

Workplace Supervisor

October 2019

Testimonials

Here are some quotes from HR Managers who recently called on Concern for a Management Consultation:

“The Clinical Manager gave me straight answers that were very helpful. The advice and information set me on the right path to deal with a very difficult problem.”

“I cannot express enough how impressed I was with the response to our very last minute request. The timeliness and the quality of care were beyond exceptional. We continue to be impressed and thankful for the service Concern and ALL of its staff offers us, from our Account Manager to the clinical staff.”

“The Clinical Manager was fantastic. She was able to identify the steps that we need to take to address a complicated situation quickly and effectively.”



FAQs for Managing Employees

Q. I am a new manager in my organization and I want to do a good job. I am not trying to be liked, but I know leadership is not like it is on a TV show where being “tough” and intimidating can still leave employees thinking you’re a hero.

A. You’re right that being a good leader or manager includes getting the work done, but your success will depend on your ability to develop relationships and trust among those you lead. This can be a tough assignment for some managers. A good supervisor is usually liked by those they supervise, but this is a payoff for first being effective with people. To be effective, meet with individual employees privately and discover what talents, hopes, and goals they possess. Use this information to develop and challenge them during the year. Praise them for good work and behave the way you want your employees to behave: Come to work on time, be reliable, follow through, fix problems quickly, and be honest about what’s going on in the company. Talk to Concern early on if you experience or sense trouble in relating to employees or feel disconnected from them.

Q. I know “presenteeism” refers to employees coming to work sick and being less productive, but it can be difficult to spot related job problems. How do supervisors intervene? Presenteeism is not a new concept, but I have only seen it mentioned in the past ten years or so.

A. Presenteeism is a relatively new term, but it is essentially a modernized version of what in the past has been referred to as “on the job absenteeism.” Presenteeism typically refers to employees being at work while sick, but it also has been used to describe almost any nonproductive activity of employees on the job, no matter what the underlying reason might be. Although presenteeism is an interesting topic for discussion, attempting to identify who is affected by it is more difficult. It is better to avoid the technical aspects of this syndrome and instead focus on what you can document in your pursuit of helping your employees maximize their productivity and job satisfaction. If you stay aware of behaviors that demonstrate an employee is either not performing competently or is without motivation for the tasks they are supposed to perform, presenteeism may exist. Concern can consult with you about presenteeism and intervention.

Q. Our team training budget has been cut this year, so are there any strategies or techniques my employees can regularly practice that have an ongoing “team building” effect to keep us cohesive and less prone to conflict with each other?

A. Team members with regular habits of communicating in positive ways with each other have fewer conflicts and better group cooperation. Here’s a technique that may help your group. Its essential purpose is to help employees practice appreciation and gratitude with each other. See if you can make it a tradition: At the end of meetings, ask whether any team member has positive feedback for any other team member. Model what you are asking. For example, say, “I would like to thank Mary for coming in last Thursday to work on the mailing project. I felt relieved of pressure and really appreciative of her for doing that.” Members can take turns sharing feedback. The exercise may be a bit awkward if these are new behaviors, but because they are inherently positive, group members should catch on. This strategy builds resilience to stress and allows conflicts to be resolved more quickly.

Q. When I correct my employee’s performance, I frequently notice body language that appears resistant (e.g., folding of arms, looking up or away, remaining quiet, staring). Can I document this behavior as refusing feedback? It feels like it.

A. Start by asking your employee about the meaning of these behaviors. You are having a negative reaction to them because they strike you as insubordinate, so provide feedback that these nonverbal behaviors do not work in your communication with him or her. You have a right to ask for something different, and can ask your employee to appear more cooperative.

Q. What can supervisors do to improve their ability to spot signs and symptoms of an employee who is impaired on the job because of alcohol or drug use? A checklist is important, but some symptoms, I think, can be very subtle and easily missed.

A. Beyond a checklist, the one thing supervisors could do to improve their ability to identify the signs and symptoms of drug or alcohol use on the job is to get to know their employees better. Knowing your employees and having frequent face time with them is your best intervention strategy. This is because over time you will develop an awareness of or “sixth sense” for your employees’ appearance, attitude, and demeanor, and how these things change from day to day. An employee with a substance abuse problem will exhibit behaviors that are inconsistent with what the supervisor has grown accustomed to experiencing. So initiate friendly conversations and make eye contact with employees on a regular basis. You will then be more likely to notice uncharacteristically slurred speech, a glazed facial expression, an unsteady gait, glassy or bloodshot eyes, and dilated pupils. These things can be easy to miss or dismiss if you are not frequently close to your employees.

Concern teams with Human Resources to provide another resource for managers and supervisors to consult about how to manage issues with individuals, within and between work groups, and across departments. When you call Concern, ask for a Management Consultant or request to speak to a Clinical Manager.

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