

Member's Quarterly

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President's Message

R.E.S.P.E.C.T.

Earn it before you expect it

A respectful workplace is a productive workplace. It really is as easy as that. I get that there can be intense pressure to meet targets and deadlines. The temptation to rule with an iron fist is real, but this is no way to get results in the long run. It is essential to be mindful of the fact that, as a leader, you set the tone for the standard of conduct within your working environment. The way you treat your employees will directly impact how they treat one another and how they treat you too.

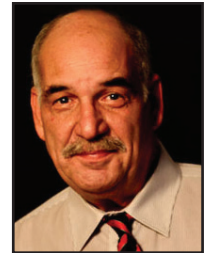
Crucially, a respectful environment will also prevent everyday workplace issues from escalating into major problems. The fact of the matter is that sometimes things don't go as planned. If you've established that you're willing to be flexible and rational, it will help employees deal with unmanageable situations rationally without losing their patience. Clients pick up on this kind of clear-headedness too, and it will make your whole operation seem more reliable and trustworthy.

In addition, an environment in which everyone feels respected will also naturally boost accountability and avoid any messy discrimination claims being levelled unjustly. When people trust that they will be treated with dignity when they come to work, it helps to maintain the discipline of an organization. This doesn't mean that constructive criticism has no place at work, but it will be received better if done in a climate of mutual respect.

Ultimately, a disrespectful working environment will simply lead to a situation where a whole lot of time is being wasted. The minutes (or hours) employees spend dwelling on what they feel are poor managerial attitudes will necessarily reduce their performance. When taken to an extreme, disrespect can have a massive impact on productivity, as more and more time is allocated towards conflict resolution. One thing can lead to another, and passive-aggressive emails and gossiping can soon become the norm. What's more, these unfavourable behaviours can be very tricky to kick once they've been given room to fester and establish themselves.

A big part of respect, therefore, is being proactive and addressing issues while they are still in their infancy. Fostering a respectful atmosphere in an organization does not necessarily require an HR policy review or other formal changes - it is a decision on behalf of those in charge to come to work every day and make respect the law of the land.

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