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Creating and Maintaining a Healthy Work Environment
Tuesday, March 17, 2009
Participant Strategies

During the program, teams were asked to brainstorm strategies to create and maintain a healthy environment. The five challenges before were identified in the pre-program assessment.

Passive Decision-Making

1. Empower teams to make decisions
2. Set specific boundaries to encourage feedback
3. Make sure the leader communicates who has authority to make decisions and then supports them
4. Identify at the end of the meeting what decisions were made or additional information needed
5. Create situations where you can't walk away without a decision
6. Narrow down the number of ideas before asking for feedback
7. Don't penalize others for taking risks (e.g., fear factor)
8. Establish a decision-making process
9. Clarify and empower the decision-maker
10. Provide support – mentoring, coaching, tools, etc.
11. Use "incorrect" decisions as learning experiences
12. Flexibility enables yet causes ambiguity – leads to paralysis analysis

Low Employee Morale

1. Lack of information
   - Timely/correct information at all levels
   - Input on budget
   - Smaller, lower level meetings with teams
   - Controlling misinformation
2. Recognize employee efforts
   - Employee recognition programs (monetary or ongoing public praise)
3. Accountability
   - Leaders responding to employee input
   - Honest feedback to employees

    ↓ Ensuring accurate roles at work and effective coaching and evaluations
4. Empowering people to have ideas
    ↓ Personal development
    ↓ Praise initiative
5. Acknowledge importance of personal lives—find balance
6. Have fun
7. Give ownership of projects
8. Offer positive feedback
9. "Cookie or goodie" days to celebrate successes
10. Improve communication
11. Ask how can we make our job environment better
12. "High-5" celebration
13. Unit bowling team – social activity
14. Dress down Fridays, bad weather days
15. Celebrate birthdays
16. Ask! Care! Listen!

Minimal Communication

1. Delegate/get more staff involved
2. Staff meetings/get staff input
3. Town hall meetings
4. Share success stories
5. Retreats/Goal setting/Missions
6. Establish shared drive/files
7. Give staff access to reporting tools
8. "Dream Setting" to get buy-in
9. Forward list serv emails to staff
10. Define problem
11. Staff meetings – group one-on-one status meetings. (e.g., executive, assistant executive)
12. Weekly newsletters (bulletin boards)
13. Staff needs to know where/how to find info (non-filtered)
14. Directly relay relevant information
15. Sometimes messages contain too much information (non-filtered)

Resistance to Share Information

1. Analyze the cause/symptom of something deeper
    ↓ Fear of job security or losing control
    ↓ Knowledge = Power
    ↓ Lack of trust
2. Set the tone – lead by example – share as much info as possible

3. Acknowledge expertise – seek assistance – elevate them to level of "expert"
4. Cross training
5. Create environment of trust
6. Set up email distribution lists
7. Information exchange meetings (face-to-face)
8. 15-minute daily exchange with ground rules
9. Make sharing of information as part of employee evaluation
10. Management needs to be an example (if I don't share neither will they)

Role/Responsibility Confusion

1. Job description and employee review
2. Defining culture of department
3. Mentoring
4. Honest and open communication
5. Knowledge of overall distribution of responsibility
6. Involving the employee in the solution
7. Update annual job description with employee
8. Setting clear expectations
9. Helping people understand what they do, and how it fits in with the big picture
10. Regular conversations with your staff
11. Demonstrate that we expect success