

Reduce absenteeism with example

There are many reasons why employees don't come to work. They have the flu. Their cousin got married. The car wouldn't start. The cat died. The babysitter quit. The moon is full.

Of course, most sick leave is legitimate: people stay home because they're sick. But abuses do occur. Fred is absent once a month usually on a Friday or Monday. Matilda is deathly ill one day and back at work the next. Looking fit as a fiddle. Harry jokes about taking "mental health days" and then proceeds to get sick when the crunch is on.

Many of the things that keep people from coming to work are beyond your control as an ordinary mortal who happens to be a supervisor. You can't regulate the phases of the moon, nor can you schedule this year's influenza epidemic for a more convenient time.

This does not mean, however, that there is nothing you can do about absenteeism. The fact is that people are more likely to call in sick when they don't feel their attendance really matters, when they find their working conditions unpleasant or stressful, or when they feel taken for granted. Anything you can do to prevent or offset such feelings will have a positive effect on attendance. Here are some guidelines.

1. Make sure that everyone knows the sick leave policy—and that you always stick to it. Is sick leave unpaid if it comes directly

before or after a paid vacation? Is a doctor's statement required after three days' leave? Is the company doctor or nurse supposed to check any person returning after five days of sick leave?

Employees need to see that the supervisor—that the company is serious about sick leave. They're more likely to call in sick only when necessary if they know that someone really cares about their attendance.

2. Set an example. No one expects to come to work when they're truly ill. But if you're on the job in spite of your allergies or a stubbed toe, your employees will know that the same level of commitment is expected of them, too.

3. Ask that employees who call in sick talk directly to you. When you get their calls, ask what the problem is and how long they expect to be away from work. Tell them that they will be missed and that you hope they get well quickly.

If you are sincere, your comments will have a positive effect on attendance. People will miss fewer days because they will return to work sooner. It's also a fact that an employee who has to tell the supervisor he can't come in is more likely to have a good reason for doing so.

4. Keep an eye out for patterns in the absences that do occur. Is an employee taking sick leave every Friday during hunting season? Is someone else gone one Wednesday afternoon every month? If you do find a pattern, see if it's related to a

recurring job duty. The employee may have a particular responsibility that he doesn't like or is trying to avoid.

5. Stay informed about what's happening in each person's job. If you do, you'll be better able to arrange to have her duties covered if she gets sick. More important, you won't be caught unaware if some work-related problem is about to cause an absence.

On this point, don't overlook the value of "supervising by walking around." Get on your feet and visit every work area—every employee—every day. It's important to make contact and show that you're interested. Ask each person, "how are you?—How's the job going?" Unless there is a problem, you won't have to spend more than a couple of minutes with most employees. But they are much more likely to feel responsible for their jobs—and to minimize sick leave—if they know you're genuinely interested in their work and how they feel about it.

6. Take the time to get to know your people—and stay current on the things that matter to them. Ask them about their families. Know the names of spouses and children. Listen when they talk about personal problems or worries. You don't have to solve their problems or give advice. Listening and caring are what's needed. People come to work not only for the wages but also to be with people who treat them as people.

7. Make it a point to welcome back each person who's been gone. Greet him in the morning or at the beginning of the shift. Shake his hand and tell him you are glad to see him back and well. Ask how he is feeling and listen if he wants to tell you about being sick. Listening says you care.



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Overnight camp fosters independence

If your child could design a perfect summer, it would probably include plenty of playmates, new things to do every day, and a place to cool off when the summer sun gets too hot.

Year after year kids discover such perfect summers at day or overnight camp. At overnight camps, in particular, boys and girls learn something about themselves, their environment, and even about their parents by spending a few weeks away from home. The mother of 8-year-old Rachel discovered that firsthand.

After her first summer at overnight camp, Rachel ordered her mother out of the bathroom while she showered. "She won't let me wash her hair anymore," her mother complained.

"Isn't that one of the reasons you sent her to camp?" I said.

Indeed, it should be. Camping fosters independence in its participants, while giving your child a feel for group living.

Camp broadens social skills and often taps resources your child never had to call on before. Your child will learn to get along with new types of people too. Rachel, for example, often gets a much needed break from cliquish school friends by reuniting with her summertime camp friends.

In addition to the social benefits, a summer spent in the mountains or woods heightens your child's awareness of the relationship between humans and nature.

The primary problem faced by kids at overnight camp usually is homesickness. It's a natural feeling for a child away from family and friends, but the condition is rarely

incapacitating. The staff at any good camp will be prepared to deal with campers who are upset.

Your best approach to homesickness is to start dealing with it at home.

Tell your child what to expect, stressing the positive. Many camps offer suggestions and guidelines; some even orientation programs.

Visit prospective camps, preferably while they're in session. If it's not possible to do that, find out how long the camp has been in operation, how staff are recruited, and the kinds of activities that are offered. Ask about the age range of the counselors, the staff-to-camper ratio and the nature of the faci-

lities. Get the names of people who have sent their children to the camp and contact them.

Children as young as 7 can enjoy overnight camp, if they're adequately prepared. The younger the child, the shorter the camping session should be. A veteran camper of 8 or 9 should be able to handle at least three weeks particularly if he or she is familiar with the camp and knows other kids there.

For more information, write: The American Camping Association, Dept., BHG, Bradford Woods, 50000 SR 67 N, Martinsville, IN 46252-7902.

High pressure, pint jars for fish

Canning is a popular way to preserve fish and if done properly, it will be high in quality and safe to eat. Only fresh seafood should be preserved. The fish and shell fish must be kept cool on ice or refrigerated immediately after catching and canned as soon as possible.

Fish should only be canned in pints or half-pints, there are no safe processing times for quart jars. All fish must be canned in a pressure canner. The high temperatures reached under pressure are necessary to destroy the bacteria that causes spoilage and food poisoning. All pressure canners must be vented (exhausted) for 10 minutes. After venting, close the petcock or place the counter weighted gauge over the vent to pressurize the canner. Begin counting the processing time when the pressure builds to eleven pounds for dial

canners and ten pounds for weighted gauges.

For canning at elevations about 1,000 feet, adjustments need to be made for weighted gauge canners. Dial canners need adjustments above 2,000 feet. Check with the Warm Springs Extension office for bulletins.

Happy Walking!

Would you like to walk off 1/2 pound by next week? Here's how...Research shows that your weight multiplied by .73 equals the number of calories your body uses when you walk a mile. For example, if you weigh 140 pounds your body burns 102 calories for every mile you walk. If you burn 1,750 calories you will lose 1/2 pound (3,500 calories are in one pound of fat). So, allowing a rough average of 100 calories per mile, that means you need to walk 17 1/2 miles a week or 2 1/2 miles a day to lose 1/2 pound. Now figure out how much walking you need to do to lose 1/2 pounds. Happy walking!

Nutritional tips still tasty

Trying to cut the cream in your coffee? Start with light cream. If that tastes okay, experiment with a light cream/whole milk combo. Soon, you might even find that whole milk, or better yet, low-fat milk, suits your purpose. Limit your use of nondairy creamers, though. Most are made with oils that are even more saturated than

heavy cream. Go green! Salad greens, tangy and fresh, are a dieter's delight: A 1 1/2-cup calories—but lots of vitamins C and A, good amounts of potassium and even some B vitamins. There's a little iron and calcium, too, and practically no sodium. And the darker the green the better source of vitamin it is.

Soup is a dieter's friend, and now new research finds that low-calorie soup is just as hunger-soothing as high-calorie soup. At John's Hopkins University, researchers fed two groups of volunteers tomato soup, telling each to eat as much as they wanted. One group ate high calorie soup, the other, low-calorie soup. Each group felt full after eating about the same amount with the high-calorie eaters consuming 146 calories and the low-calorie eaters only 17.

Stepparents try harder

Snow White's wicked stepmother is an exception to the rule in a typical stepparent.

The myth persists, however because we have grown up with stereotypes about stepparents. But the vast majority of stepparents don't harm their children. In fact, they want very much to be good parents.

The typical stepparenting mistake is in not being too demanding or mean-spirited, but in believing that, if they try hard enough, they

can make everything right. When that doesn't happen, they feel frustrated and guilty.

Professionals who work with children need to be sensitive to their own attitudes toward stepparents. They need to ask if they automatically expect the worst.

Stepparents need to realize that stepfamily stress and difficult relationships with children are typical. Rewards can come with time and good communication.

Rent to own may be costly

What seems like a "good deal"—renting a 19 inch color television for only \$11.25 per week—can be a tremendous waste of money over the year and a half it takes to become the TV's owner. When you consider that a \$350 TV may cost nearly \$900 in rent, the deal may lose some of its appeal. Look at the

bottom line before buying televisions, furniture, or other products through rent-to-own programs. Although the weekly or monthly figure may seem low, it must be multiplied out to calculate how much will be spent until the product is owned.

Another disadvantage is that a

rent-to-own agreement is not the same as a loan. There is no extension of credit or buildup of equity. If a consumer rents for a year and then stops, the \$600 spent on rent is lost. In general, renting should be used over the short term; buyers are better off comparison shopping for a loan or credit terms.

Summer camp offers opportunities, activities

4-H Summer Week—grades 7-12

An exciting opportunity is being extended to attend 4-H Summer Week at Oregon State University June 17-21. Those attending will choose among 90 different classes. Fresh tracks will allow an in-depth look at a 4-H area of interest, including career possibilities, subject matter and decision-making. Cost \$125. Partial scholarships are available. Application deadline April 19.

Natural Resource Camp—ages 14-18

Spend a week expanding your knowledge and sharpening your skills in natural resources through wise use and planning. The camp will be held June 16-21, Sunday-Friday at Hancock Field Station,

Lower John Day Valley, cost \$120. Partial scholarships are available. Applications are at the Extension Office. Application deadline for the camp is April 19, with selections made by May 15. The camp is limited to 25 campers.

Camp Counseling—grades 9-12

Do you enjoy the outdoors? Do you enjoy 4-6 graders? Can you tolerate mosquitoes and a little dirt? Do you want to know yourself better and enjoy a challenge?

If you answered yes, Camp Counseling may be your next great adventure. To participate in camp you must attend the Camp Counselor Workshop June 23-27. Application deadline is April 15. Applications are available at the Extension Office, cost \$10.

Planning to get married?

Discuss money, finances

Couples planning marriages should discuss finances and issues of money before the wedding. Some ideas to start the discussion are outlined.

It's likely that beneficiaries need to be changed on life insurance, and pension. A new will, or revisions in the current will, may be necessary to include provisions for the new spouse.

Study your options for medical and dental coverage. Read the brochures explaining your present coverage and talk with the benefits officer where you work. If only one spouse is employed, what has to be done to include the new spouse under the employed spouse's insurance?

If both spouses are employed and have health benefits available, review the benefits and costs. Decide whether each spouse will continue to be covered by his or her own plan, or if one will be covered under the other spouse's plan.

Make a list of property, including real estate and other investments. Also make a list of debts, including obligations such as child support from a prior marriage, that either is bringing

into the marriage. How are these to be handled? What if any property is to be mingled?

Whose responsibilities are the debts? As you plan your future budget don't overlook the money needed to pay for debts brought into the marriage, warns Alice Mills Morrow, OSU Extension family economics specialist.

Finally, discuss your financial goals and develop a budget for the first year. Talk about how the money will be handled? Will incomes be pooled? Will incomes remain separate? Who is responsible for such tasks as bill paying and record keeping?

There is no way to handle money in a marriage. How the partners feel about how the money is managed is important. Money management should enhance the relationship and value each partner's contributions.

When a couple marries, each brings to the marriage attitudes, values, and feelings about money. The attitudes, values and feelings of wife and husband are usually not identical. It takes time, effort and communication to arrive at a common understanding.

Spring car care necessary too!

You've finally gotten through the winter with yourself and your car in one piece. You had been careful to have your cooling system checked and serviced back in October.

You put your snow tires on before the snow was piled too deep for you to go out of the house. You even made sure you used winter strength windshield solvent. Indeed, you did everything by the book.

Now that spring is coming, you figure you can sit back and congratulate yourself. Right?

Well, congratulations might be in order, but you'd better not ignore your car. While it is true that winter driving demands the most from your car, hot weather makes its own special demands.

And while a breakdown in the dead of winter is potentially more dangerous than stalling out during a summer's drive, why neglect your car at all?

Proper and timely car maintenance will probably save you money in the long run, by preventing more costly repairs that arise from prolonged neglect.

Spring car care involves three major steps: Repairing problems caused by winter driving; preparing for the warm weather driving ahead; and finding a good automobile technician to do the jobs that are too complicated for you to do on your own.

After three months of ice, snow, sand and potholes, your car is bound to need some sprucing up. Any problems that you failed to repair last fall will probably be worse now, after a hard season of driving.

But the first thing you will notice is your car's overall appearance. A good spring cleaning, inside and out, is in order.

Your car's finish has been dulled by road chemicals and harsh weather; the inside of your car is likely to resemble a closet, with gloves, ice scrapers, cups and other items strewn out.

Thoroughly washing, waxing and vacuuming your car is a very good starting point. You not only see immediate results (always satisfying in this age of 20-year subway projects and 30-year mortgages),

you actually decrease your chances of being involved in an accident.

Studies have shown that a dirty windshield is distracting: Our eyes tend to focus automatically on the flecks and streaks on the windshield, instead of looking far ahead to spot potentially dangerous road situations.

And you do not need any studies to tell you how distracting a cluttered dashboard and floorboard can be—just try stopping your car with a soda bottle lodged between the brake pedal and floor, or cigarettes, gloves and loose change sliding around the dash.

But the greatest benefit of starting your spring car care with a general spring cleaning is probably psychological. You cross the threshold from passivity into action; you have taken that first step. Subsequent projects should be easier to do.

Winter driving has probably been difficult on your car's battery. You should remove the cables from the terminals and scrub all parts with a strong wire brush and baking soda and water. (Use a pen knife to scrape away any corrosives from the inside of the clamps).

Rinse everything with water. Buy new clamps if your old ones are almost eaten through. Reconnect the cables to the terminals (in the proper order). If you have an older, self-maintenance battery, add water as necessary.

Potholes can take their toll on your car's suspension and steering. Have you felt a difference in the car's steering, handling, and ride? You can test your shock absorbers quite easily.

Go to the front of your car and push down each fender. If you car bounces more than once, worn shocks may be indicated.

A qualified technician can install shocks, a project sometimes too difficult for do-it-yourselfers. Because having a friend follow you in his/her car to check your alignment is not always an accurate gauge, you should take your car to a good shop for testing if you feel that something is wrong.

Since winter driving is so taxing on your car's engine, spring is a good time for a "tune-up" (a popular somewhat outdated term,

given today's sophisticated cars). And you benefit by getting your car ready for the vacation season.

If you have noticed slower acceleration or rough idling, you probably need a tune-up. While smaller, older cars are relatively simple to adjust (points, plugs, and condensers), many people lack the necessary equipment.

And newer cars have computerized ignition systems that require testing equipment that home mechanics will seldom have.

Your cooling system will be asked to work hardest during hot summer months: The number-one summer breakdown problem is overheating.

If you drained your coolant last fall, chances are that everything is still sound. After the car has thoroughly cooled, remove the radiator cap and check the fluid level. It should be about one half inch from the top. (New cars with plastic reservoirs have a line etched on them that indicates the proper level.)

In any case, change your anti-freeze once each year. Remove the radiator cap, then loosen the drain valve (located at the base of the radiator) and allow the old fluid to empty into a basin.

Microwave meatloaf

- 1 1/2 lbs. ground beef
- 3 slices white bread, torn into pieces
- 1/4 cup milk
- 2 eggs
- 1/2 cup chopped onion
- 1 Tbsp. Worcestershire sauce
- 1 tsp. salt
- 1/2 tsp. pepper

Combine all ingredients. Spread in 9x5 inch ungreased loaf dish. Microwave at High 16 to 21 minutes, or until center is firm and has lost its pink color (internal temperature 145° to 150°) rotating dish after half the cooking time.

Let stand five minutes. Serves six.

13 to 25 minutes
1 1/2 lb. beef. Varies with moisture.

It's photo time!

4-H Photography Weekend is scheduled for April 26, 27, 28, 1991 at the Klamath County Extension Building, Klamath Falls, Oregon. Tentative schedule.