Playing Favorites

Employees usually notice when a supervisor uses favoritism with one or more staff members. This erodes the morale of the team and leads to disengagement. Supervisors must be careful not to play favorites. Supervisors should pay attention to each of their employees. Judge each employee on his or her own merits. Thus a supervisor can be more objective. Compliment an employee on a job well done. Invite all your employees to lunch. Show that you care about all of them. A good leader takes care of all team members.

Avoiding these six derailers will go a long way in ensuring supervisory success!

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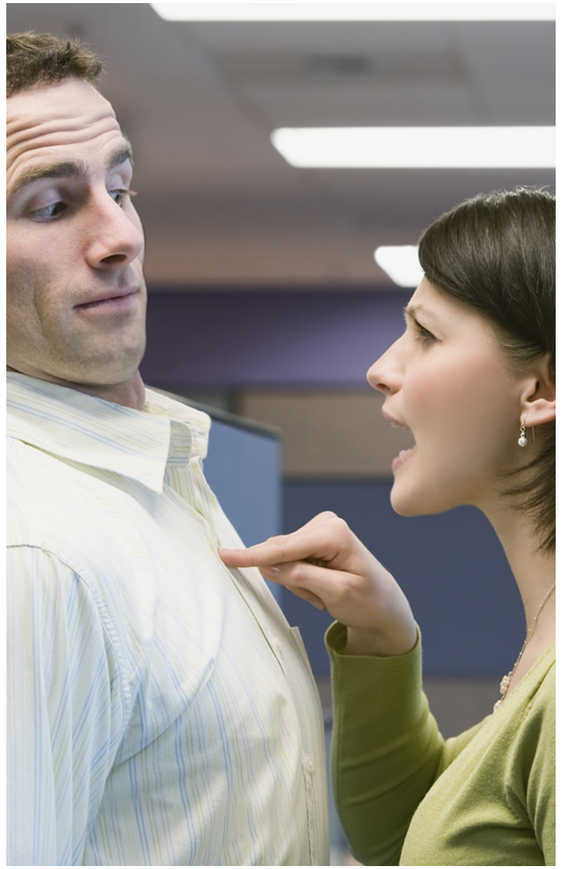
A Newsletter Dedicated to Supervisors and Staff on the Phone

Volume 5 | Issue 3

Supervisory Derailers (1 of 2)

In this first of a two-part series, we look at how to ensure success by avoiding the following supervisory derailers.



Lack of Emotional Intelligence

Some supervisors have a lack of self-awareness and are unaware as to how they come across to others. Whether it's an air of arrogance, becoming sarcastic with others when stressed, or communicating in a condescending manner, this lack of emotional intelligence will be noticed by others. When a supervisor cannot self-regulate emotionally, it makes the entire department anxious and can result in reduced productivity. Supervisors would do well to set aside their emotions and focus objectively on the work that needs to be done. The best leaders are those who remain cool and level-headed even in the midst of a crisis. One need only look at how Rudy Giuliani handled running New York City in the aftermath of 9/11 to see how important it is to keep emotions at bay.

Reluctance to Delegate

Many supervisors do not enlist the support of their staff through delegation. These supervisors may feel no one can complete a particular task as well as they can, or that they don't have the time to show/teach an employee how to complete the task. These shortsighted views often result in the supervisor becoming overwhelmed and unable to complete tasks on time or overlooking the bigger picture or longer time horizon. Delegating tasks to others enables supervisors to evaluate the capabilities of their employees, gives employees opportunities to develop and enables more work to get done with greater efficiency. The old adage "The whole is greater than the sum of the parts" holds true in delegation.

Inability to Think Strategically

There are supervisors who don't look any further than "just getting the job done." Many times, they will feel the tug of day-to-day demands, leaving them little time to think about the big picture or to think strategically. Supervisors need to think beyond today as to how the work in their particular department affects the company. Setting goals for their department and seeing how that dovetails into company goals demonstrates bigger-picture thinking. Supervisors who aspire for higher level positions need to think strategically. Considering the big picture when making decisions demonstrates that supervisors are thinking holistically and considering long-term implications.

Hiring the Wrong People

Sometimes supervisors find themselves with employees who are not a fit for a particular position. This often is due to a poor hiring selection. Supervisors must ask behavioral interview questions since a prospective employee's future behavior will be based on his or her previous behavior. Asking "Tell me about a time when you had to juggle multiple projects" will provide far more revealing insights than asking "Tell me about your background." One tip that supervisors can use, particularly before they recruit, is to list the knowledge, skills and abilities (KSAs) that are needed to be successful in each position. Then the supervisor can develop interview questions that are geared towards those specific KSAs. Doing your homework ahead of time, asking the right questions, and finding individuals who exhibit those behaviors successfully will lead to better hiring choices.

Not Addressing Poor Performers

Some supervisors are conflict avoiders and prefer not to deal with poor performers. This will bring down the morale of the team, as well as erode the supervisor's credibility. Poor performance needs to be addressed in a timely manner. Supervisors can create a performance improvement plan for their poor performers that identifies the problem(s) and then sets SMART (specific, measurable, actionable, results oriented, time bound) objectives/actions to correct those deficiencies.