



FEBRUARY 2016

Messenger

VOL. 14 NO. 1

Positive Peer Pressure

In our last *Messenger*, we began talking about the influence one person can have over a group. We looked at how having a positive attitude can help boost other employees' morale and outlook of the organization. On the other hand, we also talked about how one person who is continually negative can make the organization a dreary place in which to work. In this issue, we will look at how positive peer pressure can influence employees.

Employees can exert pressure on peers to conform

Employees exert pressure on each other that affects the morale of the company. An organization's spirit can be strongly affected by peer pressure. In many cases, an employee's behavior can be brought into check quicker with peer pressure than by means of employee discipline. As kids, we were taught to watch out for peer pressure, typically thinking of it in a negative sense. Even as adults, the term "peer pressure" still has a negative connotation. It doesn't, however, have to be a bad thing.

Peer pressure is any pressure for another person to take a certain action in order to be accepted. If done in an encouraging manner, this can motivate people to excel in their positions. When management and employees have a good relationship, employees will want the best for the organization and will work hard for it to be successful.

Organizations have an unspoken code of quality in the service they provide or the products they deliver. When workers break this code and are confronted by other employees, their behavior

will be shaped faster than it would if management intervened. Watching how seasoned employees value the organization will shape the perspective of new hires.

Forbes recently ran an article about the power of positive peer pressure. In this article, Disney was given as an example of how new hires are influenced by watching veteran employees.

If you hire people, and inspire people, in a way that aligns with your goals, the effect on future "generations" of hires allows the effect to snowball. Why do you think that everyone at Disney picks up trash when they see it? It's not because it's taught at orientation (although it is). It's because the tradition is grounded enough among the old-timers that it affects the behavior of every new hire. They see the already-successful in-group picking up trash. And they realize pretty quickly that that's the way to fit in: whether you're a Mickey impersonator or a custodian.

(Micah Solomon, "Upgrade Your Customer Service Through Positive Peer Pressure", June 18, 2014, www.forbes.com)

When you are able to positively influence your employees, great things will happen! Whether it's everyone chipping in to make sure the office stays clean or doing your best work on every project instead of letting other team members pick up the slack, your company will be successful when everyone works together.

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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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