

How Do You Rate?

How You Impact Your Employees and Their Productivity

In a recent survey, workplace expert Michelle McQuaid found that 65 percent of workers in the United States would be happier if they had a boss who recognized their good work. On the other hand, only 35 percent of those surveyed said they would be happier if they got a raise.

McQuaid also has found that bosses can affect employees' health by wearing down their immune systems and "leaving us at risk of more colds, diseases, strokes, and even heart attacks" and can make employees so anxious and stressed that they don't perform well at work. "We also take our bad mood home to the people who love us most and wind up damaging our relationships," she writes.

Thirty-one percent of the respondents to McQuaid's survey said they don't feel their bosses appreciate them, and only 38 percent said their bosses are doing a good job.

How would your employees rate you as a boss? Are you responsible for poor-performing employees? Are you costing your company money because your employees leave? It might be time to take a good, hard look at how you manage—and treat—your people.

Do you coach and nurture your employees? This is critical, if you want to develop employees who not only will be high performers—but who will make you look good in the process. Think of yourself as the coach of your favorite NFL football team. You wouldn't expect your players to take the field every week without your guidance and going on to win the Super Bowl, so why would you expect your employees to come to work

every day and perform at their highest levels? Tell them what you need them to do, give them the tools to do it, and watch them rise to the occasion.

Do you treat your employees with respect? We've all seen—and many of us have worked for—bosses who rant and rave and expect their tirades to motivate their employees to perform at higher levels. If anything, the result is the opposite. Don't kid yourself; your employees can sabotage your career by making you look bad. On the other hand, if you treat your employees with respect, they will respect you and will work hard to earn your approval.

Do you praise your employees? Nothing will motivate your employees to do well more than praise, particularly public praise. It's no secret that we all crave recognition, whether we are earning minimum wage or are at the senior executive level. When you praise your employees, you are letting them know you appreciate them and, when they feel appreciated, they will do whatever it takes to meet—and exceed—your expectations. Simply put, praise will drive performance.

Do you give your employees feedback on a regular basis? We all need to have benchmarks, some way of tracking how we are doing. Feedback is one way of doing so. Employees want some type of report card, something that lets them know how they are performing and that helps them to build on their strengths and improve their weaknesses. Annual performance reviews are fine and usually are conducted only as an

assessment on which to base a pay increase, but they do nothing to help employees improve their performance.

Do you provide your employees with the tools they need to do the job? Part of coaching is identifying training that will help employees improve their performance and productivity—and then making that training available. That might mean developing in-house training programs, purchasing training programs from outside experts, making tuition reimbursement funds available to employees, or providing one-on-one skills assessments and individual coaching. Not only does training improve performance, it sends a message that you value your employees enough to spend time and money to help them do their jobs—and do them well. A well-trained employee is a high-performing employee—and a high-performing employee is a happy employee.

Start the New Year out by making a commitment to yourself—and to your employees—that you will do everything in your power to become a better boss. You will be surprised at the results: increased productivity, decreased turnover, and a much more pleasant work environment—for you and your employees. **RO**

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