Employee Engagement Strategies
Administration Offices

BASIC family of companies includes:
- BASIC Pacific
- BASIC NFO
- BASIC New England
Technology Driven HR Solutions to Take Your Company Further

Suite of HR Benefits, Payroll and Leave Management, and Compliance solutions offered individually or bundled.
Joe Aitchison, SPHR, SHRM-SCP, CHRS  
*BASIC Vice President*

Joe provides Business & HR client advisory services and HR outsource services nationally. He is a Human Resource professional with over twenty five years business management and HR consulting experience. He has worked with multi plant International Tier I Automotive Manufacturing, retail, food processing, healthcare, legal administration and professional services.

Mr. Aitchison is recognized as a leader in human resources and has obtained a lifetime certification as a senior professional in human resource management, SHRM – Senior Certified Professional and Healthcare Reform Specialist by the Healthcare Reform Center & Policy Institute. Mr. Aitchison serves on several for profit and not for profit boards.
Today’s Topics
Providing Difficult Employee Feedback & Managing Tough Conversations

- Identifying Challenging Employees
- The Psychology of it
- Workplace Behaviors
- Characteristics of Problem Employees
- Workplace Conflict Resolution
- Dealing With Difficult Employees
- Manager Roles
- Summary
Poorly Managed Conflict

Causal Affect - Adverse Impact on Employer /Employee Relations ….

*What happens if not addressed*

- Reduced Productivity
- Lower Morale
- Increased absenteeism
- Higher turnover
- Increased Risk of violence
- Hostile work environment
  - Emotional distress of coworkers
Difficult Employees ~ Let’s just fire them…

- Firing may affect morale
- Replacement costs are high
- Even difficult workers may be turned around
- Other costs may occur
- Reassignment may work
- When all else fails or employee does not modify behavior … *let them go*
Challenging Employees and the Law

Be Mindful…. Legal Risk

• EEO Laws
  • Consistency and Fairness
    • EEOC
    • DCR
    • NLRA
    • FLSA
• Retaliation
• Wrongful Discharge
Challenging Employees ~ *who are they?*

**Employees who:**
- Complain
- Goof off
- Refuse to cooperate
- Have a bad attitude
- Think they know best
- Spread rumors
- Make others look bad
Challenging Employees ~ what do they do?

Challenging Employees
- See things negatively
- Expect failure
- Undermine authority
- Create hostile work relationships
- Break the Rules (Policy/Procedures)

Typically challenging employees represent less than 5% of the employee population.... Create 80% of the disruptive behavior and account for up to 20% or more in lost productivity
Problem Employees ~ Challenging Personalities

Personality Tendencies / Traits

What are the different types and symptoms of personality disorders? ... According to the American Psychology Association there are 10 specific personality disorders:

1. **Paranoid personality** disorder – a pattern of distrust and suspiciousness such that others' motives are interpreted as malevolent.

2. **Schizoid personality disorder** – a pattern of detachment from social relationship and a restricted range of emotional expression.

3. **Schizotypal personality disorder** – a pattern of acute discomfort in close relationships, cognitive or perceptual distortions, and eccentricities of behavior.

4. **Antisocial personality** disorder – a pattern of disregard for, and violation of, the rights of others.

5. **Borderline personality** disorder – a pattern of instability in interpersonal relationships, self-image, and affects, and marked impulsivity.

6. **Histrionic personality** disorder – a pattern of excessive emotionality and attention seeking.

7. **Narcissistic personality** disorder – a pattern of grandiosity, need for admiration, and lack of empathy.

8. **Avoidant personality** disorder – a pattern of social inhibition, feelings of inadequacy, and hypersensitivity to negative evaluation.

9. **Dependent personality** disorder – a pattern of submissive and clinging behavior related to an excessive need to be taken care of.

10. **Obsessive compulsive** personality disorder – a pattern of preoccupations with orderliness, perfectionism, and control.
Problem Employees ~ Their Actions

• Personality Traits/tendencies often create behaviors
• Frequently late to work but easy to work with
• Questions decisions, sometimes argumentative … But not always
• Does not like to work others – prefers to work alone … Refuses to cooperate with others in a group project
• Disrespectful/challenges authority
Problem Employee Behavior

Supervisor or Human Resource nightmare… what is he or she going to do next. Sometimes but not all of the time….

- Bullying
- Aggressive
- Demeaning
- Arrogant
- Untrustworthy
- Demanding
- Unproductive
- Rude
Types of Difficult Employees

Difficult employee may have a personality or behavior problem

There are 5 personality types that most often create chronic workforce problems …

- **The Bully** - Personality traits for the Bully often include physical and verbal intimidation, shouting, profanity, throwing objects, blaming others and threats.
  
  - This behavior is often caused by low self-esteem and from seeking control.

- In order to deal with a bully, manager should be firm; use open-ended questions; not compete, take notes, and require their cooperation to sit down and talk.
  
  - If there are frequent outbursts, it is critical to address the issues immediately to ensure a safe workplace.
Types of Difficult Employees

The Procrastinator has trouble starting/completing tasks and lacks motivation. This is caused by a fear of humiliation, rejection, and failure.

- Managers should create timetables or schedules for procrastinators, with required “check in” dates / updates
- Managers should be prepared to assign the project to someone else if the procrastinators is falling short on the timeline / completions.

The Passive Aggressive is friendly to your face and negative behind your back. Not a team player, they agree with everything but end up doing what they want. The passive aggressive is angry but dislikes confrontation.

- The manager should be specific; concrete in expectations; clear about consequences; and try not to over supervise this type.
Types of Difficult Employees

The Gossip - talks to everyone about anything due to an extreme need to be liked and accepted.

• Managers should never participate in gossip and immediately identify it while using disciplinary action if necessary.

The Constant Critic - falsely accuses and undermines others behind closed doors, including the boss and company decisions.

• This type also humiliates others in public settings in order to control the emotional climate at work.
Employee Behavior Change

Modifying Employee Behavior in the workplace … *What skilled managers and supervisors need to know and do*…

- Understand different personality traits
  - Not all employees think and work the same
  - What affects one may not affect others
  - **How one behaves does affect others**
What Managers need to do

Prepare for the challenge

• Understand the problem(s)

• Manager should analyze their own feelings
  • Set aside emotions
  • Maintain professionalism

• Demonstrate behavior you want others to follow
  • Attendance / punctuality / work organization
  • Model job performance and work behaviors
Manager Problem Assessment / Prepare

Don’t think about the person … think about cause and affect.

- Focus on specific behavior or attitudes
- Identify why it’s a problem
- Think solely in terms of the job
- Be objective

Investigate the Situation *(Is this a recurring situation?)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Who</th>
<th>What</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Where</td>
<td>When</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why</td>
<td>How</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
How to Resolve Conflict

• Manage
• Identify Opportunities
  • Improve Behavior
  • Transfer employee to more suitable position
  • Terminate – causal based on employee actions
• Meet Challenges Head-On
• Communicate
• Pay Attention to the People
  • Problem employee
  • Peer group
  • Others affected
Manager’s Role

- Prevention through good company culture, training and education
- Proactive and responsive to complaints
- All reasonable steps necessary to prevent
- Prompt, thorough and effective investigations
- Appropriate follow-through
Manager Responsibilities

• Be a positive force/influence on others
• Communicate Effectively
• Uphold Performance Standards
• Model Appropriate Workplace Conduct
• Filter issues to determine what needs to be raised with HR or management
Manager Responsibilities

- Remember … *it’s what you are (your title) while at work… not who you are (as a person)… employees are responding to.*
  - You are the face of the company
  - Negative attitude/interactions reflect on the entire organization
  - Most employee disputes can be dealt with early or avoided through positive communication
Manager Responsibilities

“Positive Communication” requires that you actively engage your employees … As a manager, it is not okay to ignore issues in the workplace.”

Meeting with Difficult Employees

Respond Positively to Challenging workers

- Explain your concerns
- Give specific examples
- Offer suggestions
- Avoid criticizing

- Stay focused
- Be firm
- State your willingness to help
- Agree on an action plan
Manager Responsibilities

Two sides to every story…

Unusual behavior change in an otherwise consistent employee…

- Feeling unappreciated
- Having a legitimate concern
- Experiencing stress
- Having legitimate issues
- Outside work influences
Ongoing Manager Responsibilities

Manager’s Daily Role

• Communicate Effectively
  • Give clear notice of expectations
  • Create opportunity to meet standards
  • Provide feedback on performance
    • Follow through with performance evaluations
    • Issue disciplinary actions when necessary
    • Positive praise where appropriate
Ongoing Manager Responsibilities

Model Appropriate Workplace Conduct

• The manager’s conduct is the standard for employees
  • Employees will not conform to policies if manager does not conform
    • *Do as I say not as I do!!! Won’t work…..*
  • Ignoring issues undermines the policies
Ongoing Manager Responsibilities

Meet Challenges Head-on

- Avoiding a problem is not likely to make it go away
- More likely to grow out of control if not addressed
Manager’s Understanding

Filtering Issues/Disputes

• Not every workplace dispute needs to be reported to HR or senior management

• Look at the totality of the circumstances
  • Is a protected status implicated?
  • Are factors other than one’s ability to perform a job at issue?
  • Not sure whether to involve HR?
Manager Communication

- Consistent
- Personal (maintain privacy) – *not all need to know* …
- Positive
- Respectful
- Motivational
Managing Employees ~ The Meeting

Treat Employees With Dignity And Respect

- Find an office or conference room for privacy
- Start with general, open-ended questions
  - Do you know why we are here?
  - What do you think could have been done to avoid the situation?
- Avoid questions that suggest a bias
- Avoid editorial comments or legal conclusions
- Any matter that is potentially significant (such as harassment, discrimination, family leave, retaliation, wage and hour or workplace safety) must be reported to HR
Manager - Resolving Workplace Issues

Discussions/meeting – One on One or Formal with witness(es)
• Be Direct
• Be Professional
• Deal with issues
  • There is a problem
  • We’ve got a problem
  • You’ve got a problem

• Avoid traps (we will talk about these later)
• Goal setting
• Common benefits
• Or else – Termination
  • Legal
Managers ~ Dealing with Difficult Employees

• Direct

• Professional
  • “Those that speak softly are heard”

• Deal with issues

• Avoid traps
  • Excuse / blaming others
  • Personal (attacks) / confrontation
Managers ~ Dealing with Difficult Employees

**Emotional Response –**

- Tearful,
- Apologetic
- Not my fault

**The Challenging Employee**

- I had no choice had to defend myself
- I did it for the company
- What do you expect from me!!!!
- It’s not my fault –
  - you never liked me *(because I’m Black, Hispanic, other protected class)* … always out to get me… I’m going to sue you and the company!!! *(THE TRAPS)*
Managers / Employees ~ Why am I here meetings?!

Employee work day issues

More frequent types of occurrences … Equally (if not more) important

• Excessive gossip
• Inappropriate dress
• Personal hygiene
• Work Performance issues
• Attendance
• Personality conflicts
• Safety infractions – you should know better
• “I didn’t mean to but…..” Issues
Manager Responsibilities

• Supervisors need to be skilled and understand what is appropriate to say....

• Supervisors need to know:
  • How to begin the conversation
  • How to confront difficult employees
  • How to create an atmosphere that engages employees
  • How to discover the truth and learn what is really the cause
  • Not react emotionally
Manager’s Responsibility

Managers must …..

• Address the facts
• Understand the circumstances that created the events
• Have “zero” tolerance for threats, accusations and defiance
• Create productive ways to counsel employees
• Focus on the problem, not the person
Documentation ~ Legal Risk

- All actions subject to review
- Document:
  - Circumstances
  - Events
  - Corrective action required / taken
  - Discipline
  - Performance Improvement plan
Discipline Policy & Procedure…

Appeal Policy (Peer Review)

• Provides legal protection
• Reassures “good” employees – *Good employees need not worry… for fear of job loss or discipline*
• Puts potential offenders on notice
• Protects employees from inappropriate actions of co-workers
• Gives violators the opportunity to improve
Summary

**Issue/Situation Assessment**

1. Respond positively and fairly
2. Consider employee’s side of the situation
3. Investigate before taking action against a difficult employee. *(presupposition can be costly)*
4. Follow up on all interactions

**Conflict Resolution Process**

1. Call a meeting
2. Establish/ define the rules
3. Define the problem
4. Develop a solution
5. Create and action plan
6. Implement and monitor the plan
7. Evaluate the process.
HR Solutions should be simple. **Keep it BASIC.**

---

**Request a Proposal**

For you or your client at this link:

[https://www.basiconline.com/request-a-proposal/](https://www.basiconline.com/request-a-proposal/)

BASIC Sales

888-602-2742
THANK YOU

View our current webinar schedule at www.basiconline.com/webinar.
Disclaimer

This presentation is designed to provide accurate information in regard to the subject matter covered. It is provided with the understanding that BASIC is not engaged in rendering legal or other professional services. If legal advice or other expert assistance is required, the services of a competent attorney or other professional person should be sought. Due to the numerous factual issues which arise in any human resource or employment question, each specific matter should be discussed with your attorney.