

LEADING THROUGH communication

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Every day, millions of people interact with each other on multiple levels; co-workers, friends, spouses, classmates, the list goes on. Usually, conversations are relaxed; however, when it comes to discussing conflicts or challenges, people can often shy away from these talks which can lead to issues building up over time. When these issues occur in leadership positions, the impact can even spread throughout an organization.

Effective communication skills are essential for everyone, as both verbal and non-verbal cues lay the foundation for our interactions. Whether we are speaking or expressing ourselves through body language, clarity, respect, and understanding of each other's feelings are key to meaningful conversations. By focusing on these elements, we foster stronger connections and ensure our communication is truly effective.

When we communicate with others, misinterpretations can sometimes occur on both sides. Clear, concise statements are essential for expressing feelings effectively. One way to use effective communication skills is using "I Statements". I statements let the other person know how you're feeling and can give clarity to them. "I feel frustrated when you are not doing the task that was assigned to you in a timely manner." The statement is clear and helps avoid misunderstanding.

Communication is both non-verbal and verbal. We can communicate with others without saying anything and, as supervisors, we need to be aware of how our non-verbal body language may come across. When we cross our

arms, check our smartwatches, glance around the room, or multitask while talking to someone, it creates a signal to the other person of a lack of interest and concern for the conversation. These behaviors suggest we do not wish to participate in the discussion. When we make eye contact, silence our phones, and avoid checking our watches, it demonstrates our genuine interest in the conversation.

Conflict resolution is a crucial part of what we do as supervisors. Avoiding tough conversations does not make them disappear, they are a crucial and necessary part of the workplace to accomplish overall goals. When having to address conflict, focusing on structure is helpful. To begin, make sure to clearly identify the issue by engaging all involved parties and collecting their viewpoints. Instead of concentrating solely on the problem or what someone might be demanding, focus on understanding the individual and the reasons behind their feelings. This approach encourages both sides to move toward collaborative problem solving, supporting a more effective and empathetic resolution process.

Having a solution-orientated mindset is key. Engage co-workers and staff on how to solve problems, set boundaries, make decisions, and lead with transparent communication.

Effective communication and conflict resolution are important in today's workplace. Supervisors who can help develop these skills in themselves and others create stronger, engaged, and more cohesive teams.