

June 2019

I am a brand-new supervisor and I am not well-versed in the subject of “supervisory skills.” Can you recommend important tips I should follow? I do not have time to read a bunch of books.

Here are a few tips to get you started, but they are not a substitute for more education. Be sure you know what your job entails and the performance expectations your manager and her/his manager have for you. Ask for a week to shadow a seasoned supervisor who is in good standing with your organization. This will allow you to model priorities, communication, and leadership style. Think about who can mentor you later when the going gets tough. Take time now to read company policies, the handbook, and the performance review system so later you are not caught off guard by violations, either employees’ or your own. Know who and where the experts in your organization are located, and create an easily accessible list of these individuals. Your EAP can also be a great resource. Brief videos on leadership can be found on the ERC website [Leadership Training Video Series](#). ERC also offers a one-day workshop on the [Fundamentals of Leadership](#) that can provide a solid base of skills needed for your new role.

Can the EAP work with an employee who is having trouble as a proper “work culture fit” in our organization? Although hired with great expectations, things aren’t working out so well. We believe this employee will eventually leave because of not being in tune with our workplace values and style of work.

Employers are often concerned about work culture fit in hiring. There is a good rationale for desiring employees whose temperament complements that of the organization. However, when cultural fit does not appear after hire, working with the EAP may help discover whether issues of concern are symptoms of treatable conditions resolvable with counseling or coaching. Culture fit in many organizations is not well defined, and it can be a reason for loss of valuable talent. Many job interviews help identify employees who are adaptable, articulate, and able to persevere or show high energy, confidence, and passion for the products or services offered by the organization. If evidence of these attributes diminishes later, an underlying problem may exist that the EAP can help resolve. An assessment is the way to find out. Turnover is costly and disruptive, so it is a smart move to discuss your employee’s performance issues and hope for an equitable solution that prevents loss of the worker.

Everyone seems to know that money is not the best long-term motivator of employee productivity in the workplace. What is?

It is usually the case that several factors reinforce each other or compound their influence to motivate workers. In other words, no single motivational factor alone is likely to work in isolation very long. Research consistently points to having a good manager, feeling like one is making a difference, doing something good for others, and personal growth opportunities as strong influencers, but the factor that is consistently highest is peer motivation or influence. Having a positive workplace with opportunities that incorporate peer influence in shaping motivation can yield good results in maximizing performance. But be cautious; allowing this motivational factor to become part of your work culture without considering all the other important factors that influence motivation will yield poor returns.