

The Business *Column*

Yin Yang Your Employee/ Employer Relationship



by Lina
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It is all about balance and understanding how everything and everyone can work together. I have been in the employer's seat for more than 23 years now and I am still learning life lessons. As I reflect on the past, I can honestly say that I was not always the best employer. However, I have learned to accept my strengths, help others to feel strength within them, work on my weaknesses, and hire those who fill those holes. That is how we built a great team and continue to grow towards a long time and long-term vision. Good old fashioned sense still works!

Communication

Good communication is absolutely key for building and maintaining a successful business. When there is good communication between the employer and employees, productivity and efficiency is evident. One of the most important things to communicate is aspects of an employee's job. It is your responsibility to ensure that the employee is well-informed and understands the expectations and responsibilities of their position.

It is important to make sure that your employees know you are listening. Let them know that they are valued people within the company and encourage them to voice their opinions, ideas, and suggestions. Enjoy the sparkle show... as eyes start to light up with excitement!

In the age that has yielded e-mailing and texting, talking in person may seem a little archaic, but it is still the best way to make sure both parties are on the same page. By actually speaking with the person in front of you, you can get a better feel for the situation because body language remains a huge part of communication.

Rewarding Employees

Your employees are your biggest assets. Let them know that their efforts are appreciated. Finding different ways to reward and acknowledge those who have done a great job not only makes employees feel appreciated and feel good about their work, but it also creates a positive atmosphere for everyone to enjoy. Here are some suggestions... do be creative.

Office Get Togethers: An employee may have done exceptionally well on a project, but you need to see the big picture... everyone contributes to the progress of your business. Hosting different office get-togethers is a great way

to socialize and improve the relationship with and between your employees.

Treat to Lunch: Ordering lunch in for the staff or taking them out for lunch is a simple way to show appreciation for their efforts.

Acknowledgment at Meetings: When an individual has done a great job or something extra, it is a good idea to call them out at office meetings for a round of applause. Though a small sign of appreciation, it can have a deep impact on the employee and can also motivate others to do well.

Monetary Rewards: Who loves making more money? If you are in a position to offer bonuses that help acknowledge efforts, do so by all means. Otherwise, small tokens also go a long way in the appreciation department. Tickets to movies, dinner gift certificates, or even a paid day off or early leave on a Friday makes the employee feel your appreciation.

Challenges

A common challenge is employee entitlement. Ask yourself a few questions to help recognize if an employee has these issues. Have they ever experienced conflict with co-workers? How did they resolve it? Did they ever feel underappreciated for their efforts? Look for feelings of blame within the answers of these questions. A person who truly feels entitled seldom sees the wrongdoing caused by their actions or lack of.

Conflict management is another possible challenge. You can have a staff of great people, but sometimes disputes occur. Conflict between employees can happen for several reasons: lack of respect for each other, jealousy, insecurities, stress, clashing personalities, personal life, gossiping, and so on. When trying to diffuse a situation, never take the side of one employee over the other. This will be seen as favoritism

and can cause future conflicts. Instead, have a meeting with the parties involved, either at the same time or individually. Only then can you come to a proper decision, using the facts gathered and company policies. Having good company policies (perhaps an employee manual) in place can certainly help prevent conflicts. It is also important for you to make sure employees know not to gossip or discuss the conflict with other co-workers who are not involved; this can increase hostilities and make the situation harder to diffuse.

All this advice is relevant to you, the employer, should you ever get into a conflict with an employee or when you are trying to resolve a conflict. Do not speak to others about the situation. The best way to keep the situation under control is to only speak to those related to the problem.

To resolve conflict, follow your policies. Know your labor laws. Ask employees what they would expect to hear from you. This helps you gain better understanding of the employees' mind frame. The purpose is to resolve conflicts and to hopefully build an even stronger workplace with more satisfied employees. Understand that there is no right or wrong, only trials and errors. There is learning and growing. As an employer, we are no better or worse. We might be more experienced and skilled which is why we can help others reach up as well.

Depending on the severity, the disciplinary action you need to take for a specific conflict may be nothing more than talking to the employee. But in cases where strict disciplinary action may be required, be well informed of your state labor laws, which are available online.

The Employee's Perspective

I always felt privileged to work, learn, and help myself develop into a more confident person. Of course, the environment where I worked in the past was not always conducive to these facets of employment. In a few cases where it became clear that the environment did not encourage team work and development, I simply provided my resignation. I never found it reasonable to stay somewhere that does not give me any joy.

Being a firm believer in resolving issues, I believe the main purpose for communicating concerns should always be with the intention to source a solution and move forward with confidence. Employers are more likely to listen to your concerns and suggestions if you are respectful while presenting them. Stick to the facts. You have an opportunity to help facilitate something positive for your personal growth. It is important to make sure your suggestions are sound and reasonable; otherwise, you are less likely to be taken seriously.

Understand that your work depends a lot on how well-motivated you are to perform your job. When you are not satisfied with something at work, speak up... just make sure you are speaking to the right person. If you go around complaining to co-worker after co-worker, nothing is going to change and you are potentially setting yourself up to upset your employer. Do not risk your position by complaining to others; request a one-on-one discussion with your employer.

You want to work in an environment that is conducive to teamwork. They have most likely had more years of experience and can help you understand what they expect. You might consider speaking with more experienced co-workers and see if they can help you better understand what is expected. Good experience can yield you good advice. Before going for advice, ask yourself these questions:

- "Was I completely aware of what was expected of me?" If the answer is no, then it may be time for you to have a more in-depth conversation with your employer on exactly what they expect of you. The more you understand, the better you can perform your job.
- "Is my place of work organized?" This question can relate to something simple like a desk to the workplace team being somewhat dysfunctional due to lack of leadership. The desk is an easy one for you to fix. If the problem is the infrastructure of the team and you have some insights to share, it would be considerate of you to write a proposal, outlining both the concerns you see affecting daily tasks and results, as well as some plausible solutions for consideration. If you have a clever employer, you might get a lucky break and be asked to present your idea at the next meeting! Remember – think team.
- "Have I been managing my time properly?" Taking a couple of minutes here and there to check your cell phone for text messages or go on Facebook can quickly add up in a day, and this all takes away from time you could have spent on a project or task at hand. When you are not managing your time properly, things can become overwhelming, which increases your chances of making mistakes.

Do Not Let Personal Issues Get in The Way

Feeling stressed at home? Got in a tiff with a spouse or partner? Regardless of what is going on in your personal life, it simply does not belong at work. These emotions can cause your work to suffer if you do not learn how to separate your private life from your business life.

This rule is even more important in the beauty industry because clients come to see you for their needs. It is their time and should be all about them.

Everyone understands that things can get challenging in life. If your personal situation is truly unbearable and requires your full attention, speak with your employer to see if time off can be approved to help you deal and cope with your situation.

A chief pioneer collecting many feathers in her cap, Lina Kennedy is the expert on professional sugaring who writes articles regularly for industry magazines in North America and Europe. As president of Alexandria Professional, one of her personal goals is to ensure that each professional trained in the art of body sugaring learns and understands the exceptional results they and their clients can achieve through The Kennedy Theory™ for sugaring and The Kennedy Technique Theory™. 800-957-8427 or www.alexandriaprofessional.com

