

## Member's Quarterly

Fall 2020 Edition

### President's Message

# You Don't Need to be Friends with Your Employees

*Strike the right balance as a manager*

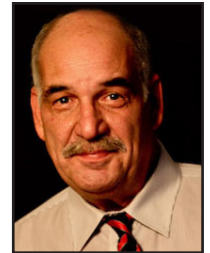
**M**ost of us start out wanting everyone to like us. Then we become managers or supervisors and realize that this is neither practical nor possible. But growing into a new managerial position, it is often difficult to navigate the spectrum of co-worker into an authority figure. This can be tricky. You need to be able to discipline when necessary, but you also don't want to turn your employees off by lording over them relentlessly. Striking just the right interpersonal chord is crucial for both your fulfillment and theirs. Find the right balance and you just might find yourself in a place where people both like and respect you.

This does not mean you shouldn't make an effort to get to know your team. You may not want to become best friends, but that doesn't mean not having a clue about who they are outside of work. In fact, getting to know your employees on a personal level, while not getting too personal, definitely has its advantages. Asking some questions from time to time will help you uncover both their talents and motivations while putting you in a better position to manage different personalities. This will certainly help when you try and resolve the inevitable conflict of personalities.

Knowing about big events in their lives will also give you confidence in conversation and will help you anticipate how their performance may be affected. Asking how someone's weekend was and actually listening to their response will not mean that you have to cast off your boss hat forever. However, you should avoid them on social media. While a casual lunch or workplace conversation can help you become a better manager, being Facebook or Instagram friends with your employees is never a good idea, at least in my opinion. Forming social network relationships can quickly land you in some uncomfortable situations. Do you really want to see everything going on with your employees? Furthermore, do you want give them a window into your personal life? I didn't think so.

Remember you're there to do a job and if you do slide into that "please like me" category, it is important to always remain mindful of your role. In the workplace, it's more important to be a boss than to be a friend. That's why they pay you the big bucks.

*Brian Pascal is President of IPM [Institute of Professional Management].*



Brian W. Pascal  
RPR, CMP, RPT  
President