

SO YOU HAVE A MORALE PROBLEM

You sense that the morale of your staff is not as good as it ought to be, but you're not sure how to turn it around. The turnover rate and absenteeism in your department have increased. What can you do about this?

Uncovering Morale Problems

If your staff has natural leaders, your job will be easier. Meet with them and express an interest in identifying problems that are causing low morale. Show them that you are ready to tackle the problems head on. If you have no natural leaders, break your staff into groups and identify a leader. Assign them the task of regularly and openly discussing concerns, opinions and ideas of the groups.

Meet with the leaders regularly to get feedback. With this method, you should hear about potential morale problems. The group also encourages teamwork and healthy communication. Ninety percent of employees involved in such groups think they are a good idea and companies using them have enjoyed increased morale.



Allow your staff to personalize their work areas. It boosts morale.

Show Them You Care

Show your staff you care about their needs, opinions, and problems. Engage in brief but regular conversations about non-work-related topics. Ask about nonverbal messages that may be signs of

trouble. Show compassion with personal problems without becoming overly involved.

Be approachable and a good listener. Your staff will more likely come to you with their problems. Keep them well informed of changes, policies, and performance expectations. Praise individual efforts personally. If you must criticize do it privately and constructively.

Your talent as a manager will do much to improve and maintain the morale of your staff.

Getting People Unstuck

Many long-term employees see themselves as stuck in one job. Studies show they average only an 80% productivity level. This shows their low morale and job dissatisfaction. Your challenge as their manager is to reward their top productive performance and compensate them for their lack of advancement opportunities.

Tell them how much you value their loyalty, their strong technical experience and their understanding of the company's operations. Ask for their suggestions. Ask these employees to serve as the team leaders in group tasks. Give them more autonomy and less direct supervision. Increase their scope of responsibilities and give them time to develop unique projects. Train them to do other peoples' jobs so they can learn new tasks while increasing the flexibility of your workforce. Encourage them to act as mentors to inexperienced staff members. Try to help them delegate some of their tedious tasks to newer staff members. Reward their increased productivity whenever possible. Provide feedback as they continue to grow and remain a vital part of your staff.

Make It A Nice Place To Work

The physical layout of the work area can have an impact on morale. Designs that ease workflow position employees near staff that they frequently interact with, their file cabinets, and often used equipment. They are also near their supervisor. Employees are allowed to give their work area tasteful personal touches. A productive work environment has good lighting and ventilation. Loud equipment is isolated or insulated.

Morale Winners

- Show your trust.
- Give everyone a mission.
- Encourage risks.
- Create opportunity from mistakes.
- Punish seldom, reward often.
- Expect the best to get it.