you left off and make the EAP referral, even if your employee claims to have another plan. This time your employee will have the EAP advantage—a professional with an accurate understanding of the employment issues, an impartial assessment of the right intervention, motivational counseling, appropriate communication with you, and follow-up.

**Q:** My employee has offered pretty lame excuses for failing to complete three training courses this year. I wrote a disciplinary letter and let him read it, with the idea of placing it in his file if he received another “incomplete.” It worked! Was this better than an EAP referral?

The purpose of an EAP referral is to help an employee improve performance when usual methods to address problems are not working. Your disciplinary approach created the motivation to overcome whatever contributed to his inability or unwillingness to complete training. The EAP is still available as a resource for him (and for you) should the problem continue.

## FRONTLINE SUPERVISOR