

Tips and Tools for Supervisors

Many of us have the opportunity to hire others. Hiring can take the form of volunteers, part-time or permanent full time. The following is designed as a quick “how-to” guide for hiring.

1. Remember to hire the right person in the first place.
 - a. If you think or “feel” an inclination that this might not be the right person – don’t hire him or her. Many times we hear that personnel situations that eventually end up badly began with the hiring person being ambivalent at the point of hire.
 - b. Once you make a decision to hire someone – do it! Don’t leave them around waiting – the best people don’t wait around for an offer.
 - c. Make the expectations extremely clear and always in writing (even for an assistant to the assistant).
 - d. Let accounting know who you have hired and at what pay.
2. When the new hire does something right – praise them.
3. When the new hire makes a mistake – give them lots of feedback.
 - a. Giving feedback is a key to helping people do well in their jobs.
 - b. Remember to use the Oreo¹ method when giving negative feedback.
 - c. It is never OK to fire someone without them getting a warning of what they did wrong in the first place. We must give people an opportunity to improve.
4. If someone continues to not be able to do the job you must let them go. It is hard for an organization to accomplish its stated mission if employees are not able to perform their tasks. We can only do our best when we work with the best. Indications are that when we allow incapable people to continue to work at our organizations the hard working lose heart and slow down their contributions.

I know we all want to work for organizations that would be referred to as a Learning Organization (Peter Senge, 1990). Learning Organizations are not based upon blame, but on truth. To be a learning organization we must hire and train people and allow them to do their very best. Learning Organizations are good at telling people the truth in love and allowing those people who desire and are capable to do a good job.

In short: Organizations need to hire the best people, tell them the truth, allow them to make mistakes, once an employee has learned of a mistake they must be given the opportunity to admit mistakes and turn around and do a better job.

¹ The Oreo method works like this: Say one positive thing (“I like that you immediately tried to solve the problem”). State the problem in clear and precise terms (“Before you change a schedule you must check with me in advance.”) Say one more thing positive (“I like that you saw the problem and knew that it needed to be fixed.”). The Oreo method looks just like the cookie: Good stuff on the top and bottom and the not so good stuff in the middle.