

E-Tool #6 Hosting a Gab Session



Motivators encourage openness and communication with employees. They do this by being good listeners. After all, the best communications in any organization come from the bottom up. The five points in the following FREE eTool – Hosting a Gab Session – will help you solve all or most of your organization’s problems using your employees’ involvement and ideas. Great solutions are probably sitting dormant in the mind of even your lowest-ranking part-time employee. Here’s how to prepare yourself to listen to what they have to say. Good luck!

HOSTING A GAB SESSION

Frequent “gab sessions” with your employees gives them the opportunity to discuss what’s on their minds, and provides you with the opportunity to listen. Remember: Most business-problem solutions are nestled collectively in the minds and imaginations of your employees, so having an “open door” attitude where anyone can say what’s on their mind creates a more positive work environment. Here’s a step-by-step guide on how to create an environment of good bottom-up communication:

- **Remove your biases from what your employees are saying.** Let them say it all without wanting to make a point so badly that you interrupt or direct them before they’re done. The talker can get things off their chest and let off steam. The freedom to regularly practice this, commonly known as “catharsis,” is a big reason to continue working for a particular boss.
- **Once they’re done talking, repeat back what you’ve heard, particularly their comments about their emotions or feelings.** Do this with empathy; that is, let them know that you *understand* how they feel and why. You do not necessarily have to agree with them on every point, but what they want most is to know that you’ve heard them and understood their feelings.



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- **Ask for suggestions on what should be done about what they've said.** Your employees need to be encouraged to bring you some possible solutions as well as their thoughts and suggestions. Remember, all of this good listening is applicable to job anxieties, job conditions, complaints, positive suggestions or anything that the employee wants the boss to hear. Sessions such as this are crucial for showing your support.
- **Thank them for their openness and tell them what, if anything, you and they will do in the future about the matter.** Have a plan, and remember that the most effective plans with the greatest potential for success are the ones created by the employee.
- **Note: If you need help with your listening skills, take a parenting course offered in your area.** Often referred to as "Parent Effectiveness Training" (the P.E.T. Program), its basis is that being an effective parent starts with being a good listener. To do this, you have to first discipline yourself for listening.
- **Remember that there are just a few significant relationships in your daily life and being your employee's boss is definitely one of them.** No employee will sing the praises of the owner's goal and objectives if they don't trust or like the owner. As the employer you not only have to concern yourself with selling consumers but **selling your employees that YOU are the employer of choice.** Stay approachable to their efforts at communications and you will walk in to your salons one day and find a whole bunch of now engaged workers who initiative, create, produce and provide answers for your business issues before you even know about them.....OMG..how frightening!