

REDUCING NEGATIVITY at the WORKPLACE

Whatever the cause of the workplace negativity, you must address the issues. Or like a seemingly dormant volcano, they will boil beneath the surface, and periodically bubble up and overflow to cause fresh damage.

NEGATIVITY is an increasing problem in the workplace, according to Gary S. Topchik, the author of *Managing Workplace Negativity*. He states that negativity is often the result of a loss of confidence, control, or community. Knowing what people are negative about is the first step towards solving this problem.

When rumblings and negativity are beginning in your organisation, talking with employees will help you understand the exact problems and the degree to which the problems are impacting your workplace.

You will want to identify the exact employee groups who are experiencing the negativity, and the nature of the issues that sparked their unhappiness.

Perhaps the organisation made a decision that adversely affected the staff. Maybe staff members feel insecure because concern exists over losing a product line. Perhaps underground rumours are circulating about an impending layoff. People may feel that they give the organisation more than they receive in return. They may feel that a coworker was mistreated or denied a deserved promotion.

The best way to combat workplace negativity is to keep it from occurring in the first place. These eight tips will help you minimise workplace negativity.

1 Provide opportunities for people to make decisions about and control and/or influence their own job. The single most frequent cause of workplace negativity is traceable to a manager or the organisation making a decision about a person's work without his input. Almost any decision that excludes the input of the person doing the work is perceived as negative.

2 Make opportunities for people to express their opinion about workplace policies and procedures. Recognise the

impact of changes in such areas as work hours, pay, benefits, assignment of overtime hours, company, dress codes, office location, job requirements, and working conditions.

These factors are closest to the heart, mind, and presence of each individual. Changes to these can cause serious negative responses. Provide timely, proactive responses to questions and concerns.

3 Treat people as adults with fairness and consistency - Develop and publicise workplace policies and procedures that organise work effectively. Apply them consistently. As an example, each employee has the opportunity to apply for leave time. In granting his request, apply the same factors to his application as you would to any other individual's.

4 Do not create "rules" for all employees, when just a few people are violating the norms. You want to minimise the number of rules directing the behavior of adult people at work. Treat people as adults; they will usually live up to your expectations, and their own expectations.

5 Help people feel like members of the in-crowd; each person wants to have the same information as quickly as everyone else. Provide the context for

decisions, and communicate effectively and constantly. If several avenues or directions are under consideration, communicate all that you know, as soon as you know it. Reserve the right to change your mind later, without consequence, when additional factors affect the direction.

6 Afford people the opportunity to grow and develop - Training, perceived opportunities for promotions, lateral moves for development, and cross-training are visible signs of an organisation's commitment to staff.

7 Provide appropriate leadership and a strategic framework, including mission, vision, values, and

goals. People want to feel as if they are part of something bigger than themselves. If they understand the direction, and their part in making the desired outcomes happen, they can effectively contribute more.

8 Provide appropriate rewards and recognition so people feel their contribution is valued. The power of appropriate rewards and recognition for a positive workplace is remarkable. Suffice to say, reward and recognition is one of the most powerful tools an organisation can use to buoy staff morale.

Take some time to analyze how well your organisation is applying these recommendations. They form the foundation for positive staff morale and minimised negativity in your workplace.

- Compiled by 1Klassifieds Team

