7 Steps To Reduce Negativity
Minimizing Negativity In Your Workplace
by Jack Stack

Negativity is more than a bad attitude. It is energy that fuels poor performance, ill health and a fair proportion of every other factor that limits agency growth. And you can do something about it.

These seven tips provided by noted author Jack Stack, will help you get started.

Provide opportunities for people to make decisions about and control and/or influence their own job

The single most frequent cause of negativity I encounter in workplaces is traceable to a manager or the organization making a decision about a person's work without her input. Almost any decision that excludes the input of the person doing the work is perceived as negative.

Make opportunities available for people to express their opinion about workplace policies and procedures

Recognize the impact of changes in such areas as work hours, pay, benefits, assignment of overtime hours, comp pay, dress codes, office location, job requirements, and working conditions. These factors are closest to the mind, heart and physical presence of each individual. Changes to these can cause serious negative responses. Provide timely, proactive responses to questions and concerns.

Treat people as adults with fairness and consistency

Develop and publicize workplace policies and procedures that organize work effectively. Apply them consistently. As an example, each employee has the opportunity to apply for leave time. In granting his request, apply the same factors to his application as you would to any other individual's.

Do not create “rules” for all employees, when just a few people are violating the norms

You want to minimize the number of rules directing the behavior of adult people at work.

Treat people as adults; they will usually live up to your expectations, and their own.

Help people feel like members of the in-crowd; each person wants to have the same information as quickly as everyone else. Provide the context for decisions, and communicate effectively and constantly.

If several avenues or directions are under consideration, communicate all that you know, as soon as you know it.

Reserve the right to change your mind later, without consequence, when additional factors affect the direction of ultimate decisions. Afford people the opportunity to grow and develop. Training, perceived opportunities for promotions, lateral moves for development, and cross-training are visible signs of an organization's commitment to staff.
Provide appropriate leadership and a strategic framework, including mission, vision, values, and goals

People want to feel as if they are part of something bigger than themselves. If they understand the direction, and their part in making the desired outcomes happen, they can effectively contribute more. Provide appropriate rewards and recognition so people feel their contribution is valued.

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