

October 2009 Newsletter (next edition December 2009)

Dear Colleague:

Welcome to the first issue of our Employee Relations bi-monthly newsletter. We developed this publication to help our University partners learn more about management resources available through Employee Relations and other Human Resources departments. This newsletter is designed to be an extension of what we do already, which is help University leaders develop solutions to promote a productive work environment. We welcome your feedback or questions – about our newsletter or about the consulting services we can provide to you.

*Thank you,
Sherri Murphy-Goins
Employee Relations*

In this issue:

- Taking Difficult Conversations “Seriously” by Larry Johnson
- FAQ
- Upcoming Important Dates
- Did you Know?
- Contact Information

Taking Difficult Conversations “Seriously”:

When you show that you've taken the other person seriously in a disagreement or heated discussion, you make an implicit statement that the other person is OK.

So how do you do it?

First: Never tell the other person he's "wrong" or that you "disagree" with him. Those words instantly say that you aren't taking him seriously and that he must be crazy for thinking as he does.

Second: Carefully listen to his point of view and then summarize it back to him so he knows you were listening. This simple act shows that you take him seriously. For example, "So you are saying that the reason your budget is over spent this month is because there were unexpected costs associated with the purchase of new equipment - and you had no choice but to spend the money?"

Third: Acknowledge how he felt or feels about the situation. Doing this communicates that you are able to feel his pain and are willing to put yourself in his shoes - a further sign that you take him seriously. For example, "It must have seemed that it was critical to make the investment at the time."

NOTE: Tone of voice is everything here. If you say the words, but your tone of voice says, "Sure Buster, you're such an idiot." You're probably not going to get the kind of reception to your suggestions that you'd like.

Fourth: Offer your point of view, taking responsibility for it by using "I" language. For example: "Here's the way I see it Jim. I'm concerned that if we continue to run over budget, the costs of this project will get out of control, which can have dire consequences down the road."

Fifth: Ask for help to solve the problem, focusing on the future, rather than the past. For example, "Jim, can you think of a procedure we could put in place so that when these issues come up in the future, they can get resolved without going outside budget guidelines."

Difficult conversations can be daunting. Most of us want to be perceived by others as nice people, so we often avoid them or wait until we are so angry about the issue at hand that we allow the conversation to turn nasty. Taking the other person "seriously," as Townsend suggests, raises the odds you'll get a positive outcome, and it makes it easier to conduct the difficult conversation because the chance there will be hard feelings afterward declines.

Frequently Asked Policy Question:

Q. Can an employee's vacation request be denied?

A. Yes. Vacation approval is at the discretion of the department. Vacation requests shall be approved in advance by the department head or designee. Scheduling should allow for adequate staffing to meet the departmental work load.

Link to Human Resources Policy and Procedure 80.0 Vacation Leave

<http://www.uky.edu/HR/policies/hrpp080.html>

Upcoming Important Dates:

UK Campus is Tobacco Free 11-19-09

Link to Frequently Asked Questions:

<http://www.uky.edu/HR/employ/TobaccoFreeFAQ.html>

November 2009 Holidays (applicable to regular staff employees with an FTE of 0.05 or greater)

Thanksgiving Day 11-26-09, Thursday

Day After Thanksgiving* 11-27-09, Friday

*Employees of UK Healthcare who do not normally receive the Friday after Thanksgiving as a holiday are given a "floating" holiday in place of this calendar day.

Link to the Official Holiday Announcement 2009-10

<http://www.uky.edu/HR/HolidayAnnouncement.html>

Employees must be hired by 11-8-09 to be eligible for the Bonus days (applicable to regular staff employees with an FTE of 0.5 or greater)

Link to the Official Holiday Announcement 2009-10

<http://www.uky.edu/HR/HolidayAnnouncement.html>

New Floating Holiday provided to regular staff employees with an FTE of 0.5 or greater.

Employees must have been employed on 9-1-09 to be eligible for the holiday and must have been in a paid status on 8-31-09 and 9-2-09 to receive the Holiday. The Holiday will be available for use through 6-30-10.

Did you Know?

Employee Relations provided assistance with 658 issues in August and September 2009?

We can provide guidance on a wide variety of employees relations issues. Please contact us!

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