

According to a survey, personal illness is no longer the chief reason for work absences. What is now leading the field is “stress” and “entitlement mentality” (i.e., “I’ve worked my tail off; I deserve time off”). What is the message for employers? Pay attention to the work environment and your employees’ well being. Data: CCH Inc. Survey of 401 companies employing 800,000 workers.

ENVIRONMENT VS. MOTIVATION & MORALE
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I was talking with a supervisor from one of the Centers we work with and during the course of the conversation he mentioned that most of their performance problems were not with new employees – they were with long-term employees.

He said that as time goes on skill levels and the desire to do a good job deteriorate. He also said it was his opinion it was just part & parcel of this type of job – that it was the demands of the job such as long hours, high volume workloads, etc. causing this situation.

Although his opinion is not without merit, it is a common misconception among many managers. Working long, hard hours can cause stress but it doesn’t necessarily cause poor morale and productivity. What most often drags down employee motivation and productivity is MANAGEMENT STYLE AND ENVIRONMENT– not job content/demands. People can and will happily work long, hard hours if they receive the support, recognition and respect that shows them that what they are doing makes a difference and they are valued in the organization.

If you see the skill levels and motivation of employees begin to deteriorate take a hard look at the workplace environment within your Center. Are employees treated with respect? Are they recognized for good work? Are they given support and encouragement by management? Are they treated as a valuable member of the public safety team? Are they provided with on-going training opportunities to enable them to enhance their job skills? Are they given salaries commensurate with the demands of the job? Are their opinions and suggestions solicited and listened to? Are lines of communications open – are they allowed to participate in policy and procedural changes? Are the standards of performance clearly delineated and strictly (but fairly) enforced?

If your review finds your Center lacking in any of these areas take aggressive steps to cure the problem(s) and change the environment. Look toward long-term solutions – not quick fixes. Your reward will be a more productive, stable and motivated workforce.