HOW TO Improve Team Morale

Adjusting the perspectives of your employees goes a long way in improving morale and output.

Many times a person's perspective determines one's morale or attitude more so than any actual situation does. While issues like pay cuts and layoffs have a real impact, it is best to not let emotions tied to these issues cause a dip in morale.

To improve employee morale is to change the team's perspective versus looking for a golden answer. An organization can spend all of their time focusing on these changes and continue to experience negative emotions, or they can choose to change the perspective of their people.

Facing low morale head-on

When a leader is faced with low employee morale, their job is to hold their team members accountable by teaching them to be grateful even if they are not necessarily content. It is all about perspective.

It does not do any good to sympathize with employees when they are complaining about workload, removal of benefits and even pay cuts. In fact, the bad morale is created when leaders and workers start to sympathize with each other on the struggles or unfairness of the job. The intent of these leaders is to show compassion and empathy for their team members, and therefore hopefully help them turn around their morale. Instead, they end up confirming why the morale *should* be bad.

To improve morale, the leader must change the team members' perspective. It is an empathetic approach that says the feelings the person is experiencing are real, but may not be necessary, helpful or have a purpose. The leader's job is to give the team members hope and understanding, not sympathy.

Seeing opportunity in challenges

When a team complains about workload increase due to layoffs or people leaving the company, the leader should discuss how the individual now has the opportunity to step up even more than before. Leaders should challenge staff to own up to the job and see the opportunities. Express what it will take for them to see success in their position and let them decide if they are committed and willing.

Leaders need to take a look at their team and their situation and know they are the only ones who can change it. Poor morale is a result of the actions, or rather lack of actions, from the leader and the team. By taking action and embracing a positive attitude, the individuals win, the company wins, and everyone reaps the rewards.

Together as a team, you can truly change perspectives. Be grateful and move forward with a purpose, taking advantage of each opportunity. Deep down everybody truly wants to be happy. However, people are not happy because they are successful—they are successful because they are happy. ∎

About the Author

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