

# THE *Front-line Supervisor*

Presented by **DOR**

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

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## CASE 1 Listening 101

➤ **Q. There is obviously more to listening than being available and attentive to what employees say. I received a poor rating on my annual evaluation from the company. What are the key issues supervisors miss with regard to listening to their employees?**

**A.** A key measure of success in how well you listen to your employees is how they feel about you, and themselves, once you have finished meeting with them. Consider the common behaviors of managers who gain the trust of employees who come in search of a listener. When listening, do you show that you welcome the employee? Do you offer a smile or demonstrate a thankful attitude that your employee has come to call? Do you avoid interruptions and splitting your listening time with other tasks? Do you actively listen to employees? (Some supervisors listen to employees like a radio – hearing, nodding, but never looking up at them as they busy themselves with other tasks.) Do you validate the legitimacy of your employee's viewpoint, even if you disagree with it? Do employees leave a meeting with you feeling important and valued? To become a good listener, see this responsibility as an essential function alongside things such as budgeting or strategic planning. Doing so will produce happier employees and great returns.

## CASE 2 How to bring up sensitive issues

➤ **Q. Can the EAP help me consider my approach to gently confronting employees with bad breath, someone who smells bad from what they eat or has some other bad habits or personal matters like body odor so that I don't offend the employee?**

**A.** The key roadblock to discussing an annoying personal habit or behavior with an employee is imagining how horrible you would feel when confronting the employee, along with the shock on the employee's face when the issue is raised. Fortunately, most supervisors discover that this fear is overblown, that instead of acting offended and horrified, the employee is grateful and thankful. Usually there is a business reason for requesting than an employee alter an annoying behavior or change a disagreeable habit. The key is being able to identify it, articulate it and link it to your request. The EAP can help with the process and add some role playing if you think it may be helpful. Generally, the business rationale is a requirement that the employee's cooperate with the cultural standards of the workplace or how behaviors or habits directly affect the business and productivity.

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