

EMPLOYEE MANAGEMENT



BASICS

OVERVIEW

- Employees have enormous influence upon a business's success or failure, not only economically but also from the point of view of control and prevention of disease.
- Business owners and managers have enormous influence on the performance of their employees.
- Most employees innately want to do a good job. A manager's responsibility and opportunity is to create an environment where employees can flourish as they help the business succeed.

EMPLOYEE ENVIRONMENT

A desirable environment includes:

- Everyone understands the purpose of their job
- A team culture
- Freedom from harassment
- A safe, clean, well lit, well ventilated working environment
- Appropriate tools/gear to perform their job
- Safe equipment in good working order
- Adequate and competitive compensation, not only within the industry but compared to all industries in the area that require similar skills, especially if employee turnover is a concern.
- Comprehensive and frequent training and coaching
- Regular recognition of the employees' contributions to the business
- Opportunity to learn and build skills
- Fair and regular feedback (positive and corrective when needed)
- Challenging and meaningful work
- Frequent and open communication with management and peers:

Employees like to know how the business is doing, especially in areas where their work has an impact, and be made aware of issues that influence the industry. They also want to be able to bring ideas to management.

EMPLOYEE RELATIONSHIPS

- It is often difficult for a manager to recognize that employees have a different perspective on the business.
- Managers maintain a global view of the business, whereas employees often focus on their specific task. Owners have equity building opportunities, unlike employees who are compensated for their time only.
- Managers need to be aware that when employees are doing physical work (for example milking cows) employee performance is very likely to decrease as working hours increase during the day.

- Communication is critical to top employee performance. The task must be understood by the employee—telling him/her what to do is often insufficient. Check to make sure there is understanding.
- Cultural differences can be important. Cultures vary in their attitudes toward supervision, training, workload, dietary habits, time off, communication, etc.
- Employee evaluation is critical. Feedback should be constructive and accompanied by agreed upon improvements in behavior. Set goals with the employee with a timeline for follow up evaluation.
- Reprimands should be timely, documented, offered with necessary changes in behavior, and include a plan for bringing the situation to closure.
- Employees benefit from a clear understanding of the management structure and hierarchy within a business. They should know who to report to during the regular workday as well as during supervisor absences.
- One boss is plenty for any employee. Ensure that instruction comes from only one individual (that includes any consultant working for the operation). This reduces the chance of contradiction and confusion. The opportunity is also reduced for the employee to play one supervisor off another.
- Owners and managers should be aware of and implement all government labor laws and regulations.
- An employee handbook is a helpful tool to maintain consistency, adhere to regulations, and offer guidance to employees. It should be reviewed regularly and updated as needed.
- Job or task rotations may help maintain morale and keep employees from becoming bored with routine tasks. Be aware that some people enjoy stability and may feel uncomfortable with change. Others will thrive with the opportunity to learn or practice a new skill.
- Managers with a sincere interest in employees' personal lives generate much good will.
- Direct supervisors need to be trained to be supervisors as well as to lead direct reports to thrive. Often, supervisors are placed in supervisory positions without the required training to help them succeed as supervisors, even though they might excel at working with livestock, being an effective supervisor requires a whole new set of skills.
- Strive to maintain a work environment that is engaging. People perform the best when they are engaged!
- Don't hesitate to thank your employees on a regular basis and be specific on what you are thanking them for. A smile and sincere thank you always lift the spirits.



MISCELLANEOUS

SEE ALSO

- Economics: Net Present Value (www.fiveminutevet.com/ruminant)
- Veterinary Legal Liabilities (www.fiveminutevet.com/ruminant)

Suggested Reading

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