Chapter 12

Problem

Employees: Counseling and Discipline
What is a Problem Employee?

- One who is consistently unwilling or unable to follow the rules or meet performance standards.
Two Types of Problem Employees

1) Employees Causing Problems

2) Employees With Problems
Problems Requiring Special Attention

Questions to help uncover the true source of a performance problem:

• Has the employee performed better in the past?
• Has the employee received proper training?
• Does the employee know and understand the objectives he or she is to accomplish?
Problems Requiring Special Attention

Questions to help uncover the true source of a performance problem:

• Is the supervisor providing enough feedback and support?

• Has the supervisor encouraged and rewarded high performance?

• Are other employees with similar abilities performing well or experiencing similar difficulties?
Most Common Types of Problems

- Absenteeism and tardiness
- Insubordination and uncooperativeness
- Alcohol and drug abuse
- Workplace violence
- Theft
Absenteeism and Tardiness

• A recent survey found that absenteeism cost employers an average of $645 per employee in 2003.

• The most common reasons given for taking unscheduled time off are personal illness and family issues.
Why Employees Had Unscheduled Absences

- Personal illness: 36%
- Family issues: 22%
- Personal needs: 18%
- Entitlement mentality: 13%
- Stress: 11%
Absenteism and Tardiness

• To help reduce absenteeism:
  – Initiate paid time off banks
  – Create a positive work environment in which morale is strong
Insubordination

• Insubordination
  – the deliberate refusal to do what a supervisor or other superior asks
Alcohol and Drug Abuse

• Alcohol and drug abuse
  – About 1 out of 10 workers abuse or are dependent on alcohol or drugs.
  – The ADA treats substance abuse arising from an addiction as a disability.
  – Actions taken with regard to the employee should focus on work performance, not the substance abuse itself.
Workplace Violence and Theft

• Security managers say that workplace violence is their number one security threat

• An estimated 2 million incidents of workplace violence occur each year.

• Workers who abuse alcohol or drugs or who have psychological problems may be more likely to engage in violence at work.
Workplace Violence

• Domestic violence is a contributing factor to workplace violence.
• Domestic violence is behind millions of days of absences each year, and millions more in lost productivity
Theft

• The largest cause of missing goods and money for retailers is employee theft, not shoplifting.
• “Stealing time” and Internet surfing are also considered theft.
• Information theft is a serious and growing problem.
Counseling

• Counseling
  – the process of learning about an individual’s personal problem and helping the employee resolve it.
• **Benefits of counseling**
  – Improved job satisfaction and motivation

• **Appropriate times to counsel**
  – When employees need help in determining how to resolve a problem that is affecting their work
Counseling Techniques

• Directive counseling
  – An approach to counseling in which the supervisor asks the employee questions about the specific problem; when the supervisor understands the problem, he suggests ways to handle it
Counseling Techniques

• Nondirective counseling
  – An approach to counseling in which the supervisor primarily listens, encouraging the employee to look for the source of the problem and propose possible solutions
The Counseling Interview

- Discussion of the problem
- Consideration of possible solutions
- Select a solution
- Scheduling follow-up meeting
Discipline

• **Discipline**
  – Action taken by the supervisor to prevent employees from breaking rules

• **Punishment**
  – an unpleasant consequence given in response to undesirable behavior.
Employee Rights During the Disciplinary Process

• Know job expectations and the consequences of not fulfilling those expectations.
• Receive consistent and predictable management action in response to rule violations.
• Receive fair discipline based on facts.
• Be able to question management’s statement of the facts and to present a defense.
• Receive progressive discipline.
• Be able to appeal a disciplinary action.
The Discipline Process

- Observe and understand the facts behind problem behavior.
- Meet with the employees involved
The Discipline Process

- Warning
- Suspension
- Demotion
- Dismissal
Guidelines for Effective Discipline

• Do not wait to act.
• Focus on learning about and resolving the issue at hand.
• Keep emotions in check.
• Make it a private matter.
• Be consistent in administering discipline.
• Keep a record of disciplinary actions taken and the basis for the discipline.
Positive Discipline

• Positive discipline
  – Discipline designed to prevent problem behavior from beginning

• A supervisor can administer positive discipline by working to create the conditions under which employees are least likely to cause problems
Detection of the Troubled Employee

- If disciplinary action or counseling seem ineffective at resolving the problem, a supervisor may have a troubled employee.

- Look for signs of substance abuse but avoid accusations – instead, focus on job performance.
Confrontation of the Troubled Employee

• **Document** the problem

• **Confront** the employee
  – Review the employee’s performance, describing the evidence of a problem
  – Refer the employee for counseling

• **Explain** the consequences of not changing
What is an EAP?

• Employee assistance program (EAP)
  – a company-based program for providing counseling and related help to employees whose personal problems affect their performance
More on EAPs

• Types of Employee Assistance Programs:
  – Recovery from substance abuse
  – Financial or career counseling
  – Referrals for child care and elder care
  – AIDS education and counseling
  – Cultural adjustment counseling
Benefits of an EAP

• Employees can find treatment for problems affecting their performance
• Help organizations develop policies, educate employees, and train supervisors
• Relieve supervisors who feel pressured to help with employee’s personal problems
Benefits of an EAP (cont.)

• Offers an alternative to firing troubled employees, saving the cost of replacing them
• Reduction in accidents, absenteeism, and turnover
• Help maintain a drug-free workplace
Sources of Support

• Your manager
• The human resource department
• Outside consultant
• Labor attorney
• Outside human relations specialist
• Local Small Business Administration office