Confronting Problem Employees: Confronting an Employee Work Plan

Identify an employee that you need to confront about task completion, attitude, tardiness, or some other situation that must be corrected.

- Review your own comfort in dealing with confrontation. Do you delay confrontations? Do you judge too quickly? Do you avoid problems? Be as honest as you can about drawbacks as well as strengths you have displayed in the past. List them.

- Review your organization’s disciplinary process. Highlight all the items you need to remember when you address this employee. Consider discussing the process with your manager to ensure you are accurate.

- Review your documentation of the employee whom you will confront. Have you captured dates? Do you have specific examples? Have you documented past conversations you’ve had with the employee? List this information, clearly stating the problem.

- Identify the goals for your employee meeting. Do you want to clarify the situation, ensure the employee is aware of standards, reinforce that the behavior is unacceptable, or create a plan for improvement? Write the outcome of the discussion that you desire.

- Design a conversation flow that will lead to the outcome you desire.

- Prepare for your employee’s response. Do you expect push back? Tears? Lack of comprehension? Write down your expectations and how you will respond.

- Prepare for your own inappropriate response. Do you jump in with advice too soon? Do you get defensive? Do you hold on to your stance too long? Do you get sidetracked easily? Can you be too lenient when face-to-face? Make a note about appropriate reactions you intend.

- Plan your meeting details. When? What time? Where? Schedule time with your employee and prepare for your meeting. Be sure to keep 15 minutes or so before your scheduled meeting time so you have time to relax, organize, and prepare. Also, allow at least 30 minutes after the scheduled time in case your discussion takes longer than you anticipated.

- Following the meeting, review what happened. What went well? What would you do differently? How would you do it differently? What did you learn that surprised you?

- Complete any tasks that you agreed to in the meeting. Document the meeting details, outcome, and next steps. Follow up with the employee to ensure that no residual feelings are lingering or formed following the meeting.