

Category 5
Workforce Focus
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One employee was up until 3 a.m. arguing with their spouse over a long- simmering domestic matter. Another employee was at the county jail to bail out their son for the second time in a month for a breaking and entering charge with drugs involved.

These employees and many more will report to work in the morning, distracted and unfocused on the task ahead.

In order to maximize Category 5 of the Baldrige criteria (workforce focus), one must first look at what keeps employees from performing at their peak capacity.

Today's corporate work environment can reveal a discouraging or even dismal picture. Words like downsizing or rightsizing, layoffs or cutbacks are often heard among today's employees. Sadly the news of an employee shooting at the workplace is not the rare or uncommon event it used to be.

A recent U.S. Department of Labor survey revealed that 46 percent of employees leave their job voluntarily because they don't feel valued. A similar Roper poll showed that 87 percent of employees would work harder if they felt like company leadership cared more or would help them and their fellow employees with their problems.

To engage their full potential and develop themselves as A-plus productive workers, employees need to have good communication at work, they need to know their employers care about them as a person and they need to be 100 percent engaged at their job.

Recent studies have shown that 88 percent of all absences on the job are related to personal problems.

The critical step for Baldrige award winning companies is the transition from satisfied employees, who may be happy today but will leave tomorrow when a personal crisis hits, to loyal employees who will give maximum effort and make a maximum contribution in their job because they feel valued and united in a common enterprise.

One of the newest and most promising tools to achieve this is the presence of an on-site workplace chaplain program like the one being used by hundreds of companies nationwide through Marketplace Chaplains USA.

David Weekley Homes, recently ranked as one of the Top 20 Companies in America to work for by Fortune Magazine, has used the on-site Chaplain program, titled David Weekley Cares, for several years having the Chaplain Employee Care Program as part of its highly rated benefits package. The regular chaplain visits address the on-going concerns of absenteeism, safety and productivity by having a neutral, voluntary, trained chaplain who employees can talk to about the problems which often limit their work effectiveness.

“ Just its existence at Weekley helps set a tone for the level of integrity and morals expected from its employees. It was one of the items that really attracted me to Weekley Homes because it showed me that Weekley has a vested interest in my overall well being and not just in what I can do for Weekley,” one employee wrote.

The results of workplace chaplains have been equally successful in the hectic and harried world of fast service restaurants.

AUSTACO, which operates more than 70 Taco Bell franchises in the Central Texas area, saw its turnover rate go from 300 percent down to nearly 100 percent after using Chaplains, and was named an Elite Franchise by Taco Bell Corporate. K&M Management, which operates four Rudy's BBQ Restaurants in the Austin, Texas area, uses the Chaplain benefit to help attract A-Plus employees to its growing business.

On-site care and concern from a workplace chaplain has been proven to show employees their company is committed to them through a tangible benefit and in turn will produce loyal, focused and productive employees.