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2004 Strategies – People Focus

Step 1: Making it Easy for People to Provide Ongoing Input on Healthy Workplace and Organizational Issues

Creating and sustaining a healthy workplace environment requires a shared approach.

A top-down only approach, where employees are not involved, can have negative consequences such as cynicism, resilience, and disengagement of front-line staff – whose support and involvement is critical to the success of any organization-wide strategy, including developing a healthy workplace. Likewise, a bottom-up approach that does not have the support of senior management will not be as successful as one where there is a balance between leadership involvement/support and employee participation.

Creating a healthy workplace involves providing an environment where employees feel respected and have trust in the organization to contribute their ideas and provide feedback on healthy workplace matters without fear of reprimand. Research on the control/demand theory indicates that people who have input into decisions that affect them have less physical and psychological disease.

Tips:

- Have processes in place that encourage staff to provide input on organizational and healthy workplace issues, as well as provide suggestions on how to improve processes or systems that may present barriers to doing good work. Click here for more information on creating an Employee Feedback System (see CHWW 2005 How To Participate) to ask employees for their suggestions on how to create a healthier workplace.
- Ensure input and ideas provided by staff are reviewed by management in a timely manner and get appropriate recognition for successful outcomes.

Workplace Health in Action!

Using surveys and collaborative groups to improve employee and organizational well-being

A large regional hospital in Sweden conducted surveys that documented psychosocial work quality, supporting resources and self-reported health and well-being. The initiative was guided by a 'project group' and 'enablers' elected by each department, who were responsible for keeping the process alive and communicating with staff. A key to success was support from top management, department management, staff, and unions. Nine organizational areas were targeted for improvement, including leadership, performance feedback, workload, employee involvement, and social climate. Everyone in a department was encouraged to participate in goal setting and follow-up activities, resulting in a variety of approaches across departments, from group discussions of skills and leadership, quality circles, and training, to study visits at other hospitals.

Adapted from: Healthy Workplace Strategies: Creating Change and Achieving Results. 2004. Graham Lowe, PhD.