OPTUM®

Solving Stubborn Morale Problems

Today's workplace is different.

The scale and impact of the Coronavirus has turned that sentence from a mundane observation to an incredible understatement.

Today's workplace is most definitely different.

Today's workplace might not even be a single physical space; it could be a vast network of remote offices in spare rooms, bedrooms and basements.

In many cases, the need for social distancing in the work environment has radically changed the dynamics of how products are made, how services are delivered and how business in general is conducted.

The issue of workplace morale in this new paradigm is an important and significant one. Employees may be dealing with fear and uncertainty about their job security at the exact same time they're being asked to deliver optimum quality and productivity in less-than-optimum circumstances.

In some businesses, the effect of the pandemic may not have been so severe and disruptions or changes to familiar routines may have been minimal. But that doesn't make them immune from fluctuations in workplace morale.
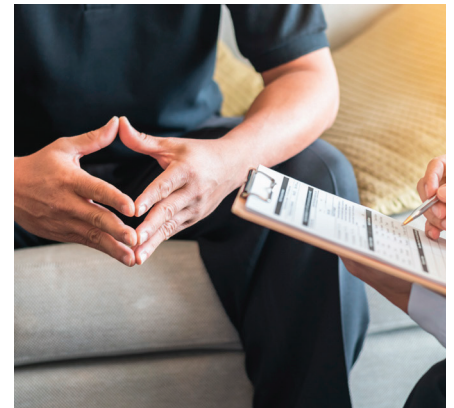
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Whatever the situation, if you (as a manager or supervisor) find yourself with a morale problem, you should implement creative and effective solutions to safeguard your employees' mental wellness.

- Try to keep your staff connected; physically (but socially distanced) if possible, virtually if necessary. A simple morning or afternoon chat over coffee may help.

- Stay in contact. Be available if they need to talk. Be clear about your expectations.

- Be as open and transparent as you can be about what the future may hold.

- Encourage teamwork. Offering incentives for group achievements may help, but don't use incentives alone.

- Make sure that good performance is noticed, acknowledged and publicly recognised.

- Never underestimate the importance of recognition, especially when it is delivered by upper management and chief executives.

- If you sense a problem, address it. Unresolved issues rarely fix themselves.

- Anticipate problems if you can. Get in front of small issues before they become large ones.

- Seek input from your staff, and actively listen to their suggestions.

- Let them act on those suggestions where appropriate.

- Encourage employees to continually look to improve their skills and qualifications.

- If you have regular staff meetings, consider allowing time for the staff to offer praise and encouragement to each other.

Creating a safe and supportive workplace is paramount for the morale of your staff. As a manager, prioritising their mental wellness via open communication, recognition and appreciation is a sound investment in your company's future.

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