

THE *Front-line Supervisor*

Presented by *dor and associates, inc.*

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

June 2003

CASE 1

➤ **Q. It is going to be a tough year for my employees. All departments are facing large budget cuts and there is a freeze on hiring. Other decisions yet to be made will threaten moral. I know the EAP can help, but what can I do to soften the blows?**

A. Maintain a well-established communication system between you and your employees to help preserve their morale in times of high stress. Morale is often independent of stress and work pressure. A work team under high stress can still possess high morale. Create two way conversations with employees daily or at least several times a week. This doesn't need to take much of your time. A few minutes every day to check on how things are going may be all that is needed. Failing to do this may result in lower morale in the face of increased work stress. Also, conduct group meetings. They are crucial to keeping the lines of communication open between you and your employees. When decisions that may cause difficulties for employees must be communicated, be careful not to soften their impact unrealistically. Consider using the EAP as a resource to manage stress, and encourage your employees to do the same.

CASE 2

➤ **Q. Some of my employees are more productive than others. Assuming none of them have personal problems interfering with their productivity, what explains the difference in motivation? What is my role in helping them to be as productive as possible?**

A. Employee motivation is a broad subject of study. Two employees equally capable of producing the same amount of work may respond to different motivators. One employee may be internally motivated by the rewards of success in accomplishing goals, while another employee may accomplish the same goals, but motivated by fear of failure. Most employees have a balance of these two motivational tracks, but favor one over the other. Manager supervision style may favor one of these employee types over the other, but finding a balance of both is ideal. Examining your management style (whether it is reward and praise oriented, or consequence and discipline oriented) can give clues to improvements in helping motivate your employees. If you struggle with difficulties in changing your style, the EAP may be able to help you discover why and find resources to support your goal of personal balance and change

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