



How to Avoid Being Manipulated by an Employee

By Velsoft Courseware Inc., 2005

Problem or Situation:

You hear from an employee that another department with which your employees must work is causing problems that result in delays and work having to be redone. Employees try to convince you that some new equipment that has just been installed is not doing the job. You hear rumors that a certain employee has been drinking on the job. You hear in a roundabout fashion that employees believe you are favoring one employee over the others.

It isn't merely a question of whether your information sources are correct. It might be that certain employees and groups are working to influence you, possibly even with misleading information.

The conclusion? Your employees may be manipulating you. In some departments, employees are very effective in using misinformation, distorted feedback and innuendoes to get certain results. Every supervisor is vulnerable to this threat, but there are ways to discourage manipulation. What would you suggest?

Recommendations:

- **Don't get isolated.** Asking employees questions about problems, chatting with them, holding meetings, giving courteous attention to problems brought to your attention, these are all ways of letting employees know you can and expect to be approached directly. It also tells employees you are on top of developments and facts.
- **Insist on constructive criticism.** When employees take great delight in shooting down a co-worker's ideas, your response should be that you are much more interested in finding out whether there is something in the idea that could work, or make things better. You will show that you expect criticism to be fair and constructive.
- **Explain the rationale for your decisions.** Be careful that you praise all ideas and suggestions that come up, not just those from a favored group. Be prepared to give logical reasons for accepting a particular idea. This will show employees you will accept good ideas from every source, and it can also show them how to present a winning idea for your consideration.
- **Avoid predictable patterns.** If you always base your decisions on "the bottom line" you lay yourself wide open to manipulation. Vary your patterns. Don't give employees a chance to play on your predictability.
- **Spread out your attention.** Talk to all employees, and consult each of them for their opinion.
- **Emphasize and reward openness and honesty.** To start with, check out the controls you use. Are you overloading employees with paperwork? Do you want activity more than you want results? Make it clear that stature in your eyes comes by doing well in their jobs.