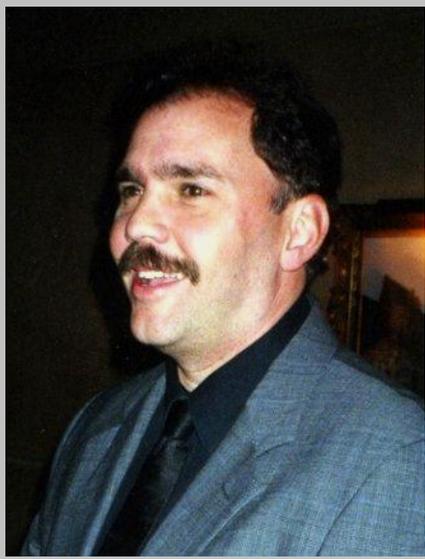


KEEPING UP WITH DR. STEVE

A QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER FROM DR. STEVE ALBRECHT ABOUT EMERGING ISSUES IN HR, SECURITY, TRAINING, AND LEADERSHIP BEST PRACTICES.



UPCOMING EVENTS:

- ❖ Thursday, June 27, 2013
Keynote Speaker
"Navigating Office and
Tenant Conflicts"
Institute of Real Estate
Management Conference
San Diego, CA
www.IREMSD.org

- ❖ Tuesday, August 13, 2013
Conference Presenter
"A Live Threat Assessment
Exercise"
Association of Threat
Assessment Professionals
Anaheim, CA
www.atapworldwide.org

WHEN TO USE COACHING

There are two times where coaching is a useful intervention tool for supervisors: to address workplace performance issues or to address workplace behavioral issues.

Coaching is useful to help supervisors talk about four key areas within these performance or behavior realms: violation of policies and procedures (harassment, theft, substance abuse, threats, etc.); work performance (quality, missing deadlines, etc.); attendance (coming in late, leaving early, misusing breaks and lunches); and attitude (sarcasm, rudeness, or disrespect to supervisors, co-workers, or customers).

The question that arises with some supervisors is, "When do I have the right to discuss an off-the-job issue with an employee?" The answer is, "When it impacts the business of the department in a negative way."

While we don't want to pry into employees' personal lives, we do have the right, duty, and obligation as supervisors to address issues or behaviors that make it hard for all employees to serve customers, work with others, or do their jobs.

In their book *Crucial Conversations*, Kerry Patterson and three co-authors discuss how to talk about tough topics with employees. They define "crucial conversations" as those where "opinions vary, stakes are high, and emotions run strong."

This idea is one that can help both parties to see that the important discussion is not about a personality conflict, retaliation, passive-aggressive behavior, avoidance, or emotions. Rather, the focus centers on what the employee does or doesn't do, should do differently, and how the issue at hand impacts the business in a negative way.

Once the supervisor gets the employee's commitment to change (a key goal), he or she should begin to follow the agreed-upon policy or solution immediately.

Any "business impact" discussion should include the consequences for non-compliance, which could mean the possibility of progressive discipline.

By focusing on the employee's behaviors, by not using labels to describe what are actually behaviors, and being firm, fair, and consistent, the supervisor and the employee can get through a crucial conversation.

Coaching services, training workshops, risk assessments/HR support.

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Keeping Up With Dr. Steve

SUMMER 2013

“Dear Dr. Steve: I have an employee who has a hygiene problem. Co-workers are complaining to me. What do I do?”

Most hygiene problems have a foundation in five possible areas:

1. a medical problem (excessive sweating, sleep apnea, or as an adverse reaction to oral medications).
2. a stress or mental health issue (depression, post-traumatic stress disorder, an obsessive-compulsive disorder, hoarding, or a disconnection from reality).
3. a revenge issue (wanting to retaliate against another employee or a supervisor, i.e., “I’ll wear these same clothes every day for a week; that’ll show them!”).
4. a cultural issue (some cultures or other countries might be less concerned with hygiene than in the US).
5. unaware of the impact on others (the employee rides his or her bike to work or exercises at lunch and doesn’t shower).

The following suggestions can help the concerned (but reluctant) supervisor to address an employee’s hygiene problem. You don’t have to read this word for word to the employee; just pick a theme that works best for the employee or the hygiene concerns in question.

Supervisor: “If you have a minute, I’d like to talk to you in private about a work issue. This is an uncomfortable yet necessary part of my job. As hard as this is to talk about, I have some concerns that your body odor and/or soiled clothing is making it hard for other people to be around you. I’ve seen for myself that it’s affecting your co-workers and our vendors and customers in a way that’s not good for our business. I’m sure it’s embarrassing for you and it’s not my intention to make you feel worse.”



Medical reason:

“I’m not here to pry into your personal life and I don’t need any details from you, but sometimes hygiene problems come from a medical issue you might be facing. If you have a medical reason for this problem, you can bring me a note from your physician and we’ll discuss how we might accommodate you.”

Stress or mental health reason:

“Sometimes we all face off-the-job stressors that may make it difficult to want to come to work every day. Again, while I don’t want any details, if you’re having some personal, professional, or family stress, you can use our Employee Assistance Program (EAP) provider. It’s 100% confidential; no one will know you have called them. You can speak to our EAP by phone, so I brought one of their brochures to leave with you just in case you might want to speak to a qualified professional when you’re alone.”

Revenge reason:

“Sometimes we have conflicts with our co-workers over small things that turn into big things. We can all agree that you don’t have to love everyone you work with, or even like everyone you work with, but we do have to co-exist in the office. If you have problems with anyone and can’t work it out, please come see me, and I’ll address it.”

Cultural reason:

“We know that folks from different countries or different cultures have personal preferences about clothing choices, hairstyles, diet choices, and personal cleanliness. We respect diversity here. That said, could you make certain that your personal appearance and clothing are neat, clean, and well-groomed before you start your work day?”

Unaware reason:

“I know you like to walk fast at lunch or like to exercise before you come into the office. Can you make sure that you take a moment to clean yourself thoroughly before you come back to your desk?”

Conclusion:

“Starting right away, I’d like you to follow our dress code and come to work clean and well-groomed. If it’s not a medical issue, I’d like you to begin with these changes starting tomorrow.”

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