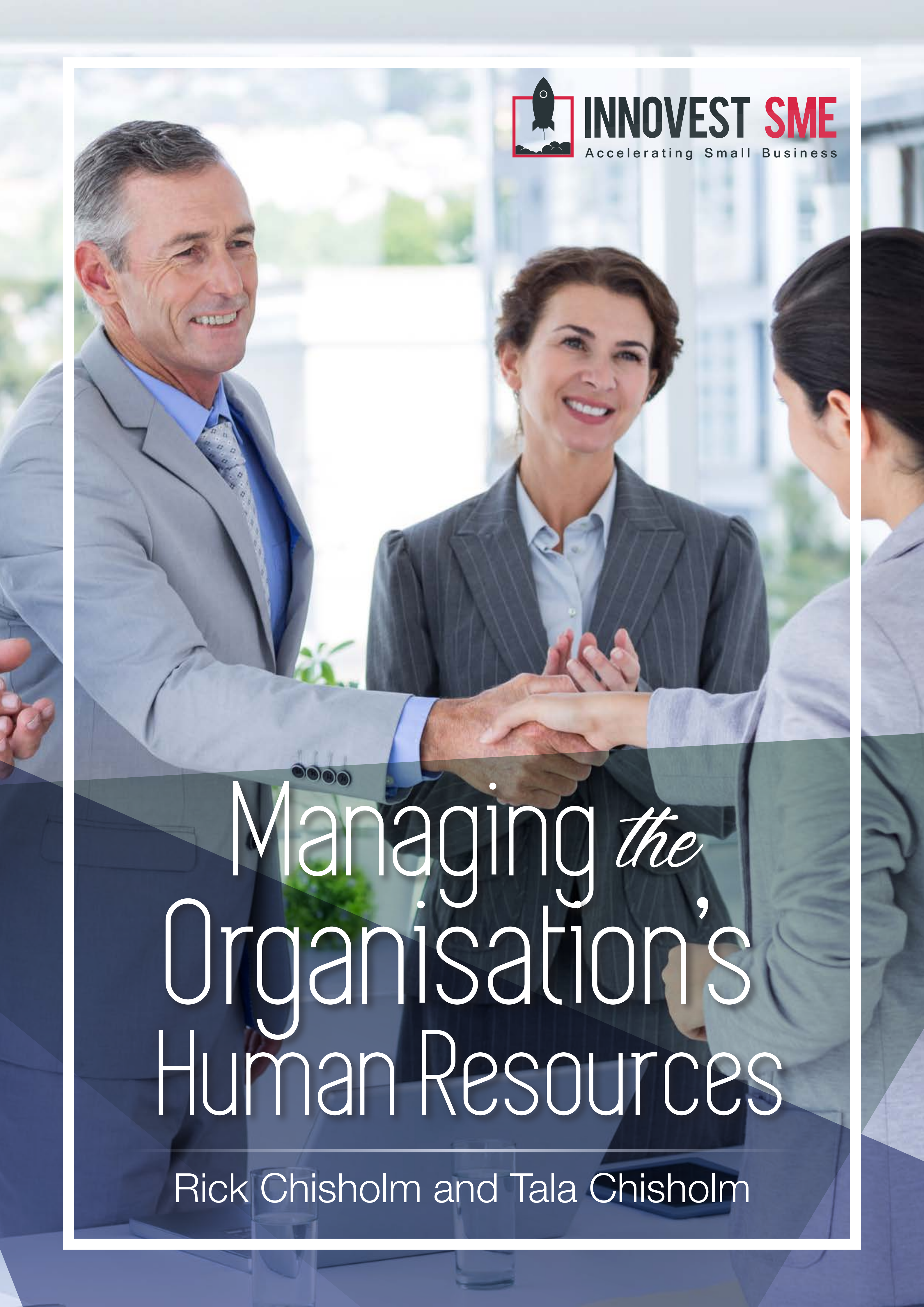

INNOVEST SME
Accelerating Small Business

Managing *the* Organisation's Human Resources

Rick Chisholm and Tala Chisholm

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CONTENTS

If your actions inspire others to dream more, learn more, do more, and become more, you are a leader.

JOHN QUINCY ADAMS

PREFACE

As companies modify priorities and operations, human resources functions can move from a dedicated HR role, to that of the manager. Whether the majority of those important functions stays within HR at your organization, or is your responsibility as a manager, it is important that managers understand how much of their role is really about their people, as well as aspects of legislation, policy, and procedures that involve human resourcing issues.

Nobody can prevent you from choosing to be exceptional.

MARK SANBORN

CHAPTER ONE

HUMAN RESOURCES TODAY

Human resources (HR) used to focus on very specific processes, and had narrowly defined terms such as “personnel manager” and “payroll.” As a discipline, HR has evolved to include areas which both complement and build on one another.

WHAT IS HUMAN RESOURCES TODAY?

HR has certainly evolved over the past 30 to 50 years, and branched out into defined areas, or sub-disciplines, within the scope of human resources. These include recruitment, employee engagement, retention, organizational development, training and development, compensation and benefits, health, safety and wellness, strategic planning, and employee relations.

Organizations arrange these areas in a way that works for them, sometimes keeping them all within the Human Resources department, and at other times broadening the scope into an area called Corporate Resources, of which Human Resources is one part.

KEY FACTORS INFLUENCING HUMAN RESOURCES TODAY

There are several key factors that have had an enormous impact on the development of Human Resources. These include:

Technology: which has had, and will continue to, have significant impact on the way we design and structure work. It also challenges the workforce to keep up with significant developments while organizations decide which changes are worthwhile adopting.

Globalization: as companies consider working in or expanding into foreign markets, and have employees working in different locations.

Demographics: as the core numbers of the workforce age and move into retirement, and the available talent pool becomes smaller. What do the older workers need to sustain themselves? What are younger workers looking for in employment?

Includes using part-time, temporary, and contract workers as a way to manage fluctuations in demand and to manage long term labor costs. One example of contingency use is companies bringing in retirees during busy periods, to cover staff vacations, and so on.

In order to best manage the workforce as it now exists, there is significant focus on training and development. Development (the long term process that facilitates strategic thinking) capitalizes on experience and aims to reach goals. Training is provided specifically to change behaviors or attitudes in order to meet job specific requirements.

Organizations are now focusing on developing individuals and their careers rather than addressing immediate needs of the job, which has led to an entire industry around lifelong learning. Doing so seems to encourage employee retention and allows us to stay up to date with technological changes as well as shifting demographics.

GROWTH IN HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

As human resources evolved, so have the ways that we manage our workforce. We have the ability to create and maintain workplaces that are fair, safe, and engaging by leveraging the strengths of human resources skills within the organization, and ourselves.

As the nature of organizations change, HR practices and theories will also evolve. No matter what they become, they will continue to enrich the organizations and people that they support.

Currently, some human resources management trends include:

- Onboarding (the process of bringing new people into the company)
- Proactive recruiting (beginning the recruitment process years before they will actually join the company)
- Focus on work-life balance
- Introduction of Lean and Six Sigma methods, which encourage sustainable improvement

PRACTICAL ILLUSTRATION

Dylan and Tatiana were discussing ways to introduce better Human Resource Management practices into their company. Dylan was relatively new to the department and was overawed by the process, but Tatiana suggested they consider some recent HR trends to help them come up with ideas for the process. Dylan agreed and was eager to learn more about the field, and discussed Onboarding with his colleague, who explained that it was a new process of bringing people into the company. They debated the efficacy of Proactive recruiting and whether starting the recruitment process early, might advance the future of the company. Together, they laid out a plan for implementing the new trends and were excited to meet with the owner of the company and reveal their solutions the next day.

Do you have awesome talent everywhere? Do you push that talent to pursue audacious quests?

TOM PETERS

CHAPTER TWO

RECRUITING AND INTERVIEWING

Essentially, recruiting and interviewing are about bringing the right people to your organization. The process of keeping those people with the organization is called retention. We will focus on the first two parts (recruiting and interviewing) in this chapter.

THE JOB SELECTION PROCESS

Organizations typically go through a formal or informal process when there is a vacancy to fill.

In some organizations, simply getting permission to fill a vacancy can be a challenge. Once the process starts, the pattern is very similar from one place to the next. Although the steps seem straightforward, this is a very interactive process, so stages can overlap.

Job Analysis: Here we will consider the KSA's (knowledge, skills, and attitudes) that are required for the position, and make sure that they are included in a job description.

Recruit: Attract the right candidates to the position. The best way to start this part of the process is to have a good idea where your candidates are.

The most effective way to do so is to know what interests them, where they tend to congregate, and in a shrinking labor market, where they already work.

Filter Candidates: It is not necessary to interview every candidate. By the same token, some folks do not interview well and yet can provide supporting and interesting information to you through screening and testing. For example, if you are hiring customer service representatives that will spend a lot of time on the phone, then conduct an initial, short interview over the phone. If they sound professional and confident, then you can consider a face to face interview.

Interview: Structured, formal interviews will give you far more valid and reliable results than informal ad-hoc interviews. Know what you are interviewing for, be well prepared, and be ready for candidates to have plenty of questions for you.

Select: Check references. Make an offer to the right candidate, and be prepared to negotiate, especially in a tight labor market.

Introduce and Retain: Now that you have your new employee, prepare to introduce them to the team, and to build on the relationship that has been established during the recruiting process.

GET GOOD AT INTERVIEWING

Interviewing, as an interpersonal activity, is something that can be troubled by lack of consistency and standardization if you do not go about it well.

Here is a model to assist in setting up ideal interviews, as well as some of the pitfalls and best practices.

INTERVIEWING FAIRLY

It can be easy for an interviewer to succumb to bias or stereotype. Be aware of the following issues, so that they do not thwart your efforts at the interview.

We used to think that if people sat with their arms crossed, they were being “closed” or “standoffish.” Sometimes, however, people are nervous and maybe trying to keep their hands still or perhaps they are simply more comfortable with their arms crossed. Reading body language is not always simple; a tendency to pay more attention to non-verbal cues means you may miss what someone actually says.

Remember, too, that if an interviewer and applicant are of similar gender, race, or share other physical characteristics, this can (and does) influence interview results.

Women, people who are overweight and visible minorities are typically paid less than Caucasian men working in the same roles. Be aware of this in terms of employment equity.

The halo effect is seen when a personal attribute is presumed to reflect some kind of truth. For example, a person who is perceived as physically attractive is frequently considered more intelligent and sociable than someone who is less attractive, even in the absence of proof.

Contrast effects surface when the characteristics of one candidate are compared to candidates who have already been interviewed, rather than against established behavioral criteria.

THE BEST WAY TO INTERVIEW

Interviews alone are not a great indicator of job performance, especially unstructured, informal interviews. The correlation between effective hiring decisions (a good choice) and a poor choice are improved by the use of behaviorally based questions. Otherwise, you can almost skip the interview and draw straws to select the right person. This is also why testing, accurate references, and use of portfolios (actual examples of work) are so helpful.

During the interview, ask questions that are job specific. To improve reliability and validity of the selection process, ask questions that are relative to the job. Concentrate on job knowledge and skills related to performance, and increasing your ability to forecast success on the job.

Interview questions must be fair, and not lead to bias. Questions that pertain to the work as well as decisions that have been made are typically the best questions. (Behaviorally based questions, which often start out as “Tell me about a time when…” is an example.)

When you ask questions, the best information comes from those that are “open.” An open ended question encourages the interviewee to say more than just yes or no, and to explain their answers. If you need to ask closed questions (such as “Do you have a valid driver’s license?”), then do so, but also plan to get detailed, active input from your open ended questions.

During the interview, score responses using a systematic, structured approach to evaluate their responses. If you require specific answers, build them in to your scoring.

Finally, train interviewers in listening, questioning, and evaluation to get consistency in the interview process and consequently make better hiring decisions.

Some examples of common questions and fairer options are listed below.

Common Question	Better Question
This job requires a lot of walking. Can you do it?	This job requires you to be on your feet for most of the day. Do you have any physical conditions that we should know about in considering you as a candidate?
We would like a photo to attach to your application because of the number of applicants. Would you mind supplying us with one?	All staff has their picture on our internal Web site so that we can recognize one another easily. If you are hired, would you mind having your picture taken for that purpose?
You have an unusual name. What nationality is it?	Did I pronounce your name correctly when I met you?
Have you ever been arrested?	This job requires that you secure a high level security clearance, including a criminal records check. Will you have difficulty providing us with that clearance?
Are you American?	If you are hired, we require proof that you are entitled to work in the U.S. Can you provide us with a work permit or proof of citizenship?

PRACTICAL ILLUSTRATION

Elizabeth was having trouble understanding the interview process, and had asked Isaac for help prior to the series of interviews she would have to conduct the next day. He was the head of the HR department and had experience in recruiting and interviewing employees, and suggested they review techniques for interviewing fairly. Elizabeth agreed and was pleased when he explained that certain body language cues may interfere with the interviewers interpretation of what was said, and that ethnic favoritism should be avoided. Isaac pointed out that Elizabeth should try to avoid bias when interviewing potential candidates and should focus on what was said and avoid comparing candidates with each other. Elizabeth used the techniques she had learned the next day and was happy when she hired the candidate most suitable for the position.

Successful and unsuccessful people do not vary greatly in their abilities. They vary in their desires to reach their potential.

John Maxwell

CHAPTER THREE

RETENTION AND ORIENTATION

The retention process is about putting things which help people stay with your organization into place. Although retention starts during the interview process, at the point where an offer of employment is made, it falls within the scope of Employee Orientation.

GETTING OFF ON THE RIGHT TRACK

Now that you have gone to the trouble and investment of conducting a thorough recruiting process, and selected the best candidate, it is time to address the things that help people get engaged in your organization. It takes about two weeks for someone to decide to stay with a new company, so the orientation process that you provide is critical, as well as its timing.

To consider the effects of bringing someone in who does not engage, take a look at your recruiting cost, and consider the impact of a poor selection choice, where now you must recruit again. Even more compelling is the cost of someone who joins the organization, then checks out emotionally, but continues to report to work every day (which we refer to as "presenteeism").

The orientation process spells out the way that new employees become effective contributors to the organization. This socialization typically includes the following factors:

Encounter: Despite what may have been revealed through the recruiting and interviewing activities, starting a new job takes getting used to. Time to familiarize to new tasks, receive training, and understand company policies and procedures are all necessary. Meeting colleagues and becoming familiar with the company culture are all a part of the transition, as is making sure that the employee receives a warm welcome.

Orientation: Some companies see orientation as filling out forms and mandatory meetings with a new manager. Effective orientation means that employees have the opportunity to ask questions and begin to interact with peers and managers. In addition, colleagues, managers, and HR must be actively involved and interested in helping the new employee settle into their role.

ROLE OF HUMAN RESOURCES

Design an orientation process for the organization.

Complete the paperwork associated with a new recruit, including reference checking; providing letter of offer; setting up candidate with benefit plan enrollment forms, direct deposit forms, and tax forms; and providing access to policies such as code of conduct, confidentiality, computer usage, and so on.

Provide managers with tools to undertake their parts of the orientation.

Provide an overview of the performance management program (including any kind of bonus programs, performance reviews, and attendance management).

ROLE OF THE MANAGER

Introduce the person to the organization, especially immediate and frequent contacts and resources, but also the less immediate but equally important individuals.

Ensure that the schedule for the first several days (or weeks, depending on the complexity and level of the job), is set up to incorporate a warm welcome, getting to know the work teams, and getting familiar with the workspace set up for them (including equipment, tools, desk, PC, business cards, cell phone, etc.).

Establish objectives for the first 30 – 60 – 90 days and following through to ensure success.

Set up technology, safety, or other training.

CREATING AN ENGAGING PROGRAM

Think of the last time you started a new job, and the range of feelings that came with it. You may have experienced excitement, curiosity, worry, and much more.

What could have been added to your own orientation experience to assist you in "clicking in" to the organization quickly?

What aspects of the orientation program were excellent, and are things that you would recommend to others?

Characteristics of an effective orientation program:

- The hiring manager is responsible for the success of the orientation.
- The program incorporates technical and social aspects of the job.
- Employees receive formal and informal introductions to managers, working groups, and peers.
- Employees receive useful information pertaining to the company's products, services, customers, and strategic plans.
- Employees receive required training.

Employee Engagement studies provide additional opportunities to discover what your employees like and what keeps them motivated. In uncovering what engages them, you can also determine where you can strengthen your organization through a commitment to retention activities. For example, if your employees identify that their work is too complex or that they are unable to exercise any flexibility with work schedules, changing those circumstances can improve your retention.

In addition, as the labor market worldwide continues to shrink, we will be competing for the same candidates for more jobs than there are workers. Having some flexibility in areas that appeal to your workforce will go a long way in keeping them engaged, contributing, and benefiting your organization.

USING AN ORIENTATION CHECKLIST

There is tremendous value in making sure that every new candidate has an equal opportunity to learn about their workplace. You will also see them engage quickly and effectively when they know for certain what their role and responsibilities are. At the same time, it is essential that they get the benefits of that warm welcome on the first day and know where to hang their coat, or go for lunch.

The checklist on the next page is a starting place to consider what is important to the new employee as they get started. When you make the effort to have things ready for that important first day (such as a ready workstation or access to tools), the employee feels welcome, and you are much more likely to have an engaged member of your workforce.

Before the First Day

- ☐ Schedule safety training (such as WHMIS, H2S, driving, first aid)
- ☐ Set up workspace (such as IT requests, telephone set up, tools, name tags, identification cards, business cards, cell phone, etc.)
- ☐ Advise when and where to arrive on the first day and to whom they should report
- ☐ Advise where to park
- ☐ Announce upcoming arrival to existing staff
- ☐ Assign someone (such as a co-worker) to conduct tour on first day (washrooms, coatroom, break/lunch room, emergency exits, muster stations, etc.)

On the First Day

Physical Space

- ☐ Washrooms
- ☐ Lunchroom
- ☐ Desk/office
- ☐ Ergonomic Evaluation
- ☐ Supplies
- ☐ Smoking area
- ☐ Lockers/Closets
- ☐ Bike Storage

IT / Security

- ☐ Computer and login information
- ☐ Access to special drives, programs, & printers
- ☐ E-mail
- ☐ ID Card
- ☐ Building access cards/keys
- ☐ Cell phone policy
- ☐ How to lock up at end of day
- ☐ How to deal with threats to safety and security

Supervisor/Manager Orientation

- ☐ First aid room/supplies
- ☐ Major duties, responsibilities, workload
- ☐ Hours of work
- ☐ Review strategic plan for department/area
- ☐ Review organizational charts
- ☐ Discuss employee role, expectations
- ☐ Performance standards
- ☐ Outline objectives of personal performance management plan (goals, benchmarks, etc.)
- ☐ Take employee to coffee or lunch
- ☐ Terms of probationary period
- ☐ Break policy
- ☐ Sick leave reporting (who to call, and when)
- ☐ Vacation requests
- ☐ Arrange initial meetings with department managers, stakeholders, etc.

HR Orientation

- ☐ Company background & organization strategic overview
- ☐ Employee handbook
- ☐ Benefits, banking, tax forms
- ☐ Explain when and how of pay
- ☐ Dress code (or uniform)
- ☐ Key policies, such as Code of Conduct, Privacy and Confidentiality, Conflict of Interest
- ☐ Where and who to go with questions
- ☐ Acceptable use of tools, property, Internet
- ☐ Absenteeism policy/Disability management policy
- ☐ Discipline
- ☐ Collective Agreements
- ☐ Informal/formal grievance reporting procedures
- ☐ Employee and Family Assistance Program (EFAP/EAP)

PRACTICAL ILLUSTRATION

Jessup and Nandi were working on a new orientation program for hired employees and were struggling to define what a good orientation program would require – they understood that orientation was a necessity for a productive working environment. Jessup suggested they take a look at some effective orientation programs and identify their characteristics. Nandi agreed and pointed out that most orientation programs incorporated technical and social aspects of the job, as well as placed the manager in charge of the success of the orientation program. Jessup included that orientation programs should provide the correct type of training and that employees should receive introductions to other members of the company. Nandi and Jessup used these guidelines to create and orientation program which would help their new employees accustom themselves to the company and produce their best work. They were excited when it was put into practice and benefitted those involved.

You see things; and you say "Why?" But I dream things that never were; and I say, "Why not?"

George Bernard Shaw

CHAPTER FOUR

FOLLOWING UP WITH NEW EMPLOYEES

As we mentioned in the previous chapter, orientation is a critical aspect of employee retention. Since the orientation process takes time and planning in order to be effective, this chapter will focus on the next critical aspect, which is following up with new employees.

CHECKING IN

Where a company is committed to drawing the right people, in turn they develop good people. This can help a company that is making an effort to be an “employer of choice.” If you speak to people who work for just such organizations, you probably know that their recruiting efforts are eased by the fact that candidates come to them asking for the privilege of working together.

So how do you do your part to help your employer achieve that prestigious status? The answer is simple: by checking in with new employees. Just think of it this way: checking in with your employees will help them from checking out.

FOLLOWING UP

Sometimes your follow up will be based on the employee orientation checklist from the previous module, and simply making sure that each area is covered adequately. Other items may get added to your checklist based on your conversations with the employee.

These regular interactions, which may be short and seem informal, or follow a more formal tone, also give the employee the opportunity to ensure that he or she has made the best decision possible in coming to work with you. If that person is able to get the information they need when they need it, your chances of developing a strong, engaged employee, continue to grow.

DESIGNING THE FOLLOW-UP SCHEDULE

We recommend that you set up and follow a regular schedule to integrate your new employee. Depending on the role they are hired to, and your role, the schedule will vary, but there are a few key things to focus on:

The employee should meet with you each day in the first week.

The employee should meet with you (or your designate) every two weeks for the first three months on the job, and monthly thereafter.

If you are new at providing this level of follow up for a new employee, and think it's too much, then temper your approach accordingly. Always keep in mind, however, the way that the new employee feels about your workplace, their level of engagement, and what those meetings can do to ensure that you have made a good choice hiring this person.

PRACTICAL ILLUSTRATION

Pablo, Karen and Ling were designing a follow-up schedule for the new employees who had participated in orientation the previous week. The board room desk was piled high with papers and stacked with pens, but they didn't have any ideas until Pablo decided they should work together and talk about key things to focus on for the schedule. Both Karen and Ling agreed, and they each wrote down an aspect they thought was important: the employee should meet with them the first day of each week, the employee should discuss how they feel about the workplace, and the employee should meet with them every two weeks for the first three months and monthly thereafter. Pablo, Karen and Ling managed to finish up early and lay out a successful follow-up schedule with these aspects in place. All three of them were happy to have completed the schedule which would make their jobs easier in future.

We make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give.

Winston Churchill

CHAPTER FIVE

WORKPLACE HEALTH & SAFETY

Understanding your responsibilities as a manager means that you do not just understand health and safety, but that you live it. In this chapter, we will look at your role in maintaining a healthy and safe workplace, and what areas of additional training you may want to explore.

UNDERSTANDING YOUR ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Each province, territory, state, or country that you work in has regulations and legislation that are produced and enforced by the appropriate levels of government. This also generally means that workers who work within the scope of that legislation have access to benefits such as medical care and wage replacement because of related insurance. In some places, they may also receive benefits for family members.

The essence of workers' compensation programs meant that workers in designated occupations could receive assistance in the form of wage replacement and medical care if they were the subject of a work related injury. In addition, the organization that they work for is protected from civil suit put forward by the employee who has been injured (meaning that the employee is not able to receive damages from a lawsuit where they charge the employer for being responsible for their injuries). The governing bodies can level fines against an employer who disregards the health and safety of their workforce, in addition to charging insurance premiums sufficient to cover the costs of the programs.

It is very important for you, as a people leader, to understand the aspects of federal as well as provincial and territorial rules for each jurisdiction that you operate in. Each jurisdiction provides frequent training as well as information about your obligations and responsibilities under current legislation and codes.

UNDERSTANDING LOCAL AND INDUSTRY SPECIFIC RULES

If you have health and safety staff within your organization, they can bring you up to speed very quickly on the local rules that govern your workplace. They are probably very competent at what they do, but you are the one responsible for having the required systems in place that meet the requirements of your legal obligations.

As an example, employees who work in positions that put them at risk of injury need safety training before they enter a worksite, not several days later. Workplace Health Materials Information Systems (WHMIS); issues of fall protection; and wearing personal protective equipment (PPE) such as ear plugs, safety vests, and so on; are all a part of that safety training. Employees who work alone may also be subject to certain legislation that will have an impact on the way that you work. Be sure to speak with experts in the field and be diligent about your research to get the information that you require.

Certain industries have special rules, and these can differ widely from one area to another. If you are working in trades, transportation, federally regulated industries, or agriculture, expect to see exceptions to things that you may already know.

Here are some resources for finding more information in your area.

Area	Organization	Web Site
North America	North American Occupational Safety & Health	http://www.naosh.org
Canada	Canadian Center for Occupational Health and Safety	http://www.ccohs.ca
United States of America	Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA)	http://www.osha.gov
Mexico	Secretaría del Trabajo y Prevision Social	http://www.stps.gob.mx/ENGLISH/index.htm
European Union (EU)	European Agency for Safety and Health at Work	http://osha.europa.eu/
Great Britain	Health and Safety Executive	http://www.hse.gov.uk/

Asia and Pacific	Asia-Pacific Occupational Safety and Health Organization	http://www.aposho.org
Australia	Safe Work Australia	http://www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au

TRAINING FOR MANAGERS

You can expect to find training in the following areas:

- Working with Occupational Health and Safety Legislation
- Incident Investigation Skills
- Fundamentals of Inspections
- Hazard Assessment and Control

Each area is well defined. Some examples are included below.

Working with occupational health and safety legislation will provide you with access to pertinent rules and regulations specific to your region and industry.

Incident investigation skills are not about finding blame for an incident (although that may be a result). Investigations identify root causes of injuries and incidents, and then put practices into place to avoid recurrences or minimize potential for further injuries or damage.

Inspections involve systematic observation of worksites, work conditions, work practices, and equipment to identify hazards or poor work practices and make recommendations for improvement.

Hazard Assessment and Control is a process to continually monitor all aspects of a workplace and to determine whether practices need to change in order to maintain the health and safety of the workplace. Examples include small tasks like posting "wet floor" signs, to larger jobs involving the controls placed on noxious substances.

Work involved in any of these processes does not just minimize exposure for workers and improve the safety record of a workplace. Often, inspections and hazard assessment can identify opportunities to reduce waste and increase productivity, quality, and efficiency, in addition to improving the health and safety of the workplace.

PRACTICAL ILLUSTRATION

Josephine and Harold were worried about the lack of training for Occupational Health and Safety legislation for managers within their company and had been working on a new regime to train them with regards to this. They were stuck on ideas for which fields managers should be trained in to agree with current legislation in their state until Harold suggested they research and definite those criteria. Josephine agreed, and together they discovered that their managers would need training in: Working with Occupational Health and Safety Legislation; Incident

Investigation Skills; Fundamentals of Inspections and Hazard Assessment and Control. Josephine and Harold were happy they clarified their needs and immediately began implementing training schedules for these areas by consulting with health and safety staff within their organization.

Force is all-conquering, but
it’s victories are short-lived.

Abraham Lincoln

CHAPTER SIX

WORKPLACE BULLYING, HARASSMENT, AND VIOLENCE

Employers, workers, and unions have all taken a serious stand on harassment and violence in the workplace, and yet these problems persist. As high as 50% of workers in Canada, the United States, and Britain indicate that they have personally been bullied at work.

DEFINITIONS

Bullying does not have an exact legal definition, but is generally considered as intimidation or abuse of authority.

Harassment is directly related to protected areas including sex, race, religion, age, sexual orientation, or disability.

Violence, in this context, can be defined as abuse, threats, or assault committed in relationship to work.

Violence is becoming more common where people work in contact with customers, clients, and the general public. Aggression often starts with an anger trigger in the form of a slight or an irritant. When it comes to losing our temper, our impulse is controlled by our inhibitions, made up of the knowledge (and perhaps fear) of repercussions and consequences as well as social and cultural norms.

Violence, bullying, and harassment can manifest in many ways. Violence often begins with a conflict; for example, two people with different ideas about what should happen. The conflict escalates to where one person decides they will stop at nothing to get what they want.

Incidents may manifest as:

- **Physical**: Attacks, threats, or unwanted sexual advances.
- **Verbal**: Offensive or critical jokes, gossip, threats, or criticism.
- **Written**: Offending notes, email, text messages, and/or letters.

COSTS TO THE ORGANIZATION

If the organization refuses to intervene, they may experience cost in many ways:

- Staff turnover
- Reduced productivity
- Poor morale
- Absenteeism
- Negative impacts to employee benefit plans (through increased plan usage)

- Legal costs
- Tarnished reputation
- Strain on resources to deal with the complaint

NEGATIVE MEDIA COVERAGE

The costs also extend to the people who work for the organization. For example, when an employee is victimized, they can suffer from stress, anxiety, or depression, particularly if they do not act. As well, their personal life and career can be damaged. The accused may lose their job and or face legal charges. Those who are falsely accused may lose their job and relationships, and also become a victim.

THE MANAGER'S ROLE

The manager's role includes providing staff with tools to report issues and a way to deal with issues that arise. Since many problems are resolved through informal means, the best tools may be those that simply allow for people to have a conversation and to facilitate discussion that will mediate problems before they escalate.

Here are some useful ways to look after issues, and your employees:

- Ensure that your staff has the ability – and authority – to manage conflict, negotiate, and remedy problems that arise. Empower them with the ability to conduct themselves safely and with confidence.

- Provide strong leadership.
- At work (and at home!) conduct yourself with consideration and respect for others. The golden rule applies.
- Model principles and standards of diversity in your everyday work.
- Recognize staff for their contributions; involve and value everyone.
- Deal with inappropriate behavior as it arises. Don't let small things grow. If you ignore them, your staff may think that you either approve of the behavior or that you simply don't care.

Where you recognize harassment, bullying, or an escalating conflict, take initiative, and ensure that appropriate steps are taken. If you are not in a position to act, or lack confidence yourself, then raise the issues to channels available to you including your own manager, and whenever necessary, the police.

During a crisis, follow the POLITE plan:

- **Position** yourself so that you know where you are in relation to an opponent, and an exit.
- **Observe** warning signs and pay attention to them, particularly if the distance between you is narrowing, or the other person begins speaking in single syllables.
- **Listen** empathetically and avoid remarks that could be considered condescending.
- **Instincts**: listen to, and make good use of your instincts.

- **Talk** to the other person and try to establish rapport. This will help you to gauge, and influence, their mood.
- **Eye** contact can also be an effective way of building rapport. Read the situation carefully, however, as some angry people will see unwavering eye contact as threatening. Use eye contact to establish a connection, not to intimidate.

A skillful interruption to an escalating situation can help to relieve tension and move from escalating conflict to problems solving. Using a technique that breaks their train of thought (or activity) is a way to do this. For example, your opponent may expect that you are going to run away, fight back, or break into tears. Doing the unexpected will disrupt the escalation.

A strong pattern interrupt is something so out of the norm that it makes the other person stop and wonder what is going on. Standing on a chair for example, would be a pattern interrupter. The other person would quite possibly lose their train of thought. If they were very angry, would it change their thoughts from anger to something else (bewilderment, or wonder, for example); quite probably.

When conflict is over the phone, try the following techniques:

- Always aim to establish rapport as soon as you pick up the phone
- Ask for the caller's name and number in case you get disconnected
- Maintain a positive tone and posture
- Have some techniques to interrupt skillfully
- Skillful interruptions over the phone can include statements such as:

- "Excuse me sir, but if we continue like this, it will be difficult for me to help you. Would you like my help?"
- You could also sneeze – not directly into the phone, but with enough force and conviction that it breaks the caller's train of thought and they automatically say, "Bless you." If this works, you can quickly reply, "Thank you! Now what is it that I can do specifically to help you today?"

Remember: A manager who is unaware of harassment, bullying, or violence brewing is not absolved of their responsibility to act.

AN EMPLOYER'S RESPONSIBILITY

It is the employer's responsibility to provide a safe workplace, and to provide the training and tools that people need to work safely. It is also their responsibility to ensure that training takes place, and is sufficient to address the work that is being done.

Most organizations have policies regarding harassment, bullying, and violence within the scope of human resources or health and safety policies.

Any allegation must be acknowledged and investigated in terms of those policies, which should incorporate the following steps:

- Investigate immediately
- Take every complaint seriously
- Be objective
- Attempt to resolve the issues informally if possible

- Keep matters confidential for ALL parties
- Follow your organization's policies, as well as legal obligations

If the employer refuses to acknowledge safety risks and do what they can to reduce or eliminate them, they can be held responsible through the court system through penalties like fines, or work stoppage orders, in addition to a publicly tarnished reputation.

Fortunately, most employers want to comply with workplace health and safety rules, and do their utmost to provide safe workplaces for their people. If you have concerns about what your obligations are in your region, contact your local health and safety association.

PRACTICAL ILLUSTRATION

Henrietta and Boris had reported an employee dispute to Killian, and were in the process of a heated argument, when Killian stepped in to manage the situation. He conducted himself with professionalism and displayed the qualities a good leader should have by taking control of the situation and teaching Henrietta and Boris the tools they would need to negotiate and resolve the dispute between themselves. He recognized both Henrietta and Boris for their separate contributions and helped them resolve their conflict in a peaceful manner which didn't disrupt the rest of the staff. Henrietta and Boris left with their issue resolved and increased respect for each other and their manager, whilst Killian was happy he could resolve an issue which had the potential to decrease productivity.

*Diseases of the soul
are more dangerous and
more numerous than
those of the body.*

Cicero

CHAPTER SEVEN

WORKPLACE WELLNESS

When your employees are healthy and fit, they are less likely to be absent from work due to illness and more likely to be engaged in what is going on around them. This chapter will explore the concept of workplace wellness and how to promote it in your organization.

WELLNESS BEHAVIORS

When you apply techniques to your own life that model wellness, your employees notice. There are three important wellness behaviors that we should all focus on:

- Healthy eating
- Exercise
- Life-work balance

Of course, managers can be just as far off the "healthy living" track as anyone. Just remember that your people are watching you, and that whatever behaviors you do exhibit, they will note.

WELLNESS TRENDS

Wellness is not just about feeling good, and it isn't about the employer taking full responsibility for their workforce's health either. However, people are looking for workplaces that respect that they have a life outside of work, and that also make efforts to keep them healthy.

Wellness addresses the psychological, cognitive, and physical health of your workforce. This includes issues that can originate at work and at home.

There are two major concerns for workplaces right now. The first area of concern is preparation for pandemic illness such as influenza. An example is the SARS outbreak in 2003 where the World Health Organization and health care providers around the world have researched, planned, and established pandemic plans. Workplaces must be prepared for pandemic illness on many fronts, since an outbreak of any magnitude can have significant implications on their business.

The second area of concern within the scope of wellness is mental health. People tend to use the word "stress" very casually, and yet the effects of negative stress, over time, can have tremendous impact on people's lives, and the work that you are trying to complete. While positive stressors can enrich our lives, the ongoing presence and pressures of negative stress can lead to mental and physical illness.

THE CASE FOR WELLNESS

Why worry about workplace wellness? Well…

Wellness programs, by their nature, can result in improved employee engagement and morale. A happy and healthy workforce is more productive.

Increased wellness puts less demand on expensive benefit programs.

Disability programs are demonstrating a shift from paying claims for primarily physical causes (for fractures, cardiac issues, or cancer, for example), to paying for mental health issues such as depression and anxiety. In addition, the cumulative effects of stress can have both physical and psychological effects.

As people – our workers – continue to foster sedentary lives that are fraught with quick, processed food, and as the realization sets in for some of them that their lives need improving, the need for support provided by the workplace becomes more apparent.

What can you do as an employer?

- Focus on health promotion and prevention (for example, healthy food options and activity programs)
- Provide training and education for supervisors and managers so they have tools to recognize when employees are at risk
- Promote your EAP/EFAP
- Undertake Health Risk Assessments

- Maintain contact with absent employees and let them know they're missed
- What can you do as an employee?
- Make your health a priority
- Remember that you have a duty to be prepared for work
- Participate in and comply with treatment

Also consider:

Is your employee (or, are you) in the right job? Are there needs for lifestyle or career changes that will help you to be successful?

Of the five key stressors in life (relationships, work, health, crime/violence, and personal finances), the personal finance issue is five times that of the health stressors. (Chartered Institute of Personnel & Development [CIPD], 2003)

Up to 20% of the workforce is actively disengaged, meaning that they may be at work, but really not that into it.

Early intervention, which includes recognition of issues, is very important.

- Talk to your employees, and more importantly, listen to them
- Encourage employees to seek assistance
- Be supportive
- Be clear about concerns and expectations, and flexible with solutions

- Work with the employee to set goals; turning things around can be easier than you think

Your EAP/EFAP provider should be a tremendous resource. Many of them provide more services than just counseling, including:

- Financial planning
- Assistance with locating childcare
- Nutritional counseling
- Retirement planning
- Wellness programming for the workplace

PRACTICAL ILLUSTRATION

Dean and Caitlin were the owners of a successful aerial photography business and had recently employed several new photographers and administrative staff members to help them achieve their goals. They travelled extensively in West Africa and were discussing their employees' wellness needs and whether the Ebola outbreak would prove a serious threat to their business. Caitlin suggested they create a plan for managing wellness should a pandemic occur, and Dean agreed. He included the need for managing stress and mental health in their employees and themselves. Together they set up plan for managing employee health and safety and were happy they had this aspect of their business covered should worst come to worst at any point in the future.

Life is not fair.
Get used to it.

BILL GATES


Resume
Lorem Ipsum
SENIOR
ASSISTANT
BACHELOR
COOL DESIGN TRAINING

CHAPTER EIGHT

PROVIDING FEEDBACK TO EMPLOYEES

Your employees expect your feedback whether it is a pat on the back, or time for change. This chapter will explore some different feedback models, as well as some ways to make your feedback effective and encouraging.

FEEDBACK MODEL

Time and place: When you are offering feedback to an employee, give consideration to your environment, and to your timing. Never offer negative feedback in front of colleagues; it is unprofessional and can damage the reputation of the employee (co-workers seeing someone criticized in front of others tend to not forget it), and you (that you care so little for your staff that you would embarrass them in front of their co-workers).

The best place to provide feedback is somewhere quiet, like an office or meeting room. The feedback needs to come as soon as possible after the event (later the same day or the following day is good), unless you are feeling emotionally charged about something.

If an employee has done something that violates a rule at work, you may have to act immediately. However, if you can hold off and get your own emotions in check first, you will avoid saying something that you might later regret.

TYPES OF FEEDBACK

Just as there are many types of conversations, so are there a range of feedback models. Feedback can be formal, as we will discuss with the feedback sandwich in a moment, or informal. Informal feedback can be just as meaningful and valuable as formal feedback.

Informal feedback, such as recognition for something that has been learned and properly applied to the workplace, or offering a small reward for overall performance, can really perk up your employee's day, immediately turning into a burst of energy or creativity for that individual.

More formal feedback is often used with certain benchmarks and at certain times of the year. Some organizations schedule annual, formal performance reviews and may also include quarterly or monthly meetings to review and document progress, strengths, and opportunities for growth.

The 360-degree performance review is a tool that, instead of relying on performance comments from the immediate supervisor, also solicits feedback from people within a 360-degree radius of the employee. Direct reports, colleagues, managers, internal customers, and even external customers can all contribute to feedback for a 360-degree review.

No matter which tools you prefer, and whether you are more likely to rely on formal or informal feedback methods, keep in mind that feedback is provided as a way to encourage growth and development of your staff. Feedback can help employees along with their career goals, not just to meet the goals of the company or your specific department, but also to reach their own.

THE FEEDBACK SANDWICH

Managers often use a "feedback sandwich" as a way to provide feedback and to cushion criticism. The benefits include having positive comments that frame the critique. A feedback sandwich typically looks like this:

1. Make a specific positive comment
2. Offer critique or suggestions for improvement
3. Make an overall positive comment

The drawback to using a feedback sandwich is that it does not take long before an employee knows that if you are leading a conversation and offer a compliment, there will be some kind of negative comment to follow it. It is human nature for them to filter out any compliment you make, and to focus on the negative comments.

Therefore, instead of offering a feedback sandwich that you build, we recommend that you have the employee get involved, particularly with the middle. The value in this is that when you are working with adults, chances are they will know what went wrong and have ideas about how to improve.

Instead of a sandwich made with white bread and a jam filling, like this:

1. Hi Paul, I really thought your presentation went well yesterday.
2. But I think that if you had more statistics in your report, you wouldn't have had to work so hard to sell the idea to the group.
3. You're a strong member of our team, and I'm looking forward to your continued contributions.

Try multi-grain and homemade fruit spread with hazelnut drizzle:

1) Paul, I thought we could sit and debrief the presentation you gave yesterday. Congratulations on getting the support for your project – I think it's a really valuable one for our division, and a great reflection of your strength as a leader. Paul might just say "Thanks!" or, "They were a tough crowd." You can probe a bit here and then encourage him to fill in the middle, or you could say:

2) "They were certainly interested in what you had to say, and had lots of questions. I thought for a moment that things might go off the rails, but you managed to field their questions and keep them on track at the same time."

Responses could look like this:

Paul: “I will have more detail in the presentation next time I do something like this. Even if they don’t want it then, at least it’ll be there as back up.”

You: “It can be tough to know exactly what to anticipate from them as a board. One thing I have done before is to have a couple of extra slides hidden in the presentation that I can bring up if they ask, or a couple of spare story boards or charts, just in case. Also, I think that I could have done a better job of introducing you or perhaps preparing you to meet the executives. Are there other things that I should have done, or that you would add to your plan?”

And then at the end of the conversation, offer that multi-grain kind of closing:

3) “Paul, you got what you went in for, and also earned credibility in their eyes in the way you managed their questions. That makes for a job well done. If there is anything that you want some help from me on next time, or if you’d like to do a practice run with the team, or a pre-meeting survey to the board directly, that might be helpful, too. I thought the design you went with was brilliant, and it’s great you have the green light that you need. If I can do anything more to help next time, let me know.”

A Powerful Tip: When offering feedback, avoid the word “but” after you make a comment, especially a compliment. The word “but” is a negative indicator, meaning that it negates whatever preceded it in the sentence. A listener often shuts out everything that comes before the word "but."

ENCOURAGING GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT

Giving good, meaningful feedback is hard work. Appreciate that this is a learned skill, so you will improve with practice. Take the time to ask questions, observe, and refine your skills.

The payoff for you as a manager is that even if you are giving someone unwanted news, they will appreciate the way that you deliver it. In addition, news that is well delivered is more likely to be listened to than is feedback that is poorly thought out, or coldly articulated.

You may have also noticed that our multi-grain sandwich highlighted some areas where you, the manager, could improve. This not only gives you some things to work on, but it shows your staff that learning and growing never stop.

PRACTICAL ILLUSTRATION

Yuri and Tosca were managers at a civil engineering company, and were considering the best ways to give feedback and criticism to their employees without causing a dispute or lowering morale. Yuri suggested they use the Feedback Sandwich and explained that it was the perfect way to provide feedback and cushion criticism by: making a specific positive comment, then offering critique or suggestions for improvement, and finally making an overall positive comment to cap off the 'sandwich'.

Tosca agreed that this seemed a positive way of approaching feedback on tasks completed and the pair decided to implement it in the company. They were happy when their critiques were well-received and worked on by the employees in question and could move onto managing new tasks.

Do one thing every day
that scares you.

Eleanor Roosevelt

CHAPTER NINE

DISCIPLINING EMPLOYEES

Despite our best efforts at hiring the right people, sometimes they do not behave or learn in the way that we anticipate, and so discipline follows their actions. This chapter will explore some different ways of looking at discipline.

THE GENERAL DISCIPLINE PROCESS

Most employees want to do what they are expected to do at work, and most of them want to do it well. When performance problems appear, you need to:

Act quickly: Letting a problem linger because you do not like to address performance issues can also mean that poor work becomes the normal way of doing things within your area of responsibility. Human nature being what it is if one worker sees another get away with sub-standard performance, they may think that you are fine with it too, and then a small problem becomes a much larger one.

Clarify the expectations of the employee's role. If he does not know what he is being measured against, it's pretty hard for him to improve.

Assist in approving the performance by providing adequate direction when necessary. Make sure that employees know what the company's policies are, and that they are applied consistently and fairly.

Work with the employee to resolve the problem by applying a progressive discipline process.

Clearly and consistently document the steps that you take through the process, including support, training, incidents of misconduct, meetings, and coaching sessions.

THE PROGRESSIVE DISCIPLINE PROCESS

Before we start, please note that the principles and steps here apply to progressive discipline in general, but that some jurisdictions may have specific rules pertaining to this. In addition, collective agreements may stipulate a quite different process (although with similar goals and outcomes). This module outlines a general process for progressive discipline, and is not to be construed as specific legal advice, or as appropriate in all situations or jurisdictions. Make sure that you understand the labor laws in the area that you are managing.

Progressive discipline is a method of behavior correction that allows you to build on the strengths of existing policy, and to apply corrective expectations when employee performance is below the acceptable standard. The process can be applied for both incompetence (when an employee lacks skills or knowledge needed for the job) and misconduct (when an employee knows what they are responsible for, but neglects those responsibilities).

Each time you meet with an employee about their performance, you need to keep dated documentation about the discussion that took place; training completed; warnings and letters provided; and copies of supporting documentation such as error rates, performance reviews, or witness statements.

Managing Incompetence: When the employee lacks the skills to perform their work at an acceptable level, a meeting to clarify the expectations of the job is necessary. Be open with the employee, and let them know what will happen if there is no improvement, including dismissal. Act promptly, because if you are considered to have ignored the problem (and thereby condoned the poor performance), you cannot use it as a reason for dismissal.

Next, assess whether the person has the ability to learn the skills needed, and then provide them with training and support to improve their performance and gain practice and confidence with their new skills. If the performance improves, then the process has been successful. If they have not improved, then you are closer to determining whether terminating their employment is justified.

Managing Misconduct: Depending on the severity of the misconduct, you may have just cause to dismiss the employee immediately. This is called summary dismissal, and is common in cases that involve serious breaches of company policy and/or the law (theft, assault, or reckless behavior with company equipment or vehicles, for example). Deciding how severe an infraction is should also take into account the seriousness and frequency of the misconduct; the employee's work history; and the effect on the company.

As indicated in the previous chapter, you cannot delay your action plan, because you could be seen as condoning the behavior, and then unable to use it in a dismissal.

If the infraction is minor, speak with the employee and allow all sides of the issue to be heard through an investigation. Collect and document the facts, including witness statements. Outline the consequences if job expectations are not met. If you can agree that the behavior will be corrected and that is what occurs, then the progressive discipline ends.

Ensure that you document everything. If the behavior does not improve, you can then implement the next step of discipline, which is a written letter outlining the job expectations and future consequences if they are not met, including possible suspension. If the problem persists, consider suspending the employee. Again, you will have to produce a written document that confirms what is taking place and the consequences if job expectations are not met.

Once the suspension has ended, your next step is to try and forge an agreement that there will not be any further misconduct. You are now in a stronger position to determine whether the last resort, dismissal, is warranted.

Aggravating Factors: Although the progressive discipline policy may be clear, there can be some mitigating factors in incompetence and misconduct. These can include:

- Whether the misconduct was intentional
- Whether the employee accepts responsibility for their actions
- Whether the issue was an isolated or lone incident
- The employee's length of service with the company
- The employee's work history

In many organizations, anything past that first step of progressive discipline will be managed by the supervisor and someone from the HR area. The HR representative may attend the meetings with you, assist with documentation, and ensure that the progressive discipline policy is being adhered to fairly. If questions arise, then checking with legal counsel is always appropriate in cases leading to dismissal, to ensure that any legal matters are addressed, and that the potential for legal suit is minimized if possible.

Throughout this process, keep in mind that the goal of a progressive discipline process is to modify behavior, and to support development of an effective and productive employee.

HAVING DISCIPLINE MEETINGS

Depending on the process for progressive discipline in your workplace, there may typically be two to three discipline meetings.

1) An employee demonstrates non-standard behavior (misconduct or incompetence).

   An informal meeting takes place between the immediate supervisor and employee to identify the unwanted behavior, and outline expectations for improvement (including dates). The supervisor must clearly document this incident. Since the meeting should follow as soon as possible after the non-standard behavior is discovered, there is no letter provided at this stage.

2) If the non-standard behavior continues, the supervisor arranges a more formal meeting with the employee.

   Again the undesirable behavior is discussed, and expectations for improvement. Consequences are also outlined in this step.

3) If the undesirable behavior continues, a formal meeting is arranged again.

In this meeting, a written letter is provided to the employee with an action plan for improvement and clearly outlined consequences. If the possibility of termination, suspension, or charges is possible, share that information with the employee. Have the employee sign a copy of the letter indicating that they have received a copy for their records. (They do not have to agree with what is written in the letter, just sign to acknowledge receipt.)

Often employees will refuse to sign the letter, or they may prefer to take it away with them, read it on their own, and then sign it. If they refuse to sign it, that too is a disciplinary matter that you may have to address. As we said earlier, they are not signing to say they agree with the letter; only to confirm that they received a copy.

Some tips for making the most of disciplinary meetings:

- Make sure that you have all the information for the meeting before you begin (notes, evidence, facts, etc.).
- Keep the meeting focused on the behavior, and not the individual. Make sure that your language is free of personal emotion (such as "I am so disappointed in you!") and stick to the issues ("We are speaking today because you were found with stolen property in the backseat of your car this morning.").
- Conduct the meeting away from the eyes and ears of other employees. Discipline should never embarrass anyone, especially the person receiving it.

Check your HR policies so that you know the desired format for any letters or disciplinary documentation. Also check to see at what stage the HR consultant or manager also needs to be a part of the meeting (often by the second formal meeting).

If you are handing out consequences, make sure that you have the authority to enforce them. It's no good threatening to suspend someone if you actually do not have the ability to follow through.

FOLLOWING UP

Often the initial progressive discipline meetings that you hold are enough to correct the unwanted behavior. When that is the case, acknowledge the positive changes with the employee, and move on.

However, if more steps need to be taken and you neglect to follow up on time, you will derail the progressive nature of discipline and may end up stuck with a problem employee who never changes their behavior…and really has no reason to, since there are no real consequences anyway.

Do whatever it takes to ensure you follow up on time: write it in your day timer, set up a reminder on your computer, or book the meeting with the employee in advance.

PRACTICAL ILLUSTRATION

Thomas and Alexander were discussing disciplinary methods after a specific complaint had arisen in the work place. The employee in question would attend a hearing, but the time and place had yet to be discussed, and the pair was worried that the problem could escalate should the hearing be delayed. Alexander suggested they discuss the General Discipline Process and Thomas agreed. They realized that they should: act quickly, clarify the expectations of the employee's role, assist by providing direction where necessary, work with the employee to resolve the problem, and consistently document the steps in the resolution. Thomas and Alexander were satisfied they could help the employee resolve the issue at hand and set the time for the discussion with the employee for the following afternoon.

You're Fired!

Donald Trump

CHAPTER TEN

TERMINATING EMPLOYEES

Sometimes it may seem that actually firing an employee is impossible. Here are some ways to make it work for you. Should you find yourself continually trying to modify an employee's behavior and unable to get the desired results, then considering dismissal, or termination, is the logical next step.

DOCUMENTING EVENTS

It is, of course, possible to terminate employees. It is easiest in cases of clear and serious misconduct or breach of conduct, but even less serious or cumulative events can lead to termination. By the time you reach the state where you are considering terminating anyone, you will have had to review the steps included in the previous module on progressive discipline.

Important things to remember:

As we discussed in the previous module, you may find yourself meeting the employee in an advanced stage of the progressive discipline process. By the second stage, you need to have met with and discussed the matter with HR before you actually threaten dismissal to anyone. If you do not have HR staff, because you work in a small company, then check with your superiors to ensure you have the authority to act as you see fit.

Your documentation must be excellent. Make sure that all of your paperwork is in order and that what you are documenting is part of the process. Stick to the facts in your documentation, and leave your personal opinions out of it. Sign and date your notes and any letters to the employee. Ask the employee to sign and date anything that you provide them with as "received and read." They do not have to agree to the content of the document, but should sign and date it to indicate that they have received it.

Part of your documentation can also come from another person, such as an HR consultant. If they attend any meetings with you, ask them to also take notes and sign them.

MAKING THE DECISION

There is a lot of thought that goes into actually making the decision to terminate someone. Part of this is emotional, and part of it is logical. When we struggle to make the decision for any reason, consider that your turmoil may come from wondering if you are really making the best decision. Of course, the reason that your stomach may be in knots could also have to do with the increased tension that managing this particular employee has brought. Discuss your decision making process with HR and your immediate manager to get their support.

Some employees will present themselves in such a way that you may question your judgment about firing them. Asking these questions will help you to determine whether you are on the right track:

- Am I being hard on this person unnecessarily? (Obviously there has been continued poor performance or misconduct that has led to this stage of the process)
- How serious were the infractions or performance issues that led to this? Do I still believe that they are worthy of termination?
- What are the implications of releasing this employee in terms of backlash to the company, my work unit, and my professional integrity?
- What are the implications to me as a manager, to the results of this department, and to the morale of people working here, to keep this problem employee?

COMMUNICATING THE DECISION

The termination meeting is simply an advanced stage of progressive discipline, but with very dire consequences. Before the meeting, you will have to determine whether the termination requires that the employee be escorted from the property following the meeting, or if they will be allowed to pack up their personal effects. If they work in a sensitive area that is vulnerable to sabotage or tampering, or where they may make comments to co-workers that can be overheard by clients, the safety of the workplace is even more important.

For staff that has remote access to computers, business cell phones, keys, and access cards, a plan must be put in place to ensure that there are no security breaches following the termination.

If you are having the employee leave the office that day, how will you ensure that they get home safely? You should never, ever let an employee drive themselves home after dismissal, but you could arrange a cab. Depending on the circumstances, you may also arrange to have a counselor from your EAP on standby.

Never, EVER, dismiss an employee on a Friday, no matter how tempting it may be. If circumstances come to a head on a Friday, you can prevent the employee from entering the workplace over the weekend by restricting access. (This should only be done if there is a concern about behavior or safety of the other workers or property.)

However, they should not be fired at that time. You can, however, tell them that both of you will take the weekend to cool off and then meet to discuss things the next week. Normally, we have enough indication that termination is pending that we can actually avoid doing so until the following week.

Communicating the termination should be done in a brief, professional meeting. You will have the HR person with you. If the employee is aware this is a disciplinary meeting, they may have a union representative or advocate with them. If you are a unionized workplace, you can invite the union representative to attend. Keep the dismissal meeting short, and free of personal bias or remarks. If you have had previous meetings about an issue (through the progressive discipline process), you can briefly recap why you are here today. If this is the result of a serious incident and no previous meetings took place, calmly review the circumstances (reading right off the termination letter is best).

If career transition (i.e. job search) assistance is being provided, the terms of the services should be outlined in the letter, as well as any severance pay. When you finish reading, ask the employee if he or she understands what you read, and that they are being terminated from their employment effective immediately. Ask them politely to sign the letter, not because they agree with the contents, but to say they have received a copy of the letter. Ask them to provide you with keys, access cards, cell phones, or any other company property they may have on them. Ask them to provide you with any company property that may be at home within 24 hours. Offer them an EAP brochure, or if a counselor is available, let them know.

Then, end the meeting and have the HR representative or their union representative escort them to the counselor if another room is being used, and for the HR/union representative to follow through with the arrangements for them to go home. You could offer a taxi chit, call someone for them, or have a trusted colleague drive them home. Again, do not allow the individual to drive home from work following this meeting.

When you finish with the termination meeting, you may need to decompress too. This can be a nerve-wracking task, and so you may wish to undertake a wind-down activity (such as meditation, deep breathing, a discussion with HR, or your favorite cup of coffee), as a way to unwind after the meeting.

Afterwards, document that the meeting took place, and follow up on any outstanding items that need to be addressed (particularly related to security and access).

PRACTICAL ILLUSTRATION

Trent and Cassidy were facing a difficult issue with an employee and had decided they needed to terminate the employee. They had already implemented the progressive disciplinary action and were considering the best way of handling the tricky situation of actual termination. Cassidy suggested the work out a plan for ensuring the protection of the company and its assets and Trent agreed and stipulated that they shouldn't dismiss the employee on a Friday and should have him escorted out of the building because of the delicacy of the situation. Trent and Cassidy were happy once they'd agreed on the details and decided to conduct the dismissal in a brief and professional meeting which would be conducted with a union member present. Both were satisfied with their decisions and prepared for the meeting that following Monday.

The greatest leaders
are like the best conductors:
they reach beyond the
notes to reach the magic
in the players.

Blaine Lee

FINAL THOUGHTS

- **Winston Churchill:** Success consists of going from failure to failure without loss of enthusiasm.
- **Leo Rosten**: I cannot believe that the purpose of life is to be happy. I think the purpose of life is to be useful, to be responsible, and to be compassionate. It is, above all to matter, to count, to stand for something, to have made some difference that you lived at all.
- **Pearl Buck:** To know how to do something well is to enjoy it.

Rick Chisholm made history when he single-handedly changed the professional Audio Visual industry by breaking all the rules and capitalised over 50% market share in Australia with very little capital, no partners, mergers or lenders and set up the first franchise operation of its kind in the world in the late 1990's and early 2000's.

As a 7x founder of companies and 30x businesses such as Innovest, AI Machine, Lightsounds, LSW, Light Emotion with revenue in excess of $300 million and having employed more than 1,000 staff over the last 35 years. Rick is known as the Start-Up and SME Guru and is Author of a number of books including Business Success for Life. Unlike many mentors, he actually walks the talk and has a number of businesses under management in such areas as Automation, Events management, Importing, Distribution, Retailing and E-commerce.

His BIG passion is Business Education empowering Businesses Owners through knowledge and skills. Whilst Rick has experienced great success, he has also endured many failures. Rick has faced and overcome the exact same challenges you are facing now.

Tala Chisholm is an SME specialist who has owned and managed several small to medium sized businesses in the last 20 years, several of which were eventually sold. She has extensive experience in the fields of retail, franchising, licensing, dealerships, education, importing, distribution and consulting.

Her expertise lies in building and implementing customised cross-platform database and software solutions for businesses, automation, IT, web marketing, advertising, graphic design, business administration, process refinement and implementation. Her business experience ranges from bricks-and-mortar Giftware retailing to highly technical fields such as Security, CCTV, Entertainment Lighting and Audio sales, hire and installations as well as e-commerce.

Throughout her career she also trained and mentored Franchise business owners as well as internal division managers. Some areas of training included retail operations, management practices, business strategy, accounting, cash-flow, marketing, customer service and IT. She has also headed up the drafting of Operating Compliance Manuals for Franchise operations and implementation of all the elements involved.

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