



Feeling the effects

Liz McKeon tackles poor morale amongst a salon team

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Poor morale undermines the commitment of employees, hurts the product and service they offer and can alienate the clients.

It can arise for many reasons such as a difficult economic climate, a personality clash or poor management - all of which may result in a high stress environment and this is the last thing you want your clients to experience.

Poor morale can be so encompassing that, after a while, it is difficult to know how to find its source, and thus how to reverse it. What may start just as individual apathy can deteriorate into a generalised infectious problem that spreads throughout the entire salon or Spa.

In spite of the insidiousness of poor morale, the good news is, it is reversible!

If your salon is suffering from poor morale and you are unsure why, start by asking your therapists. Assess the feelings and opinions of your team. Try to understand the resources people need to make their work and work environment more satisfying.

It is important to identify people's expectations, their wages and benefits, how the internal communication system is working and whether your management style is effective.

Are you the centre of a morale problem?

Personal problems, work stresses, for example, will affect a team at all levels, including the manager. So, do you know how to get yourself back on track when your morale is the worst in your team? Don't let paths of communication break down when you are feeling low.

Consider your options, such as:

1. If possible, **explain your circumstances** to another senior manager in order to build new understanding and make a fresh start.
2. Explain your morale problem to your team, but **take a positive approach** and tell them your plan for getting back on track, asking for their help.
3. Poor motivation often occurs as a result of a lack of salon structure or discipline. **People need a framework** so that they know where they are in the wider scheme of things. It provides them with a route for getting decisions made or making special requests.
4. Map out and publicise a **clear salon structure**. You need to structure a good balance between structure,

flexibility and open communication in all aspects of running your business.

A salon's most valuable resource

Managers can do so much to improve morale by getting to know the team, making yourself available when therapists need to talk or share a problem, valuing staff for their particular skills, passions and knowledge, and most importantly, helping your team members to develop their potential and supporting them in their ambitions.

Your staff are the salon's most valuable resource. By creating an environment of open, constructive feedback, staff will feel inclined to co-operate with you as you drive your salon forward.

Tackling poor morale is not a once-in-a-lifetime activity; it needs to be sustained over a long period of time.

Communicating in these ways will show that you are in charge of your salon, you care and value your team, and you are committed to providing a satisfying place to work.

Liz McKeon is a Consultant, Trainer and Business Coach specialising in the beauty industry. For further information telephone **086 386 1243** or visit **www.lizmckeon.com**

