



Managing A Workforce - Read Your Employees

David Grusenmeyer
Human Resource Management,
Cornell PRO-DAIRY

Effective managers read their employees' needs and adjust to them if possible. That isn't to say you need to be an emotional babysitter to your employees. But you need to be aware of their moods and feelings if you expect high performance.

Think about you or other members of your management team. Are you all in exactly the same mood everyday? Do you have days, for whatever reason, that you would rather be left alone? Days when everyone else is better off staying as far out of your way as possible?

We all have days like that. It's part of being human, as opposed to android.

Employees are no different. You'll be a more effective manager if you read your employees' feelings and moods and adjust accordingly. This might mean as little as an encouraging word, or listening empathetically, perhaps changing their work assignment, or possibly sending them home or even to counseling. It's fine to say, "Keep your problems and emotional stuff out of the work place", but we know that isn't 100% possible everyday.

Listen closely to what your employees say to you and to each other. Observe how they act and move. Are they enthusiastic and energetic? Or sluggish and tired?

Say hello to each employee every morning. Try to spend enough time to get a feel for their mood. If you expect employees to be responsive to you, first be responsive to them. Over the long term, successful managers are those who understand this and adjust where possible to the people around them.