



High Level of Staff Morale = High Level of Client Satisfaction

By: Evelyn Scotten – President, InfoSYS Inc. | March 2006

Remember the day you came in to work and you knew you just shouldn't have gone in? It could have been a bad mood or low energy level. Were you at your personal best? One of the challenges of managers today is to recognize and troubleshoot low employee morale. It is important to note that morale is not a "cause" rather the effect or result of many factors going awry.

How does low morale impact the level of service to your customer? Is your help desk measured by customer satisfaction? Of course, and that is why it is important to make sure your staff is satisfied.

If you manage several people, it can be a challenge to know when someone on your staff has a low morale. Here are some of the signs to look for:

- increased absenteeism
- conflict among employees
- complaints about seemingly insignificant issues
- increased turnover (either voluntary or involuntary)
- insubordination
- theft and/or sabotage
- decreased productivity
- disorganized and unkempt workplace environment
- increased complaints and conflict.

An article on motivating your employees by Mary Rau Foster states the costs associated with low employee morale can be calculated by looking at the expenses associated with decreased productivity, unresolved conflict, employee turnover, and unproductive time spent gossiping and complaining to co-workers. As competitive as the business climate is, no company can afford to ignore low morale.

Ms. Foster asks "Is it possible to create an environment where employees are motivated to do their jobs to the best of their abilities -

and communication satisfaction to everyone around them?" She states that the answer is yes, when management takes the time to learn what motivates employees to do their best work, and what contributes to a sense of well being and satisfaction.

Troubleshooting low morale is easier than it sounds. Start by asking. Staff will start to feel better as a result of interest in their input. In an article by Entrepreneur Magazine, managers are advised to:

- Show GENUINE concern. Care about the task at hand and the employee will as well. Also, care about the employee. Entrepreneur Magazine advises to create the office environment where employees know that they are part of the success of the organization, not a machine. Ask employees from time to time how things should be done in the work process. This allows for "ownership".
- Provide appropriate feedback what is expected and how well they are doing. This will alleviate "over-work" or "under-work".
- Make sure there are appropriate goals that are mutually acceptable. Save your company time and money when people are clear in what it expected of them. Make your goals "action-oriented".
- Recognize your staff's efforts. Be sincere; cite specific examples such as "when you handled that call, you could hear the enthusiasm in your voice". There is nothing worse than insincere recognition, don't patronize, it is easily recognizable. For a "bigger punch" recognize your employee in an interoffice email or at your next staff meeting. This will go far in building self-worth and employee morale.
- Spark your employees' enthusiasm by increasing their responsibility. Add more challenging tasks based on the current workload appropriate to "stretching" the employee's capabilities. Provide frequent feedback and ask for input. Set up a system to track success and results.

March 2006 Issue

Morale = Client Satisfaction

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Help Desk Ergonomics

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A Message from the President

Oscar Gomez – Help Desk Manager

A Cure for the Flu

I was feeling awful. My temperature was high, bones ached and I had a sore throat. I was coming down with the flu two days before the February local HDI meeting. The timing could not have been worse. Months of planning were finally here.

Bart Barthold was flying in the following day from Arizona. I had plans to meet Bart and Laurie Lock for dinner the day prior to the meeting. Bart was my manager at Autodesk back in 1998 and I hadn't seen him since then. The last time I had seen Laurie was last April at the local chapter meeting.

How can I entertain two help desk experts feeling the way I did?

I rested all morning and drank large quantities of orange and apple juice. I also took medicine to reduce the fever and went on my way to meet Bart and Laurie for dinner.

I still was not feeling well and didn't feel I had the energy to hear about their experiences. However, once we were seated, Laurie and Bart started throwing nuggets of valuable information. I was soaking in all the information and I actually started to feel better.

When we are not feeling well, we tend to lose sight of what needs to be done.

"Think outside of the box."
"Challenge the norm."
"Change how things were always done."

These phrases are heard everyday without a second thought. When two experts tell you **how** they took these phrases and brought them to life, it made such an impression on me that I was beginning to forget about how sick I had been. I felt re-energized having had this opportunity to meet with them over dinner. It was refreshing to hear them speak again the next day. They were as inspiring as the night before.

We believe we know all there is about a subject but when others come forth with new approaches, we realize that the learning process never truly ends. Based on a survey, many requested to hear from Laurie and Bart again. I only hope to be 100% the next time I get the opportunity to learn from them.

Take advantage of experiences as this one. In April, we welcome Jay Rifenbary to Sacramento. This invitation is open to members and non-members of Sac HDI. The local Chapter welcomes all levels of support professionals in this area to participate in our monthly meetings.

President Commentary

Jay Rifenbary

Guest Speaker Bio

Jay Rifenbary is president of the Rifenbary Training & Development Center, and author of the International Best Seller, "No Excuse! - Key Principles for Balancing Life and Achieving Success", recently awarded "Book of the Year" by the North American Book Dealers Exchange.

Jay is a professional speaker, trainer and consultant; and was recognized as the "Outstanding New Yorker in the Field of Business" for 1995. He has provided his expertise in the areas of personal development, leadership and communication training to Fortune 500 companies, associations and schools across the nation.

Jay received his Bachelor of Science degree from the United States Military Academy at West Point, with a concentration in Nuclear Physics.

From being a qualified Airborne/Ranger, Military Commander, Sales Professional, Corporate Manager and Entrepreneur, Jay brings a unique background of interpersonal skills and business experience to each of his training and speaking engagements.



Meeting Agenda

Thursday April 20, 2006

Meeting Location

To be determined

Setting Up a Successful Help Desk (Ergonomically)

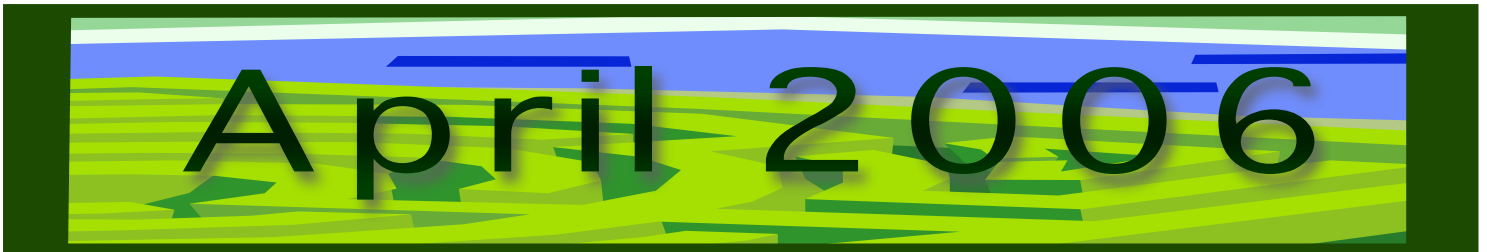
By: Ruby Bay | March 16, 2006

Ensure efficiency with ergonomic environments

Job efficiency is largely influenced by the workplace, and this would be most apparent in your helpdesk center, especially if your crew's core function is troubleshooting — emphasis on "trouble". It may be sufficient to line up your helpdesk reps in neat rows of cubicles, but sometimes creative floor plans can spell the difference between a helpful and a helpless contact center. Consider these ergo-tips when designing your helpdesk layout:

- **Teamwork** – Create an environment which reps can hear each other and easily ask for or offer help.
- **Proximity** – Allow for enough distance between each rep in order to be able to hear the customers and are not distracted by other calls.
- **Harmony** – Muted non-primary colors, open flooring, sufficient lighting, and movable partitions to accommodate work flow.
- **Workflow** – Provide adequate workstations to allow for flow and a clear mind.
- **Tools** – Wireless headsets are ideal to all for a little movement but headsets will enable reps to be focused on the problem rather than the phone.

Ray Zorz, network administrator for United Cerebral Palsy of Central Arizona, emphasized that an effective and successful help desk workplace needs to be pleasant and comfortable. "Unfortunately, all too often the helpdesk is considered an expense, and is often relegated to second-class status. They need great working conditions, because this job is tough. It's often a thankless, immobile job with unhappy people on the other end of the phone. If the job requires workspace, then give it to them. If it's a lot of phone time, then give them the best headphones. And, by all means, give them great chairs."



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1
2 Daylight Saving Time Begins	3	4	5	6	7	8
9 Palm Sunday	10	11	12	13	14 Good Friday	15
16 Easter	17	18	19	20 HDI Meeting	21	22
23 30	24	25	26 Admin. Professionals Day	27	28	29