

5 Tips for a Workplace Attitude Adjustment

by John H. Ostdick

Lead a happiness turnaround at your office.

Psychologist and author Noelle Nelson, Ph.D., offers basic advice about nurturing a happy work environment:

- 1. Listen to your employees' opinions and use them.** And let them know that you use them and that you're grateful for their input. "That makes people really sit up, pay attention and not only work harder, but be much happier with what happens in their workplace," she says.
- 2. Be aware of the messages you are sending.** "It takes a nanosecond when you walk down the hall to glance at someone and offer a pleasant expression. That may seem small, but it can matter hugely to employees—especially to that employee who feels that he or she is invisible," Nelson says. "Take it all in, give and accept feedback, be generous of spirit. That may sound New Age-y, but it is that capacity that makes for success."
- 3. Start with one thing, do it well and keep it up.** For instance, solicit and act on employee opinion, because that alone will shift things. Employees may be hesitant at first, but keep at it with a smile. Even if you get 10 employee suggestions and nine are horrible, if the 10th idea has any merit whatsoever, seize on it, spin it, turn it into something real, and applaud the employee.
- 4. Catch your employees in the act of doing something right.** "Again, they won't trust you at the beginning if your company's not been of that culture. Don't worry about it. If you are consistent, you will wear them down in the positive sense."
- 5. Once you've established a little trust, start working on a meaningful recognition and reward program.** Come up with half a dozen things that are of equal value that your company can put forth. Then ask your employees which ones are important to them. Listen to your employees, rather than assume you know what's best.