

Relate to Employees-You Need To!

A harmonious work environment is an important factor in the growth of a business. When everyone is “on track” headed in the same direction, progress is made much quicker. The difficult task is getting all employees to have the same collective agenda rather than individual agendas. Success in this area increases productivity, stimulates innovative ideas, and moves the company closer to achieving its goals.

Owners and managers must relate to employees as individuals rather than simply putting a “round peg in right hole.” Employees have families, personal situations, needs, wants, and desires. For the truly committed employee, these have to be aligned with how the business treats and views employees.

Try the following ways to relate to your employees:

1. Seek Feedback - For communication to be effective, it must be a two-way street. It can't just be the owner's way or only listening to the owner's stories. Employees have their opinions about work and personal stories, as well. They want someone to listen to their ideas or about their kids' accomplishments. When the owner takes an interest, it's amazing how employees light up. Seeking employee feedback...and being sincere about it...is a great way for “owners” to relate to their employees both on a professional and personal basis.

2. Social Functions - No one says that everyone at work must become best friends but having a social hour now and then is a great way to break down organizational barriers that exist in any business. It's a way that owners, managers, and employees can get to know each other outside the normal work environment. Depending on the interest of employees (not only the interest of the owner), social functions could be “happy hour” on the premises before the work day ends or after work at a nearby location, contributing time to a charitable event that everyone agrees upon, or an athletic event pitting one group of employees against another. It's not the actual event that counts. It's the fact that everyone can get together without just talking about business.

3. Howdy Rounds - A “howdy” what? You know...when the owner goes around every day and says “howdy” to all employees. Depending on the size of the company and daily circumstances, it might not be possible to give everyone a big “howdy” every day, but just making an attempt to talk to some employees every day gets the job done. If the good morning “howdy rounds” doesn't fit into the schedule, mid-day or afternoon “rounds” serve the same purpose. The owner just told me to have a great evening, a good weekend, or enjoy my kid's soccer game. What? He actually takes an interest in me and knows who I am!

4. Learn Jobs - The owner is probably not going to be called upon to do everyone's job, but understanding and knowing the basics lets employees know how concerned the owner is about each person and his or her job. Talking to employees and learning their jobs just might even enlighten the owner to how something might be improved. Great combination...relating to employees and improving business!

Owners and managers can relate to employees in many different ways. They can be aloof - passing employees without speaking and sheltering themselves behind closed doors. On the other hand, they can make a sincere effort to show employees that everyone is on the same team. Wonder which philosophy works better for business?