



From left: Meg Salyer, president of Accel Financial Staffing, with Angela Russell, assistant recruiter.

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MANAGEMENT

Attitude is everything

A LONG LOOK IN THE MIRROR MIGHT HELP MANAGERS, SUPERVISORS KEEP THE PROVERBIAL DOOR FROM REVOLVING AT THE OFFICE

It's no great secret that attitude in the workplace often is dictated by that of the manager. And some could argue that it appears most managers received their masters in mediocrity.

Perhaps this very notion is why many companies' doors continually revolve.

One local manager says she does her best by communicating clearly with her staff, then stepping aside.

"Toward the end of each year, I sit down during the budgeting process and think long and hard about what next year is going to look like and set the big picture," said Meg Salyer, president of Accel Financial Staffing. "Then I sit down with the team and talk collectively about where we can go, where we see growth and new opportunities... Then I try to get out of the way."

Salyer says she doesn't subscribe to the "dictator" role managers have played in the past. Rather, the days of top-management are behind us, she says.

"I think we have learned that we think a lot better collectively ...we're stronger," she said. "Multiple voices are stronger than a single voice and what works for the group."

Scott Lowber, president of the Oklahoma City Human Resource Society and director of human resources at 4-Star Trailers Inc., says his company has set aside nine key areas they believe are most important and uses to train each supervisor.

Those key areas include: self awareness, stress management, supportive communication, problem solving, handling power, inspiring employee performance, decision making, conducting effective meetings and managing conflict.

"It's extremely important to be able to sit and just listen to that employee when they're upset," he says. "Ninety-nine percent of the time, the manager just needs to listen and not necessarily come up with a solution, but help the employee find their own solution."

In the manufacturing industry, Lowber says, the turnover rate is higher than most industries. And the manager plays a large role in said turnover.

"Most people do leave their jobs because of their managers," he said. "This is why we came up with a training program to help our new supervisors learn how to manage."

Furthermore, he said, the 22-year-old company only hires from within so the soon-to-be managers-in-training have come up through the ranks and can understand – and appreciate – every aspect of the job. While in many companies a manager doesn't necessarily have to know all the nuts and bolts of company processes, at 4-Star Trailers, he says, it's absolutely necessary.

Then, of course, there is the issue of perks.

Salyer inspires her staff by offering what she calls "getting everyone out of the office for a couple of days" in January.

Her idea of "getting everyone out of the office" consists of everyone – and their spouses – taking a corporate retreat.

Salyer's idea of a corporate retreat? This year it will be a Thursday-through-Monday trip to Panama. Last year, it was a trip to Costa Rica.

"Of course, we do that based on company performance," Salyer noted. "So there have been years when we have not done this. But it's great team-building time together, and it's had a tremendous impact on the overall success of the company." ♦