

THE *Front-line Supervisor*

Presented by *dor and associates, inc.*

Helping you to manage your company's most valuable resource -- your employees.

February 2000

CASE 1. Employees and conduct problems

➤ **Q.** How can I deal with conduct problems of an employee whom coworkers are complaining about? My investigations lead to denials, and I am unable to confront the employee outright with the facts. I just keep saying, "if it happened, don't do it again."

A. You will need to keep an accurate account of the coworkers' complaints and when they occur. The problem you face is not one that depends on the absolute proof of the facts you provide in a corrective interview, but the quality and number of those accounts given to you by others. Eventually, the number and quality of those accounts outweigh the ability to deny them credibly. You should always ask the other employees to put their reports to you in writing. This makes a greater impression than your verbal report and will prevent you from having to restate what you heard. Before you talk with the "problem" employee again, you may wish to consider attending a coaching session with a **dor and associates, inc** counselor to establish a game plan to help correct the employee's behavior. Telephone consultation is available as well. If the employee's behavior continues to be disruptive in the workplace, you should consider making a formal supervisory referral to **dor and associates, inc** for the employee.

CASE 2. Conflict can be good?

➤ **Q.** Every group of employees I have supervised has experienced conflict. I've heard the phrase, "conflict can be good," but that's easy to say when you're not in the middle of it. What should supervisors know about conflict in order to deal with it?

A. Properly understanding conflict is the first step to managing it more effectively. Most supervisors and employees see conflict as arguing, in-group fighting, or personality clashes. These types of conflict are only a few examples within the scope of a broader definition that applies to the workplace. Workplace conflict is a lack of cooperation among a group of workers that inhibits productivity or customer service. Conflict can't be totally eliminated. Instead the goal is to minimize its severity and the length of time it exists. This is made possible by effective and regular communication that solves problems efficiently and helps the work group evolve. Minimize conflict by encouraging regular meetings with staff that focus on problems and solutions in four areas: 1) communication between coworkers and management; 2) concerns about roles and job functions; 3) material resource and support; and 4) factors outside the work unit that impede productivity.

dor and associates, inc.

Employee Assistance Services

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