



Solutions

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 APS Healthcare

Q I am trying to do a better job at delegating work. Are there any important points about delegating assignments to employees that help ensure work will be done with superior results?

A. When supervisors delegate, they often neglect a few key points needed to make delegation a process of growth, not just an assigned task. Your goal in delegating is to get work accomplished and also to expand your employee's capabilities. Unless key steps are taken, many problems can ensue with delegation, the most significant of which is the inability to let go of control. Instead of monitoring progress, you are compelled to meddle and thereby frustrate your worker. To help ensure better delegation:

- 1) Explain the assignment and what you anticipate as a successful or satisfactory outcome.
- 2) Explain the importance of the assignment to the organization, its bottom line, and how your employee will grow from the experience.
- 3) Monitor to show an interest in the outcome, but monitor less on the details of the project.
- 4) Make sure your employee has everything needed to produce the expected outcome—resources, accountability, authority, etc.

Q Is there an attitude about supervision that you recommend supervisors adopt? By attitude, I mean a framework or model that reduces distress in supervision relationships and makes them more collaborative.

A. Many supervisors visualize the role of supervisor as "unidirectional," or one way. The supervisor is "directing" and the employee is acting on that direction. This is too simplistic. Employees need you as much as you need them. You have a need for job satisfaction as much as your employee does, and you have a need to achieve career goals, too. This orientation to supervision may help your relationships with employees be more cooperative and productive. Most supervisors want to guide employees, maximize their productivity,

and help them develop and feel rewarded for the good work they do. But it is also important to see yourself as teaming up with your employee. "How can we cooperate with each other?" or "What do we need to work on to achieve results together?" is a proactive orientation to supervision.

Q I am a new supervisor who is replacing another leadership staff member who retired. Employees had a great deal of respect for my predecessor. How do I efficiently and quickly gain their trust? I know that this is also the first step toward gaining a great deal of respect in the future.

A. Understanding the meaning of trust can help you practice behaviors and set standards for yourself that will win the hearts and minds of your employees. Trust means reliance on and confidence in the truth, worth, and reliability of a person. Consider how these values translate into supervisory practice, and you can gain trust. To get on the fast track, establish relationships with your employees that demonstrate that you can be counted on for support when the going gets tough. When times are tough, your employees will have faith in your ability to support them. This will deepen their trust in you. Be a consistent communicator, along with making yourself accessible. This will remove the mystery between you and your employees, which is a frequently overlooked obstacle to building trust. Be truthful with employees. Doing so will help build their confidence in you. Keep commitments and appointments and only promise what you are certain you can deliver. This will show employees that you are reliable.

Q Is there a method or approach to inspiring employees? When I think of employees being inspired, I think of them as motivated. Are feeling inspired and feeling motivated the same thing?

A. All inspired employees are motivated, but not all motivated employees necessarily feel inspired. Often, the two terms are used interchangeably, but a closer look will reveal important differences. An employee can be motivated to accomplish work as a result of being provoked, aggravated, goaded, or annoyed into productivity. On the other hand, employees who feel inspired are moved internally, feel enthused about work accomplishments, and are infectious in their excitement. To inspire employees, summarize a tantalizing goal, discuss its implications for everyone, remind workers of their past triumphs, and ask them to reflect on what drove them to achieve successful outcomes in the past. Help set their sights on a faraway goal that is so exciting and potentially rewarding that they can't help but covet it. Finally, help them visualize what it will feel like to reach the mountaintop.

Q Certainly all supervisors eventually face the task of managing difficult employees. Although, beyond a magazine article or short seminar, I haven't seen much in-depth training. Is the EAP a good resource for this kind of help? What about experienced peers?

A. Both sources of experience – the EAP and your peers – can lend guidance to managing difficult employees. Obviously, the EAP has advantages that your professional friends do not possess. One is confidentiality. Your peers may not keep conversations confidential. The EAP can also help you discover how your personality style supports or interferes with the process of managing difficult employees. It can challenge and help you to use new or different approaches. Role plays are very effective tools, and the EAP may suggest them. Admittedly, learning to respond properly to distressed, upset, or difficult employees is a "learning by doing" experience, but there are also principles worth knowing. Remaining calm, thinking deliberately before you speak, avoiding emotional involvement, practicing detachment, reducing provocative responses, and knowing how to problem-solve are only a few principles you can learn from the EAP.

APS Healthcare's Employee Assistance Program. The EAP program through APS Healthcare assists organizations and their workforce in managing the personal challenges that impact employee well-being, performance and effectiveness. APS' life management consultants employ a comprehensive approach that identifies issues impacting the employee and assists them in developing meaningful solutions.

Please call the phone number below for more information about your Employee Assistance Program and the services available to you.

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