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The Proactive Challenge

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When you were younger did you ever do something without much thought? If so, what were the consequences? Once experienced, do you remember promising yourself and those around you that you would never do that again and yet somehow history repeated itself and the exact same thing happened? If so, fear not...you are not alone.

The beauty of a young child lies in the innocence of their thoughts and actions. Carrying a limited understanding of the consequences that may arise, a young child may make some errors in judgment, but with time learn to make better decisions, especially if appropriate guidance and encouragement is offered.

Taking this generalized theory one step further, let's pretend these young children are now adults working as executives, managers, and supervisors in an organization that appears to be experiencing the same difficulties year after year such as: low morale, low productivity, and a decrease in staff retention. So how can this workplace environment improve itself? What can the executives, managers and supervisors do to improve their results? Shift the focus...shift the strategies...

When an organization chooses to alter their perspective and shift their focus to a more proactive approach, everything else follows. Helping to transition toward better results, here are a few things to consider:

- **Pay attention to daily communications.** Become an active listener considering both verbal and nonverbal messages. If low morale is an issue, chances are the employees working in this environment no longer feel valued or appreciated by those carrying authoritative positions. In addition, employees like these no longer view themselves or their job as having a significant role in the direction of the organization's vision or mission. To be proactive in this situation means to offer authentic and sincere thoughts of appreciation on a regular basis. Do not wait for year end evaluations, or monthly assessments. If someone has done a great job...tell them right away. If someone is consistently pleasant, tell them you appreciate their personable approach to their work. Either way, tell the person TODAY, that they make a difference, and then watch how quickly your results can change.



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- **Ask for weekly feedback.** Some organizations will display a 'comments or suggestion' box as a way to communicate with their clients, customers or staff members to ensure that their professional needs are being met. However, these boxes might only be viewed sporadically by those in authority. If an organization wishes to be proactive in its approach to receiving feedback from their customers and employees, then they should consider asking for, and reviewing, all feedback given on a weekly basis. A good day for this review is on Thursdays, that way there is still one day left if clarification is required, and in most cases, employees are more willing to share their point of view when it is closer to the end of their work week, or their pay day...just a thought.
- **Be willing to question like a child** - The best solutions can come to mind when you begin to question *why*. Why are certain processes and business practices still being used? Why are we losing our staff? To be proactive in your organizational strategies and daily practices, you must be willing to break free from the mold of familiar and step into the world of possibilities. Remember, there is no harm in being childlike in your creative thinking process, just be sure to be adult like when making your decisions.

ACTION:

Start to think proactively. If you are tired of the same outcome year after year, then take your first step into the world of possibilities and create the workplace that others will be drawn to.



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