



## **Exclusive Tips to Increase Employee Satisfaction within the Sterile Processing Department** **Katrina Simpson, B.S., CST, CSPDT**

### **Objectives:**

- Discuss some issues that may contribute to employee dissatisfaction.
- Define morale.
- Define employee work ethics.
- Discuss solutions to help improve employee satisfaction.

### **Work woes**

Everyone has experienced at least one bad day at work. The question is do you let that day reflect the way you act towards your co-workers in sterile processing or any department? I'm sure everyone has



heard the saying, "It's not the job that makes me uncomfortable; it's the people"! Yes indeed! It's the people that can make some of the most amazing jobs in the world the most unbearable. Can you relate? Of course you can. What does the word morale mean to you? Could this contribute to employee dissatisfaction? Morale can be defined as "the level of individual psychological well-being based on such factors as a sense of purpose and confidence in the future" (Merriam-Webster, 2015). Depending on how we feel that we contribute to the workplace, rather it be positive or negative, can certainly determine our morale. How often have you told yourself that my job would be so much better if it was equipped with people I can work with? You may not have stated these precise words, but everyone has felt this way at least once during their career. Although there are many factors that can contribute to the betterment of the workplace, we first need to learn how to work with the people that make the establishment successful in order to maintain employee satisfaction

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### **Just another day in the dungeon**

Morale in today's society is steadily plummeting. With more and more employees feeling invaluable, work ethics are decreasing and coming to work day in day out is becoming a need rather than want. Most of these concerns are stemmed from stress: "Sixty-nine percent of employees report that work is a significant source of stress and 41% say they typically feel tense or stressed out during the workday (American Psychological Association, 2009)". Unhappy employees breed other unhappy employees which can indeed turn out to be torturous to a facility. Positive employee morale creates employee commitment towards an organization. "There is a positive association between the level of job satisfaction in a workplace and the level of employee commitment in a workplace" (Menezes, 2012). This creates an environment in which the employees have a want to come to work and not just a financial need to do so. How would you rate your work ethics in sterile processing? Work ethics can be defined "a belief in the moral benefit and importance of work and its inherent ability to strengthen character. Quality management can also aide in increased employee satisfaction, however that may not always be the case. "Nonetheless, given that quality management initiatives in organizations change the nature of work, they may affect job satisfaction and different dimensions of quality management may differ in impact" (Menezes, 2012). Below are a few suggestions on what corporations no matter the size can implement in their departments in order to increase employee satisfaction.





### **Create a suggestion box**

The suggestion box will allow your staff to anonymously write complaints, recommendations, or even things they appreciate within the department that can give you better insight of areas that are in need of improvement. This will help the supervisor with suggestive tips to improve the morale strictly from the feedback from the staff. Suggestion boxes are nice because they are anonymous, and allow the users to be as honest as possible without the fear of being reprimanded. This stratagem could work well with recognizing problem areas within different departments that may have otherwise gone undetected.

### **Create a complainer box**

The complainer box is for anyone in the office that consistently complains. There will be days that are justifiable days that an employee would need to complain. This box is not for those days! These are for the days that your employee woke up on the wrong side of bed because their husband or wife didn't come home the night before, the electric bill is four-hundred dollars, the dog couldn't wait to go out in the morning so they ruined the carpet, or we're running late because the alarm didn't go off. You get the point. Each time they complain because they woke up having a bad day, is when that particular individual would be required to put a selected amount of money in a box in a designated area within the department. Depending on what the company decides, the amount of money dropped in the box can range from a penny to one-hundred dollars. Anyone that complains habitually in your sterile processing department would have to contribute monies per day to the box that includes the employer themselves! At the end of the month a drawing can be done, and whomever name is drawn wins the money. Now to keep this method logical, only those that were not jotted as complainers for the month would be allowed their names to be drawn from the box. In time, hopefully the complainers would get tired of rewarding everyone else, but themselves.

### **Create an empowerment committee**

If you have anyone willing to help with creating a positive environment, have a couple of people create an empowerment committee. These people will be responsible for creating a session once a month in which the employees are rewarded with words of encouragement, certificates of appreciation, gift cards, or anything else uplifting. They can create a small play mimicking an incident that jeopardize the morale of the department, and display effective ways they fixed that specific issue. This can be done briefly in the morning to help brighten up the day. Any other idea the committee could think of would be utilized monthly to keep the employees on track through encouragement. It could be as small as decorating the department with positive posters to donating vacation time to a random employee that has done their best to work as a team.



Source: <http://www.publicdomainpictures.net/view-image...>

### **Provide free lunch cards**

Anyone that has done an exceptional job, and have gone above and beyond to lead and work as a team should if possible receive a free lunch card. All employees are required a lunch break when they work a full-time hour position. For those that are responsible for purchasing their own lunch, a lunch on the company could be very rewarding. When improving the morale of a person, expensive exchanges are not always required. A lunch card doesn't sound like much, but sometimes small rewards can boost an employee's confidence.

### **Have employees work in teams and not groups**

Try to find ways to get the employees to work together as a team and not a group. Groups work together because they are assigned to do so, and don't have the desire to work outside of that group. For example an employee states: "I'm responsible for working in the Decontamination Department therefore; I can care less about helping anyone in Assembly". This type of behavior is from a non-team oriented point-of-view, and only benefits one sector of the organization. Teams work together because they want to benefit all "groups" of people. For example an employee states: "Although, I work in Tray Assembly, it is my desire to help my fellow Case-Cart Preparation co-workers because it's not about me, but customer satisfaction and the overall success of this company". This behavior exhibits a selfless type of attitude that benefits multiple sectors. Once the employees have an understanding that it is not just about them, they may become more selfless working better as a team.





### Conclusion

In conclusion, the hopeful outcome would be to sustain increasingly positive atmospheres in which are beneficial to both the employer and employee. Increased employee satisfaction is an agenda that all corporations around the nation can benefit from. Effective communication, proper management, competitive salaries, customer service surveys, and an overall positive environment can all contribute to employee and employer satisfaction. Once employees are hired, the foundation should be pre-set that the company in which they are employed is a company built on integrity and employee/employer wellness. With proper education on how to enhance the work environment; there is a significant chance that companies across the nation will breed more exultant employees.

### References

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### Exclusive Tips to Increase Employee Satisfaction within the Sterile Processing Department Post-Test 2015

1. Morale can be defined as “the level of individual psychological non-existent well-being based on such factors as a sense of purpose and confidence in the future  
TRUE      FALSE
2. Bad morale cannot contribute to employee dissatisfaction.  
TRUE      FALSE
3. Sixty-nine percent of employees report that work is a significant source of stress and 50% say they typically feel tense or stressed out during the workday.  
TRUE      FALSE
4. There is a positive association between the level of job satisfaction in a workplace and the level of employee commitment in a workplace.  
TRUE      FALSE
5. Quality management does not increase employee satisfaction.  
TRUE      FALSE
6. Two things that suggestion box provides is an opportunity to submit anonymous complaints or recommendations to the supervisor.  
TRUE      FALSE
7. You should never work together as a team in the sterile processing department.  
TRUE      FALSE
8. Providing a lunch card for your employees could potentially improve employee satisfaction  
TRUE      FALSE
9. Increased employee satisfaction is an agenda that all corporations around the nation can benefit from.  
TRUE      FALSE
10. Employee satisfaction should never be a concern for corporations.  
TRUE      FALSE

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Lana Haecherl  
PO Box 568  
Pineville, NC 28134

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