

THE *Front-line Supervisor*

Presented by *dor and associates, inc.*

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

December, 1999

CASE 1. Why did the memo work?

➤ **Q.** I followed the advice of the EAP counselor and put in writing the changes I expected from my employee regarding his getting to work on time. It worked, but why was a memo more effective than my hounding him for a year?

A. Understanding the reasons why corrective memos work can help you decide to put requests in writing sooner rather than growing more frustrated with your employee. Most employees with a long-term behavior problem resist change naturally. They don't sense any urgency to change their behavior because over the long term they have not experienced consequences for continuing it. The employee may know the behavior should change, but his experience does not allow him to muster a sense of urgency necessary to do it. Frustration at his behavior and promises to the supervisor may not overcome the behavior. A corrective memo can produce change because it eliminates dialogue and processing of excuses. Most employees will re-read such a memo or mentally replay its contents. This increases healthy anxiety, breaks the denial, and helps the employee focus on the consequences of failing to change. This produces the sense of urgency, and change occurs. Don't forget to include a referral to **dor and associates** (and possibly your work/life service) in such memos.

CASE 2. Is this a supervisory referral?

➤ **Q.** My employee is an excellent performer, but I strongly encouraged her to call **dor and associates** when she began to talk about her husband's personal problems. The employee said she would definitely go. Is this a supervisor referral or a self-referral?

A. **dor and associates** would consider this a self-referral, particularly if the employee doesn't mention your role in her decision to contact the program. Obviously, no job performance problems exist, so follow-up by you or communication with the EAP counselor is not indicated. You, of course, played a role in motivating the employee to contact **dor and associates** but a supervisor referral entails more. EAP theory bases supervisor referrals on job performance problems that can be documented and articulated; however, nothing prevents the supervisor from urging an employee to contact the EAP when he or she volunteers information about personal problems. If this same employee also had job performance problems, you could choose to make this a supervisor referral. In that case, you would base the referral on job performance by calling **dor and associates** and asking to speak with the counselor on duty. You can anticipate limited communication from the counselor who saw the employee -with a signed release - after the first appointment.

dor and associates, inc.

Employee Assistance Services

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

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