

Managing Company Morale In Difficult Times

During these times when earnings have been battered, unemployment is high and companies, even those with strong balance sheets, are treading water. It is pretty clear that we all share the same boat and the same hope that the tide will change and the stormy seas will become calm.

No wonder morale is low and uncertainty is high. No wonder people are sullen and concerned. And no wonder people's gloominess has a ripple effect, causing companies to feel listless, with a resultant reduction of risk taking and innovative thinking.

That is why leadership is so essential during difficult times. It is a golden opportunity for leaders to earn their stripes and provide the jump-start necessary to revitalize the workforce.

Following are some helpful pointers in guiding leaders to improve company morale:

- Create focus. Make it practical. Build consensus. Measure results. And provide feedback.
- Maintain a positive can-do attitude. People love to stretch their abilities, particularly when they feel they are sharing a common goal.
- Communicate frequently. Keep your message clear, concise and believable. If you don't know what to say or do, tell people so. Don't fudge it.
- Mine the gold in your organization. Too many senior managers lose track of the wisdom of their subordinates. Such behavior forces a "we versus they" mind-set and fractionalizes the organization.

- Manage expectations. Do not let the pressure of the moment force you to promise things that are not realistic and not deliverable. That's a sure-fire way of tarnishing your credibility.
- Manage surprises early. Shock-and-awe communication gives birth to low morale.
- Recognize that the word "moral", not surprisingly, is embedded in the work "morale." Good leaders intuitively understand and do what is right.
- Don't sugarcoat tough news. People are more realistic and savvy than we give them credit for.
- Understand that certain events in companies are not isolated. They have an impact on all parts of the organization.

Privileges given to one group at the exclusion of others can cause deep resentment. Big raises and bonuses for senior staff coupled with layoffs and salary cuts for other is damaging. Engaging in corporate semantics to justify such actions compounds the problem and lowers morale. Don't expect a one-shot infusion to be potent enough to dissolve complex morale problems magically. Maintain morale on a daily basis.

Leadership is not a privilege but a responsibility. We need responsible leaders to shore up the troops constantly during turbulent times.

What companies need are not pessimists who see difficulty in every opportunity, but rather pragmatic optimists who see opportunity in every difficulty. (Source: Boston Business Journal)

Colorectal Cancer Preventions

In the United States the number of new cases of colorectal cancer in 2008 was approximately 150,000 cases and the number of deaths resulting from this cancer was approximately 50,000. With this many people getting colorectal cancer and dying from it, the focus should be on prevention.

Regular colon cancer screening should begin at age 50 for people at average risk of colon cancer. Several screening options exist, each with its own benefits and drawbacks. Talk about your options with your doctor, and together you can decide which tests are appropriate for you. The options are as follows:

- Annual fecal occult blood testing
- Stool DNA testing
- Flexible sigmoidoscopy every five years
- Double-contrast barium enema every five years
- Colonoscopy every 10 years
- Virtual colonoscopy every five years

More frequent or earlier screening may be recommended if you're at high risk of colon cancer. Discuss the benefits and risks of each screening option with your doctor. You may decide one or more tests are appropriate for you.

Making lifestyle changes can reduce your risk of colon cancer. Follow the steps below:

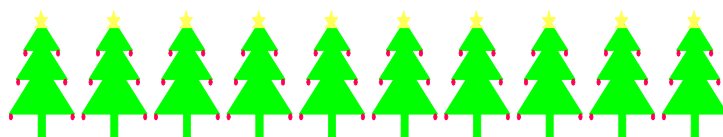
- Eat plenty of fruits, vegetables and whole grains. Try to eat 5 servings of fruits and vegetables every day and a variety of produce.
- Limit fat, especially saturated fat from animal sources such as red meat.
- Eat a varied diet to increase the vitamins and minerals you consume.
- Limit alcohol consumption to no more than one to two drinks a day.
- Stop smoking
- Stay physically active and maintain a healthy body weight. Try to get at least 30 minutes of exercise on most days.

(Source: Mayo Clinic online)



Holiday Hours

HealthFirst Medical Group will have limited service during the holiday season. Both the North and South Clinics will be open on **December 24 and December 31 from 7:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. for all services.** After 2:00 p.m. both clinics will be open for **Emergency Care and Random Drug screening only.** Both the North and South Clinics will be open for **Emergency Care on December 25 (Christmas Day) and January 1 (New Years Day).** Our regular schedule will resume on December 26 & January 2nd. If you have any questions call our office at **(562) 949-9328 or (562) 926-3440.**



HealthFirst Updates

As the year comes to an end HealthFirst wants to update you on some of our services and our computer system.

The Galen computer system has been faxing or emailing you status automatically after each patient visit. If you are not setup this way and want to be, contact marketing at **562-926-3440 x313.**

E-Galen is also available to you online at our website **www.healthfirstmedical.net.** At this time you can get a patient's work status and first report of injury. After the first of the year you will also be able to retrieve physical and drug screen results online. If you don't have a login and password to access E-Galen call marketing.

HealthFirst has also updated our video library to DVD. We have many safety DVDs available for your safety meetings that can be checked out from our marketing department.