Q09. My associates or fellow employees are committed to doing quality work.

Help Me Feel Proud

Trusting that one's coworkers share a commitment to quality is vital to excellent team performance. All employees need to be in an environment where there is mutual trust and a respect for one another's efforts and results. This starts with a deep awareness of work standards and team expectations.

By a 6-to-1 margin, people are more upset with a colleague who has the ability but doesn't try than a colleague who tries hard but doesn't have much ability.

For highly productive employees, there is a vast difference between being assigned to a team and actually identifying with that team. Employees want to know that everyone on their team is pitching in to get the job done. Few factors are more damaging to teamwork than one employee who skates through their work, taking advantage of others who work much harder.

On average, about **one in three** employees strongly agree that their associates are committed to doing quality work. When a team perceives one of its members is not pitching in, that proportion drops to one in five.

But when the team feels as if everyone is pitching in equally, about **one in every two** employees agree that their associates are committed to doing quality work.

Improving the team's level of natural talent is a manager's most powerful weapon in the battle against poor quality.

One of the worst feelings for an employee is having a slacker for a coworker and a manager who doesn't do anything about it. Unfortunately, the worst performer on your team sets your team's standards. As a manager, you should routinely ask yourself:

- ✓ How am I selecting and recognizing hardworking employees?
- ✓ How do I define quality work? Does my team know what quality looks like?
- ✓ Have I talked with my team members individually about their quality goals?

Three Important Things to Focus on

1 **Culture** Quality is a priority in the organization, and standards are upheld at all levels.

2 **Individual Commitment** Individuals take responsibility for their actions and deliver the highest quality standards.

3 **Team Commitment** Teams feel comfortable with questioning, confronting and being vigilant about what's right.

Creating a Team Focused on Quality Results

If you want to see great business results from your team, as a manager you have to ensure that all team members are committed to doing quality work. Even just one team member not giving it their all can mess it up for everyone else. Think of your team as a rowboat. If you have three team members rowing as hard as they can and one team member sitting there doing nothing, it makes rowing for the entire group a little bit harder.

Engaging Conversations

As a manager, you set performance standards and ensure that your team members adhere to them. Doing this creates an environment in which your team members understand the work expected of them and promotes a culture of superior work. Make time to talk with your team members about what quality means to them by asking some of these questions:

- As a team, how do we know when we have done good work?

- When do you feel like quality is important to our team? To our organization?

- When do you feel the most pride in your work?

- When was the last time you spoke with a team member about quality?

- When do you feel like your team members are committed to doing quality work? Why?

- How do you/we measure your own work and quality?

- What is a recent example of when you did more than your normal work to ensure quality? When did you last see a fellow employee do more than their normal work to ensure quality?

- What do you do when you see employees not doing quality work?

- What gets in our way of doing quality work every day?

- What improvements do you think we could make within our team that would enhance quality?

- What can I do to help you produce more quality work?

Best Practices

The most effective managers foster an environment that consistently produces high-quality work by incorporating the following behaviors into their management style and approach:

- Outline quality standards for each task or function.

- Confirm that new team members know the importance you and your team place on quality by setting expectations early on.

- Be on the lookout for employees producing high-quality work. Take time to recognize these employees, and share with the rest of the team what high-quality work looks like. Provide a way for team members to recognize one another when they witness exemplary quality or a person going the extra mile to ensure quality.

- Have each team member share their expectations for quality work during team meetings. This will help clarify and set expectations. It may also provide an opportunity for you to redefine quality, if needed.

- Share and exchange best practices as a team that demonstrate quality.

- Create a way for team members to share their concerns if a fellow employee is not producing quality work.

- Produce high-quality work yourself. Remember, your team looks to you for guidance. If you do not produce quality work, they won't either.