Positive vs. Negative Workplace Environments

INDIVIDUALISM IN THE WORKPLACE

Most people who are out there working would agree a positive environment is better than a negative one once you are on the clock. With many companies paying attention to employee morale as a way to sustain and increase profits, this work environment continues to demand attention. Fortunately for both employers and employees, the identification of the contributing factors of positive and negative workplace environments are simple to identify.

Purpose

One of the most influential aspects of a workplace environment is how the employees feel about the work they do. A positive workplace environment is filled with employees who believe they have a purpose at their jobs. They believe they are making a difference, whether it be benefiting the community, adding to the growth of the company or simply being a valuable part of the team. A negative environment lacks this feeling. Employees there do not feel they are performing work that really matters. Without a sense of purpose, motivation to complete responsibilities with pride and enthusiasm is hard to come by.

Communication

Communication between employees at all levels will really help or hinder the workplace environment. A positive environment communicates in a way that is encouraging, empowering and focused on what's right, rather than what's wrong. Even in times of disagreement, this workplace will concentrate on the solution, not the problem, by talking about how the issues should be handled in the future. Since conflict is inevitable, this type of positive redirection helps you understand how to be successful and thrive at work. In the same situation, negative workplace environments engage in pessimistic talk centered on how badly the issue was handled, with little information about the solution and what to do in the future.

Strength-Based Vs. Weakness-Based

Studies have shown that focusing on strengths rather than weaknesses allows for greater personal and professional growth and happiness. Therefore, a positive workplace environment recognizes and uses employees' strengths. The bosses and worker bees brainstorm to find positions and projects that allow everyone to thrive by doing what they do best. No surprise -- the next thing you know, you and your colleagues are enjoying work more. These companies also provide opportunities for you to develop your strengths. On the other hand, a negative environment

emphasizes employees' weaknesses, which creates a feeling of inadequacy and frustration. The result? Unhappy you and less revenue for the company.

Novelty Vs. Monotony

Although many aspects of a job can't be changed, the amount of novelty or monotony involved can positively or negatively affect the workplace environment. One way to increase enjoyment at work is to have opportunities for innovation and creativity. Many large companies, such as Apple, have recognized this and even offer a certain amount of time each day for employees to work on new projects they are enthusiastic about. This creates a positive workplace environment that is fresh and exciting. Negative workplace environments often leave workers stuck in the rut of their mundane and completely predictable jobs. This fosters restlessness, or even depression.

Individualism in the Workplace

EFFECTS OF A CULTURAL STEREOTYPE IN THE WORKPLACE

Humans are naturally social creatures that innately desire to create relationships with those around them. Therefore, most businesses thrive when employees are working together for the greater good of each other, the company and the community. Individualism often conflicts with these values, so a healthy balance must be maintained to create an effective workplace.

Definition

Individualism emphasizes the value and interest of the individual. This contrasts with collectivism, which is focused on the well-being of the group as a whole. Individualism became a central part of American culture by the 19th century. Today, individualism continues to flourish in all aspects of American society, including work. This can be seen in the popular "dog eat dog" business mindset that puts personal growth and success above co-workers and at times, even the company.

Advantages

Properly guided individualism fosters an environment that can benefit the workplace. Individualistic workers tend to be highly competitive because they believe being the best will help them reach their professional goals, which makes them efficient and effective. They tend to be productive because they aren't relying on working with others to help them succeed. These employees often are self-motivated and therefore usually don't need a boss frequently checking in on them and monitoring their work.

Disadvantages

The competitive nature of individualistic employees can be detrimental if they see collaboration with co-workers as worthless or an inconvenience. Collaboration fosters creativity and innovation when the environment is positive. When the environment is negative, people are less likely to share their ideas and opinions and hostility can brew. Because individualism values the person over the group, this type of worker may also be selfish and willing to do whatever it takes, even if unethical, to attain their desired level of success.

Solutions

Individualism isn't going anywhere, so it's important to understand how to positively integrate this into the workplace. Mangers should offer trainings that show how harmony and collaboration in the office actually helps everyone reach their individual goals. When employees start to see the connection between their own success and their co-workers' and company's success, collectivism will occur naturally. In this type of environment, workers can compete in a healthy way that still keeps the well-being of the office team and company as a whole at the forefront.