

MOTIVATING EMPLOYEES

Michelle Poché Flaherty

A leader's role is to raise people's aspirations for what they can become and to release their energies so they will try to get there.

**David Gergen, professor, presidential advisor,
and political consultant**

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SNAPSHOT

Motivating employees to carry out their responsibilities and release their energies in productive and satisfying ways is an essential and highly challenging role of a supervisor. This chapter provides a framework for understanding motivation and tools for energizing and inspiring employees. Chapter objectives are to

- Increase understanding of individual interests and needs and how they affect employee motivation
- Deepen awareness of theories of motivation to provide a context for action
- Explore actions supervisors can take to meet employees' needs
- Introduce the connection between personality type and employee motivation.

The chapter will help you answer these questions:

- What theories of motivation can guide your work as a supervisor?
- What do employees want and need from their work?
- What can you do as a supervisor to reduce dissatisfaction in the workplace?
- How do autonomy, mastery, and purpose contribute to motivating employees?
- How do you release higher levels of motivation in your employees?
- How can you apply these concepts and strategies to strengthen your relationship with your boss?

The study of motivation is an examination of what makes people tick. What turns them on to want to try harder, do more, and be happy? What turns them off or even makes them feel like giving up? What makes them respond positively or negatively to you? Are there ways to inspire your employees, create synergy with your peers, and delight your boss? The answer is yes, and the secrets lie in understanding motivation.

Author Michelle Poché Flaherty appreciatively recognizes the contribution of Richard L. Milford and Mark D. Bradbury, who wrote the version of this chapter included in the previous edition.

The needs of employees

Your job as supervisor is to get work done with and through your employees. To do this, you must find ways to release your employees' motivation—to awaken and energize their drive to get work done and to get it done well.

In your role as supervisor, releasing employee motivation means aligning individual needs, and employees' efforts to satisfy those needs, with the goals of the organization. To help your employees do their best, you need to ensure that their individual needs are met as they pursue the organization's goals.

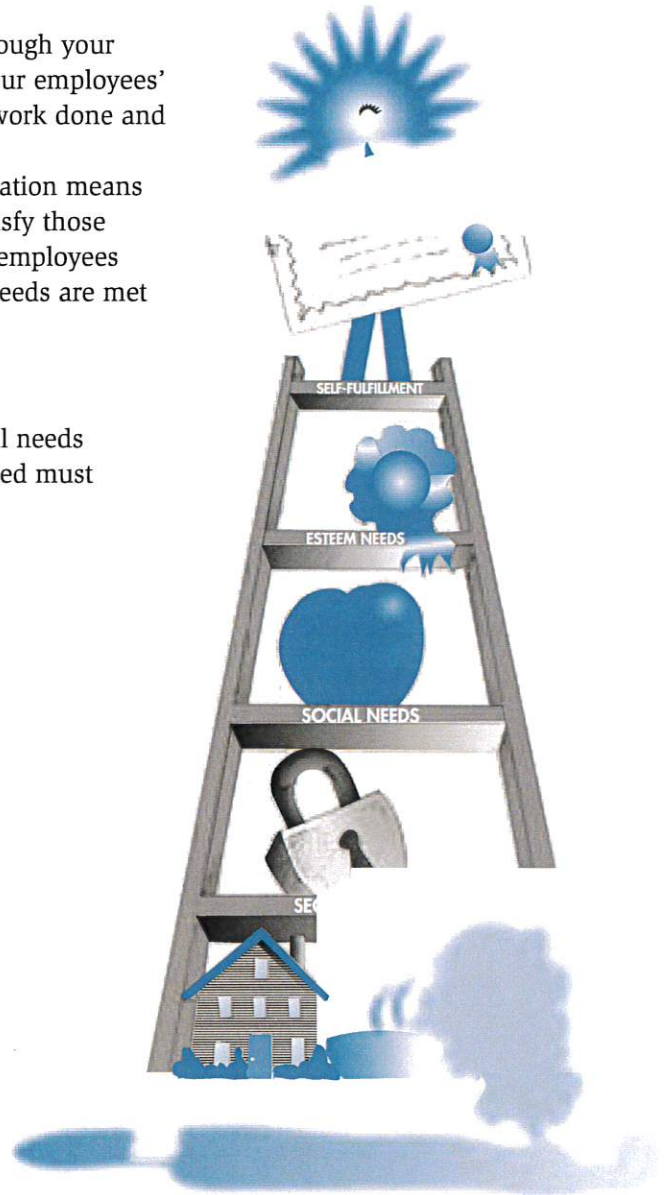
Maslow's hierarchy of needs


Psychologist Abraham Maslow suggested that individual needs are organized on a hierarchical ladder, and that each need must be met before you can move to the next level of need.¹

- **Physiological needs:** food, shelter, clothing, and an environment that sustains life
- **Security needs:** physical safety and an orderly environment
- **Social needs:** acceptance and a sense of belonging
- **Esteem needs:** self-respect and the respect of others
- **Self-actualization or self-fulfillment needs:** full development of individual abilities and a satisfying personal life.

The lower-level needs must be satisfied before higher-level needs have any effect on motivation. Human behavior is driven by unsatisfied needs, and as long as a more basic need remains unsatisfied, it will dominate. Once lower-level needs are satisfied, higher-level needs begin to drive behavior.

When asked to describe their worst jobs, employees who have experienced adverse work conditions





will quickly cite them: dirty, smelly, burning hot, freezing cold, or dangerous conditions often qualify a job as the worst in someone's history. However, employees who have always worked in fairly safe and orderly environments tend to cite negative issues that fall higher up Maslow's hierarchy, such as inconsiderate co-workers and disrespectful or unsupportive bosses. When asked to describe their best jobs, employees consistently describe them in terms of satisfying higher-level needs, such as a challenging job where they were able to learn and grow, a position that involved independence or responsibility, or a role where they were able to make a difference.

Your employees will have a hard time focusing on the fulfilling aspects of their work if their equipment rarely works or weekly assignments are frequently unclear. Start by ensuring that your employees have an orderly work environment so that you both can focus on higher needs such as collaborative teamwork and innovative, interesting ways to improve the work.

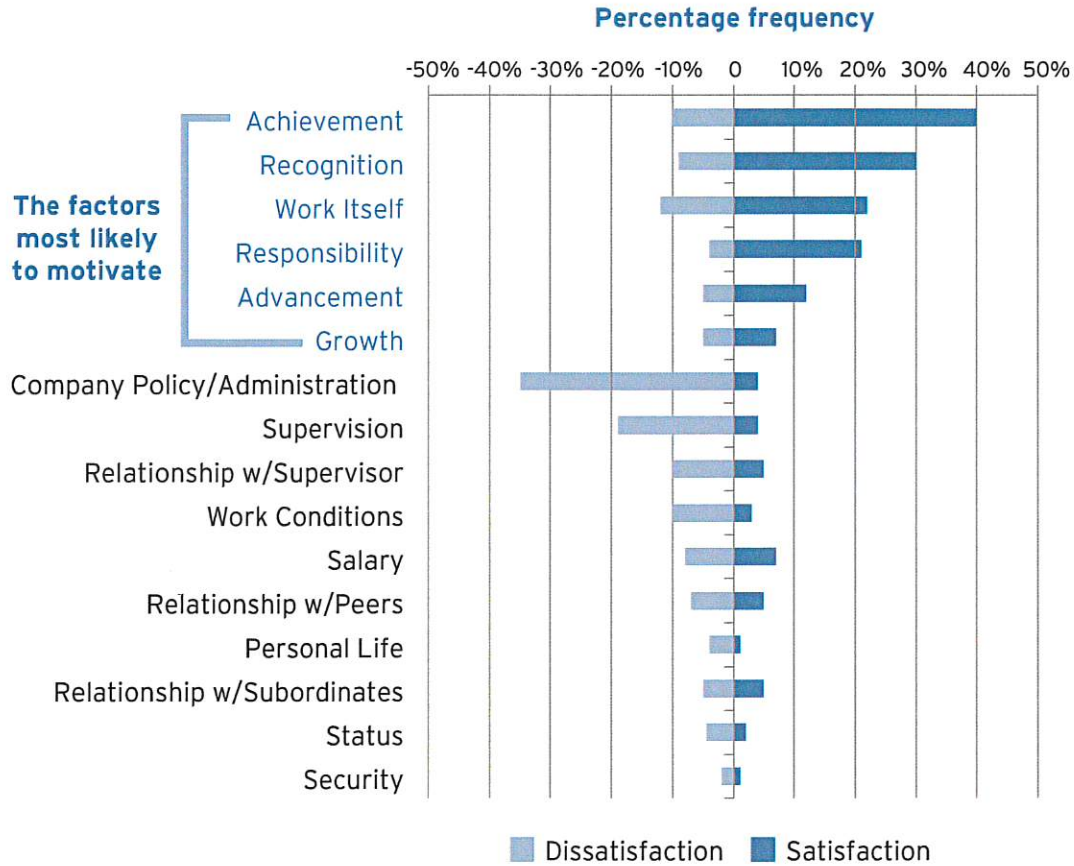
Herzberg's motivation factors

Frederick Herzberg's theory of motivation is compatible with Maslow's view. Herzberg divides sources of motivation into two categories: those that prompt satisfaction and those that prompt dissatisfaction.² Herzberg identifies six factors that are most likely to satisfy workers and lead to increased levels of motivation. They are: achievement, recognition, interesting [work], responsibility, advancement, and growth. There are ten factors that Herzberg said are likely to demotivate when they reach undesirable levels. The demotivators are policies/administration, supervision, relationship with the supervisor, work conditions, salary, relationships with peers, personal life, relationship with subordinates, status, and security.

For example, *salary* scores higher in dissatisfaction; therefore, the data indicate that a higher salary doesn't necessarily motivate an employee, but an inadequate salary can demotivate. An adequate level of pay will remove the issue of compensation as a primary motivator for most workers, who are then free to be motivated by factors like achievement, recognition, responsibility, and interesting work.

The most frequent source of dissatisfaction is company policy and administration, also known as bureaucracy or red tape. While many rules are established by senior management and do not fall under your control as a supervisor, you can still find ways to advocate for reducing rules that cause significant dissatisfaction.

HERZBERG'S MOTIVATION FACTORS




Adapted from Frederick Herzberg, "One More Time: How Do You Motivate Employees?" *Harvard Business Review* (September-October 1987), 8. ©Harvard Business School Publishing, 1987. Used with permission.

SIX STEPS TO PROMOTE CREATIVITY AND REDUCE BUREAUCRACY

- Decrease required number of approvals and eliminate unnecessary rules
- Push decisions as far down the chain of command as possible
- Remove formal communication protocols; let people talk directly to the person with the answer
- Seek employee suggestions more often and follow through on pursuing them
- Remove punishments for mistakes made while trying to solve problems
- Do not assign authority based only on job title or position; allow for situational authority.

Adapted from Daniel H. Pink, *Drive: The Surprising Truth About What Motivates Us* (New York: Riverhead Books, 2009).



The next most frequent source of dissatisfaction is the employee's relationship with his or her supervisor. This is a powerful reminder of the importance of your role as a supervisor. You can reduce dissatisfaction in your team by promoting the most frequent sources of employee satisfaction and productivity, including

- Giving your employees opportunities to succeed and experience high achievement
- Recognizing and celebrating good work, talent, and effort
- When possible, allowing employees to work on the projects and tasks that interest them most
- Seeking ways for employees to take on additional responsibilities and work toward opportunities for advancement
- Helping employees develop their skills and abilities by offering them learning opportunities that go beyond the basics of their current jobs.

Herzberg and Maslow both disprove the assumption held by some supervisors that many employees dislike work and will avoid it if possible. Such supervisors wrongly assume that most people have little initiative or ambition and are unwilling to take responsibility. As a result, they must be controlled, directed, coerced, and intimi-

dated to produce desired results. Maslow and Herzberg both demonstrate that most people:

- Welcome work as an opportunity to learn and grow
- Will seek more responsibility and challenging work
- Are primarily motivated by their desire for acceptance, recognition, and a sense of achievement.

Autonomy, mastery, and purpose

In his best-selling book, *Drive: The Surprising Truth About What Motivates Us*,³ Daniel H. Pink summarizes employee motivation in three concepts:

- **Autonomy** An urge to direct our own lives
- **Mastery** The desire to get better and better at something that matters
- **Purpose** A yearning to do what we do in service of something larger than ourselves.

The following sections identify actions you can take to motivate employees using Pink's three concepts.

Ways to provide *autonomy* to your employees:

- Ensure clear, accurate, reliable, and open communication.
- Make resources easily available.
- Provide facilitative, supportive leadership.
- Increase flexibility by establishing desired results and letting employees decide *how* to achieve those results.
- Let employees design their jobs or propose their own deadlines when appropriate.
- Get out of their way.
- Be accessible when they need you.



Paul L. Marciano, *Carrots and Sticks Don't Work: Build a Culture of Employee Engagement with the Principles of RESPECT*. (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2010), 80-81. ©2010 McGraw-Hill Companies, Inc. Used with permission.


Ways to develop *mastery* in your employees:

- Give them access to training.
- Make resources easily available.
- Permit job rotation and cross-training.
- Take responsibility for supporting the development of each of your employees by
 - Assessing where and how each one needs to grow
 - Asking them about their own interests and aspirations
 - Investing in coaching and mentoring
 - Giving them access to others who can help them grow.

WHAT MILLENNIALS WANT

...from their boss	...from their company	...to learn
Top five characteristics millennials want in a boss	Top five characteristics millennials want in a company	Top five things millennials want to learn
Will help me navigate my career path	Will develop my skills for the future	Technical skills in my area of expertise
Will give me straight feedback	Has strong values	Self-management and personal productivity
Will mentor and coach me	Offers customizable options in my benefits/reward package	Leadership
Will sponsor me for formal development programs	Allows me to blend work with the rest of my life	Industry or functional knowledge
Is comfortable with flexible schedules	Offers a clear career path	Creativity and innovation strategies

From Jeanne C. Meister and Karie Willyerd, "Mentoring Millennials," *Harvard Business Review* (May 2010). ©Harvard Business School Publishing, 2010. Used with permission.



Ways to cultivate *purpose* among your employees:

- Promote a supportive team environment.
- Model a positive attitude.
- Align employees and their work with a larger strategic vision and values by highlighting connections between their efforts and the end results.
- Provide fair and desirable rewards and recognition.
- Trust employees to do the right things.


These motivators are becoming even more pronounced in today's workforce due to the values prevalent among members of Generation X (born between 1965 and 1979) and the Millennial generation (born between 1980 and 2000). By 2014, Millennials will account for nearly half the employees in the world.⁴

Maslow, Herzberg, and Pink provide insights into the major themes you can rely on to release higher levels of motivation in nearly all employees. However, you must also deal with the nuances of different personality types on your team and look for ways to customize your approach to specific individuals.

Customizing motivation for individual temperaments

Many psychological models and assessments have been developed to measure and categorize human personalities into various groups. The most widely used is the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI), which measures a person's preferences about how he or she perceives the world and makes decisions. Other popular tools include Gallup's StrengthsFinder, the Birkman Method,[®] and the DISC[®] assessment. The majority of these instruments measure *preferences*, not *ability*, so they are not to be used as predictors of job performance. However, you can use them to increase understanding of what makes a person tick and what kinds of motivation he or she may respond to best.

Some organizations have employees on staff, usually in the human resources (HR) department, who are certified to administer these similar instruments. Still other organizations have contracts with consultants, facilitators, or trainers who can administer the MBTI for you and your team. You may want to check with your HR department to see if this resource is available to you.



The MBTI uses letters to describe its categories of personality components. According to MBTI theory, the combination of certain components (represented by letter combinations) correlates to four categories of personality temperaments: NF, NT, SJ and SP. (These initials are explained in the “Four Temperaments” sidebar.) Most people can identify with aspects of all four temperaments, but the theory suggests one temperament is likely to be a stronger fit than the rest.

If you are able to determine the temperament that describes you best, it will enhance your self-awareness—and can strengthen your success as a supervisor. If you recognize the characteristics of a particular temperament in each of your employees, it may provide insight into the most effective ways to motivate, connect with, and reward each individual.

(text continues on page 221)

FOUR TEMPERAMENTS Using the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator

In the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator, sixteen personality types are identified as combinations of these type preferences: **E**xtravert or **I**ntrovert, **S**ensing or **I**ntuition, **T**hinking or **F**eeling, and **J**udging or **P**erception. The personality types are usually referred to by an abbreviation of the initial letters (highlighted here in boldface type) of each of a person’s four type preferences.

NF *[intuition and feeling; 12 percent of the population]*

NFs look at the world and see possibilities for people. They tend to serve causes that advance human interest, but their sensitivity can lead them to take criticism personally, sometimes in their feeling hurt. Overall, NFs feel that harmony with themselves and with others is their most important value. If harmony exists, everything else will fall naturally into place.

Words that describe NFs

- Strong interpersonal skills
- Supportive of others
- Sympathetic
- Relationships
- Possibilities for people
- Interaction
- Seductive
- Cooperation
- “Becoming”
- Vivid imagination
- Mysterious
- Hypersensitive to conflict
- Search for self
- Autonomy
- Need encouragement and recognition
- Integrity
- Give strokes freely.

How NFs lead

- Regard power as residing in personal and professional relationships
- Create and maintain non-hierarchical work structures and relationships
- Build bridges to individuals and groups through shared values, concern, and affection, and then leverage these bridges to bring about the desired outcome
- Use inspirational speeches and imagery to unite and motivate
- Communicate appreciation, approval, and hope with greater ease and urgency than criticism or anything that invites conflict
- Give and want compliments and affirmation often.

How to motivate NFs

- Like them, know them, acknowledge their uniqueness, share their values or at least acknowledge that their values exist and are important
- Acknowledge their contributions and effort with affirmation and sincere expressions of gratitude
- Help provide and maintain an open, conflict-free workplace
- Ask for their help, support, creativity, and collaboration
- Affirm and complement at least as much as you criticize and correct; make sure criticism is framed as a means to greater personal and professional development—and a stronger bridge between you and the employee.

VividFrom Hile Rutledge, *The Four Temperaments Workbook* (Fairfax, VA: OKA, 2008). ©OKA, 2008. Used with permission.

NT [intuition and thinking; 12 percent of the population]

NTs perceive the world largely through abstractions and possibilities to which they apply objective analysis. Their driving force, in their quest for competence, is to theorize and intellectualize everything. Driven to try to understand the universe, they ask, "Why?" or "Why not?" NTs learn by challenging any authority or source. They have their own standards and benchmarks for competence against which they measure themselves and everybody else.

Words that describe NTs	How NTs lead	How to motivate NTs
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• High achievers• Knowledge seekers• Objective perceptions• Independent• Self-doubt• Intellectually curious• Conceptualizers• Competitive with self and others• Nonconformists• Wordsmiths• Principles• Enjoy complexity• Authority-independent• Architects of change• Systems designers• Argumentative• "What would happen if..."	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Regard power as residing in skill, ability, knowledge, and competency• Drive toward an independently conceived and assessed standard of competence and excellence, and then apply this standard to those who work for them• Intrigued and motivated by challenges and problems to be solved, often taking a systematic, strategic, and/or conceptual approach to generating solutions• Visionary, focusing on possibilities, change, and continuous improvement through non-personal analysis• Often see conflict as a positive tool, shining a light on what needs to be confronted, fixed, or improved• Reward success with criticism, a harder assignment, and more freedom to perform independently.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Demonstrate your own competence by passing their individual (and often internal) competency assessment• Identify clear quality standards and accept nothing less• Have a vision of the future and communicate this direction clearly to put today's activity into a strategic framework• Allow for independent contributions, successes, and failures; do not micromanage• Push for independent problem solving on challenging issues, and introduce, allow, and encourage "why" questions• Follow these points, and you will have the NT employee on board until the end of the day; tomorrow, you'll start over again.

From Hile Rutledge, *The Four Temperaments Workbook* (Fairfax, VA: OKA, 2008). ©OKA, 2008. Used with permission.

SJ [sensing and judging; 38 percent of the population]

SJs focus on what is practical and realistic to provide organization and structure. They yearn to belong to meaningful institutions. They are trustworthy, loyal, helpful, and reverent. As stabilizing traditionalists, SJs tend to organize people, furniture, schedules, structures, and more to ensure that everything runs smoothly and on time.

Words that describe SJs	How SJs lead	How to motivate SJs
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Loyal to the system• Duty• Super dependable• Resist change• Preserve traditions• Precise• "KISS" (keep it simple and straightforward)• Procedures• Decisive• Stability• "Should" and "Should Not"• Social responsibility• Structure• Orderly• Authority dependent.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Regard power as residing in the organization or system, so real power is in the authority of your title, rank, tenure, position, or status• Prize efficiency, responsibility, and consistency• Orderly, dependable, and realistic• Understand and conserve institutional values• Supply stability, routine, and structure• More likely to reward institutionally using trophies, letters, and commendations rather than personally• Tend to be more critical of mistakes than rewarding of expected duties.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Communicate and maintain clear timelines and reporting structures• Give specific and detailed instructions• Get to the point and stick to it• Emphasize consistency and efficiency• Address the bottom line results• Officially reward and recognize contributions with money, status, and official commendations.


From Hille Rutledge, *The Four Temperaments Workbook* (Fairfax, VA: OKA, 2008). ©OKA, 2008. Used with permission.

SP [sensing and perception; 38 percent of the population]

SPs focus on what is practical and realistic to which they bring spontaneity and flexibility. They are simultaneously grounded in the reality of the moment and open to multiple ways of dealing with that reality. The only thing the SP can be sure of is the moment; a long-range plan is a contradiction in terms. They are driven to act in and adapt to the moment; everything else, from past procedures to future possibilities, becomes irrelevant in the face of the options, challenges, and fun offered "now."

Words that describe SPs	How SPs lead	How to motivate SPs
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Free spirit• Process oriented• Fun-loving• Good in crisis situations• "When all else fails, read the directions"• Impulsive and spontaneous• Need freedom and space• "Let me do something"• Flexible• Focus on immediacy• Realistic and practical• Enjoy the moment• Like hands-on experience• Adaptable• Seek variety and change• Action oriented• Most worry free of the four temperaments.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Regard power as residing in the moment, unencumbered by the past and future• Hunger for freedom and action• Flexible, open-minded, and willing to take risks in dealing with realistic problems• Highly negotiable• Challenged by trouble spots but not long-term concepts• Best at verbal planning and short-range projects.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Get to the point• Make tasks a challenge and allow them to make it fun• Be realistic and practical• Outline any critical guidelines, provide options; then back off and let them approach the task at their own pace and in their own way• Relax and have some fun.

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After reviewing the descriptions of the four temperaments, think about which one best describes you, and consider how you use the leadership style described to succeed as a supervisor. Also keep in mind that any strength maximized can become a weakness; therefore, if these leadership approaches are your strengths, what blind spots might interfere with your expectations? How can you take advantage of the strengths of your temperament to become a better leader?

You should also consider which temperaments best describe your team members. Understanding how their temperaments differ from yours can provide insight into what motivates them. With this in mind, how might you use this information to lead and motivate each member of your team?

You also might consider which temperaments best describe your peers and how having a better understanding of your co-workers will help you become a more successful team member.

Lastly, consider which temperament best describes your boss. How could this help you to focus on what your boss wants most from you and help you to communicate more effectively with your boss?

The needs of managers

The study of motivation will not only help you to lead and inspire your employees but also strengthen your relationship with your supervisor. In the same way that Maslow, Herzberg, and Pink have identified general principles that meet the needs of most workers, there are some general principles that can help you meet the needs of nearly all managers. These principles include being accommodating, doing your due diligence, and earning trust and confidence. Some of these approaches may take extra effort on your part, but they may increase your long-term success in the organization.

Nine tips to manage your manager

1. *Share information strategically.*

- Respect your manager's time by asking for it only for important issues.
- Know when she needs to hear it from you first.

- Listen to what she's asking before you answer.
- When she requests information, don't just pass on all the raw data. Analyze it, bring out what is essential, connect related points, and eliminate unnecessary details.
- Demonstrate alignment between her priorities and yours.


2. ***Respect your manager's role as a generalist.***

Your manager has multiple responsibilities beyond you and your team. Don't assume he knows as much as you do about your unit's work and your expertise. Translate from your perspective as a subject matter expert by simplifying, summarizing, and getting to the point. When you approach your boss, make it easy for him to give you what you're asking for (direction, permission, etc.) by

- Getting your facts straight and being ready for questions.
- Providing context and framing the discussion. Briefly remind him where you left this issue at your last meeting. Remind him of the *why* before rushing into the *what* and *how* of your immediate concern.
- Summarizing quickly the options considered and criteria for your recommended choice.
- Saying what you're asking for (just informing vs. seeking approval, guidance, back-up).
- Identifying where you need help.
- E-mailing a summary after the meeting to confirm understandings and next steps.
- Keeping him posted on the status.

3. ***Be a problem solver.***

- Don't act helpless and ask your manager to fix everything or everyone for you.
- Don't bring problems without bringing at least one possible solution to explore.
- Before you approach your manager, identify the causes of the problem and/or the gap between the desired objective and the current situation.
- Identify options to close the gap or correct the cause to prevent it in the future.
- Identify tasks and resources (time, people, money, materials, tools, and skills) required. Bring this analysis with you when you seek her help with the problem.



4. ***Exercise initiative.***

- Learn when you need to seek permission before acting versus when you can leap and take a risk.
- Clarify your authority and your manager's expectations.

5. ***Underpromise and overdeliver.***


- Demonstrate integrity. Do what you say you are going to do—every time. Be the one your boss knows she can count on.
- Be prudent with estimates. Give yourself and your team a margin for error and adjustments.
- Don't confuse underpromising with saying no. It's your job to figure out how to make it happen rather than identifying all the reasons it can't.

6. ***Avoid surprises and never bluff.***

- Stay on top of your team's projects and keep your manager posted on both good and bad news.
- If you don't know an answer, say so.
 - Don't bluff your way through questionable information or give your best guess and portray it as certain.
 - If you don't have the data, say you'll get it. Then get it, and give it to your boss as soon as possible.
- When you or your team makes a mistake or there is a problem, say so.
 - Don't wait and hope your manager won't find out, or that the mistake will go away on its own.
 - Own it. Don't make excuses. Don't blame others.
 - Fix it.
 - Demonstrate what you're doing to prevent repeating it.
 - Add value by applying lessons learned to future efforts.

7. ***Support your manager's leadership.***

- Stand by her decisions in front of all others. When you disagree, speak up respectfully and in private. Once you've made your best recommendation,



support the decision even when you've been overruled. Whether it was your preference or not, the final decision is now yours to implement.

- Watch her back. If you can help your boss avoid a setback, do so.
- Help your boss succeed by making her look good when you can. Her wins are your wins.

8. ***Meet your manager where he is.***

- Accommodate his personality type; don't demand that he accommodate yours.
- Customize your communication according to his preference. Does he prefer a written memo or an oral briefing? By appointment, at the group meeting, or in the hallway? Do it his way.
- Figure out what annoys your manager and don't do it.

9. ***Earn trust by doing good work.***

- Take pride in your work. Don't be sloppy, careless, or indifferent.
- Always give your best work, not half-baked drafts. It's not your manager's job to fix what you could have done on your own; it's her job to fix what you couldn't—which should be minimal.
- Show your strengths. Be the star you are.

Summary

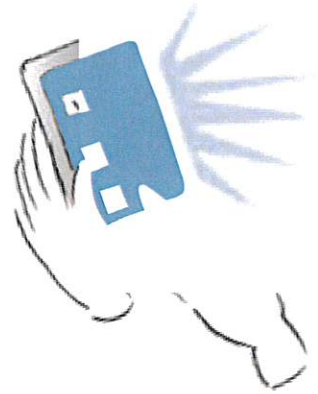
Being effective in the workplace requires more than having the proper rank or the correct answer. You must also have the skills to deal with the human aspects of your managers, peers, and subordinates—however illogical or strange they may sometimes seem to you. People are all individuals with different personalities and motivations that affect how they respond, behave, and perform in the workplace.

Part of your responsibility as a supervisor is to integrate an understanding of motivation into your leadership approach. When you apply this to your employees, you can inspire and empower extraordinary levels of satisfaction and productivity in your team. When you apply it to your co-workers, you can increase your contributions and success as a team member. When you apply it to your manager, you can enhance your own achievement and organizational success. When you apply it to yourself, you can use that self-knowledge to minimize your weaknesses and maxi-

mize your strengths. These positive outcomes support the overall success of your organization, and that is the goal of leadership.

CHECKLIST

- Maximize the opportunities for autonomy, mastery, and purpose in your employees.
- Get to know employees individually, find out what motivates them, and work with employees to determine how best to release that motivation in the service of organizational goals.
- Use the principles of motivation to increase your success with your peers and managers as well as your subordinates.
- Know yourself. Understand your own motivations so that you can minimize the obstacles and maximize your strengths.



Endnotes

- 1 Abraham H. Maslow, *Motivation and Personality* (New York: Harper, 1954).
- 2 Frederick Herzberg, Bernard Mausner, and Barbara Bloch Snyderman, *The Motivation to Work* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1959).
- 3 Daniel H. Pink, *Drive: The Surprising Truth About What Motivates Us* (New York: Riverhead Books, 2009).
- 4 Jeanne C. Meister and Karie Willyerd, "Mentoring Millennials," *Harvard Business Review*, May 2010.

WHAT DO I STAND TO LOSE?

WHAT DO I STAND TO GAIN?

Stage 3: Discomfort
Feelings of **Anxiety**
Thoughts are **Confused**
Behavior is **Unproductive**

Stage 4: Discovery
Feelings of **Anticipation**
Thoughts are **Resourceful**
Behavior is **Energized**

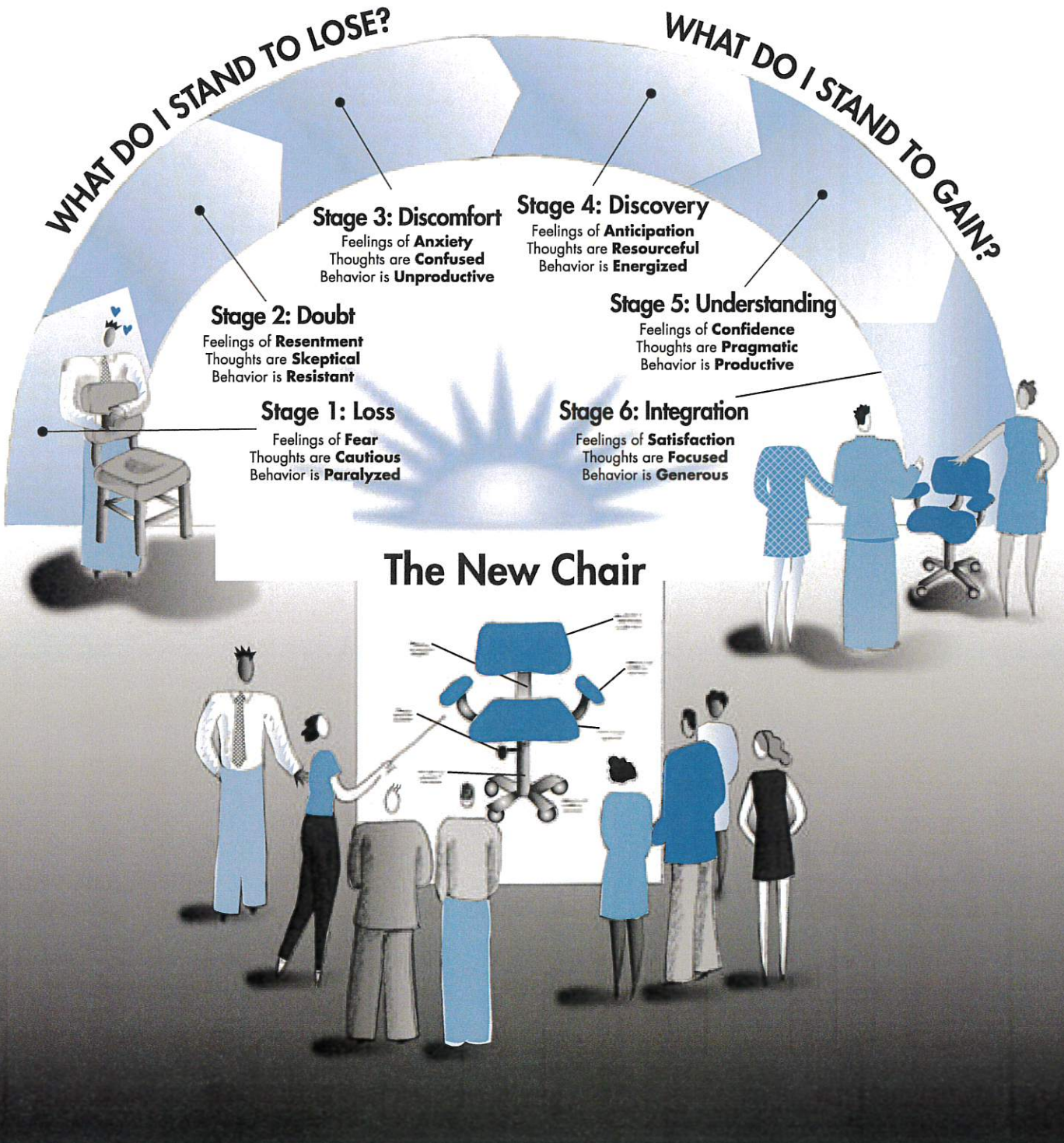
Stage 2: Doubt
Feelings of **Resentment**
Thoughts are **Skeptical**
Behavior is **Resistant**

Stage 5: Understanding
Feelings of **Confidence**
Thoughts are **Pragmatic**
Behavior is **Productive**

Stage 1: Loss
Feelings of **Fear**
Thoughts are **Cautious**
Behavior is **Paralyzed**

Stage 6: Integration
Feelings of **Satisfaction**
Thoughts are **Focused**
Behavior is **Generous**

The New Chair



13

LEADING CHANGE

Michelle Poché Flaherty

There is nothing more difficult to take in hand, more perilous to conduct, or more uncertain in its success, than to take the lead in the introduction of a new order of things.

Niccolò Machiavelli, Italian historian, writer, philosopher



SNAPSHOT

This chapter explores change in organizations and provides practical techniques to help you lead your team to a better place on the other side of change. Chapter objectives are to

- Increase understanding of the challenges of introducing and leading successful change processes
- Provide tools and strategies for helping you guide, support, coach, and lead employees when changes are implemented
- Introduce a five-step model for removing obstacles to change and sustaining positive outcomes
- Help you become a successful change leader.


The chapter will help you answer these questions:

- Where do you get ideas for making improvements?
- How do you decide where improvements should be made?
- How do you choose a better way of doing things?
- How do you get management, employees, and the public to accept new ideas?

What is change? It might be a new policy or procedure, the addition of a new team member, or a software upgrade or new piece of equipment. Without change, there would be no progress or improvement. Organizations must change for many reasons:

- To keep up with the times, with customer expectations, and with new technologies
- To adapt to cultural shifts that come from new employees who bring different experiences, ideas, and expectations to teams
- To introduce new programs and services to respond to emerging challenges.

Author Michelle Poché Flaherty appreciatively recognizes the contribution of Wes Wynens, who wrote the version of this chapter included in the previous edition.



Change cannot be avoided. It is usually good for the organization and the people in it. Yet, many people in organizations don't like change.

As a supervisor, you are expected to help implement change. Some changes are the result of management decisions while others are responses to new conditions in the environment. Regardless of the impetus, nearly all major changes will require you to lead your employees through the discomfort and uncertainty of the unknown.

Planning for change

By thinking through a change and its implications for your work unit, you can guide your employees through the transition and increase the chance of success. The following questions will help you plan for a change.

- **How quickly?** Change creates stress. The faster a change takes place, the greater the stress on the people involved. Must this change happen overnight, or can it be introduced gradually so that people have time to adjust? You should also consider how long the change will last. Is it permanent or temporary?
- **Big steps or little steps?** The bigger the change, the more stress and resistance it will generate. You should ask yourself how different your work environment will be after the change. Can the change be made in a series of small steps rather than in one big step?
- **How many changes?** Your work crew may begin to feel overwhelmed when asked to make many changes, even if they are small ones. The greater the number of different changes that employees must make in a short time, the greater the stress they will feel. You should also consider whether the government is implementing changes in other areas of their work environment which could add to employee stress.
- **Right now or later?** Do the changes in your work unit have to take place right now, or can some of them wait? Your employees may find changes that are spread out over time to be less overwhelming than multiple changes pushed through all at once.

Sometimes senior management will mandate a change in response to a crisis without realizing the effect it will have on the employees who implement it. In such cases, it is wise to let your supervisor know of the possible effects of the change and to suggest ways to reduce the associated stress.

TRY A PILOT PROJECT

If a change is sweeping or may be threatening to many employees, it might be best to launch a pilot project—an experiment to see whether the idea will work. This approach signals to employees that you're seeking their involvement in assessing the change, identifying implementation problems, and helping to solve them.

If you choose to undertake a pilot project, it is important to explain to employees that success depends on their willingness to help make the project work. You may want to choose a team quarterback to lead the unit in the new project.

Since a pilot project is an experiment, you will eventually need to decide whether the experiment has succeeded. Employees should keep records to compare the quantity and quality of the work resulting from the old method versus the new. When the before-and-after information is available, employees should share in making the decision about the project's success. Did it save money? Time? Did it help the team work faster? Better? Should we continue it? Change it? Or go back to the old system?


Answers to these questions should be written down in a final report for management. If there is a difference of opinion on the results or the recommendation for action, you must include the opinions of the minority as well as the majority on your team.

Is this a good change to make?

Let's assume you have studied your most troublesome operation and figured out why it is not going smoothly and how it could be improved. What do you do next?

Implementing change takes time and patience. Before you can begin to put a change into effect, you need to be sure that the new approach has a good chance of succeeding. At the very least, it should not create more problems than it sets out to solve. There are a wide range of issues to consider when assessing whether you are ready to implement a change proposal including cost, timing, impact on other departments, compatibility with regulations and policies, and public reactions. Ask yourself these questions to make sure you haven't overlooked anything and to assess the potential for success:

- Does the new method comply with safety regulations?
- Does it conflict with any working conditions?
- Will it reduce costs? Increase service levels? Improve quality?

- 
- Will the cost of implementing the new method be offset by lower operating costs in the long run?
 - How might your improvement affect the work of other units and departments? For example, how would a change in meter readings affect the workload in the billing department?
 - Is the proposed change compatible with other systems, schedules, and machines already in use in your department or in the government?
 - Are there any recent public issues or broad organizational changes that might affect your proposed change? For example, you would not want to test a new method of installing storm sewers if most of the streets in the area were resurfaced a month ago.
 - Do you have the money, materials, and capacity to adjust to the changes? Or have you made too many other changes in work methods lately?
 - Are you making changes more quickly than your department can adjust to them? Would it be better to make this change at a time when another department (or a department in a nearby jurisdiction) makes a similar change?

Once you've reviewed all the issues and challenges, you're ready to lead a change.

Implementing change is difficult

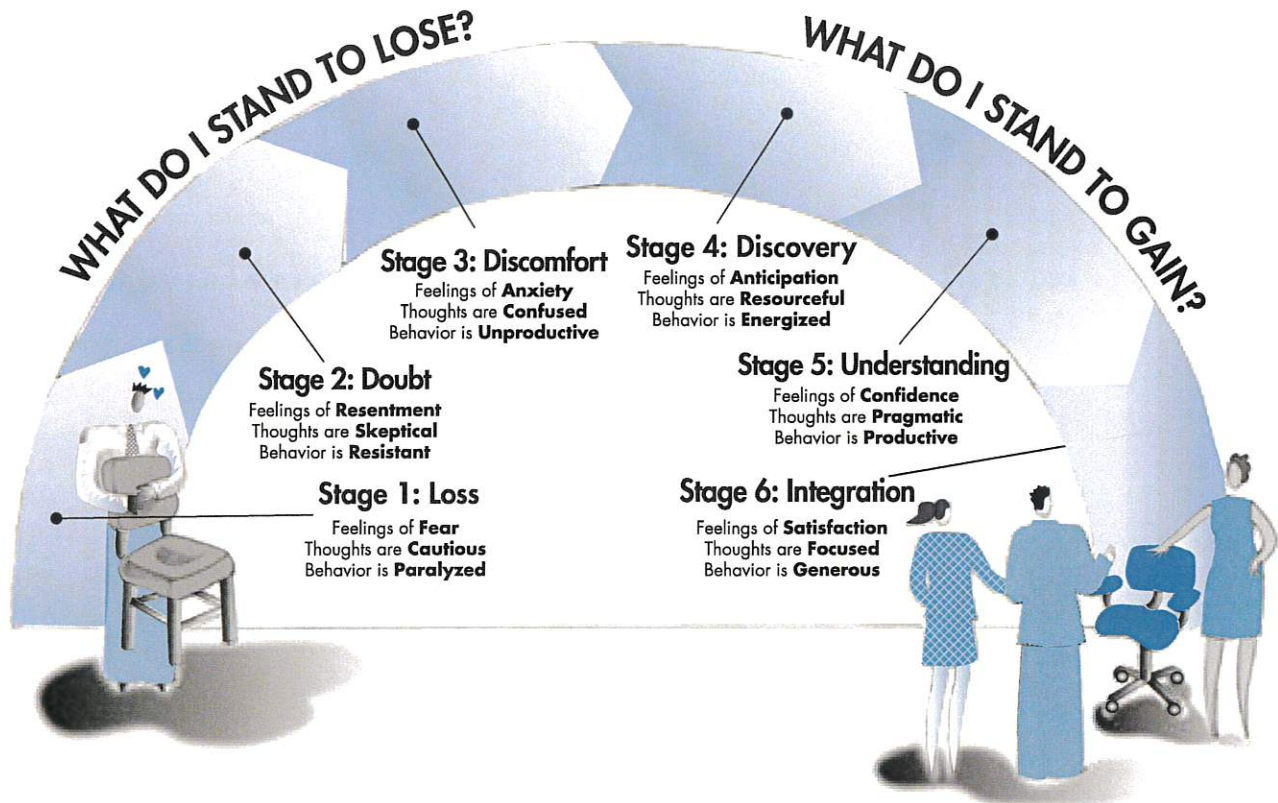
Most people's initial reaction to change is unfavorable. It can prompt worries and complaints, such as


- I like the old way. If it ain't broke, don't fix it.
- It'll take too long to switch everything. And it probably won't work, anyway.
- You should have seen the last time they tried something like this; it was a complete failure.
- Sounds like the latest "flavor of the month." They're always chasing the latest new thing like it's going to be some kind of magic bullet, but nothing ever really changes.
- Sounds complicated and like more work, not less.
- I just finally got the hang of this, now you want to change it?

- What if the new way is too hard to learn, or I'm not good at it?
- What if they won't need my job anymore?

When you lead a change, your job includes helping your employees embrace something they may not like initially. It is important to recognize that people don't move quickly from disliking something to liking it. Adapting to change is typically a slow, gradual process of moving from an unfavorable view to a favorable one by traveling through several stages.

In their book, *The Change Cycle: How People Can Survive and Thrive in Organizational Change*, Ann Salerno and Lillie Brock describe six stages that people move through in responding to change.¹





In stages one and two, people are fearful, cautious, resentful, and skeptical. They are worried about what they may lose and may resist the change. As the supervisor, you have the difficult but powerful responsibility of leading people out of these stages and through the discomfort of stage three, where they are confused and anxious. This can be especially challenging not only because it's unpleasant but also because productivity typically drops during stage three, making it easy for people to argue that the change isn't working. However, you can lead your employees through difficult change efforts by confronting the challenges of stages one, two, and three, and keeping the process moving despite the initial resistance.

When you successfully lead your team through a change, you help them to adapt to the change and to focus on what they stand to gain from it. By doing so, you move them out of stage three and into stage four: a place of discovery where employees become energized and resourceful in anticipation of the new possibilities. From there, it is an easier journey to stage five, where they begin to truly understand the change and become confident in their relationship to it; and finally to stage six, where they embrace the change and find genuine satisfaction from integrating it into their norms.

It will take some time for your employees to move through these six stages. Once you've decided to propose a change—or your managers have explained their proposal for a new change to you and you feel ready to lead it, you have likely reached stage five or six yourself; you understand why the change is necessary and how it will make things better. You cannot command your employees to jump from stage one to stage six. They will need your patience and reassurance as you help them move out of the negative stages of caution and anxiety and into the positive stages of confidence and productivity. They need you to be their leader more than their boss.

ADJUSTING TO CHANGE

Think of a time when you were asked to make a change that you weren't comfortable with. Then consider these questions:

- What were you being asked to leave behind?
- Why was that such a difficult loss for you?
- If you overcame your resistance, how did you do it?
- If you successfully implemented the change, what replaced what you lost?

Building commitment to change in three steps

As you introduce the need for change to your work unit, you want your employees to develop a commitment to change rather than feel forced into compliance with your demands. *Compliance* means that employees feel they have to make the change and are more likely to resist it. *Commitment* means they want to make the change and truly support it. Changes that grow out of commitment last longer and work better. You can build commitment among your team members with three steps of change leadership: promote why, promote how, and maintain momentum.

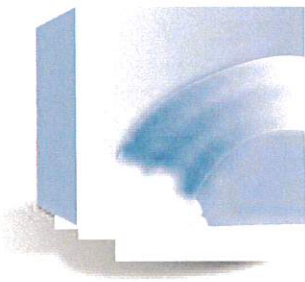
Step 1: Promote the *why*


When leading a change process, managers often think they can simply direct people to do things differently because they have the authority to issue orders. They start explaining *what* the new way is and *how* it will work differently from the old way. This rarely goes well. Instead, always start with the *why*. Explain *why* things need to change from how they are *before* you explain what will change or how it's going to be different.

Develop your vision. Imagine your change has been successfully implemented. How has it benefitted the organization? Your community? What have your employees gained from the change? How is it making people happy?

Forming a picture of success in your mind can help you tap into the positive emotions associated with success. This is important because much of the opposition to change stems from negative emotions like fear. A logical change to improve productivity must overcome the psychological blocks and emotional objections of those resisting it. You can fight fire with fire by using positive emotion to counteract negative emotion. Your positive picture of success can replace the worries rising in your team. Draw on your hopeful feelings and your image of what is possible so that you can share them with others.

Once you have an image of possibility and a sense of what success would feel like, ask yourself which of your convictions are being fueled by this vision. Then ask yourself what are the values that are held by all members of your team, or at least the vast majority of them. Connect your vision to the shared values of your audience, and you have created an inspiring vision that will promote conviction and teamwork toward your change.





Inspiration is not limited to charismatic leaders. This simple method of imagining your success and linking that picture to shared values can enable any leader to shape a logical plan into an inspiring vision.

Once you have a clear vision, consider which additional key points should be included in your message, how it might best be delivered, and by whom.

What are the key message points? Your vision message should focus on the positive aspects of your change once it is successfully implemented: how the change will benefit the organization and/or the community, and what your employees will gain from this change. Keep refocusing on what's in it for them. Are there other compelling factors that demonstrate why the change is necessary? What are the costs to the organization and/or the community if the change isn't made? What will your team members lose or risk by not changing? The answers to these questions will help raise your employees' awareness of the benefits of making the change. It is also important to confirm that your message is consistent with the messages being delivered by others in your organization—especially senior management.

How might the message best be delivered? It's fairly difficult to communicate an inspiring vision by e-mail. You will need to convene your team so that you or your designee can address the team directly. One option might be to begin with a team meeting followed by an e-mail to confirm what was covered. How big or small the change is, how much it means to your team, and how people in your organization typically communicate will influence your decision about the best delivery methods.

Who should deliver the message? Do your employees need to hear this directly from you, as their immediate supervisor? If this is a change that is being led by senior management, would the message be more powerful coming from a more senior manager? Your audience will notice who is delivering the message, so it is important to think carefully about the most appropriate spokesperson.

Promoting the *why* requires effective sponsorship; that is, the people in charge need to demonstrate that the change is important and that they support its implementation. Therefore, if you want a change to succeed, you must make sure that senior management agrees on its benefit and value and will speak in favor of it. If senior leadership is delivering the message, it is your role as a supervisor to reinforce that message by repeating it and focusing on what it means for your work group.

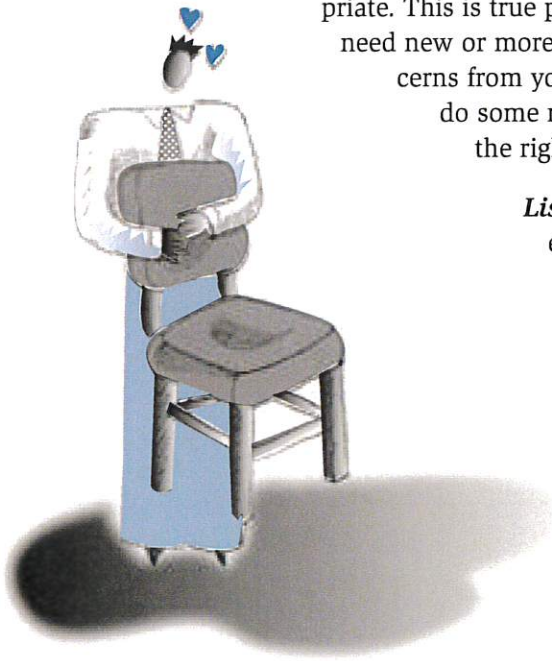
Remember to focus on values.

In addition to delivering your message, two-way communication requires that you also listen.


Listen for questions. Misunderstandings and confusion about facts and details are common. Invite questions and listen for misunderstandings so that you can correct the facts and clear up confusion. The most effective way to prevent and correct misinformation is to ensure that accurate information is readily accessible to your employees. Distribute written explanations of the details to everyone, post them on bulletin boards and shared online resources, and review them in staff meetings. Make it as easy as possible for everyone to get the correct information about the change and why it is necessary.

Your credibility as a change leader depends on having the most current and accurate information. If the change is being led by senior management, you should periodically confirm that your information is still correct and seek updates as appropriate. This is true particularly as questions arise or if confusion erupts. You may need new or more detailed information in order to adequately address new concerns from your team. If you are leading the change yourself, you may need to do some research to find the right information. Take it upon yourself to get the right data; don't just offer your best guess.

Listen for suggestions. To promote the *why* among your employees, listen not only for *questions* about a proposed change but also for employee *suggestions* about how to implement the change. The people responsible for certain tasks usually have the best ideas on how to improve work processes. Incorporating suggestions from employees to improve the change will help employees become more invested in the change and its success. These employees can become such strong supporters that they may also serve as effective messengers to their peers about the value of the change. These advocates can provide momentum to support your transition from the first step of promoting the *why* to the second step, promoting the *how*.



Address change with empathy



Regardless of how well you lead a change effort, you are likely to encounter some resistance. Expect this, be ready for it, and don't let it discourage you.

TIPS FOR OVERCOMING OBJECTIONS TO THE *WHY*

When people find the change too big, too hard, or overwhelming,

- Make the change smaller by breaking it into manageable pieces for people and focusing them on the first piece.
- Show that the change will be easy by building on people's current strengths to make the change.
- Find examples to share of a similar change that was successful.

When people still fear the change despite your inspiring vision,

- Show the path forward will be safe by starting to remove any negative consequences for making the change.
- Show that the future benefits from this change really are going to happen by starting to make any needed adjustments to systems or policies now (instead of waiting until the change is accomplished to begin the necessary updates to systems or policies).

Step 2: Promote the *how*

In the same way that your inspiring vision will help your employees develop an attitude that welcomes the change, you must provide the guidance and resources required to ensure they have the knowledge, skills, and abilities needed to implement the change.

Some changes may require formal training and education to learn about a new system, process, or piece of equipment. Other changes may require less structured ways of explaining how employees are to go about making the change. It is important that everyone who is involved in or affected by the change is given the information and assistance needed to thrive in the changed environment. Your goal here is to make it as easy as possible for everyone to succeed.

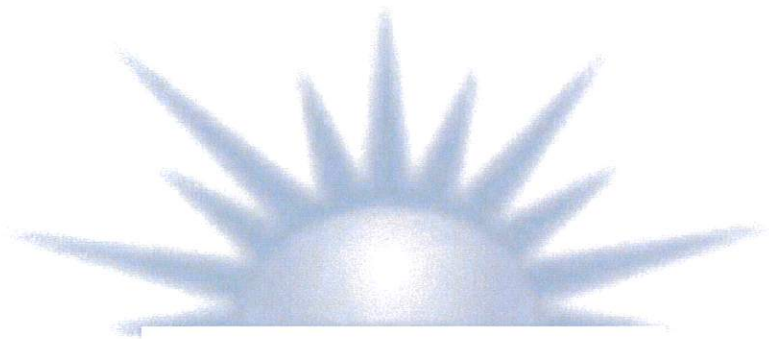
SUPPORT THE CHANGE, NOT THE RESISTANCE

Senior leaders of one city undermined their own computer software upgrade by sending only half the workforce to computer training classes because people in the other half were “too busy” to enroll. The leaders rationalized that this approach saved money and those who didn’t receive formal training would just pick up the ability to use the new software along the way. However, no support team of trained users was ever organized to coach the untrained users.

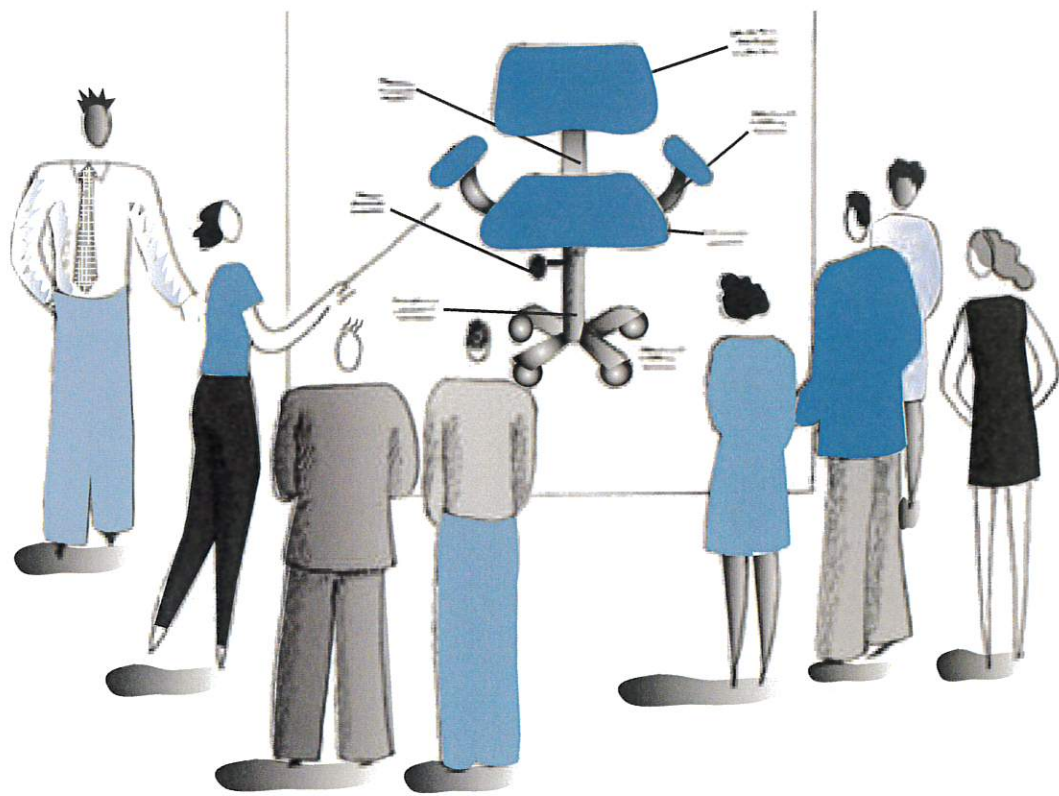
When the untrained employees had to use the new software, their work took longer to complete, leading to frustration and inefficiencies. Before long, the untrained half of the workforce was complaining about how stupid and useless the new software was and arguing that the city should go back to the old software that got the job done more effectively. These leaders not only failed to promote their own change process, they fed the resistance to their change.


Provide well-prepared instruction. If you are responsible for training or coaching your employees on how to accomplish something new, try to keep your early instructions simple. Change can be easier in bite-size pieces. Once employees get the hang of the basics, you can add more details and more complexity to the information you give them. If you provide all the instruction in one sitting, your employees may feel like they’re trying to drink from a fire hose. To build confidence and minimize resistance, you should be patient and supportive, willing to repeat explanations, and available for questions.

Provide simple job aids. Job aids are excellent tools for helping people get the hang of learning something new. A job aid or “cheat sheet” might be a one-page template, card, or diagram that summarizes a more complex set of instructions that your employees have already learned in training sessions. The tool can serve as a quick reminder of the steps required to complete a task until the employee has gotten the hang of the new process. If job aids are not provided to you, you and your team can create your own and accomplish a good review of the new information at the same time. (See the section on Planning a Development Program in chapter 9 for more information.)



The New Chair





Make it fun. Remember that opposition to change is fueled more by emotions than facts; therefore, you must look for ways to continue feeding positive emotions while you promote the *how*. You tapped into positive emotions when you were promoting the *why* by describing your vision in a way that was inspiring. Now tap into positive emotions when people are struggling to learn something new by making the learning fun. Incorporate games into training and let people socialize as they learn. Make it safe for people to make mistakes while they're practicing new skills and techniques. Stay lighthearted; don't let the importance of the change turn promoting the *how* into a boring, serious production or an intimidating experience.


Provide coaching and mentoring. You can continually coach your team members in a variety of ways to reinforce new learning and new habits. Some information might be most effectively shared through group meetings, while other learning is better achieved through one-on-one coaching between you and each team member.

Ask yourself who else might be able to help you and your team. If there is someone outside your normal work group who is particularly knowledgeable about what your team is trying to master, ask that expert to provide coaching, additional instruction, or serve as a resource to answer questions as needed. Co-workers are often flattered to be asked to help, as long as the requests don't interfere with other work responsibilities and you've cleared your request with their manager. As the requesting supervisor, you should monitor the amount of support being requested to make sure your team doesn't wear out its welcome with someone who is lending a hand.

Once some of your team members become comfortable with the new approach, you can ask them to help their co-workers. Peer-to-peer mentoring can make it more fun and easier for learners to ask questions, and their co-workers are often able to give explanations and examples that are relevant to the team's work and easier to understand.

Keep repeating your message. As people become more focused on the *how*, you will need to periodically remind them of the *why*. Re-energize your team by keeping the vision alive and reminding them that all this effort at changing is for a higher worthy goal.

Celebrate small wins. Don't wait until the change is accomplished to celebrate. This is a mistake made by too many leaders. Certainly, your big celebration will mean more by waiting until the end, but that shouldn't prohibit you from offer-



ing modest celebrations along the way as members of the team make incremental progress toward the change. Celebrating small wins in small ways is a valuable leadership technique to sustain your team through trying times. Celebrate the hard work performed by those working toward the change. Celebrate smaller milestones as your team progresses toward the vision. Use these small wins to reinforce the possibility of achieving the vision and to build momentum toward the final, big celebration once the change has been implemented. Celebrating small wins will build a foundation to support your efforts in the third step of this process.

Step 3: Maintain momentum


Your work isn't over once change has taken hold. Have you or someone you know ever lost weight on a diet, only to put the pounds back on again? Old habits die hard. If a successful change isn't reinforced continuously after it has been implemented, there's a good chance it won't be sustained.

The key to sustaining a change is to motivate the people involved to want to keep at it. A review of the motivational factors described in chapter 12 may help you customize your efforts to motivate various participants and stakeholders according to what might resonate most strongly for each of them.

Celebrate the team's success. Once you've implemented the change, you should make the effort to hold a large celebration. Go the extra mile for this one; the size of your celebration should reflect the importance you placed on this change when you first shared your inspiring vision of the success that has now been achieved. Take stock of the benefits gained for your team, the organization, and the community and speak about them with pride and congratulations for all involved. Don't wait until later to hold this celebration just because everyone is busy; everyone is always busy. Hold it close in time to the achievement or you will lose the emotional connection that celebrations are intended to feed.

Once the big celebration is over, don't give up small celebrations for small wins. Look for ways to continue to recognize your team for sticking with the new change and the accomplishments associated with it.

Provide individual rewards and recognition. In addition to holding team celebrations, look for ways to offer rewards or recognition to individuals who have gone the



extra mile to contribute to the attainment of the vision. Depending on the rules in your organization, rewards might include monetary compensation, extra time off, gift cards, assignments with new levels of responsibility or interesting new work, opportunities to partner with people who are otherwise difficult to access, and training or travel opportunities. Recognition might range from public acknowledgement, like presenting a framed certificate or offering congratulations at a group meeting, to private acknowledgement, like writing a thank you message in a note card, writing a letter of commendation and submitting a copy to their personnel file, or simply stopping by their work station and saying congratulations and thank you in person. When recognizing an individual for exceptional performance or contributions, it's most effective to tailor the recognition to the person's own preferences. For example, a more extroverted personality may be comfortable being recognized in front of others, whereas a more introverted personality may prefer to receive recognition in a private setting.

Enforce accountability. Fairness dictates that you not only celebrate the positive but also correct the negative. As a supervisor who has led this change, you should align your accountability systems to preserve the vision that has been attained. Now that everyone has learned how to operate under the new change, incorporate the new methods and procedures into the requirements of your work place, and enforce adherence to them appropriately. This might include reviewing employee performance goals to reflect the change and any new expectations and to ensure there are no conflicts. Depending on the scope of the change, you may need to coordinate with the human resources (HR) department to ensure that accountability systems support the change and that desired outcomes are reinforced. Be sure to continue providing extra coaching and support to those who are struggling with the new change. As always, communicate your standards and consequences clearly before holding people accountable to them.

Monitor progress. You will need to keep track of how successfully your team members are adapting to the change and implementing it. Monitoring the performance of the team is always your responsibility, but during a change process it is especially important. Monitoring progress can help you measure how successfully the change is taking hold and how much support your team members continue to require. It is also essential for identifying the wins you'll be celebrating, where rewards have been earned, and where accountability must be enforced.

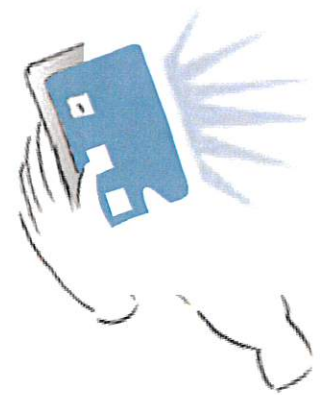
Seek feedback. Stakeholders who are affected by a change may have feedback to offer regarding how well it is working and areas needing improvement. While it may be challenging to invite criticism on an effort you've helped to lead, seeking feedback is a key element of remaining committed to continuous improvement in any undertaking, including change management. In addition, seeking feedback from those affected by the change before they come to you with a problem or concern will help you be proactive in uncovering any issues and demonstrate your interest in good solutions. You can use the feedback you receive to correct problems and refine your implementation. This is one of the most effective, but often overlooked, keys to sustaining change.

Summary

Leading a successful change process requires a clear reason to change, a solid strategy for implementing the change, effective two-way communication to promote awareness and desire, training and coaching to ensure employees have the ability to change successfully, and reinforcement to sustain the change. This roadmap will help you lead your employees from the early stages of fear and skepticism, through the inevitable resistance that will arise, to successful change implementation characterized by confident and highly productive employees.

CHECKLIST

- Think through the pros and cons of a proposed change, and the best timing for it, before you launch it.
- Anticipate resistance to change and plan to address it with empathy and strategy rather than commands.
- First communicate why the change is necessary. Then explain how employees are being asked to change.
- Coach people through learning the new change and adapting to it.
- Listen to people's concerns about change and provide positive reinforcement to those who are making progress toward it.





Endnote

- 1 Ann Salerno and Lillie Brock, *The Change Cycle: How People Can Survive and Thrive in Organizational Change* (San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler Publishers, Inc., 2008). Material adapted by permission.

Supervisory situation 13-1

The manager of Glenview County has just announced that the county will begin a countywide citizen-service campaign with the county's work teams, departmental managers, and supervisors reviewing county services from customers' perspectives. The manager has announced that she expects many changes in the way the county performs its operations and delivers its services.

George is a supervisor in the finance department. His work unit is responsible for processing tax bills. When George announced the pending campaign to his staff, a look of alarm passed across the faces of several staff members. After the meeting, Sue and Tom approached George. Both asked him whether the changes would mean layoffs. Sue was also concerned that her system for filing receipts would change. "I have a really good system that works for me, and I don't like the idea of changing it," she said. George wasn't quite sure how to respond to Sue and Tom.

1. What are some of the reasons that Sue and Tom might be resistant to possible changes in their work processes?
2. What steps might George follow to analyze his unit's work processes?
3. What suggestions would you give to George for reducing the potential negative effects of change?





ENSURING A HARASSMENT-FREE AND RESPECTFUL WORKPLACE

Stephen F. Anderson

Respect for ourselves guides our morals;
respect for others guides our manners.

Laurence Sterne, writer and Anglican clergyman

14



SNAPSHOT

This chapter addresses the important role supervisors play in promoting a healthy and inclusive work environment where employees value and respect each other.

Chapter objectives are to

- Provide a legal foundation for the supervisor's role in ensuring a harassment-free and respectful workplace
- Broaden understanding of the importance of your organization's harassment policy as the key resource on prohibited behaviors, supervisor and employee responsibilities, and the complaint process
- Offer practical advice, action steps, and tools recognizing and responding appropriately to discrimination and harassment situations and complaints
- Increase awareness of the opportunities and challenges of increasingly diverse workplaces.

The chapter will help you answer these questions:

- What is the legal basis of employment law and its impact on an organization's harassment policy?
- How can you recognize subtle sexual harassment when the recipient has not said, "that's unwelcome?"
- How does your organization's harassment policy apply to today's complex workplace issues?
- What is your role in ensuring a harassment-free and respectful workplace?
- What is a complaint?
- How do you appropriately respond to a complaint and avoid interview mistakes?
- How is intervention different from receiving a complaint?
- What is an effective intervention?

Workplaces and their clients, customers, and the public are becoming increasingly diverse. This diversity creates new opportunities and challenges for supervisors. An inclusive, harassment-free, and respectful workplace is one where employees feel safe and are treated fairly. This environment enables them to focus on their work, maintain teamwork, and communicate effectively. As a supervisor, your responsibilities include monitoring the workplace and promoting a healthy and inclusive work environment where people value and respect each other.

Recognizing discrimination and harassment

One step in creating a harassment-free and respectful workplace is to understand the definitions of discrimination, harassment, and disrespectful behavior and the differences among them.

Definitions of negative behaviors

- Discrimination is making a choice such as what you eat for supper or your favorite color. *Illegal discrimination* is making biased employment decisions against a person because of their protected characteristic.
- *Harassment* is a legal term describing a form of discrimination where a person is subjected to threatening, intimidating, embarrassing, or other offensive and unwelcome behavior because of gender, race, ethnicity, religion, age, disability, or some other protected characteristic.
- *Disrespectful behavior*, while not a legal term, describes actions that insult or indicate hostility or aversion toward someone. The behavior is not directed at a person because of a protected characteristic.

Federal and state employment laws prohibit illegal discrimination and harassment based on protected characteristics, but those laws do not prohibit disrespectful behavior. Whether illegal or not, these behaviors have a negative impact on employees and teamwork.

Examples of prohibited behavior in the workplace

The following list identifies types of behaviors that are always prohibited in the workplace even if they are welcomed or tolerated by the employees. The list doesn't cover all behaviors that may be prohibited in your organization.

- Pressure for sexual favors
- Derogatory ethnic or racial jokes, gifts, images, graffiti, e-mails, tweets, or comments about a person's gender, religion, age, color, race, weight, medical condition, or other protected characteristic



- Sabotaging an employee's work, or withholding information from an employee because of gender, religion, sexual orientation, disability, or other protected characteristic
- Sexual materials, images, videos, tweets, links, screen savers, or other content
- E-mails and tweets that ridicule, denigrate, or spread rumors about a person's sexual orientation or gender identity
- Unwelcome touching, hugging, letters, phone calls, gifts, or repeated requests for dates
- Unwelcome questions or comments about a person's religious beliefs or sexual life
- Mimicking or ridiculing an accent, cultural characteristics, clothing, or a person's weight.

Your organization's harassment policy

An organization's harassment policy identifies

- Types of prohibited behaviors
 - Supervisor and employee responsibilities in preventing workplace harassment
 - The process for filing a complaint.



As a supervisor it is important to be familiar with your organization's harassment policy and complaint process so that you can meet your unique responsibilities.

Building a respectful work environment

Organizations write and update their harassment policies and complaint procedures based on overlapping federal, state, and local employment laws and court decisions interpreting these laws. Many state and local harassment and discrimination laws, rules, and regulations broaden the scope of protected groups to cover, for example, parental status, sexual orientation,

gender identity, or marital status. In addition, most states and some localities have their own compliance agencies that are responsible for enforcing state or local harassment and discrimination laws. Lastly, state and federal courts interpret and apply these laws to specific cases to clarify and sometimes expand the scope of the laws.

While federal, state, and local laws are the basis for harassment policies, employers often impose a higher standard than the law requires to ensure a respectful work environment for all employees.



FEDERAL LAWS ON DISCRIMINATION AND HARASSMENT

Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, as amended in 1991, prohibits discrimination in hiring, promotion, discharge, pay, benefits, job training, classification, and other aspects of employment on the basis of race, religion, color, national origin, sex, age, disability, pregnancy, and other protected characteristics. Courts have ruled that sexual harassment is sexual discrimination and is, therefore, prohibited by Title VII.

The Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967 protects applicants and employees forty years of age or older from discrimination in hiring, promotion, discharge, compensation terms, conditions, or privileges of employment. It does not protect workers under the age of forty, although some states do have laws that protect younger workers from age discrimination.

The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, as amended, protects qualified applicants and employees with disabilities from discrimination in hiring, promotion, discharge, pay, job training, fringe benefits, and other aspects of employment. The law requires an employer to provide reasonable accommodation to an employee or job applicant with a disability, unless doing so would cause an undue hardship for the employer.

Title II of the Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act of 2008 prohibits the use of genetic information in making employment decisions, restricts employers from requesting, requiring, or purchasing genetic information, and strictly limits the disclosure of genetic information.

The Equal Pay Act of 1967, as amended, prohibits sex discrimination in payment of wages to women and men performing substantially equal work in the same organization.

Ignorance of the organization's harassment policy is no excuse

"I was just joking" or "I did not intend to discriminate" are not valid excuses for violating an organization's harassment policy. Your organization's harassment policy, *not* employees' personal comfort, determines what behaviors are prohibited in the workplace. Even if employees seem comfortable with a joke or a questionable comment, many may "go along to get along" rather than complain about unwelcome behavior. In addition, a person can feel harassed even if he or she is not the intended target of the behavior. An overheard conversation that any employee finds offensive may create a hostile work environment.

THE FAMILY AND MEDICAL LEAVE ACT

The Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993 entitles eligible employees to take up to twelve weeks of leave during any twelve-month period for one or more of the following reasons: (1) birth of and care for a child; (2) placement of and care for a child through adoption or foster care; (3) care for the employee's spouse, son, daughter, or parent with a serious health condition; and (4) a serious health condition that makes the employee unable to perform one or more of the essential functions of his or her job. FMLA guarantees time off, whether paid or unpaid. Many employees use accumulated sick leave and/or vacation leave to avoid leave without pay during an FMLA absence. The type of leave taken depends on the reasons for the leave, an employee's earnings, and any relevant regulations. There are often eligibility criteria, medical certification guidelines, and other detailed rules governing employee rights to FMLA leave. As a supervisor, it is important to be familiar with FMLA provisions to support eligible employees. Check with your human resources or legal department to ensure that you administer FMLA leave correctly.

Some employees who are members of a protected group are surprised to learn that they are also prohibited from telling jokes and making derogatory or stereotypical comments about others in the same group. Members of the same protected characteristic group are, like all others in the organization, prohibited from discriminating against others in their group.

Recognizing subtle sexual harassment

Some unwelcome behavior that is not clearly illegal or prohibited by your organization's harassment policy such as hugging, asking for a date, nonsexual touching, or comments about appearance may constitute subtle sexual harassment. Unintentional sexual harassers often do not recognize when their behavior crosses the line from welcome to unwelcome. Subtle sexual harassment creates an uncomfortable workplace; if it escalates, it may create a hostile work environment.

These are two practical ways to recognize subtle sexual harassment when the recipient has not said, "that is unwelcome":

1. Focus on the *impact* of the behavior rather than on its *intention*. Even if

the employee is “just joking around,” the behavior may make some people uncomfortable.

2. Try to determine if the person experiencing the behavior, such as a hug or nonsexual comments about appearance, initiates and participates in the same behavior. If he or she doesn't, then the behavior is usually unwelcome.

Sexual orientation

In today's increasingly diverse workplace, it is important to understand sexual orientation terminology and to be able to recognize types of behaviors that are prohibited by a harassment policy.

Sexual orientation describes a person's emotional, physical, and romantic attraction to members of the same or opposite gender. Based on that attraction, a person's orientation is gay, straight, bisexual, or asexual.

Gender identity refers to an internal understanding of self as a man or a woman. That understanding can be consistent with or different from how the individual was defined at birth.

Transgender refers to people whose gender identity, or how they feel about being a man or a woman, does not match their birth gender.

Transsexual refers to people who change their body from the sex they were born with to match their gender identity.

Examples of behaviors related to sexual orientation that are usually prohibited by a harassment policy include

- Publicly declaring or “outing” a person at work who does not want his or her sexual orientation known to others
- Joking about, ridiculing, or mocking a person's sexual orientation and gender identity
- Speculating about, asking co-workers, or spreading rumors about an employee's sexual orientation or gender identity.

Responding appropriately to discrimination and harassment complaints

Your role as a supervisor is to:

- Know your organization's harassment policy and complaint process

- Establish and maintain a harassment- and discrimination-free work environment
- Encourage respectful behavior
- Recognize behavior that is prohibited by your organization’s harassment policy
- Respond appropriately to all discrimination and harassment complaints.

To respond appropriately to a complaint, you must understand what is considered a complaint, how to be an objective fact finder rather than an investigator, and how to respond to a complainant’s questions.

What is a complaint?

Employees don’t have to use specific words or legal terms such as, “I want to file a harassment complaint” or “I’m being sexually harassed” to put the employer on notice of potential harassment or discrimination.


As a supervisor, you must understand that any conversation you have with your employees—even outside the workplace—that includes a discussion about behavior that is prohibited by the harassment policy constitutes a potential complaint and creates three responsibilities:

1. You, as the supervisor, must bring the situation to the attention of your human resources (HR) department.
2. The HR department must determine if the alleged behavior occurred.
3. If the HR department finds that prohibited behavior has occurred, the employer has a legal responsibility to stop it and prevent retaliation against any of the involved employees.

Receiving a complaint

Resolving harassment situations can be fairly complex so it is important that you understand your responsibilities and have the tools to respond appropriately if you





receive a complaint. You are *not* responsible for investigating harassment complaints. You *are* responsible for responding appropriately if an employee talks with you about an alleged harassment or discrimination situation. How you respond initially to a complaint can hinder or support its timely resolution and encourage or discourage an employee from talking with you and/or using your organization's complaint process.

Conducting an initial interview

When an employee brings a complaint or concern to you about possible discrimination or harassment, it is your responsibility to be an objective fact finder and to conduct an initial interview. The following steps will help you conduct the interview.

Step 1: Receive the complaint

Begin by ensuring privacy during the interview. Then explain that your role is to be a neutral fact finder. Focus on listening carefully. If the involved employees are friends of yours, it could be difficult for you to be unbiased. Asking open-ended questions will assist you in being neutral. Take careful and detailed notes because the HR department will use your notes when conducting its investigation. Your notes could also be evidence for establishing when the organization knew of the alleged discrimination or harassment.

Step 2: Obtain details

Objectively gather details of what allegedly occurred by asking the complainant *what, who, where, and when* open-ended questions and if there were any witnesses. Ask clarifying questions to gather more details about what has already been said. For example, "You said she touched you. Where did she touch you?" Don't put words in the employee's mouth by asking leading questions. For example, "You said she touched you. Did she touch you on your arm or hand" is a leading question.

Step 3: Respond appropriately to the complainant's concerns and questions

Be patient. The employee may be upset, uncomfortable talking with you about the allegation, and/or fear retaliation. One concern shared by many employees is that they want to talk to their supervisor, but don't want the supervisor to tell anyone else. Possible responses to that concern include

- “I understand that you don’t want me to tell anyone else. I may or may not be able to make that promise until I know what you want to talk about.”
- “If you don’t talk with me, I’m concerned that the situation could continue and or escalate.”
- “Please give me an opportunity to assist you.”

One question asked by some employees after they describe what allegedly occurred is, “That’s sexual harassment or discrimination, isn’t it?” One effective response is, “I don’t know exactly what occurred so I can’t say what did or did not happen. I need to gather additional details from you to determine my next steps. And, I do want to emphasize that I take this situation seriously.”

Step 4: Close the interview

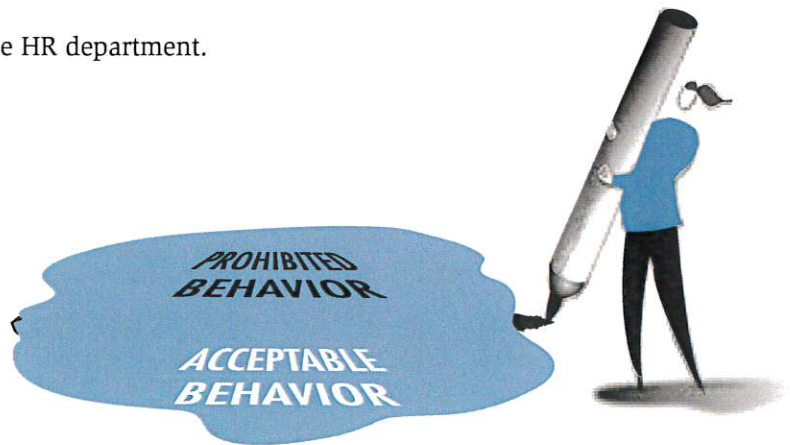
Review the details with the employee to ensure that you have a clear understanding of what was said. Then ask, “Is there anything else?” to provide an opportunity for additional details. It is also important to ask how the employee feels about returning to work to determine if there are any other issues that need to be addressed. You should emphasize that the organization does not tolerate retaliation and encourage the employee to contact you, another person in management, or the HR department immediately if it occurs.

Immediately after the interview contact the HR department.

Effective intervention

Intervention means

- Drawing a clear line between acceptable behavior and behavior that is prohibited by the organization’s harassment policy so that your employees know what’s expected of them
- Applying effective communication techniques to stop harassment and disrespectful behavior that you see, hear, or read



- Clarifying the harassment policy to your employees when needed.

The goal of an effective intervention is to clarify the organization's harassment policy, encourage open communication, and stop prohibited behavior. If you don't intervene to stop prohibited behavior that you see, hear, or read, you risk being disciplined for allowing a hostile work environment to exist. In addition, you give the impression to others that you approve of the harasser's behavior, and you may lose the confidence of your employees and others in management in your supervisory capabilities.

Carrying out an effective intervention

The following steps provide a guide for talking with employees about unacceptable or prohibited behavior.

Step 1: Document your conversation

Take thorough notes, including the date the conversation occurred.

Step 2: Objectively identify the specific behavior that is prohibited

For example, "Your screen saver is a picture of a naked person."

Step 3: Identify the policy that prohibits that behavior

For example, "Our sexual harassment policy prohibits that type of behavior."

Step 4: Respond to questions and concerns from the employee

Employee says, "No one is ever around or visits me, so why is the picture on my screen saver an issue?"

You respond, "I understand that no one visits your cubicle, but that type of visual is always prohibited in our work environment."

Step 5: Ask the employee to stop the prohibited behavior

For example, "I want you to remove the screen saver of the naked person right now."

Step 6: Ask for and receive the employee's commitment to stop the specific behavior now and any similar behavior in the future

For example, "Will you remove it and agree not to do anything similar again?"

Employee responds, "Yes, I will remove it and not use it again."



Step 7: Contact the HR department to report your conversation and the outcome

Give documentation of your conversation with that employee to HR.

Step 8: Monitor your workplace to ensure that the behavior has stopped

Review the harassment policy and ensure that other types of probated behavior are not occurring.

Preventing retaliation

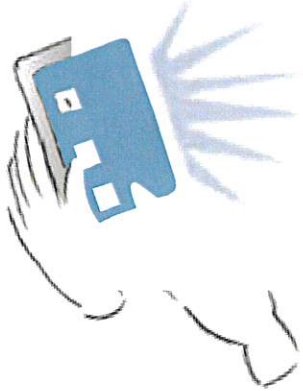
Retaliation is prohibited by federal employment law and your organization's harassment policy. It includes any adverse action taken against an employee for filing a complaint or supporting another employee's complaint.

Supervisors play an important role in protecting employees from retaliation and assisting their organization in avoiding retaliation claims. Examples of retaliation include, but are not limited to

- Avoiding the complainant in the workplace
- Drawing unnecessary attention to the complainant or the situation involving the complaint
- Spreading rumors about the complainant
- Trying to find out who made the complaint in the first place.

An employee does not need a strong discrimination or harassment case to have a strong retaliation case. In fact, retaliation can convert an easily defensible harassment claim into an expensive legal liability.

One method for avoiding retaliation, or its appearance, against an employee you supervise who has filed a discrimination or harassment complaint is to seek guidance from your HR department any time you make an employment decision that affects that employee's job status.



CHECKLIST

- Become familiar with your responsibilities and your organization's harassment policy and complaint process.
- Learn to recognize prohibited behavior in the workplace.
- Treat your employees respectfully.
- Take every complaint seriously.
- Use the four-step process for receiving a complaint.
- Intervene when you witness behavior prohibited by the organization's harassment policy, even if there is no complaint.
- Use the eight-step process for carrying out an effective intervention.
- Prevent retaliation.

Supervisory situation 14-1

Joan is part way through her interview with Deborah. Deborah just said that "Bob took my face in his hands and tried to kiss me." Joan asked, "When he did that, what did you do?" Deborah replied, "I left." Then Deborah asked, "That's sexual harassment, isn't it?"

Which of these responses would be the most appropriate?

1. You're right. Bob does not have the right to treat you this way.
2. Let me explain the factors that would make this a case of sexual harassment, and see if they apply.
3. I know you don't like being treated this way, but until I have more information, I can't decide what this is or how to resolve it.

Supervisory situation guidance The third response is most effective because it acknowledges how Deborah feels while making it clear that Joan needs more details before she can determine what her next steps will be.

Supervisory situation 14-2

Joan's employee, Deborah, has just told her that her co-worker, Bob, has been repeatedly asking her out. During their meeting Joan asked Deborah for more detail and documented their conversation. Joan is now explaining that she is going to contact the HR department about this situation.

Deborah asks Joan not to do anything because she does not want to get Bob in trouble and she is afraid of getting a reputation as a troublemaker. Based on your employer's complaint process, what should Joan do?

1. Tell Deborah "I understand, but I must notify HR."
2. Tell Deborah "I won't do anything now, but if it happens again, I'll have to talk with HR."
3. Tell Deborah that you'll "respect her request but that you must document their conversation."


Supervisory situation guidance The most appropriate response is number one because the supervisor has knowledge of alleged behavior that is prohibited by the employer's harassment policy which must be reported and investigated. The second response is less appropriate because if Bob is doing the alleged behavior, it creates a hostile work environment for Deborah or other employees which establishes a potential legal liability for Joan and the organization. Number three is not quite right. Though Joan should document their meeting she should also contact the HR department.

Supervisory situation 14-3

Pam, who is Ivan's supervisor, saw him point his cell phone at a co-worker's buttocks and take a picture. Pam immediately asked Ivan to come to her office. When she explained the purpose of her meeting and talked about his prohibited behavior, Ivan became defensive. Here is a summary of their conversation.

Pam: Ivan, the reason I asked you to join me is that I want to talk with you about what just happened.

Ivan: What do you mean?



Pam: Before I start, I want you to know that I'll be documenting our conversation.

Ivan: Why?

Pam: Because it's my responsibility to document these types of discussions, which I then submit to HR.

Ivan: Ok, but I still don't know why I'm here.

Pam: The purpose of this meeting is to discuss what I observed, to address your behavior, and to make sure it does not happen again. I'll be talking with Tom about the same issues later today. I observed you and Tom stop your conversation as Wendy walked by. I then saw you look her slowly up and down and take a picture of her buttocks with your cell phone.

Ivan: No I didn't!

How should Pam respond?

1. Ivan, I saw you, so why are you denying it?
2. Ivan, please don't get upset, that will only make this intervention meeting more difficult.
3. What do you mean, "no, I didn't"?
4. Do you believe I am making up what I just said"?

Supervisory situation guidance Pam's most effective response is "What do you mean, 'no, I didn't'?" because it is a neutral, open-ended question that asks Ivan to provide more information and clarify what he meant.

Asking, "Why are you denying it?" is less effective because it is a combative question. Pam would be making assumptions about what Ivan is thinking or feeling if she asked, "Do you believe I am making up what I just said?" or said, "Please don't get upset." Even if she is correct this time, she is guessing and could be wrong the next time. Plus, because these types of questions and assumptions are more likely to increase the harasser's defensiveness, and hinder open communications, you should not use them.



Supervisory situation 14-4

As Pam continues her intervention meeting with Ivan, he gets very upset. Here is a summary of their continuing conversation.

Pam: What do you mean, “No I didn’t?”

Ivan: How could I take a picture of her when I don’t even know how to work my phone yet!

Pam: OK. Then what I saw was, you looked Wendy slowly up and down and then you pointed your phone at Wendy as she passed.

Ivan: Where I come from, in my culture, that is how a man shows his appreciation for a pretty woman. If you don’t notice, a woman gets offended.

Pam: This is not about where you came from or your culture, Ivan. Looking a woman up and down and pretending to take a picture of her buttocks is unacceptable. And it’s prohibited by our policy against harassment. After this meeting I want you to go to our website...

Ivan: So to work here [irritated, disbelief], I have to give up my culture! Well, I’m [raises voice] not going to do that, I’m out of here! [Stands up].

What is an effective way for Pam to respond?

1. Ivan, unless you want to be disciplined, please sit down.
2. Ivan, please listen to me before you decide what to do next.
3. Ivan, please stop being defensive and listen to me.
4. Ivan, if you want to continue working here you must stop those types of behavior.

Supervisory situation guidance Pam’s most effective response is to ask Ivan to “listen to me before you decide what to do next” because she is focusing on getting Ivan to listen and to think about what he is doing, and Pam is maintaining control of her own emotions by not reacting defensively.

