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## COMMUNICATION IS THE KEY

Good communication is the key to a good employee relations program in any workplace. While most supervisors understand the importance of good communication, at times when production issues have to take precedence, you may have a tendency to neglect your “people skills.” Usually all it takes is a little reminder that your relationships with your employees and how you deal with your employees are critical in maintaining good employee morale. A personnel self-audit is a good way to stay on top of your game. So, you managers and supervisors out there should regularly ask yourselves the following questions:

- When an employee brings me a problem, whether real or imaginary, do I give prompt attention and make sincere efforts to explain the reason for the final action taken?
- Do I really operate with an “open door” policy or is my open door policy a “fairy tale” for public relations purposes?
- When one of my employees brings me a complaint, do I follow up to find out the real deal?
- Do I do all I can to inform my employees about changes in equipment, procedures, and techniques that the company may be considering?
- Do I give reasons for changes in company policies or procedures or for not making changes requested by my employees?
- Do I have meetings with my employees to go over problems they may have and answer their questions about company policies, equipment, or procedures?
- Am I well enough informed about economic and technological trends to give my employees tips on what will be required of them in the months and years ahead?
- Do I give my employees reasonable deadlines?
- Do I make it easy for my employees to talk with me?
- Am I sympathetic to my employees’ problems?

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- Do I always give clear and understandable instructions?
- Do I compliment my employees on a job well done?
- Do my employees consider me to be even-tempered?
- Do I make every reasonable effort to keep employee complaints from arising?
- When complaints do arise, do I handle them honestly and objectively?
- Do I always counsel and reprimand my employees discreetly and in private?
- Do I encourage suggestions and ideas from my people?
- Do I avoid passing the buck on my own mistakes?
- Do I always give credit where credit is due?
- Can I take constructive criticism?
- Do I keep my employees posted on their progress?
- Do I keep my promises?
- Do I avoid jumping to conclusions?
- Do I avoid sarcasm in dealing with my employees?
- Do I give my employees the real facts to cut down on rumors?
- If one of my employees disagrees with me, can I usually argue the point without getting irritated?
- Do I make special efforts to fully orient new employees?
- Do I display a “superior” attitude?
- Do I play favorites?

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- Am I impartial?
- Can I accept change without getting upset and taking out my disagreement on my employees?
- Do I show my employees my loyalty to the company?
- Are my employees able to talk to me without fear of reprisal?
- Am I consistent in my actions toward my employees?
- Do I recognize and respect my employees as individuals and as human beings?
- Do I acknowledge my own shortcomings and make corrections when necessary?
- Do I give my employees a sense of belonging?
- Do I really know what my employees think about the company, their jobs, their working conditions, and their pay?
- Are my employees friendly, loyal, and cooperative?
- Do any of my employees display a “hostile” attitude?
- If so, could my behavior toward my employees be the reason?

Don't be surprised if you can't answer “yes” to all 41 questions. But that's why this kind of honest self-appraisal is the best way for you to determine whether you need to improve your communication with your employees.

Supervisors always tend to underestimate the impact of their actions on employees. Whatever effort you make to improve your supervisory skills, your employees will notice and appreciate your effort and improvement 10 times more.

- *Sidney F. Lewis, V*

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Remember that these legal principles may change and vary widely in their application to specific factual circumstances. You should consult with counsel about your individual circumstances. For further information regarding these issues, contact::

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