

Performance Linked to Work/Life Balance

Many banks are learning the hard way that whether it is in their banking operations or on their frontline teller ranks, performance issues are not always linked to the lack of job skills but may also be impacted by poor cause identification, inefficient work schedules, continuous overtime, lack of adequate transportation or other personal issues that flood over into the worksite and diminish their performance. For over 21 years, as Edcomm Banker's Academy has presented the latest in staff development options, we have recently recognized the importance of identifying and dealing with how to balance the best approaches to both work/life worlds for our client needs through management development.

To address some of these concerns, there has been increased interest in course offerings that include work/life segments within supervisory development programs that help to identify diverse stress-related behaviors and to modify the effects that challenge work teams, which left unchecked, will cost banks money.

How does a banking organization balance the need for top performance expectations with top performance realization?

Three key steps:

1. Extend Flex Hour Options to All Employees

Many banks have discovered that there is a wide variety of potential employees looking for less than full-time hours and who are extremely flexible in their willingness to cover a wide variety of the bank's work. Use this group as an opportunity to supplement your existing employee population who may want the choice for occasional overtime vs. continuous overtime (especially if they are hourly/non-exempt). As customers are still expecting broader service days and operating hours, offer flex hour or job sharing options into the work plan - proactively. To this point, consider how well the security benefit factors associated with a permanent (background checked) flex-timer will apply as stringently as ever in hiring. This option is far safer, for sure, than the risk connected to temporary employees, in general. It also works well with the bank's exempt (salaried) positions whose backgrounds lend themselves to professional tasks yet whose lifestyle requires less-than-full-time hours.

2. Identify Work Standards and Check Them Often

Because banking is under continuous change, we acknowledge that workflows are more quickly dated and are in need of continuous reviews. At a minimum, managers, who are trained in operations forecasting, capacity planning and strategic planning will readily identify the line's or the individual worker's potential to produce – anywhere in your bank. The more this is accomplished, the more all of your managers and workers will be become aware of opportunities to save time, save energy and save money. Develop ways to make results tangible in,

as many aspects of the bank's business lines as possible, so that achieving results are the target *all* the time.

3. Sustain Quality Though Maintaining Well-Trained Employees

Just as with getting and keeping clients, it takes a long time to train and develop good workers who know the quality performance values of your bank. Treat them as *real* resources. Your organization has invested in them and it costs more money to hire and re-train new ones, no matter their level in the bank. A fully trained full-time employee may offer many more years of quality performance for an opportunity to shift (down) work hours – especially during a temporary life situation. This would be far more valuable to your bank than losing the employee because your HR policies & procedures were too restrictive or unresponsive. Loyalty is a rare commodity in employees these days. As employers, those banks showing their hand first can make the difference in their bank's being the “employer of choice” for current bank employees looking for a better company.

Edcomm Banker's Academy has been in the business of preparing banking professionals to address every possible hurdle in order to succeed in its business mission. Since 9/11 however, we have seen an increase in serious supervisory concerns directed at workforce performance and the need to train managers in coping with how to help work teams achieve peak performance around individual employee life issues.

All of the flagship training programs on managing operations, leadership, project management and communication are just a few of the courses that should be incorporating exercises in effectively managing these types of situations to a mutually successful resolution (between employer to employee). Too many supervisors lack the professional skills to uncover, to start dialogue or to follow-up on new behaviors that may mean trouble for not just that particular employee, but for others in the work group or work site. And it starts at the departmental level. HR may be too far removed or too threatening for an employee to open up to. Most especially, as a financial services organization, align your need for employee safety and security through updated and interactive work/life training segments that have incorporated these new dimensions into their management development by offering techniques for progress in areas, which until now, have been either missed or ignored.

As an industry, financial institutions will profit best through continuously addressing all aspects of banking news from the “Soldiers and Sailors Act's” impact on its military family customers, to the real time fallout that banking institutions are facing when their employees fail and just training alone - won't fix the problem.

Dr. Linda Eagle is Founder & President of The Edcomm Group Banker's Academy—a 21-year-old education and consulting firm dedicated to serving Banks, Credit Unions, Money Services Businesses and all areas of the Global Financial Community with thousands of generic and customized training programs in areas such as BSA/AML,

Regulatory Compliance, Teller Training, Systems Training, Sales and Service Training, and many more.

[Edcomm Banker's Academy](#) is headquartered in New York, NY. For more information, email linda.eagle@edcomm.com or call 888.433.2666/+1.212.631.9400.