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Changing One Employee Will Impact Others

Have you noticed how the attitude and actions of one employee can rub off on others? Whether it be positively or negatively, one person's behavior will influence those around them. We can use this to our advantage in motivating our workforce.

Ponder the words of the poem "My Influence".

My life shall touch a dozen lives
Before this day is done,
Leave countless marks of good or ill,
E'er sets the evening sun.
This, the wish I always wish,
The prayer I always pray;
Lord, may my life help other lives,
It touches by the way.
(7700 Illustrations, p. 604)

Our lives do touch others throughout each day. Are we trying to help people, as the poem suggests, or do we propagate negativity throughout the organization? Let's look at three reasons how the behavior of one person can affect many.

Employees socialize together

When employees are together, it isn't long before the topic of work comes up and they comment on what's going on in the organization. When you positively change the attitude of one employee, it will ripple out and impact many other workers. For this reason, supervisors are well advised to make sure the changes encouraged in one

employee will bring about the desired results and reinforce a positive work environment with other personnel.

Employees can escalate bad situations and hurt the organization

Employees commonly pass on gossip. Your organization no doubt has a rumor mill. It consists of talk about what is happening or allegedly happening in the company. While you cannot stop the rumor mill, you can escalate it if you are not careful. Workers, not management, normally control rumors. When employees pass on a piece of juicy information, they typically add emotions and additional information that may or may not be true.

If we asked 100 people about their feelings toward Adolf Hitler, the strong majority would say they hate what he did. However, we must admit that he had a gift for getting people to passionately follow him. He did most of this through what he called making his message "burn" inside of people. In doing this, he gave people a cause to which they wanted to be committed, but he did something more. In a tragically effective way, he was able

The influence of each human being on others in this life is a kind of immortality.

John Quincy Adams (1767-1848)
6th US President

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to manipulate people. Don't misunderstand my point. Hitler was wicked, very misguided, and twisted, but he excelled at motivating people.

Hitler summarized his philosophy for moving people to action. He said, "Say it simple, say it often. Make it burn." When a supervisor makes a decision that dishonors, insults, or harms another person, it feeds the rumor mill. That is why managing the rumor mill is critically important for the leader's success. If supervisors honor their

workers, this adds positive news to the gossip that is circulating.

Creating a positive environment in which your employees can thrive, will encourage them to become supportive and motivated to give their best work to the organization. Next month we will look at a final reason on how one person's attitude can affect many.

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THE MATHIS GROUP, INC
DR. KEITH MATHIS

9515 N. Spring Valley Dr.
Pleasant Hope, MO 65725
800-224-3731
417-759-9110 voice/fax

wanda@themathisgroup.com

keith@themathisgroup.com

www.themathisgroup.com

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