

Listening to Your Employees

You may have something to learn - Listen to Your Employees

When an employee approaches you with a need to communicate at whatever level, set aside your work for the moment, and give the speaker your undivided attention. Listen to your employees. Do not interrupt the talker at mid sentence; it's a sign you're not listening. Allow some pause before jumping in. Smile and lean forward. It's a sign that you are fully engaged in listening to your employee. Ask questions, even though you understand what's being discussed. Questions tell the person that you are listening. Paraphrasing indicates that you are listening to your employee and trying to fully understand the topic. Questioning also aids retention of the conversation. It has been said that 50% of the conversation is retained immediately afterwards. Two weeks later the figure drops to 25%.

Motivation - Most employees have a genuine interest in the well being of the company. The main motivators are advancement, type of work, and a company to be proud of. It has been found that pay, benefits, and working conditions take a back seat. Listening to your employees is a large motivator. [Other important motivators are rewards on performance, accessibility to the boss, and knowing what is over the horizon.]

Employees want to know that they are contributing to company success and their suggestions can make a difference. When they sense that they are ignored or put down, they can develop a resentment, which impacts their care for the good of the company. Explain that you are grateful for their effort and interested in their ideas, but you may not adopt them without further study. Regardless, you have shown that you listen to your employees.

Not just face to face – Communications can take many forms, such as larger meetings, phone calls, memos, teleconferences, or video calls, and personal letters. Acknowledging these communications assures the employee that you have listened, you consider new ideas valuable, and you will give attention to questions in the future. Providing new communications tools empowers employees to be more productive and provide excellent service to customers. Listening to employees is a form of feedback, and the manager needs to learn the response to his actions. Feedback from sales people will telegraph what the customer is saying and what their needs are.

Working closely with employees, sharing information about the company's goals and listening to employee feedback and suggestions will help you to develop a cohesive team that is committed to achieving company goals. Listening and sharing with employees goes a long way in assuring success in the organization.