



## ATTITUDE AT WORK

Have you noticed how some places of work have atmospheres that exude warmth and happiness? And others are just miserable? These atmospheric conditions are created by people's workplace attitude.

What is your place of work like and what can you do to help encourage your staff to foster the right attitude?

I think it is important to realise how much impact attitude has on daily life. Basically a person's attitude determines how their next minute, hour and day will be, so it seems fairly fundamental to have the right attitude at your place of work.

I believe attitude is part of a person's psyche and has been built up throughout their lives. We all know the eternal optimist who is constantly cheerful and smiling, and equally visible, is the complaining never satisfied staff member who no one wants to be around.

These two extremes typify attitudes people at work convey. Any job in the workplace can be done with reputable and genuine intent, or it can be carried out with little interest and a 'don't care' tone. These attitudes denote feelings they have about their work. If they are positive about it this will show in their smiling face, tone of voice and general interpersonal relating. If they have a negative attitude towards work this will be reflected in their facial expression, grumpiness and general demeanour. Attitude also has the added effect of spreading. For instance if someone in the office is full of despair and negativity, chances are the people around them are going to start to feel a bit miserable as well.

The workplace cannot magically change, but it can be made better if people take personal responsibility for what they project within the office on a daily basis.

Some suggestions to help create a more positive attitude within the office might be:

**Focus on the positives** – Encourage staff when giving feedback to colleagues; to mention something the person did that worked well.

**Support staff having empathy for each other** – research shows a happier and more productive workplace exists if staff are treated the way *they want to be* rather than how others think *they should be*.

**Foster individual responsibility in staff for their response to tension and negativity.** Encourage their use of humour in a stressful environment – as sometimes humour can deflect a potentially destructive situation from developing

**Support your team to take tension breakers during the day** – this can be as simple as walking away from the desk and stretching for a minute or two.

**Openly encourage staff communicating in a friendly and open manner** – remember attitude is contagious!

**Challenge staff to do thought replacement work** – When they have negative attitudes encourage them to reframe their thinking, so the problem becomes workable. For instance; when the thinking is 'I'll never get this report completed on time', support them to think 'by focusing on one section at a time I will finish this report'.

**Encourage staff to smile more** – research shows this can make people at work feel happier.

8 steps used by Management for maintaining a positive attitude at work:

- Demonstrate a commitment to the organisation through hard work and responsible behaviour
- Be competent and lead accordingly
- Have a clear vision of the goals of the Company and clearly communicate these to appropriate staff members
- Clearly state objectives and outcomes staff are working towards
- Establish clear expectations and provide regular feedback so staff know what they have and haven't done well
- Create a success-focused atmosphere, in which staff feel they are achieving well when meeting targets set
- Reward success and praise goals reached
- Show respect in your thoughts and actions to staff

With a particularly negative staff member who you have tried to encourage and failed, some of the following may be useful:

**Talk** to them about replacing their negative inner voice with a positive one.

**Remind** them that the mood that pervades the office is usually created by the people in it.

**Strategise** with them on how they can control their frustration.

**Encourage** them to look forward.

**Remind** them of why they are there and what they have achieved.

If all else fails you may have no choice but to encourage them to move on elsewhere if you are seeing morale dropping, productivity down through other staff taking time off or calling in sick. Remember you can only do the best you can with the knowledge you have – it may be that you need external advice to work through this problem more effectively.

You cannot change the world, only your actions in it.

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