

Tips for Communicating Effectively With Your Employees

An essential part of your job as a manager is to encourage a climate of open communication in the workplace. Use the tips below to help develop good communication skills.

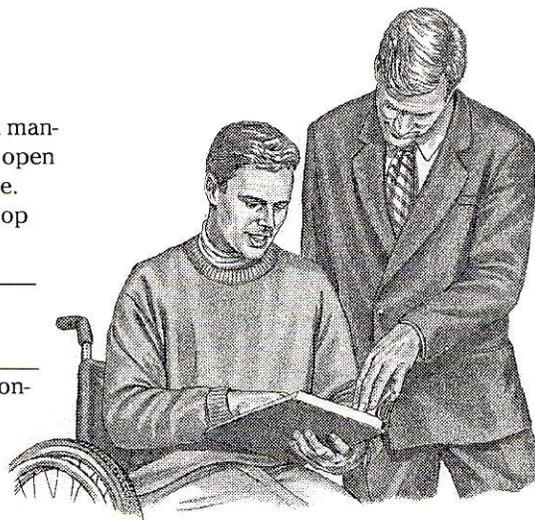
Take Time to Build Relationships

In addition to reviewing job responsibilities, giving employees feedback and discussing attendance issues, an important element of your role is to get to know your employees. When you understand your employees' individual work styles, preferences and needs, you can gain their trust. You can motivate them to achieve greater productivity, more effective teamwork and higher morale.

When someone joins your work team, learn about their special skills and talents. Find out about their learning style and the type of feedback they appreciate. Ask them about their previous successes and how they work best with others.

Learn to Be an Active Listener

Good communication is a two-way street, a process of give and take between individuals. When you initiate conversations with employees, greet them personally and listen sincerely. Ask friendly questions, such as "How's the family?" and "What's going on with you?" Listen for hidden messages in words and actions. The speaker may not want to say certain things out of fear of a negative reaction. Be aware of the other person's body language and tone of voice.



Remember the Value of Diversity

Your workplace is composed of people from widely diverse backgrounds who come together to accomplish common goals. Remember that everyone wants to be treated as an individual and judged on their own merits. When evaluating a worker's performance, make sure that you focus on what they do and not who they are.

Be Understanding About Personal Issues

At some point, you may be faced with an employee's family, financial, legal or health crisis. Learn all you can about your organization's Employee Assistance Program (EAP) and policies on time-off to handle personal problems. Stay in touch with the employee as he or she resolves a crisis. Determine and discuss your expectations about your employee's return to productivity.

Learn When It's Better to Keep Quiet

Some subjects should not be matters of public discussion in the workplace. These include an employee's work performance, your feelings about company policy and difficulties you have with your boss. It's also important to keep confidential any personal problems employees bring to you and anything anyone tells you in confidence. The only exception to this practice would be when keeping quiet involves breaking the law or company policy.

Give Effective Feedback

Employees need to know how well they're doing at work and it's your job to tell them. The most effective feedback is...

- ✓ **specific:** *"You wrote a thorough analysis on the Anderson project," rather than "You've been doing a good job lately."*
- ✓ **timely:** *Give feedback as soon as possible.*
- ✓ **descriptive:** *Give facts. Talk about your observations, rather than what you've concluded from your observations.*
- ✓ **sensitive:** *When emotions run high, allow a cooling-off period before talking.*
- ✓ **helpful:** *When feedback is negative, explore alternatives for improvement so the employee has goals to aim for. Use the "sandwich technique" by saying one positive statement followed by the negative feedback and then another compliment.*

Distributed under license. © Parlay International 1960.004

**Contact Your Employee Assistance Program
Outcomes, Inc. (505)243-7145 or 1-800-677-2947**