

## IMPACT

Manager Supplement

October - December 2004

### Managers and Stress

#### *Did you know?*

- Claremont EAP can make referrals for after-school care, day camps, and summer camps
- You can get a free credit report once a year from Claremont EAP
- Claremont EAP is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week

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Think back to the jobs you held before you became a manager. You can probably remember worrying about whether you were doing your job well and whether your work would get done on time. Now that you're a manager and responsible for the work of other people as well as your own, you may suddenly experience a higher level of anxiety than you did before.

#### **Avoid Unproductive Worrying**

At times, it may seem overwhelming to accept responsibility for the performance of other people, over whom you can really exercise only limited control. One of the risks of being a manager is succumbing to the temptation to worry constantly about your department and your job. In order to avoid burnout, however, it is essential to minimize the unproductive time you spend worrying. Instead, focus on one

task or problem area at a time. While you are concentrating on one area, don't let all the other concerns you may have flood your mind and leave you feeling frustrated and impatient.

#### **Encourage Communication**

Be sure that your employees understand that they have a responsibility to do their work in accordance with company standards and in timely fashion. Tell your employees that you should be alerted to any problems they may have while there is still ample time to correct them. Let them know you will work with them on any problem, even those that seem trivial. It is much better to have information—even bad news—than to be caught off guard at the eleventh hour. No employee should struggle with an assignment only to submit

something at the last minute, which is partially or improperly done. Monitor each employee's progress frequently. Some employees may be hesitant to ask for help when they need it. So emphasize that you not only want but need to know of any problem before it gets out of hand.

#### **Follow Your Own Advice**

Most managers today know the importance of good nutrition, adequate rest, and exercise in reducing stress. It's easy to forget these basics during peak work periods, however. In this respect, emergencies at work have certain similarities to "real life" emergencies. You will be in no position to guide your staff through the complexities of their jobs if you don't first take care of yourself, and your own work.

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# Characteristics of a Participative Leader

Successful participative leaders in today's businesses see in their employees an opportunity to develop individual strengths, encourage growth and produce strong results based on teamwork. To become more of a participative leader, follow these guidelines:

## **Maintain a Positive Attitude**

Use problem-solving situations as a tool for improvement. See obstacles as challenges, problems as opportunities. Reflect often on the enjoyable parts of the job. Be ready to delegate instead of feeling overwhelmed. A positive attitude contributes to a pleasant work environment and creates a sense of enthusiasm for the job.

## **Communicate**

Give team members all the information you have about a project. This allows them to make solid decisions. Keep information flowing in both directions. Be prepared to spend time listening and considering their input.

## **Consult Team Members**

Involve the team in goal and deadline setting. Then leave them to attain those goals by using their own best judgment. By demonstrating trust in employees in the decision-making process, they in turn will trust you.

## **Be Patient**

Build credibility for the team process by listening to the employee's side before



jumping to conclusions. Count to 10 before reacting to avoid setting a negative tone. Be patient with delays, missed deadlines and normal daily glitches. Be proactive rather than reactive. Focus on the situation, not the person.

## **Be Consistent**

Use praise and coaching consistently to encourage more participation. Take a look at the long-term picture for each employee. Steadily increase expectations and use established support to motivate even average performers toward extraordinary levels of success.

## **Cultivate Team Members**

Offer encouragement. Listen to team members who discuss their hopes for the future. Look for hidden strengths. Watch closely as they attempt challenging tasks.

## **Expect Individual Growth**

When the team begins to experience growing pains from the explosion of individual growth, challenge the team members individually. A successful team is full of strong individuals.

*“See in their employees an opportunity to develop individual strengths, encourage growth and produce strong results based on teamwork.”*

# CLAREMONT EAP

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*Managers can call Claremont for consultation regarding employees who appear to be experiencing personal problems, whether or not work performance has become an issue. The purpose of this consultation is to help formulate an approach that effectively facilitates the person receiving appropriate help. The Claremont consultant will review the do's and don'ts for handling these often delicate situations and suggest things you can say and do which are most likely to be helpful.*