

BOOST THE MORALE OF YOUR CARE TEAM!

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Employees who are engaged in their jobs exceed patients' service expectations; they create positive experiences, and promote loyalty and referrals. They're the ones who account for your high scores on patient surveys.

Disengaged employees are often the source of some of your biggest challenges. Physicians fret—and you perspire when your staff opinion survey shows low scores on morale, teamwork, and/or job satisfaction.

Industry research tells us that the two most important factors affecting how people approach their jobs are relationships with fellow employees and the relationship with their immediate boss.

How can you promote relationships among your staff? Here are two good ideas that emerged from recent Manager Effectiveness seminars conducted at practices like yours:

1. Pats on the back at staff meetings

Next time you have your staff together, single out one employee and ask each person to say "something nice" about that person. And don't worry – unless you pick the least-likeable person on your team, everyone will have fun with this exercise, and nobody will be embarrassed.

2. Holiday tree envelopes

Toward year's end, put a decorated tree in the reception area, and hang an envelope for each of your employees. Encourage anyone who has "something nice" to say about a person to drop a short note into that employee's envelope. Just before the holidays, have a lunchtime party at which everyone gets to open their envelope and read the comments.

What about your employees' relationship with you? Turns out that the most important part of your relationship with your staff isn't popularity – its respect. People want to know what you stand for...and what you won't stand for.

Here are few thoughts on how top-performing bosses build respect:

1. Be consistent. If you treat everyone the same, you'll escape the too-frequent accusation that "my boss plays favorites."
2. Be generous with compliments – but only when they're deserved; people resent it when someone's performance does not merit the accolades.
3. Be assertive. As the boss, you're entitled to make decisions for your own reasons, whether or not your employees agree.
4. Be there. Rounding on your employees is a smart strategy for showing your availability, your willingness to listen, and your interest in what they have to say.

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