

This is a special follow-up letter exclusively for the attendees of:

"CONFRONTING AND CHANGING BAD BEHAVIOR: WHAT EVERY SUPERVISOR SHOULD KNOW,"

From the instructor, Larry Johnson, in this letter, Larry offers some great tips to help you implement the strategies that he outlined in the seminar. If you have questions, feel free to e-mail Larry at:

larry@larry-johnson.com

Additionally, if you'd like even more tips and ideas on how to manage people more effectively, sign up to receive Larry's free monthly e-newsletter, "Tips For Today's Managers" at his website:

www.larry-johnson.com

MARK YOUR CALENDAR. Larry will be the presenter for the upcoming Professional Business Conference Seminar: MANAGING DIFFICULT PEOPLE: How To Get Along And Get Results," September 9, 2003 at 1:00pm EDT. If you liked Larry's presentation in June, you're going to love this one.

Hello Everyone,

It's been two months since you attended my seminar. By now, you should have tried some of the suggestions in that program. If you're uncomfortable confronting people, however, I will guess that you're putting off that heart-to-heart discussion with the person who's driving you crazy, hoping he'll have a miraculous recovery. You may have to wait for a long time.

So if he's still coming in late, not completing assignments, causing distractions on the job, irritating co-workers or running off customers, you're going to have to act because:

1. For whatever reason, these behaviors work for him, so he's unlikely to change them on his own.
2. It's likely that he is interpreting your lack of expressed disapproval as tacit approval of his modus operandi. Until you confront him, he will assume that what he is doing is OK.
3. Everyone else who works for you is watching how you are handling the situation. They may assume that because you haven't done anything about his behavior, that YOU APPROVE of it. In which case, they might also assume that such behavior is OK for them too.

More likely, your non-action will simply impeach your credibility in their eyes. Like children looking to their parents to right the wrongs of the world, employees look to their supervisors to enforce the high standards of performance and ethics the company espouses. Most people want to work for someone who has high standards.

So don't delay, take action to correct the problem behavior before it gets any worse. And don't forget to follow the Nine Steps we covered in the seminar:

1. Approach in a friendly but firm manner.
2. Describe the problem specifically
3. Explain your concern
4. Describe what he or she contributes
5. Ask for his or her view and listen
6. Summarize his or her view and acknowledge
7. Clarify your expectation & describe consequences
8. Ask for input and agree on a solution
9. Follow-up.

Here are a few suggestions to help make this conversation more successful:

- Get the facts. Conducting a Nine Steps Conversation with inaccurate facts will weaken your case and invite the person to argue about side issues. So know what you're talking about when you describe the problem behavior to this person. Have specific instances and dates noted describing the unacceptable behavior.
- Pick the right time. The purpose of giving corrective feedback is to facilitate learning. When someone makes a mistake, it is tempting to jump right in and chastise him vigorously. This is probably the worst time to let the person know that you don't go along with what he just did. Both your emotions and theirs can hinder the learning process, especially if one or both of you are upset. Try holding your feedback until you've both calmed down.
- Select a private place. We all have a powerful need to maintain "face" in front of others. The chances he'll get defensive soar when negative information is given in front of peers, regardless of your intentions.
- Make sure the purpose of the conversation is to coach rather than punish. Again, your emotional state can hinder the delivery of helpful information. Take some time

to cool off and examine your reasons for having the conversation and the outcome you would like to achieve. To facilitate this, try applying the principles of the Pygmalion Effect.

Pygmalion was a figure in Greek Mythology who sculpted a statue of a beautiful woman (Galatea), and then promptly fell in love with it. His love was so intense that the goddess, Aphrodite, brought Galatea to life. (This is kind of like Pinocchio with erotic overtones).

The Pygmalion Effect says that you will usually get what you expect from people. If you think a person is a loser, you will tend to treat her like one, and she, in turn, will tend to act like a loser. On the other hand, if you treat her like a winner, she's more likely to take responsibility and act like one. Applied to the Nine Steps Conversation, it means making sure that you frame the person in your mind as a winner who simply needs to change a behavior, and that you are confident he will be able to do so. Doing this will help send a message to the person that you have every confidence that she will correct the bad behavior and will be a productive employee.

Of course, the trick here is to really believe it. If you can't, then ask yourself, "Why am I keeping this person?"

- Finally, don't forget to follow up. Change is hard for any of us. If the bad behavior you are asking the person to change is a habit or a personality trait, remember that it took a lifetime to develop. Change may be slow and painful for him. When you see small changes, make positive comments that will reward the progress, but do it carefully and in private. Praising someone in public for getting to work on time or not yelling at a customer will be seen as punishing by the person. Additionally, don't hesitate to say something when you see backsliding. Otherwise, he will assume that although you spoke to him about the problem, your failure to respond when he repeats it means that you really didn't mean what you said in the first place.

If you have questions, you can e-mail me directly at Larry@Larry-Johnson.com or call me at 480-948-5596.

Sincerely,

Larry Johnson

Larry is the co-author of "Absolute Honesty: Building A Corporate Culture That Values Straight Talk And Rewards Integrity," published by AMACOM Books, a division of the American Management Association, 2003. You can get this book at any book store or on-line bookseller, including www.larry-johnson.com