

# THE *Front-line Supervisor*

Presented by *dor and associates, inc.*

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

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## CASE 1

➤ **Q. I would like improve the morale of my work group but I can't offer any monetary incentives or other tangible rewards. What can I do?**

A. Most employees welcome monetary awards, but management research demonstrates that such awards alone will not sustain improved morale. Meaningful relationships and feeling valued will mean more. Here are four powerful steps any supervisor can take that will either help improve morale or keep it from getting worse: 1) Be accessible and approachable to your employees. Make conscious choices to listen, put your work down, and meet their needs to discuss work problems and receive feedback. 2) Morale difficulties mean that employees need to talk. Do not avoid the tough discussions needed for problem solving. 3) Visit employees where they work or create products. Let them see that you are involved and part of the business of the day. 4) Act quickly on problems you commit to solving. Employees will not forget the things you promise. None of these steps necessarily costs money, but you can win influence and improve morale with each one.

## CASE 2

➤ **Q. My employee frightened coworkers by "blowing up" over a small matter. I made an EAP referral and told him to enroll in anger management counseling. It's easy to see that this is the problem, so why can't I insist on it?**

A. Although it appears your employee could use help in learning how to manage anger, his anger outburst does not make this conclusive. There could be many explanations for the outburst you witnessed. Only some of these explanations may require intervention or professional help. Your demand that he obtains anger management counseling is beyond your role as a supervisor and is an example of diagnosing of conduct problems. However outlining your expectations for job performance and referring your employee to the EAP because of his inappropriate anger response is appropriate. When supervisors direct employees to the type of help they think is needed for a personal problem, they risk litigation. If an employee has or *is perceived* as having a condition that makes him/her a protected class under the Americans with Disabilities act, employers may be legally obligated to provide him/her with reasonable accommodations to maintain employment. When making a formal supervisory referral to the EAP, it is important for you to stick to job performance issues.

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Employee Assistance Services

1-800-367-3271 \* (612) 332-4805

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