

Six Keys to Success

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Six Keys to Success

1. Be a Good Communicator
2. Embrace Conflict
3. Use discipline, but only as necessary
4. Conduct useful performance evaluations
5. Perform and Participate in Reference Checks
6. Know the rules

Be a Good Communicator

- ▶ Begin by Listening

“The most basic of all human needs is the need to understand and be understood. The best way to understand people is to listen to them.”

- Ralph Nichols

- ▶ Express yourself honestly while conveying respect for the other person's opinion.

- ▶ State your position without confrontation: “This is what I think/feel/believe”, “This is how I see the situation”
- ▶ Remember, you are the boss. Model the behavior you expect from your employees.

- ▶ Set specific, reasonable and positive expectations for employees - in terms they can understand.

- ▶ Explain why goals/expectations exist to help employees understand why they are working towards them

Embrace Conflict

- ▶ When there is conflict in the workplace, you have to do something about it at the first sign of trouble. If you ignore problems, you risk:
 - ▶ Even more conflict
 - ▶ Breach of a legal duty to ensure health, safety or welfare
 - ▶ Exposure to charges of discrimination
 - ▶ Negative impact on morale and productivity due to the appearance of favoritism
 - ▶ Higher absenteeism and turnover
 - ▶ Damage to the District's reputation and **YOUR** reputation

How to Respond to Conflict

- ▶ Get to the source of the conflict: “what” and “why” rather than “who.”
- ▶ Identify the cause of the problem and frame the discussion around an opportunity for improvement.
- ▶ Help each employee understand the perspective of the others.
- ▶ Explicitly state the District’s expectations for behavior.
- ▶ If you issue an action plan, follow through and follow up. Put the final deal in writing, set a time to check progress and hold the parties to it.
- ▶ *Everyone is watching.*

Use discipline, but only as necessary

- ▶ How would you like someone to treat you if you need to be disciplined?
- ▶ Generally begin with the lowest form of discipline:
 1. Verbal Warning/Counseling
 2. Written Reprimand
 3. Suspension
 4. Demotion
 5. Termination
- ▶ Disciplinary actions are intended to be corrective, not punitive.
- ▶ *Caution:* If you let things “slide”, your employees notice and you might not be able to impose the discipline you need/want to when the time comes

The Appropriate “Amount” of Discipline

When deciding how much discipline to impose, consider the following factors:

- ▶ **Intent:** What was the employee’s intention when the violation was committed?
- ▶ **Number of Occurrences:** How many times has this type of problem occurred?
- ▶ **Previous Corrective Measures:** What past measures have been taken in an attempt to correct the problem?
- ▶ **Frequency:** Has the problem occurred frequently within a relatively short time?

Conduct useful performance evaluations

- ▶ Evaluations can:
 - ▶ measure and recognize individual performance
 - ▶ bring attention to any areas of job performance that need improvement
 - ▶ help set goals and build opportunities for professional/career development
- ▶ Performance Evaluation is an ongoing process - don't wait for the formal evaluation to let your employees know how they are doing. **The content of the formal appraisal should not be a surprise.**
- ▶ Constructive feedback should be specific, honest, timely, helpful, and ongoing.

How to Evaluate: Pitfalls to Avoid

- ▶ **The Halo Effect:** Allowing one good aspect of a person's character or performance to influence the entire evaluation.
- ▶ **The Horns Effect:** Allowing one negative aspect of a person's character or performance to influence the entire evaluation.
- ▶ **Partial Rating:** Basing the rating on the most recent period of time, not the total evaluation period.
- ▶ **Similar to me:** Evaluating more favorably those who are similar to the rater
- ▶ **Favoritism:** Evaluating friends higher than other employees.
- ▶ The “error of central tendency” in which all employees are rated about average
- ▶ Evaluations at that are too “nice”
 - ▶ Impacts the person being evaluated: loss of full potential, professional development, motivation
 - ▶ Impacts the work group: communicates that people are not held fully accountable or that there is preferential treatment
 - ▶ Impacts you as a manager: effectiveness, management decisions
 - ▶ Impacts overall performance of work group, department, divisions, the college/district

How to Evaluate: Goals

- ▶ Goals should be specific to the person and position. They identify the aspirations of the individual, the areas in which the employee wants and/or needs to grow, as well as identify the role the individual takes in meeting departmental goals.
- ▶ Avoid using numbers in goals unless you actually intend to count the behavior
 - ▶ Consider the cost/benefit of gathering data on performance
- ▶ Both the employee and supervisor should agree on the goals.
- ▶ **SMART Goals**
 - ▶ Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound

Examples of unclear goals:

- ▶ Continue to work on cross-training manual.
- ▶ Work toward becoming the MS Word expert for your work group.

Examples of clear goals:

- ▶ Create a new cross-training manual so that the Green Widget People and Blue Widget People are interchangeable by November 15, 2009.
- ▶ Become work group MS Word expert by attending at least 15 hours of training and provide a mini-training session for co-workers by the end of the fiscal year.

Perform and Participate in Reference Checks

- ▶ Always check references before extending a job offer so that you know who you are hiring.
 - ▶ Do not only call the references recommended by the Applicant; candidates tend to cherry pick.
 - ▶ Consider requiring all applicants to sign a waiver so that prior employers can give a candid reference without fear of legal liability
 - ▶ Include release of personnel files as part of waiver language
- ▶ Depending on your local policy/rules, always give truthful references when asked.
 - ▶ You are immune from legal claims if statements are made without malice, concerning job performance or qualifications, based upon credible evidence.
 - ▶ It is ok to answer whether or not you would rehire

Know the rules

- ▶ Before making decisions that affect the terms and conditions of someone's employment, e.g. wages, hours, benefits be sure you know what the applicable collective bargaining agreement says
- ▶ Familiarize yourself with the Education Code and/or Title 5 as it affects your area of work
- ▶ When you are not sure if you can or should do something, ask a colleague for advice.
- ▶ Do as much professional development as possible!