

How to Build Empathy in the Workplace

The training approach companies should expect from agency partners

- Listen first, speak second.
 - A term that is often thrown out that pertains to this one is active listening. And this goes back to making sure your people feel seen and heard on a human level. Too often, especially as bosses and managers, we think we have to have all of the answers or we jump in to try to "fix" things for our people. When really, in many cases, if we just take a pause and hear them out we get to a far better place much more quickly.
 - So how do we do this? First, zip it. Do not speak until the person is finished speaking. Show them that you are listening. Make eye contact. Sit still/do not fidget. Do not be distracted by what else is going on outside the room. Nod your head and offer an 'mm-hmm' every now and then.
 - Do NOT stop listening/be ready to jump in and speak. We all know what this looks like- you are chomping at the bit for them to just hurry up and finish so that you can offer your moment of brilliance.
 - Share stories of relatability but don't make it about you. Ask "how can I help?"
- Seek to know your staff on a personal level.
 - This is maybe one of the things that the pandemic taught us the most, and that is that we all need human connection and this includes with the people that we work with and as a result spend some much time with. The way to get the best out of your team members is to treat them as a whole person. We are not robots.
 - You do not need to be best friends with your staff. But you should know what is important to them and what makes them tick. Learn the names of their significant others and kids. Ask them how they spend their weekends. Know where they like to vacation. Take an active interest beyond just the job they do for you. This helps them feel like you care about them.
 - Make sure it is AUTHENTIC. If you try to phone it in/check boxes, this will have the opposite effect. We are not saying you do this with an agenda in mind on your end. That is the OPPOSITE of empathy.
- Respect your employees by having the tough conversations.
 - Confrontation is a tricky thing- some of us are better at it than others. But no one really likes it. It is really important to effectiveness and productivity at work, and to having a highly functioning team. One of the ways to make it easier is by treating your employees with empathy and having the conversations in a timely manner so that any issues don't get "too big".
 - If you have been practicing active listening and you have gotten to know your employees on a personal level, this should make these conversations easier because the employee feels like they have you in their corner. Give the feedback directly, but respectfully, and then decide what you are going to do about it. Come up with a plan to address it together. Make sure you hear the other party out and/or give them time to come back after they have had time to process to continue the conversation with you.
 - One of the things about tough conversations is that people hurry through to get them done, pat themselves on the back, and then don't revisit/hear the other party out. This is not an empathetic approach.
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- Ask for feedback and mean it. Then do something about it.
 - Whenever we

