

The Cheerleader Who Won't Shake Her Pom Pons

If you have the type of team that can be described as outstanding performers, always getting along well, and working toward a common purpose, congratulations! I have heard this only a few times ... in all my years of helping organizations achieve their goals. Although extremely uncommon without training and continuous communication, the cohesive team is possible.

Problem employees are lurking in most workplaces. You can be sure they're costing a tremendous amount in low morale, lost patients, decreased productivity, and poor employee retention. In fact, the cost of retaining a "cheerleader who won't shake her pom-pons along with the rest of the team" can be so significant that it's foolish to overlook the problem. If your office has an employee with a behavior or attitude problem, you need to take action immediately.

Bad behavior noted in my experience includes inability to get along with others, resistance toward change, pessimistic about their career, cynical toward others, impolite, selfish, lacking confidence, dishonest and lazy.

Define the game that you are cheering for. As leaders, setting your team up with defined goals, acceptable practices, and the importance of everyone's commitment to these common goals is important. This helps communicate to everyone what the boundaries are that they are to work within.

Set regular checkpoints. Communication from the whole team to share and evaluate progress is vital. Encourage your group to come together and celebrate successes, as well as discuss the areas that need improvement. Talking openly is a great way to have them learn to give and receive effective feedback. If there are issues too delicate to discuss as a group, encourage them to write their opinions on paper for your review.

Why terminate when you can turn around? If you find that one personality needs a correction of behavior, confront it assertively and effectively with a private meeting to correct the situation by reiterating the goals, what is acceptable and the importance of this one

person's contribution. This needs to be done without delay. The team will respect a leader who is committed to the set boundaries.

When negative attitudes and employee resistance persists, termination is a viable option. Concerned about losing the one bad employee because of her experience, education and production? How many good cheerleaders are you prepared to lose, how many patients are you prepared to lose, how many useless hours of poor morale and lost production, simply because you continue to tolerate the bad behavior of another? Unacceptable employee behavior is a plague that should not be allowed to affect those cheerleaders who do perform well toward winning at the practice goals and objectives.

I believe that people are hired for their technical skills, but fired for their lack of ability to get along with others. Leadership skills are the multiplier of performance, and I believe that making time for leadership training is an important step toward building a solid pyramid of cheerleaders who do, all together as a team, shake their pom-pons.

"When they discover the center of the universe, a lot of people will be disappointed to discover that they are not in it."

Best wishes for a great team.

Penny is a consultant committed to helping dental offices achieve their goals with training and motivation toward practice goals. She can be reached through www.NorthernLightsPresentations.com.



Penny Tremblay, ACG, CL