



CT Technology Transfer Center

Supervisor's Signpost 2016-1

BEING A PUBLIC WORKS ROLE MODEL

What is a role model?

A role model is someone who serves as an example. They exemplify professional behavior and image. They recognize that what they say and do is imitated by others.

Steps to becoming a better role model

There are a number of different ways that managers can set the right example for their employees:

- Treat your employees with respect. Tell them you appreciate their efforts and hard work.
- Provide honest and descriptive feedback to help your employees improve or sustain their performance; encourage feedback from them as well.
- Keep commitments. Never promise to do something that you cannot deliver.
- Never ask someone to do something you wouldn't do.
- If you make a mistake, own up to it. Don't cover up the mistake or blame others.
- Be mindful of how you respond to change. Create an outlet for employees to voice their concerns, rather than participating in unconstructive gossip.
- Follow the rules. Rules and policies are important to have, but if you do not follow them, how can you expect your employees to? Many supervisors think policies are for them to set and their employees to follow. As a supervisor you model what's expected.

Role Modeling in Action

An important aspect of role modeling is to have consistency between your words and actions. Persuasive words may help to influence, but the buy-in of your employees is gained through your actions. Your credibility as a leader depends on being able to do what you say.

With leadership comes responsibility. You need to lead your team to achieve results and ensure they work effectively together. Role modeling inappropriate behaviors can lead your team to become disengaged, dysfunctional and unable to produce the desired outcomes. Role modeling does not mean that all your employees mirror you identically, but that you nurture specific behaviors that then become positive workplace habits. As you lead your team, keep in mind the saying “the example you set is the example you get”.

Why does this matter!

Managers rely on their employees to get things done. They are not able to do all the work themselves; therefore, they must create an environment that helps to produce results. This type of culture does not just happen organically; managers must consistently and deliberately demonstrate the type of behavior they expect to see from their employees.

For more information on the T2 Center’s Educational Programs and other copies of the Supervisor’s Signpost, visit our website at: www.t2center.uconn.edu

Special thanks to the University of Florida (UF) Training & Organizational Development Department for permission to reprint.

