

Morale

Defined as “The state of the spirit of an individual or group as shown by confidence, cheerfulness, discipline and willingness to performed assigned tasks.”

But remember Perception is Reality

Problem Statement #1¹

A quarter (27%) of responding AFM employees do not agree that their Division Director cares about the morale in their divisions.

Problem Statement #2

A quarter (24%) of responding AFM employees do not agree that morale in their work groups is good.

Problem Statement #3

A quarter (27%) of responding AFM employees do not agree that morale has improved since the last survey.

¹Please use caution when interpreting the QWS percentage rate data. Caution is needed due to the significant bias introduced by the 34.5 percent non-response rate of AFM staff.

Problem Statement #1

A quarter (27%) of responding AFM employees do not agree that their Division Directors care about the morale in their divisions.

Cause A: Consistency

Division Directors need to strive for fair and equitable treatment of subordinates, superiors, peers, and others outside the organization.

Whenever possible establish guidelines on work issues and situations.

Be open to employee comments. "Don't shoot the messenger."

Barriers:

Shortage of time.

Different value systems

Organizational Politics (Who do you have to please).

Unaware that decisions you make can set precedent.

Enablers:

It is the right thing to do.

Being aware of applicable policies.

Cause B: Honest and Effective Responses

Division directors should have proactive, timely, and appropriate responses to issues or problems.

They should demonstrate through word and action that they care about employees' morale.

They should encourage reasonable "risk taking" and "thinking outside the box."

They should use more appropriate demonstrations of appreciation. (Not awards)

Barriers:

Fearful of hurting feelings.

Benign neglect, doing nothing till it goes away.

Sending bad news by e-mail.

Enablers:

Use compassion when communicating uncomfortable decisions.

When done right, face-to-face is an enabler.

Be prepared when meeting face-to-face.

Be willing to meet face-to-face.

Cause C: Decision Making:

Division directors should be reflective and analytical vs reactionary, in their responses to situations needing immediate action.
They should use appropriate resources to address problems.

Barriers:

Organizational Politics: Source of the request.

Internal pressure.

Deadline: Immediate and continuous.

Responsible Officials: Division Directors and their supervisors.

Enablers:

Stop and think, find out the facts.

Problem Statement #2

A quarter (24%) of responding AFM employees do not agree that morale in their work groups is good

Cause A: Unprofessional or bad behavior and attitudes.

From supervisors:

- Counseling
- Take action; be responsive.
- Deal directly with "problem" employee.
- Do not ignore problems
- Praise in public. Discipline in private.

From employees or peers in work groups.

- Bring problems to the attention of management.
- Participate in team building.

Barriers for supervisors:

- Fear of hurting feelings.
- Desire to avoid conflict.
- Fear of preexisting relationships.
- Fear of reprisal.

Enablers for supervisors:

- You could effect change and reverse the bad behavior.
- Staff will respect you for taking action.
- Training in constructive criticism could be helpful.
- Improved productivity from entire staff.

Barriers for employees or peers in work group:

- Unapproachable supervisors.
- Labeled a tattle-tale or spy.
- If supervisors are indiscreet, fear of reprisal from staff.
- Unclear lines of authority (To whom are they accountable?)

Enablers for employees or peers in work group:

- Open door policies.
- Employee Assistance Program.
- Knowing you have managers' support when you go to them with a conflict or problem.
- Managers reinforcing and thanking staff and responding when appropriate.

Cause B: Failure to address “problem” employees.

Make it clear that personnel actions are confidential. Coworkers may not know when corrective action is being taken.

Deal with each employee objectively and fairly.

Barriers:

Employees may feel you are feeding them the company line or that you are not being truthful.

Old relationships may blur objectivity.

You may be unaware of your own bias.

There is comfort in “staying in the gray.”

Short time supervisors/managers perpetuate problems by ignoring them on their watch.

Enablers:

Objective opinions from an outsider.

You will be respected for maintaining confidentiality.

Cause C: Favoritism, distribution of choice work assignments, and office politics.

Supervisors need an objective and fair way to give out work assignments.

Be aware of favoritism and its effects.

Consistent fairness.

Supervisors should not participate in gossip and they should discourage it within their staff.

Barriers: Work assignments

It is natural to go to proven high performers.

Unwillingness to take the time and patience to develop high performers.

Fear of failure of that assignment.

Enablers: Work assignments

Improved morale and self-esteem of staff.

Increased pool of resources to draw from for future work assignments.

Gain reputation as a fair supervisor.

Personal satisfaction in seeing your staff improve.

Barriers: Favoritism

Lack of awareness

Lack of objectivity.

Denial

Enablers: Favoritism

Openness to employee feedback.

Significant emotional event

Setting an example of respect, fair play, and integrity.

Adds to your credibility.

Deadline: Immediate and continuous.

Responsible Official(s): Supervisors, Managers, and Employees

Problem Statement #3

A quarter (24%) of responding AFM employees do not agree that morale has improved since the last survey.

Cause A: Unaware of the indicators that morale has in fact improved since the last survey.

Morale may have improved because of the strong economy and few negative influences such as RIF, reorganizations, budget restrictions, etc.

Morale may have improved due to the management actions taken as a result of the 1996 QWS.

This team indicated that they would like to see more explicit questions on morale in the next survey.

Deadline: Next 30 days.

Responsible Official(s): Not clear at this time. Whoever issues report on our work.

Suggestions for Improving Survey Questions

Morale questions should differentiate individual morale from work unit morale, and from Division morale, i.e., 3 separate questions.

Use rating scale. Ex. "Rate your individual morale as either high, medium, or low."

After every question on morale, put blank lines underneath the question and ask employees to explain why their individual, work unit, or Division morale is high, medium, or low.

When distributing the next QWS form, emphasize to all AFM that it's very important to take the time to respond. Discuss the bias that occurs when 34.5% of staff do not respond.