

## Stop Workplace Negativity by Focusing on the 3 Cs

It's been said that losing **confidence**, **control**, or **community** creates negativity. So if your staff seems more focused on dark clouds than silver linings, here's how to help them regain the three Cs:

- **Avoid unilateral decisions.** Each time you make a decision affecting employees without seeking their input, you strip them of *control*. Give them as much freedom as possible to choose how to manage their assignments.
- **Value employee opinions.** Unexpected changes in hours, pay, benefits, dress codes, office setup, job requirements, and deadlines can reap negative results. Create a sense of *community* by seeking employee input on policies and procedures.
- **Offer development opportunities.** Help workers gain *confidence* by providing formal training programs, encouraging cross-training, and supporting upward and lateral moves that will further their careers.
- **Be fair and consistent.** Workers won't feel in *control* if you're not. Strive to be calm and evenhanded. And keep rules to a minimum. If you treat workers as adults, most will live up to your expectations. Deal with problem workers individually; don't penalize the entire group.
- **Keep workers in the know.** Open communication forges a *community* bond. Provide each person the same information at the same time, and give context for decisions. People need to feel they're part of something bigger than themselves. That's why it's important that you link their roles to missions, values, and goals.
- **Provide recognition.** Nothing boosts *confidence* as effectively as timely, well-placed recognition from supervisors and peers.

—Adapted from “Tips for minimizing workplace negativity,” by Susan M. Heathfield, on About.com  
(*Motivational Manager*, February 2002)