Negativity in the Workplace Sucks

10 Tips for Decreasing Workplace Negativity

In short, negativity drains morale, decreases overall productivity, increases employee turnover, and can lead to workplace violence. Nothing good comes from being negative. Let's face it – there is no place for negativity in the workplace – or in life for that matter. Negativity causes an array of problems on the team including reduced morale snowballing into lost productivity and employee turnover.

From the management perspective, the culture of a team begins here. Things that can ignite negativity include actions taken, or not taken, and poor behavior not addressed. Previous situations that are carried over and were never addressed by the leader can easily lead to a culture of negativity.

On the front line, negativity comes from a variety of sources and can include lack of giving feedback (positive or negative) to a colleague, personal issues being brought into the office, and taking feedback or comments from someone personally. A teammate who is slacking off, whose behavior is not addressed by management or by their co-workers, causes animosity among colleagues and results in a negative culture.

Here are 10 tips every leader can utilize to decrease negativity in the workplace:

1. **Be consistent in your discipline**. All employees want a level playing field and when there is a perception of favoritism trust is eroded and negativity builds among everyone.

2. **Praise employees for a job well done**. Behavior that is rewarded develops behavior that is repeated. Consequently, do not praise 'average' work because average work will be returned. Instead, praise exceptional work. In some cases this praise should be in front of the entire team and in some cases the praise should be done privately. It all depends on the natural style of the person(s) being praised. Effectively praising employees is the number one factor in creating a culture of teamwork and collaboration.

3. **Praise the team as whole**. Praising employees is vital and should not be overlooked; when you praise the team, you create an environment that is free of negativity and productivity is increased.

4. **Involve everyone on the team**. Make sure each person has an active voice and input on team decisions. These decisions can include ground rules for the team, goals on time lines for a project, etc.

5. **Take regular surveys of your team**. A key word today is 'benchmarking' and that is absolutely true here – when you survey your team with the same questions a couple of times per year, you can see what is improving and what is not.

6. **Require input from team members before making decisions that directly affect them**. When given the respect of having input to important decisions, negativity is squashed before it can emerge. On the other hand, not gaining input will springboard negativity among everyone.

7. **Be honest**. This should be a given and unfortunately, in many cases, it is not. Trust is a major underlying factor in the erosion of teamwork and collaboration. Be sure to share information with the entire team at the same time. If some of the members are off site, then set up a video or at the least an audio conference call so everyone gets the news (positive and negative) at the same time.

8. **Help your employees grow**. When great leaders are asked about their greatest accomplishment, many times they will talk about the employees they helped develop into effective leaders. Fostering growth and development among the team goes a long way to creating a culture of teamwork and collaboration; ultimately reducing employee turnover and increasing productivity.

9. **Share the larger goal and missions**. The more a leader can keep employees involved and help them recognize the overall goals and mission, the more they increase employee engagement and reduce negativity.

10. **Stay flexible**. If a decision that was made is not working out – admit the mistake and show your vulnerability. This is not a sign of weakness, rather a sign of strength and being secure as a leader. It shows employees you truly care about the team.

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A diverse, twenty-year background in real estate, mortgage banking, event planning, and production, as well as radio and television broadcasting, created a perfect storm that put Gregg Gregory where he is today. Gregg works hard to ensure that different personalities can work together successfully to accomplish your organization's mission, goals, and objectives.

For more information, call Gregg at (301) 564-0908 or visit Gregg's website at www.teamsrock.com.

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Gregg Gregory, CSP
4505 Clearbrook Lane, Suite B
Kensington, MD 20895

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