

Collaboration Team Issue – Accountability (Revised 9/27/2007)

Overview

The team consensus is that managers, supervisors, and their respective staffs, are ignoring accepted policies, procedures, and/or responsibilities. Ongoing performance issues with a few individuals in each section may be responsible for feelings of inequality and discontent throughout the organization. Contributing factors may be:

- The director is not familiar or interested enough with the day-to-day operations to effectively discuss accountability concerns with the managers or supervisors.
- The management team appears focused on other responsibilities (e.g. disposition and purchase of sites, sustainability initiatives, etc.) and not on division, section, unit or individual performance.
- Managers and supervisors appear out of touch with the concerns and effectiveness of employees in the field and how those employees interact with co-workers.
- Managers and supervisors assign lead responsibilities inconsistently across sections.

Workforce Inequity

Division history has shown that many FPM employees were hired for one position, then subsequently transferred or reclassified within the organization without the necessary knowledge, skills, abilities or training (other than being in the classification for “x” amount of years). Consequently:

- Employee skill levels, productivity levels, and workload levels are vastly disproportionate within sections and within job classifications.
- Certain employees are required to carry the brunt of the workload or perform the more complex tasks and are not commensurately compensated.

Poor Direction

There is an absence of management commitment to mentor and guide employees or to improve their skill levels and performance capabilities. This has an adverse effect on the morale of co-workers. Specifically:

- Each employee (both management and non-management) is considered fully trained and self-reliant the moment they are assigned a new task or transferred to a new position. Unless the employee specifically asks for assistance or training, none is provided.
- *When supervisors directly offer informal assistance, the result is often inconsistent with existing procedures, guidelines, and standards.*
- Formal training is generic, not specific to County policies, procedures and standards (with the exception being the procurement policy training), and inappropriate for most of the trainees. If given instruction, there is no evaluation to determine its appropriateness or effectiveness.
- Follow-up is rare and field visits to review employee capabilities by the management team are non-existent.

Ineffective Supervision

There is the appearance of retaining “unemployable” personnel due to lack of sufficient management oversight to either improve performance or dismiss the employee. When an employee is not held accountable for their actions this has a negative impact on teamwork and communication. Specifically:

- There is virtually no quality review by managers or supervisors at the completion of a given task by line staff. This practice appears endemic in the FPM culture

and has had a considerable negative impact on employee morale for the past several years.

- Both management and non-management abuse the system (e.g. unwarranted sick leave, arriving late to the office, sleeping on the job, extending lunch hours, missing meetings, leaving work early, not replying to email or telephone requests, or simply not performing the job assigned). When a non-management employee notifies management that an abuse has occurred, typically no action is taken.

Inconsistent Supervision

Managers and supervisors appear unaware of the specifics of existing policies, procedures, and guidelines, therefore application and communication is inconsistent. For example, several employees have not had an annual review for several years, and some units have work plans developed for each employee while others do not. Furthermore, it appears that some employees get more manager and supervisor time than others.

Conclusion

The collaboration team, as well as most FPM employees, is keenly aware that these concerns have been presented to management in the past and have not been adequately addressed, thus our intent to communicate these concerns candidly. The collaboration team feels that the challenge of accountability oversight is a management issue and needs to be initially addressed by the manager/supervisor staff. The team, however, is committed to working with management to resolve these issues.

We believe that all FPM employees (both management and non-management) are dedicated to the vision of improving the FPM culture by optimizing our diverse employee talents and further advancing our team efforts. We hope the management team will accept this document in good faith as an indication of our commitment.

We request that management review these concerns and follow-up with this team with the following information:

1. A written action plan indicating how and when these concerns will be addressed.
2. A follow-up report assessing the effectiveness of the action plan.

Thank you.