Stop Supervising in Circles

5 questions to get direction in challenging situations

MLA 2018

What do I do if my staff person isn’t meeting performance expectations?

- Assertiveness Training
- Employee Motivation
- Coaching and Mentoring
- Communication Styles
- Performance Evaluation
What do I do if my staff person isn’t meeting performance expectations?

Start with Why.

Critical thinking and personal accountability are key to supervising well.

The Five Questions to Help Identify Why Staff Don’t Meet Performance Expectations

1. Do they know you expect them to do it?
2. Do they know how to do it?
3. Do they have the resources to do it?
4. Do they have the motivation/willingness to do it?
5. Are they able to do it?
1. They don’t know you expect them to do it.

- Is it in their job description?
- Culture-based expectations
  - New to culture
  - Culture shifts
- Have I said what I expect?
  - Have I *defined* it?

1. Job desc says they ‘provide assistance to library patrons’
2. Directive: ‘be nice to people’

Just as important, have I said whether and how they are *not* meeting my expectations?

2. They don’t know how to do it.

- Have they received training?
- Are the local procedures in line with the training?
  - And with workaday reality?
- Specificity of procedure
  - Too little or too much can confuse

1. E-Book or other tech assistance
2. How to do it vs. how to do it when you have to do it between interruptions
Let’s talk about Documentation

Document thoroughly and remember

Stick to the facts.
Be specific.
It’s discoverable.

You may need it in the future, so find a system now.
3. They lack the resources to do it.

- Time, people, $$
- Is there too much on their plate?
  - Can they delegate some tasks/projects?
- Can you be an advocate to get them what they need?

1. At capacity with current programming, then a request to do a special event
2. Supervisor/team member who doesn’t want to delegate

Who’s Responsible?

Maybe much of it is Me.
4. They lack the motivation to do it

- Is something missing from 1 through 3?
- Is there a trust gap?
- Are they afraid to try?
- Are they seeing something I’m not?

1. Not my comfort zone. Not the job I was hired to do.
2. Too much risk of failure, and it’s not safe to fail here.
3. It’s not a priority, or it’s not worth the effort.

You don’t know what someone is thinking.
Ask questions, listen, listen more, then problem solve.
Celebrate even small successes.

Let’s talk about Change
People just don’t like change.

People just don’t like:
- unpleasant surprises.
- to be blindsided.
- to not feel trusted.
- losing status.
- to feel unappreciated.
- to feel trapped.
- to not be asked first.
Own what’s ours

Some could still be Me.

Let’s Talk about Difficult Conversations
Nobody “likes” them.

Be compassionate, professional, and fair. Nice is optional.

Don’t expect one-shot miracles.

The harder the conversation, the more careful you want to be.

It’s not their job to make this easy for you.

5. They are not able to do it. (Yet?)

- Aptitude isn’t permanent.
- Can you ‘scaffold’ the job to build the person for success?
- Be honest about the job but don’t shortchange staff potential.

1. Not a good fit for supervising / management.
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5. Are they able to do it?

Set your staff up to succeed!

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