

IS YOUR DOOR REALLY OPEN? EXAMINE YOUR OPEN-DOOR POLICY, IS IT WORKING?

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Every single employee policy manual has some version of it, the “Open-door Policy.” Letting that policy collect dust on the proverbial policy bookshelf can be a costly mistake for you and your people. What does an open-door policy mean? For me, it is knowing that should an issue arise, my staff can walk straight into my office, email me, or message me on MS Teams with a concern immediately when it comes up. I am approachable, accessible, and genuinely care about their feedback.

Have you ever had an employee leave for another job because the schedule offered was a better fit for their work/life balance, or left for a more challenging opportunity? What if that employee approached you first, asking for more challenging projects or requested to change their schedule? If they felt like you were not approachable or that your answer would be “no” anyhow, then it is time to revisit your open-door policy.

Constantly tell your people that you want to hear from them and really listen. Say it in staff meetings, say it during evaluations and reviews, say it whenever you get the chance. Think of it like an internal marketing campaign for workplace happiness. Campaign slogan, “We want to hear from you, my door is always open!” I once had a supervisor who closed every email with, “Have an idea? I want to hear it.” I remember thinking that was a little cheesy then, but now I admire and understand. It is a constant flashing beacon that their voice matters.

It isn’t just workplace concerns that come from an open-door policy. Some of what could have been huge hurdles for our company to face never came to fruition because a staff member recognized it and shared it with me, and we got ahead of the problem. The folks with boots on the ground, who have their hands in the details, may be more useful for giving feedback, solutions, and efficiencies than you are. That is the way it should be with a well-organized manager who is delegating.

Here is your inspiration to open your policy manual and read your open-door policy. Is it working for you? Do others know it exists? Maybe poll your staff on what they’d like to see out of an open-door policy and build a fresh new one for the start of 2024. Collaboration in workplace happiness inspires passion and commitment.