

How to Improve Relations Between Your Managers and Employees

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Abstract

The relationship between your managers and your employees is key to maintaining a productive and happy workplace. Here's how to improve the dynamic. Manager and employee relations is an important aspect of day-to-day business operations. Poor relationships in the workplace can directly impact employee performance and retention. You shouldn't run the risk of losing good workers due to something solvable like poor working relationships. Here's what you need to know about improving manager-employer relations for long-term success.

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Background to the Study

Employee relationship management describes an organization's ongoing effort to engage its employees and keep them satisfied. This initiative involves maintaining open communication in the workplace among workers of all levels. Positive manager-employee relationships in the office encourage productivity and collaboration among teams. When there's mutual respect between a manager and a worker, there's more willingness on both ends to offer support and perform well. How you and your managers treat employees directly impacts employee behavior and output, and good leadership plays an essential role in forming a close, efficient team. Positive relationship management can increase employee engagement, productivity, creativity, innovation, and collaboration. Strong manager-employee relations can also help reduce employee absenteeism and employee turnover. The opposite, of course, is also true. In fact, a GoodHire survey found that 82 percent of workers would quit a job because of a bad manager.

Examples of Employee Relations?

Employee relations, when managed well, help eliminate toxicity in the workplace and keep workers at all levels content and secure. For instance, if an employee bullies their teammate, it's the employer's responsibility to take action against the perpetrator. If there's a concern about time off or paid leave, it's up to management to handle these concerns with care. Essentially, any activity or initiative put in place to engage and support employees falls under employee relations and can make a difference in workers' performance as well as your overall workplace culture. Here are a few areas of focus to consider.

1. Professional development: Helping workers reach their own professional goals in relation to the business.
2. Team building: Hosting activities that bring workers together.
3. Workplace safety: Ensuring your office and work environment are both physically and emotionally safe for your employees.
4. Conflict management: Helping resolve any issues in the workplace, whether they're between two co-workers or an employee and manager.
5. Employee appreciation: Positively acknowledging and rewarding team members' good work.
6. When you engage with your team in these ways, you can prevent or mitigate personnel issues that affect productivity, collaboration, and morale.

How to Improve Employee Relations?

1. Take Advantage of Feedback.

Formal and informal feedback is highly beneficial to the inner workings of a company. Not soliciting feedback can make an employee feel like a less vital player in the organization, which can lead to a decrease in their work performance. It's critical to show staffers that they and their opinions matter. Instead of making decisions independently of your employees, seek their input. Speak with team members about departmental strengths and weaknesses to gauge how managers are executing their own responsibilities. This makes your employees feel more appreciated and involved and should ultimately improve their productivity and morale. Plus,

employee input not only helps you visualize situations from alternate perspectives, but it also provides you with more viable options for what path to take as you move forward as an organization. As a result of your consideration and actions, your employees will also feel more invested in the company.

2. Promote Workplace Cooperation.

All employees should understand that work performance is not about competition. It's about coming together to serve a common purpose, e.g., pleasing your clients or customers. It's not a race. Managers may delegate specific responsibilities to certain employees, but each responsibility should be linked to the next in a seamless effort to provide top-quality products or services. Good communication is a must for successful collaboration. Providing opportunities for your managers to interact more with other employees will help build stronger cooperation and understanding among leadership while allowing managers to help employees improve their individual skills. Many activities can build good communication skills and improve relations among different levels of workers, including workshops, seminars and webinars, training programs, and office luncheons. Employees will see these activities as a chance to take a break from the daily grind and bond with one another in a nonthreatening environment.

3. Encourage a Healthy Work-life Balance.

A healthy work-life balance is essential for maintaining job satisfaction and good employee relations. However, many organizations and managers fail to successfully promote a company culture with a positive work-life balance. As a result, employees might start to resent their managers if they feel like there will be consequences for taking time away from work, exacerbating interpersonal tension and worsening employee burnout. Instead of working employees to the point of exhaustion, create an environment that demonstrates you and other company leaders care about employee well-being and mental health. Have managers and supervisors not only encourage employees to take care of their physical and mental health, but also lead by example by embracing a strong work-life balance for themselves. This will show employees it's OK to use their well-deserved PTO days for a little R&R and alleviate the fear of potential consequences.

4. Resolve Conflict Rationally. Conflict in the workplace is inevitable, but its resolution should always be a top priority. Issues among employees, and especially between employees and managers, can easily disrupt the workings of your company, so it's crucial to address them in a rational and timely manner. When responding to conflict, don't be quick to judge. Jumping to conclusions before hearing multiple sides of the story can be detrimental to the health of your business should the wrong person be reprimanded. Approach each situation with an open mind.

Miscommunication often plays a large role in problems that arise in the workplace. Be sure to ask what was said by each party and whether any effort was made to clear up potential misunderstandings before you were informed of the situation. Companies lose employees all too often over miscommunication. You can also try to prevent conflicts before they start.

Team-building activities are great opportunities for managers and employees to strengthen their bonds on a personal level, lowering the risk of conflict resulting from a misunderstanding.

5. Inspire and Reward your Employees.

Find ways to bring your teams together. Although individual employees have their own unique responsibilities, team members need to recognize they're in this together. Inform each department of their monthly goals and offer incentives and rewards for reaching them. Some prizes could include corporate-branded swag (T-shirts, hats, accessories, etc.), fitness perks (e.g., gym memberships), gift cards, bonuses, and free lunches. Tackling daily tasks is more exciting when there are physical benefits in addition to a regular paycheck. Employees are likely to accomplish much more and put their hearts into their work when they have control over the extras they receive. They may also be more amenable to working cooperatively with management but take care to ensure managers aren't using the promise of rewards to manipulate staffers or even punish those who may be struggling. You don't want your employees to dread coming to work every day – whether in person or virtually – because of their supervisors. Use these strategies to improve relations between managers and employees and make your workplace a friendlier, more productive environment for everyone.

Assessing in Crisis Intervention

Assessment is an intentional practice that occurs throughout the crisis intervention process and involves seeking information from a woman or girl (although practices for engaging child survivors are distinct from those working with adults), actively listening and interpreting what she shares in order to understand her emotional state, level of emotional mobility or immobility, options for action, coping mechanisms, support systems and other resources. Assessment allows staff to draw conclusions about the woman's situation and her responses to it, in order to plan and offer ways to assist her. It is also used to determine the level of risk and any specific threat of self-harm or being killed by their abuser(s).

During crisis intervention, shelter workers should seek to understand the woman's:

1. **Emotional State:** Emotional distress is often an initial sign that a woman is experiencing a crisis, which may appear as though she is emotionally "out of control" or severely withdrawn. Shelter staff can be trained to help a woman to regain control and emotional mobility by assisting her to express her specific feelings using language that accurately reflects the emotion.
2. **Behavioural Functioning:** Observing a woman's behaviour can help to understand her ability to cope with the situation she is experiencing. For example, noticing whether she is pacing the floor, having difficulty breathing, or sitting calmly, and whether she appears withdrawn or unresponsive. Shelter workers can be trained to assist women to take positive actions that she can able to complete in that moment. For example, asking her to breathe slowly.
3. **Cognitive State:** Determining a woman's thinking patterns is essential in assessing her current ability to cope with the situation she is experiencing. When listening to what a woman is saying, staff can be trained to consider whether her verbal communication is coherent and logical, and whether her words make sense.

Acting in Crisis Intervention

Taking action in crisis intervention involves intentionally responding to the assessment of the woman's situation and needs in one of three ways: nondirective, collaborative, or directive.

- a. Nondirective counseling is preferable when a woman is able to plan and implement actions on her own that she chooses to take. In this case, the shelter worker's role is to assist the woman in mobilizing her existing capacity to solve her own problem. Comments that support a woman's self-determination and action can be helpful in this situation, such as "What do you want to have happen? Is there anyone that could support you with this plan?"
- b. *Collaborative counseling* involves working together with a woman to evaluate the problem, identify options for addressing it, and taking actions toward a particular option. Collaborative counseling approaches are helpful when a woman is able to participate in planning and taking action but is not able to complete the entire process on her own. For example: "You are saying that you have decided to leave your partner, but you are unsure of the legal options available. Let's explore together where you could go for legal advice."
- c. *Directive counseling* is necessary when a woman is assessed as being immobilized by her experience to the extent that she is unable to cope with the crisis. Shelter staff can be trained to use directive counseling to take temporary control and responsibility for the situation. For example: "What I want you to do right now is breathe with me. That's good. Breathe in for a count of 6 and out for a count of 6." In these situations, shelter workers may move back and forth between directive counseling and collaborative counseling as the woman shows signs of decreased anxiety and increased ability to participate in the process.

Conclusion

It is particularly important for staff to have sufficient training in this area in order to ensure that directive counseling is used only when necessary, and women are empowered as much as possible within the counseling relationship.

Reference

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