

# Graduated Discipline

## Getting the Results you Want

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# Graduated Discipline

A Method to Establish a High  
Performing Cohesive Workforce

# Discipline

Training that corrects, molds, or perfects the mental faculties or moral character

Source: Meriam Webster Dictionary

# Biggest Misconception Concerning Discipline

## Discipline is NOT Punishment

Discipline is a method to communicate need for improvement and establish expectations for correcting behavior, together with the employee

# Why do Managers Avoid Disciplining Employees?

- Do not want to be seen as the 'bad guy'
- Do not see the impact upon the staff
- Aren't comfortable in the process
- Do not want to invest the time necessary
- Believe things will just 'blow over'
- Do not understand corporate policies

## Staff Turnover Costs

Poor discipline at the minimum will lead to employee turnover resulting in expenses that potentially could have been avoided

Estimates from a number of surveys and studies regarding turnover costs range from 50-250% of a separated employee's total benefit package

A cost avoidance of this level would significantly add to the financial success of any organization!

## Factors Contributing to Staff Turnover Costs

- Lost Productivity
- Interviewing/Recruiting Costs
- Impact upon remaining staff
- Training: Lost of separated Associate and expense of training new associate
- Severance Costs/Unemployment
- Lost value in knowledge and experience
- Lost time for many in process

## Statistics to Consider

National employee turnover average for US  
Businesses in March 2014 was 3.2%  
(Source Bureau of Labor Statistics)

75% of all hiring is to replace separated staff not for  
new positions



# Importance of Quality Discipline

Address items impacting Performance and/or Harmony within the Department

Establishes Expectations for all to Follow

Effort sets Environment for Compliance

Critical to Maintaining Consistency

# Consequences of Poor Discipline

- Performance suffers with lack of accountability
- Organization is at risk for employee litigation
- Morale of staff suffers for having to deal with unacceptable behavior or performance
- Quality staff may be lost in their pursuit of better environment
- Staff/individual unaware behavior or performance is unacceptable

# Common Mistakes of Discipline

- Waiting too late
- Being Inconsistent
- Making it 'Personal'
- Not Being specific with the expectations
- Failing to Fully Understand the Circumstances
- Not Making connection to behavior's impact upon organization
- Failure to Document
- Failure to Follow Up

# Graduated Discipline as a Solution

Graduated discipline is a method designed to set expectations for all associates in regards to discipline and accepted behavior

1. Communicate Expectations in orientation
2. Clearly Outline steps to everyone
3. Change Perception of Discipline
4. Staff Becomes Familiar with Process

# Management's Responsibility

- Fully understand and communicate corporate expectations for performance and behavior
- Eliminate emotion from the process
- Complete proper Due Diligence in compiling the facts
- Be Proactive in addressing issues in a timely manner
- Provide necessary resources to facilitate required improvement
- Maintain respect for the individuals privacy and feelings
- Demonstrate fairness and consistency in all discipline

# Step #1: Verbal Warning

This is the opportunity to sit down with an employee that is failing to meet expectations in behavior or performance

1. Be Prepared- Fully Document Circumstances
2. Communicate that associates participation is required and desired in the process
3. Establish Realistic Goals/Benchmarks
4. Respect Employee's Privacy
5. Provide Positive Environment

# Keys to Verbal Warning

Must communicate that the goal is to eliminate issues with first discussion

Provide Feedback Regularly over next few weeks

Acknowledge Positive Performance/Behavior

Clearly Communicate Consequences of Further Performance/Behavior Issues

Solicit Employee Input for Correction

## Steps #2: Written Warning

A written warning escalates the level of discipline by documenting a failure to improve or the continuation of unacceptable behavior

Most difficult step based upon the effort to date to avoid further discipline-Do Not Avoid!

Follow same steps of Documentation as Step #1



# Keys to Written Warning

Focus on Improvement-Do Not Focus on Emotion

Meet Opportunity Head on-Do Not Delay

Verify Understanding of Future Consequences

Provide Additional Resources to Employee

## Step #3: Suspension

Unfortunately there are those occasions where the efforts to improve performance or behavior is not accepted by or responded to by the employee requiring measures to demonstrate that circumstances will not be tolerated

Again, Focus on Circumstances not the Emotion

# Keys to Suspension

Employee's Privacy Must be Respected-Do Not Publicly Acknowledge Suspension

Set Expectation that Performance/Behavior issues can be overcome at this point

Provide Environment for Success Upon Return

Do Not Tolerate any Comments from Peers

## Step #4 Termination

There are times when an employee will not respond to all efforts to improve performance or behavior issues

There is no other alternative than to terminate the employee for the long term success of the organization

This is critical for all parties involved: Staff, management and the organization

# Graduated Discipline can only succeed with a commitment from all parties involved:

Management

Human Resources

Employees

All Must Focus on the Effort to Correct Issues Associated with Performance and/or Behavior

# Summary Items to Remember

Discipline must be timely and consistent

Focus on behavior/Not the individual

Follow the process and document all actions

Evaluate what went wrong and identify areas of improvement

# Questions?

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