

Introduction

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Most of us here at the Tattered Cover, involved in the business of bookselling, found our way here because of our love of books, our enjoyment of people, and our desire to work in the atmosphere of openness, trust and respect, which we found at the Tattered Cover and have helped to foster over the years. Few of us came to the store with the intention of being managers or with much training in it, but we have evolved and grown into these jobs as the opportunities presented themselves. As we and others have taken on the added responsibility of management, much of the training we have received has been, and needs to be, "on-the-job", as we meet in groups with other managers, plan and problem-solve together, and learn from each other and from the General Managers and Joyce the way management is done Tattered Cover-style.

This is a process that does not happen overnight. Regardless of the other life experiences that we each bring to our jobs here, learning to be an effective manager in this particular environment takes time, and, in fact, is an on-going learning process that continues for as long as one works here. While being an effective leader is never an easy job, it can be exciting and personally rewarding to take part in an organization such as ours in a leadership position.

Welcome to the world of ambiguity and shades of gray, to a shared process based on many different minds, many different approaches, and yet a common passion for what we do. What follows is not a simple directory of "do's" and "don't's", but rather a foundation on which to build your skills as a manager at the Tattered Cover. You will come across very few absolutes in your job as a manager here, but where a specific and definitive approach is necessary, we have tried to provide it. On the whole we are not looking for a manager to "take control, charge forward, and make decisions!" Rather, we need managers who can be both patient with the "process" and courageous with change; who are willing to listen and also to speak up; who are critical thinkers, but not negative critics.

We believe that it is only in tending well to each other that we will tend well to our customers, and that it is only in working together that we will continue to make the Tattered Cover an extraordinary place for our community and for our colleagues. None of us ever performs the job of manager perfectly. We all make mistakes and experience frustration and disappointment. As lofty and as exciting as our goals are, we must remember that we work with a limited amount of time, energy, and resources, financial and otherwise. We cannot implement every good idea that comes our way and yet we must always stay open to them, and to a continual reassessment of our priorities. There will always be more to do than you can do, but together we can achieve and have achieved great things.

In the face of all this we must underscore the importance of taking good care of yourself, as well as the people you work with. At times, while it is important to "do extra" and to be there as a leader until the job gets done, it is also important to know your limits and your needs. Letting go of stress and staying healthy have a critical impact on your ability to do your job well. So don't neglect these things in your eagerness to take on your new role.

This Management Training Program has been put together with the help and combined experience of many people. We believe it to be an important tool to help you approach your job with a clearer sense of direction and a greater sense of understanding of management, Tattered Cover style. But this, too, is a process in which your feedback and ideas are essential ingredients. Your thoughtful participation in this training, in the day-to-day life of your job, and in the store as a whole has a tremendous influence on the course we take. Thank you for taking part in it.

Conduct

While Joyce would like each manager to bring to their job their own individual style and personality, there are also expectations that sometimes a manager must set aside their own personal preferences and style in deference to the Tattered Cover style of management. It can undoubtedly be one of the most challenging and, at times, frustrating parts of the job. How do we each create a relatively comfortable mix of the personal and the professional?

An important part of your job as a manager is to be a model of the Tattered Cover philosophy of honesty, trust, and respect. A manager is committed to an open, inclusive process based on patience, tolerance, and compassion rather than an unnecessarily secretive and exclusive use of power. Even in casual and informal exchanges with your co-workers it is expected that you will exemplify the best of the Tattered Cover philosophy. Your choice of language and demeanor should reflect this.

Where that can get a bit confusing is in the social ways we relate to each other as colleagues and friends. As part of the social mix of this wonderfully diverse environment, it is, of course, fine for a manager to form friendships with his or her colleagues. It is imperative, however, that these friendships do not intrude on one's professional judgements and responsibilities. A manager cannot give preferential treatment to a friend or to a relationship that they may have here at the store; nor can they be less attentive and helpful with someone they may not like. They must do everything they can to avoid even the impression that they prefer one colleague over another. Sometimes this may mean altering the ways you normally act with friends and normally express yourself socially in order to be the most effective manager you can be.

When it comes to new employees at the store a manager should be even more thoughtful in his or her approach to that person. This new employee does not know you as a person and is not familiar with your style or your sense of humor or play. They are in a vulnerable position, uncertain of what is expected of them and what is acceptable in this new environment. A manager should refrain from socializing outside of the store with or dating an employee new to the store. It is important to allow a new employee at least six months time to acclimate to their new Tattered Cover environment and to feel more comfortable here, and safer, in possibly declining an invitation to socialize.

A manager should not date or become involved with an employee whom they are supervising. While we expect that you would act in a professional manner while at work, regardless of your relationship, the perceptions of others can be very difficult and damaging to both you and the person with whom you are relating. So, it is our preference, if at all possible, that managers not supervise people with whom they are in a relationship.

A manager should set the standard for honesty, fairness, and respect for others. This standard goes with you whether you are at work or at play with your colleagues. Discretion and confidentiality must always be maintained – these do not get left at the store at night when you leave the store premises. They go with you. And, if you choose to socialize with your colleagues after hours, when it comes to store “conversation” you must deport yourself in a manner that does not undermine the confidentiality and discretion that is part and parcel of your job.

We are all human. Being a manager does not mean that you don't have feelings, preferences, likes, dislikes, frustrations, resentments, and insecurities. It only means that you will try every day to be aware of these things and to set them aside so that you can be available and supportive to all of your colleagues equally. That will enable you to be the best manager you can be and for you to experience the most satisfaction you can at a job well done.

Management Styles

From the days when Joyce was the only manager, through our slow and steady growth into a system of general managers, and then on to the addition of middle managers, we have always approached this aspect of business life in a uniquely personal yet professional way.

Our goals with management now, as in the past, are to provide the staff with three essential ingredients: **LEADERSHIP**, **SUPPORT**, and **OVERVIEW**. As managers we must balance the needs of the store with the needs of the individual. In doing so, our job is to encourage and to foster a healthy working environment, physically, emotionally, and professionally, so that we can work together to achieve the financial and spiritual rewards of a great bookstore.

There are many schools of thought in terms of the best management style, ranging from a dictatorship to a collective. Our approach has never been a traditional one, but it has been and is based on a consistent and thoughtful approach. We choose to create an environment that is inclusive rather than exclusive; an environment that flourishes because of involvement and input by all; a business based on trust and respect, for each other and for our customers.

LEADERSHIP

How do we lead?

- By being a role model: First and foremost, we lead by modeling the behavior we believe in. A manager should exemplify an attitude of openness, compassion, fairness and courage. A manager should exemplify the best in service. It is not required nor expected that a manager should know all the answers, but rather be committed to the Tattered Cover way of working together to find the best solutions at the moment.
- By envisioning new possibilities: As managers we must always be looking for new ways to grow the business and new ways to do the business; be open to changing our systems, our process, our approach to staffing in ways that help the store to grow, while maintaining our philosophy.
- By supporting others to do their best.
- By inviting and encouraging others to participate
- By taking responsibility and then being willing to share it with others.
- By being leaders of change; being courageous and constructive with change and the fears and stress that comes with it.
- By speaking up, when silence might be easier, to share your ideas and feelings and/or to represent, on behalf of others, their thoughts and feelings.
- By a willingness to set one's own ego aside and not to be too personally invested with a particular outcome to a situation.

SUPPORT

A good manager supports by:

- By listening well to others; gathering information and feelings.
- By representing your department well to others.
- By helping your colleagues when needed, without being asked.
- By providing your department with needed equipment, supplies, space, training, time and people to do their job, and when they are not available in the ways that we would like, then by helping your department to find the best ways to function given the resources you have.
- By appreciating, complimenting, sharing the limelight with others.

- By treating the people in your department, and in other departments, as colleagues – with respect, trust, and a recognition that they are individuals with personal lives and needs.
- By being patient with different learning styles and working styles.
- By encouraging growth in others, by delegating and sharing the tasks, by providing sufficient training, feedback, and support so that others can be successful in growing their skills and competencies.

Overview

Managers provide an overview by:

- Being a conduit of information, both into and out of the department.
- By posing the right questions, so that staff remains mindful of the interconnectedness of the departments to the store as a whole.
- Acting respectfully in regard to other departments.

One of the challenges to you, as a Tattered Cover manager is to lead the staff during times of often rapid and uncertain change, in both the retail industry in general and book selling in particular, we must find ways that will allow the store to *survive financially with its values intact*, as one of this city's great institutions. Moreover, this must be done in such a way that those booksellers who spend part of their lives with us will see their tenure there as one of the better things they've ever done.

This should be accomplished in three ways. First, the Tattered Cover needs managers who will be professional in their conduct with each other and with the staff. By adhering to this and other basic principles upon which the store is founded, we facilitate the work necessary to lead this store effectively. Second, our managers must give more and more consideration to the question of leadership and find creative ways to lead an intelligent staff. Third, Tattered Cover managers are uniquely situated to dramatically and positively renew, every day, the store's outstanding reputation for staff and customer care.

This handbook is designed to give the store's managers a foundation for their jobs. It is not designed as a "how-to" for all circumstances. but is rather a philosophical orientation that will result in a decision-making process that best serves the store as a whole.

The manager's relationship to the store.

Each manager is a representative of the store and an "agent" of Joyce. While each brings a unique perspective and insight to the work, it is not the role of the manager to necessarily assert his/her opinion in any given situation. Instead, a manager's individual expertise and skill should be directed at discerning the approach appropriate for the store, consistent with Joyce's vision of tolerance, understanding, and generosity.

The expectation is that you, as a manager, will relate to the staff, the customers and the decision-making process in ways that are good for the store; not necessarily what you would personally do in any given situation. An important expectation for leading at the Tattered Cover is creating and maintaining a professional and social environment that encourages the staff to make those sacrifices in their lives (money, weekends, nights, and holidays) in order to stay at the bookstore. As a manager, you hold a responsibility to meet the expectations that have helped the Tattered Cover to become a world-class bookstore. This cannot be done without world-class booksellers delivering exceptional service. The manager's job is to help create them through training and then by maintaining an atmosphere in which world-class booksellers can thrive. This requires an expansion of self-awareness and the ability to step away from a personal view and discern a solution or approach consistent with the store's philosophy. In this way we as managers are responsible for maintaining the "Tattered Cover experience" for staff and customer alike.

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of the attractions of working at the store is that we are not required to assume a stereotypical "corporate" identity. The social aspect of the store is conducive to the free-expression of its staff. This is an important store value. It helps make the store a humane and enjoyable environment. It also allows us to meet the needs of a broader spectrum of readers. However challenging it can sometimes be to lead such diversity, it is one of the central tasks of a manager.

As managers, however, the spectrum of possible behaviors is much narrower. You must adhere to a stricter definition of professional conduct so that you may better lead and earn the respect of the staff. It is often the case that it is inappropriate for a manager to express personal views or personal feelings in regards to store and personnel issues, even if you are off the clock at the time. In all circumstances you must maintain a tone of voice, vocabulary and body language that indicates competence, maturity, sincerity and a willingness to lead constructively. You should not show frustration, anger or impatience with staff or customers.

When in the company of other managers in private, more personal displays of emotion are possible. "Blowing off steam" in this way is sometimes necessary. The danger is that this practice begins to substitute for actual problem-solving. Complaining can take on a life of its own (it's easier than work) and is demoralizing to staff and colleagues. Professional Tattered Cover conduct allows for managers to blow off steam as needed and where appropriate but asks that the same frustrations be immediately addressed constructively. Moreover, in conduct with other managers, there is no place for personal animosities. As personally rewarding as some of our friendships can be at the store, you will not always enjoy the challenges you face as a manager, nor will you always enjoy the people you work with. But strictly speaking work-place relationships are , and must remain, professional.

Similar standards of professionalism apply for manager meetings. Managers should discuss staff and customers with respect. You should listen with respect to the views of other managers. Your energy in meetings should be directed at accurately and fairly discussing any given topic with a mind toward forming a Tattered Cover solution. It is the store's expectation that in meetings you will constructively engage your creativity and intelligence. It can sometimes happen that the group, as a whole, can slip into a tone that is more glib than thoughtful, more emotive than constructive. Be vigilant against this and don't hesitate to ask the group to refocus.

Decision-making style

Managing at the Tattered Cover is distinctly different from many other management models. The store is process-oriented and hands-on. The managers act as coaches, mentors and facilitators helping to foster good bookselling while at the same time infusing the work with a sense of fun and *esprit de corps*. Managers do not issue orders or edicts, nor do they make other decisions and simply impose them upon the staff. Tattered Cover managers do solicit the input of everyone by whatever means we can devise and then, in conjunction with other managers, choose a course that best meets out needs. For example, it is rare that Joyce tells anybody what to do or makes important decisions in the life of the store alone. She explains the needs or issues and allows required actions to flow from discussion. This can be a labor-intensive method, but the underlying belief is that people neither need nor want to be told what to do and would prefer to be involved in seeking solutions to store issues.

Given the difficult choices the store faces, some decisions will be less popular than others will. In those instances, it is even more important that the decision be understood, even more important than it necessarily be liked. The managers should work to involve staff, frame the questions accurately and accept staff input fairly. Keep in mind that resistance to change is commonplace. Engaging and sincerely involving the staff in the process should go far in helping everyone feel that their participation in the life of the store matters.

It is also true that many choices must be made during the course of any given day to best run the store that can't or even shouldn't wait for everybody's input. When called upon in these circumstances the manager must be

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prepared to make a decision. However, this should not be confused with the employment of force, power or “pulling rank.” That is not Tattered Cover style. The managers are here to help make happen what is necessary in the best way possible to insure the store’s success and enhance the morale of the staff.

Training

All managers are responsible for training and developing the staff. Therefore, you need to enjoy working closely with individuals and groups. It is, perhaps, the most important thing you do because it affects everything else. Effective training will enhance the quality of our booksellers and minimize the time devoted to addressing poor performance.

The store has experienced significant differences among new-hires with each class, season and year. This happens in spite of the fact that the personnel team has been using the same basic criteria to choose booksellers for twenty years. Changes in the world around us affect the applicants that come to the store. Moreover, in training, they react to each other and develop a personality, as a group, all their own. Those teaching cannot rest on assumptions about their own skill or the efficacy of the store’s methods. With patience and creativity teachers should learn to quickly “read” the group and modify their style accordingly.

You must not “give up” on an employee out of frustration with their learning style. You need to make every attempt to teach each student. Some might fail, but not because you failed to take the time to try to find a way to make it work.

You should also recognize that training does not end when the class ends. It is ongoing. Whether it is new technology or new consumer habits, the store is constantly changing to meet its readers’ expectations. When the store adopts new technologies, changes software systems or implements new procedures it is your responsibility to devise a way to continue educating booksellers—new and old alike.

Also be mindful of the fact that, as a manager, you teach every time the staff watches and listens. What you do each day must be used as if it were a classroom. Please comment on your Co-workers’ work. Comment frequently. Praise. Compliment. Acknowledge. We must try to make constructive feedback as routine as saying hello. The staff must be taught that managers will comment on their work and that they can safely comment on management. Learning, changing, becoming a better bookseller and becoming a better manager are important ongoing processes that allow us to grow as a community and a business.

Addressing Staff Performance

One of your rewards as a manager is that you get to recognize and to help develop someone who thrives at the store. After all, creating good booksellers is our mission. Working in your favor is the fact that everyone desires to do his or her job well. If the staff has been provided with a clear articulation of the store’s expectations as well as the proper tools to meet these expectations we should be successful in that mission.

It has never been easy to accomplish. Hiring, training and retaining staff consumes enormous amounts of time and energy. Each person brings a set of unique skills and needs. Each person causes a ripple through the rest of the store. Perceiving these subtleties as well seeing the bigger picture is essential. Using that insight wisely is a great skill. Recognize that your thinking must remain fluid and that you must maintain a willingness to observe and to learn; develop different approaches to familiar as well as unique problems. After all, one of the best qualities of the Tattered Cover experience is the store’s desire to find a “fit” for everyone that allows that person to excel.

Nevertheless, as hard as we strive to accommodate the broadest spectrum of personality types, it is still difficult for some to thrive at the store. For a variety of reasons, any one person may not be suited to the nature of the

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the expectations, or the store's culture. Managers are responsible for identifying these "no matches" and, with trust, tolerance and compassion, trying to resolve them in a way that is unique in the world of business.

When you find that a person is not meeting the store's expectations your first reaction ought to be to recognize that the person does, indeed, desire to do well. Perhaps something about that person's training experience (our teaching style, their learning style) missed the mark. The store will retrain as best it can, trying to tailor this offer to best match the needs of the individual. You should also restate the store's expectations, speaking to the staff person with the specifics of your concerns to better illustrate what you mean. You should present this information without negativity. The staff person is not in trouble. Since it is impossible to teach everybody all the time, we make provisions for those that have been "missed."

Sometimes this does not work as well as we hope. That may be okay. Given the store's commitment to finding the unique and special—a reflection of that broad reading public—we expect and accept a wide spectrum of performance. The essential point is often whether or not a person is contributing something useful to the store and the experience of the customers. A person may be less than ideal in some respects, yet exceptional in others. Managers must try to find a way to not only keep the staff person but also to foster the mutual respect among their peers necessary to make their professional relationships successful.

If the staff person does not contribute positively in a significant way it might then be necessary to consider termination. While not enjoyable, this part of the process can be done to the benefit of the store and the employee. After all, if the relationship between the store and staff person is not working, keeping them on is a disservice, both to the store and to them. The challenge for you is to craft an approach with the staff person that is honest, fair and clear. The store's goal in regards to termination is that there must be respect for and attention to the process. Ideally, both the store and the staff person will come to recognize that moving on is the best resolution.

Of course it may happen that the staff person disagrees with an assessment that casts them unfavorably. This should be a rare occurrence, because a successful separation should follow a process that meets our goals of fairness and clarity. In situations where disagreement exists it may be important to take extra care to find a way to demonstrate the store's concerns in a manner the staff person will accept. In the event that there is still disagreement the managers, working together, are the final arbiters. Management must define the expectations the store has for its staff and then determine how successful a staff person is in meeting them.

There are a number of methods for working through this process. It usually begins with an informal "heads up" conversation. Much of what managers do regarding performance is maintaining informal conversations with their staff about what is working well or not so well. These do not need to be documented. We assume that the staff person forgot part of their training, heard it wrong or is having a bad day. This is all part of the normal hubbub of people and their lives.

The process should become formalized with documentation if a pattern or a consistency of style emerges which is at odds with the Tattered Cover approach. Documenting the specifics of a behavior and your responses to them is a useful tool for several reasons. It creates a record that functions as a reference for previous events or conversations. Sometimes documentation can serve as an agreement or a clearly defined understanding of the store's expectations of a staff person and, finally, any documentation serves to support a decision to sever employment. Please take documentation seriously. If we ultimately determine that someone is not a match, but have no documentation, we can do nothing, thus prolonging an unhappy situation.

Documentation does have legal significance and employees are able to read their personnel files. Be professional. Anything you document will have to be accurate, factual and behaviorally specific. Good documentation includes descriptions that illustrate or exemplify our concerns. They include observations of

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concrete behaviors, not just feelings about someone's attitude. It is typically not necessary to document an entire conversation word-for-word. Summarizing the important points is usually sufficient.

As a manager you will struggle with the process. The Tattered Cover does not have a "one process fits all" methodology. The store tries to craft an approach that serves the store and the staff person. It can vary in both method and outcome (two people consistently late in the same ways; one is perceived to suffer consequences and the other is not). To an outside observer, it can appear inconsistent. This is in part due to the fact that we cannot discuss personnel issues with the staff. This makes it hard for managers to control the content of the "grapevine." More importantly for managers, it is also true that the circumstances surrounding a staff person's performance can vary significantly. The Tattered Cover recognizes that events in the lives of the staff will impact their performance. When addressing poor performance take these life events, if present, into consideration. It may be possible to make temporary accommodations that are supportive during a period of crisis or distress. The store, while needing to make decisions that are good for the store, will try to find a way to accommodate an individual's circumstances. Other organizations may set rigid expectations and make no allowances for the fact that life can be inconsistent. The Tattered Cover, and therefore the managers, wants to make it work. That is why the store's response to certain behaviors may appear inconsistent. However, it is of greater importance that the process we use to arrive at solutions be consistent and fair, and we must not be swayed from this by popular opinion.

Try to craft this process carefully and with subtlety. The store is developing booksellers, not imposing a rigid model of performance on them. A person is more likely to be resistant if they find the manager aggressive or unappreciative of the effort they do make. Determine how they learn, hear and respond. Tailor the approach as uniquely as the individual being approached. This is hard work and becomes increasingly difficult with fatigue and frustration. Regardless, you must continue to find creative solutions to repetitive, intractable and age-old problems, sometimes for people difficult to like and for whom all patience is at an end.

One option is that some other part of the store may play to someone's strengths and minimize his or her weaknesses. A job behind the scenes for somebody that doesn't enjoy customer contact is a possibility. The danger here is that transferring a person who doesn't have the personal or professional skills to perform well to another department isn't a solution. We should only do this if we believe the person has the potential to be successful elsewhere in the store.

Customers

In many respects the appropriate course of action with customers is clearer than with staff. The store's desire to do whatever is necessary to please the customer is well understood. Still, many managers often wonder how far they should go in appeasing the angry customer and sometimes struggle with a course of action to their liking as opposed to Joyce's liking. Fortunately there exists some basic philosophical approaches that should be useful in most situations.

Trust the customer. Trust that they are accurately describing what happened, what they initially wanted and where we failed to meet their expectations. Trust what they tell us we can do to come to a resolution. Sure, there will be times you think someone is lying and there will be times when you are astonished at the world some people live in. However, Joyce has always made it clear she recognizes that to some extent everyone lives in their "own world." Accordingly, our efforts to sell books well to the widest possible spectrum of readers means that we will make every effort to meet their expectations.

The Tattered Cover does not strictly adhere to "policy." We operate using guidelines that we find allow us to do our best work day-to-day. It is good to have mutually agreed-upon procedures to facilitate operations. These guidelines were developed to best meet the needs of most customers most of the time. However, it is impossible to meet everybody's expectations all of the time adhering to any set of guidelines. For that reason the store will significantly modify its guidelines or policies when doing so better meets an individual's needs.

It is to put a book in somebody's hand. When a customer feels we have failed them in some way, we do whatever is in our power to right that sense of wrong. You should feel completely comfortable to bend, stretch, mutilate and modify the store's usual practices to better serve one of its readers.

Customers are not at fault. Don't treat them like problems. The energy brought to a customer interaction greatly affects the experience. It is often the case that the customer is "keyed-up" a bit anticipating some sort of stall or double-talk when they come with a complaint or what they fear is a particular special need. Managers must not feed that dynamic by arriving on the scene anxious about "what the trouble is." However anxiety-provoking any given situation, it can be helpful to keep in mind that the store is likely to do whatever the customer needs as soon as we can discern what is expected and how we can meet it. The customer is your opportunity to surprise somebody with just how far the store will go to please him or her.

Of course we are often presented with difficult to solve situations as we do say "no" to some customers. Nevertheless, your instinctive reaction should be to do whatever it takes to meet the customers' expectations, even if it means breaking a few "rules" or cutting a shortcut through a complicated procedure. The store has the ability to re-group after the fact and clean it up or craft a better future response for unique situations.

The Basics

What you have just read should help to orient you in your job as a manager of booksellers at the Tattered Cover. Part of the store's success as a business and "social experiment," as Joyce describes it, is entrusted to you. It is a unique endeavor. It can be frustrating. It can be fun. And if there is any shorthand suggestions of qualities that will help you be successful as a Tattered Cover manager, it would be to find in yourself and develop in your staff patience, tolerance, generosity of spirit and action, trust, service and community.

Teamwork

As a manager you are a member of a number of teams. You are a member of your department's team, as well as, the whole store's team, and, too, you are a member of a team of other managers. You must coordinate these various teams in your day-to-day working life.

The success of the Tattered Cover is really based on teamwork. This has been the case over the years as Joyce has invited each of us to combine our efforts in creating the best bookstore and the best working environment that we possibly can. You do not work in a vacuum. You, alone, are not responsible for answering all the questions or solving all the problems that come your way. You should, on a regular basis, be working with your staff and with other managers to most creatively and effectively be doing your job. We truly have a "great collective head" here and you sell your department and the store short, and do yourself a great disservice, if you try to handle it all on your own.

As a manager you must be prepared to work actively with members of your department and with other managers. Whether within your department or with the other managers with whom you work, keep these ingredients in mind for a healthy team.

1. **Good communication** – it should be honest, two way communication, done on a regular basis through group meetings and one-on-one. It is the responsibility of the manager to present to their department information regarding the whole store picture, as well as to take back information to the general managers and Joyce from their department.
2. **Involvement** – the involvement and participation of every one on the team is essential to the health of the team and the store. We involve people in the life of the store in many ways: by the way we listen to and act upon suggestions and feedback, by trust and respect of an individual's opinions and talents, by sharing the workload, the challenge, and the successes, which leads to the next ingredient.
3. **Shared responsibility and problem-solving** – tasks should be allocated fairly and subject to periodic re-evaluation. The manager should solicit input in regard to staff members' preference with tasks ("would you be able to/ like to/ be willing to" depending on the circumstances) though these must be balanced with the overall department needs and resources. Delegating tasks is an important way to involve team members. When delegating keep these thoughts in mind:
 - Don't just delegate the unpleasant or boring tasks. Delegate all kinds of tasks. This sharing of responsibilities helps to involve interested and capable staff, as well as to encourage professional growth and better Tattered Cover knowledge and pride in the store.
 - Be clear about what exactly the task involves and what the desired results are.
 - Be clear about the timeline involved.
 - Ask for and clarify any questions your colleagues might have: will the timeline work? What does she/he need to get the job done? Equipment? Time? Space? Information?
 - Check in with the staff member before the project completion date – how are things going? Do they need help? Etc.
 - If the project is completed well, then thanks and acknowledgement are due. If not, then problem-solving should occur. What is needed both for the person and the project? Feedback both ways is essential.
 - Delegate "do-able" tasks, appropriate to the skill level of the staff member. In the future more complex tasks can be taken on as the staff member demonstrates their competency and their interest.

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4. **Shared successes** – The store’s success is a result of many people working together, not one person or one department. The number one motivation for people in terms of their jobs is “recognition of work done.” It is so important to compliment, acknowledge, and celebrate the fine work that gets done by many people every day. We are all in this together and that’s why it works so well. It is very important for a manager to keep this in mind when working with colleagues, and also when being queried by the press or representing the store to the community or other book people in the business. This is our store. It works because we work well together.
 5. **Leadership by example** – The most effective leaders are those who lead by example. There are many ways to do this. Of course, you should display a good working knowledge of your department’s systems and procedures. But, keep in mind, nobody knows everything, even managers! Use the collective knowledge of the department and other departments and managers to make it work. Even more important, however, is for managers to be leaders in terms of attitude. A leader who models openness, trust, a willingness to take on challenges, flexibility, support, critical thinking rather than negative criticism is one who is bringing the essentials of leadership, Tattered Cover-style, to the job.
 6. **Support and encouragement with store education and training, resources, etc.** – Managers should be aware of the available training tools and resources for the people in their department. Whenever possible, people should be encouraged to increase their overall knowledge of the store’s workings, their department’s workings, and the book industry in general. Managers are expected to take part as is appropriate in the training of staff. When, for whatever reason, desired staffing or resources are not available as requested by a department, the manager is a key element in helping the team work as creatively and efficiently as they can with what they have.
 7. **Respect for different styles while maintaining a commitment to quality** – One of the strengths of the Tattered Cover is our willingness to work with a variety of styles and approaches to the business of selling books. The challenge in an inclusive environment such as ours is to respect differences while maintaining a common goal of excellence. This requires a team to listen and work supportively with one another but also to adapt and compromise when necessary. This can be a difficult process at times as we work through many gray areas of appropriate and inappropriate behavior given different personal styles. We must be as clear and consistent as possible, willing to work collectively yet also willing to confront constructively when personal style differences interfere with our common goals.
 8. **Shared mission, goals, and purpose** – From the application, through the interview, through training (initial and ongoing), through department and all-store meetings, and in our day-to-day work we repeatedly reference, directly or indirectly, our mission here at the Tattered Cover: We want to bring people and books together in a profitable, ethical, and socially conscious way, and we want to create an environment, both for ourselves and our customers, of respect, trust, and service. Every department in the store contributes to this and must always be looking for ways to further these goals by improving not only what we do but how we do it.

9. Communications

One of the most important aspects of our jobs as managers is that of communication. Informally and formally, through store meetings, department meetings and manager meetings, one to one, written and verbal – in many different ways, we try our best to share and to gather information. The efficient operations of the store, staff morale, and a healthy environment all depend on good communication.

Does your staff have the information necessary to do their jobs? Do Joyce and the General Managers have the information necessary to make the best planning decisions? Are you, as a manager, effective in communicating your interest, caring, support, and leadership to your staff?

Communications is a never-ending issue. It is with us every day. We can never do it right for everyone, all of the time, but we must each continue to try our best to communicate effectively.

What does that mean? First of all, Be aware that the primary way in which you communicate with another is non-verbally: 93% of how we communicate is through our body language and tone of voice. 93%! So, your behavior must match your words; if it does not, then it will be your behavior, not your words, which communicate the message. If, for instance, someone asks you to show them how to do something, and you “say” that you don’t mind doing that but you look irritated or frustrated or bored or angry then the stronger message by far is that you, indeed, do mind. If we’re happy to help our customers, we need to smile and show it. If we’re happy to help a staff member with a problem (and, as a manager, we certainly should be) we need to smile and show it.

We choose our behaviors. Consciously or unconsciously we decide how to behave. It is always our choice. You must choose behaviors which communicate interest, openness, and caring. These behaviors would be: attentive eye contact, an open body posture, smiling, and nodding, while someone is talking with you. Don’t interrupt. Don’t finish sentences for people. Listen to your tone of voice. Whiny, exasperated, arrogant, impatient, or angry tones of voice are not going to help you be an effective communicator or manager. If you sound worried about a particular change in the store or your department, but you say, “it’s fine,” the larger message that you have just communicated is one of worry. In that case, it would be better to say, “I have some worries about this or that, but I think it’s going to be fine.” Or, “I think we ought to give it a try.” That way people don’t have to second guess what you really mean by what you are saying.

Make sure your message is clear and concise. Choose language that will be understood by the people with whom you are communicating. When considering, remember not to use inappropriate language such as profanity, racial slurs, or sexual references. All business related messages should be professional in both manner and tone and should be related specifically to work related issues.

Try to keep your message brief and to the point. Don’t include unnecessary information; try to stick to the point; don’t wander. Also, be aware of distractions that may make it difficult for your message to be understood. If you are speaking, make sure you speak loudly enough to be heard clearly. Speak in a well-modulated voice; don’t speak too quickly or too slowly, and don’t mumble or slur your speech. If there is outside noise, you may have to compensate in order to be heard and understood. If you are writing, write clearly or type.

Be aware of the environment around you. If you are communicating information of a sensitive nature it is better done in a private setting. Personnel issues, such as work performance, attendance problems, getting back to someone who has applied for a job within the store, etc., all can be potentially difficult for someone to hear. They may feel very vulnerable and be much better able to hear what you have to say if you choose a setting that is private and can allow for a safe exchange of feelings and ideas.

Remember to listen attentively. It's essential in order to communicate well. Pay attention to what is being said, the body language and tone of voice of the person who is speaking to you. Is there an underlying message there that they are not articulating? Maybe you need to ask a question in order to get at it, such as, "you sound frustrated (or angry or bored or hurt, etc.) – can you tell me more about that? Is that what you're feeling?" If they are fidgeting, frowning, mumbling, or not making eye contact, they are definitely telling you something, even if their actual words are to the contrary. Once again, behaviors speak more loudly than words.

Don't interrupt the person speaking to you. Give them ample opportunity to completely express their thoughts and feelings. Respond to any questions or comments as directly and honestly as you can. If you don't know the answer or the correct course of action, let them know that you will get back to them with it, and then be sure to do so!

It is often helpful to ask questions in order to determine that your message has been understood. Don't ask questions that can be answered with a simple "yes" or "no," but rather ones like, "what do you think about what I've been saying?" or "how does this feel to you?" or "what would you like to change or add?" or, "How do you see it?"

If you are responsible for communicating an important message, you should usually deliver it yourself. If you decide to delegate that responsibility to someone, you should ask yourself what kind of a communicator are they? Be aware that there is always the possibility that the person delivering the message may slightly change the original message. The more the message is passed on from person to person, the more the chances increase that the original message will change substantially.

As a reminder, be aware of the following when analyzing your own communication skills:

1. Communication is a two-way street. Express your thoughts well and listen openly and attentively to what is being said to you.
2. Formulate your message so that it will be easily understood.
3. Keep communication informal when possible. If the message is serious or sensitive, you should discuss it in private.
4. If someone else is passing on information for you, consider how well they communicate. Will they be trusted and believed?
5. Refrain from inappropriate language or references.
6. Be aware of your body language and tone of voice. Remember that how you communicate can have even more impact than what you are communicating.
7. Always communicate in a professional manner. Communication should be work related. Make every effort to set aside personal bias. Attempt to be pleasant even when you disagree with what you're hearing. You might consider responding to a statement that you don't agree with in the following manner: "I understand your point of view. Have you ever thought about it from this point of view? What do you think about that?" Take the "but" out of it, i.e. "I understand your point of view, but..." and think about replacing it with "and," which is more inclusive and less argumentative.
8. Remain focused on your message. Remain unemotional even if you are dealing with a sensitive topic. It is fine to acknowledge emotions or the awkwardness of a given topic or moment: "This seems to be bringing up some feelings for you. It's okay," or, "This is awkward for me to talk about," or, "This may be uncomfortable for you to hear." But remain professional in your presentation.
9. Be aware of outside distractions. Compensate for excessive noise or physical distractions between you and the person or persons with whom you are communicating.
10. Understand that there may be potential implications from body contact. A handshake might be appropriate while a pat on the back or a hug may not be.
11. Listen attentively. Ask open-ended questions; be concerned and interested, and show it!

- ✓ 12. Respond fully and directly to the person; always remember to get back to them if you have told them that you will do so.

Change

Change is a part of life. Whether we eagerly await it, or we resent it and resist it, it is a part of our personal and professional lives. Much has been written on this subject, advising us on how best we can live with and grow with change in our lives. I will not attempt to add much here, though we do feel it is extremely important to underscore two main thoughts for your consideration. First, change has always been and will always be part of our lives at the Tattered Cover. It is not a new thing. It is not a bad thing. It is an absolute and vital part of our past and future successes. And, secondly, while we live with it and encourage it, we also know that it is never easy, and requires great care and attention from all of us, especially managers.

It has been said that systems that are stable are closest to death, and there is much truth in that, especially in the competitive world of bookselling in which we find ourselves. While change and innovation has always been essential to our success, we have also had to balance that with periods of stabilization. So, that too is an important part of making change work. It is best not to be changing everything, all at once, all the time, though sometimes it may feel like that is what's happening.

All of us, at one time or another, experience difficulty with change. We can be fearful and unsettled about it; we can feel resentment and betrayal. While we may "know" intellectually that change always brings with it opportunity, it can also, nonetheless, trigger a sense of loss and anger. Change is an emotional issue, not just an intellectual decision. As a manager, you must give people time to plan for change and opportunities to be involved with decision making around change. So, the processes around change need to be as open, as inclusive, and as participatory as we can possibly make it. As managers, we need to make change an ally.

Any healthy organization must not only accept and adapt to change, but must learn to anticipate it, plan for it, and grow from it. As a manager you must learn not only to be comfortable with change, but to seek it. You have a tremendous ability to influence how change is perceived by those you work with. While you help to create and support a steady environment you also want it to be an environment that fosters change and innovation within it. Get people involved! Get them thinking! Model a behavior that welcomes change and encourages your department to be creative in thinking how we can improve what we can do.

We do not expect you as a manager to have all the answers, but we do expect you to become coach and facilitator of the people you work with. Together, we can come up with the solutions we need. It is important to remember that it is okay to make mistakes. As we deal with change and encourage innovation, and since we do so without the aid of a crystal ball, misjudgments and mistakes will happen. It is essential in our environment to regularly be reassessing the changing needs and interests of our customers and our staff. As we, as a group, or as a manager, try to anticipate and respond to these changes we can only do our best to make the best decisions possible. While we would like to move forward with no mistakes or missteps or overlooked processes, it happens. We must learn from it and go on. In fact, if we are not occasionally making mistakes, then we are probably not taking enough risks, and change is always a risk and must not be shied away from.

As we contemplate a change, we must always be asking these questions:

- Why is this change important?
- What is the perceived problem it will solve or the proposed benefit it will produce?

- Who will this change affect? Do they perceive the problem or the benefit in the same way? If not, what communication is needed in order to be working towards the same goal?
- What support systems need to be in place to both support the individuals affected and to evaluate the progress of the change?

Remember, no change is ever without its problems, and probably some we never anticipated having. So, it is only realistic to expect bumps along the way and to be ready to help and support people through them. It is important, though, not to panic, and to give a new idea enough time to really work.

Goals

The Tattered Cover is an amazing construct of many parts, all working together by offering the finest in service and selection. Every department shares the same basic goals: Excellence in service, co-worker relations, professionalism, and knowledge. But each area translates these goals according to their department's particular working challenges.

Your goal, as a manager, is to provide the leadership, support, and overview necessary to help your department and the individuals within it to function as creatively, efficiently, and harmoniously as possible.

As we work toward these larger goals we need to translate them, as concretely as possible, into smaller, daily or weekly goals. It is not enough to say that the goal for a particular department is to "be caught up" without defining what "caught up" means. Does it mean 24 hours? One week? Two weeks? Is everyone in the department working towards the same definition of "keeping up"? Often, you may find out, people have very different definitions of the same goal. Sometimes even the concept of being "caught up" is a threatening one for people who, perhaps even unconsciously, prefer the security of having lots to do. They may become anxious about the idea of staying caught up in their department because then they may worry about having enough work to do.

It seems it is human nature to fall into habits, patterns, and ways of thinking that are familiar to us. We like to know what to expect and may become very uncomfortable when a new idea is introduced and we are unsure as to how it may affect our daily lives. It is important to be aware of this so that we do not get stuck in unproductive and unsatisfying ways of working. A department must continue to evolve and improve its systems and operations, always with the goal of increased service and sales in mind. And, the individuals within the department need opportunities to contribute their skills and energies in the most meaningful ways possible.

If the goal is to "operate more efficiently", everyone needs to understand what that means. It may include organizing the department differently or require a different system or different equipment. It might mean working with less staff or more staff, less hours worked by all or more hours.

Whatever the goals are, it is important to break them down into achievable tasks and behaviors that can be understood by all. This is a process and should be an inclusive one, so that everyone is working together toward the same goals, with the same tasks and behaviors in mind to get them there.

Some departments have budgets, such as Marketing; some have sales goals, such as buying, some have deadlines, such as Returns. It is important to check in with your General Manager to see if your department is working within any specifics such as these. But every department manager must keep in mind the number of staff FTE's (Full-Time Equivalents) in your department. Is it enough; too much; how does it change seasonally or daily, if it does? This information is essential to successfully plan for store and department needs.

It is healthy for each area of the store to meet at least once or twice a year to evaluate their success in achieving their goals, and, if appropriate, set new ones. Part of your role is to help your co-workers keep in mind the larger store goals as they focus in on their particular department goals and needs. You do this by working closely with your General Manager, so that you can stay aware of the overall store plans and goals. Your role here as a two-way communicator, between your department and the whole store, is an essential ingredient in helping us all move forward in the same direction, towards the same ends.

Motivation

The number one motivation for most of us is the feeling that we are appreciated for the contributions that we have made to the store. In fact this is important to employees in other lines of work as well. In a study done by the US government working with thousands of people over a fifteen year period, they found the following ten motivational factors to be of the utmost importance to employees:

Factors in Employee Motivation (Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics)

1. Full appreciation of work done
2. Feeling "in" on things
3. Sympathetic help with problems
4. Job security
5. Good wages
6. Interesting work
7. Promotion and growth potential
8. Management loyalty to workers
9. Good working conditions
10. Tactful discipline

Although salary is certainly one of the ten motivational factors, it is not the number one factor. In order to get a better understanding of how this survey relates to the Tattered Cover, we decided to ask a number of Tattered Cover employees why they originally wanted to work at the book store and why they continue to work at the store once they are hired. We discovered that many of their answers were similar. We found that almost all of our employees take extreme pride in being associated with the Tattered Cover; in fact, most of them feel a deep sense of ownership for the store. Being part of the Tattered Cover family and having a common purpose is also important to our employees. Finally, working in an atmosphere where they are trusted and appreciated is also extremely important.

All of these things have one thing in common as far as a manager is concerned; they are all things a manager can control to some extent. By carefully utilizing communication skills and various management styles which emphasize listening and working together, you can hopefully create an atmosphere in which people feel trusted, respected and useful.

You can and should consciously choose a management style which is not dictatorial but rather positive and inclusive. We are all working together toward a common goal and everyone can be a productive member of the team. This doesn't mean, however, that everyone's role is the same. An effective manager should be able to lead and guide the team. The manager is ultimately the one who must decide how responsibilities are shared, but you can accomplish this in an open, honest, and flexible manner with maximum input from all. For example it is preferable to ask someone to do something rather than tell him or her.

As a manager you should also be aware of how communication skills can affect someone's motivation. As a general rule you should keep communication positive. Take advantage of all opportunities to use positive reinforcement. Whenever you observe someone performing well, be sure to praise them or thank them. Too often, employees only hear from managers when they are performing poorly.

In addition, remember that your body language is as important as your verbal message. Don't forget to smile and make eye contact. Don't fidget or shake your head from side to side, especially when you are trying to be positive. Don't point your finger at someone even if you are upset. Don't position yourself so that you are talking down to someone (you're standing, they're sitting). Intonation is also very

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important. Many times a dissatisfied employee does not react negatively to what is being said to them, but rather to the way that it is being said.

People who are not motivated can create a number of problems for any manager. These people usually require additional supervision, they tend to have problems with absenteeism, their productivity is low and they provide sub-standard customer service. In addition, their behavior can be difficult on their co-workers. It is often true that if a person has a problem with motivation, they are not happy with their job. If they are not content, they are probably going to complain, and usually they will complain to co-workers rather than to management. Many co-workers will attempt to avoid these people or adapt their individual style in order to coexist with these people. Ultimately the dissatisfied workers will affect the overall morale of everyone. They are not pleasant to be around, they don't work well in a team setting, and they tend to view things from their perspective only.

The best way to prevent a motivation problem from escalating into an overall morale problem is to continually be aware of all the potential causes and not to allow these causes to become a factor. An effective manager should be able to recognize these potential causes in advance and attempt to alleviate them. Even if a manager does this, there is no guarantee that the people who work with this manager will be satisfied. A manager cannot motivate people; people motivate themselves. All a manager can do is attempt to create an environment which is conducive to people motivating themselves.

In order to accomplish this you need to determine what is important to the people you are supervising. It may seem obvious, but you should make every effort to know your people. Spend as much time as possible working with them. The more time you spend with them, the more you will understand what is important to them. In addition, be accessible. You should be available to answer questions or to discuss concerns which are important to people working with you. Whenever you talk with any employee, pay close attention to your communication skills and make an effort to establish a pleasant work environment. Even if you do this, you may still have discontented and unmotivated employees. If this situation occurs, then you must deal with each person individually.

Before you can effectively deal with someone who is not motivated, you must determine why that particular individual is not motivated. Remember that each of us is unique and that each of us has different priorities and different incentives. Never assume that you know what an individual needs or wants. In order to determine this, you need to discuss the situation fully with the person involved. Find out what's important to them. How can that fit with what's important to the store? When talking to anyone who works with you, utilize the same communication skills and management styles we discussed earlier. Design questions which will lead to open conversation. Ex. – “How are you feeling about this?”, “What would you like to see happen here?”, “How do you see yourself participating?”, “What do you need that you're not getting now?.” Refrain from asking questions which can be answered with a simple ‘yes’ or ‘no’ answer. Try to determine what they expect and what they want. Allow whomever you are speaking with to complete their thoughts fully before you respond. Listen with concern, empathy, understanding, and interest to what they are saying.

When responding, answer directly and honestly. If you disagree with them, explain why. Try to keep your statements inclusive rather than oppositional, i.e., don't start off with “I disagree” or “I don't think you're right about that.” But rather, “I appreciate what you're saying and I see it somewhat differently.” Even when you disagree, remain pleasant. Make every effort to keep personalities out of the conversation. Finally, always thank them for their input.

Since the ultimate purpose of your discussion is to create an atmosphere in which the employee will want to motivate themselves, it is important to establish some specific goals for both you and the employee. The goals should be mutually agreed upon. The benefits of achieving the goals should be

clear and desirable. They should also be reasonable and realistic. If the goals are properly formulated, they will establish a sense of purpose for the employee.

Once you have established goals, don't assume that everything is fine. You need to follow-up periodically in order to ensure that the situation has been resolved. When you observe the person involved working, don't hesitate to praise them when they are performing well. Don't ignore them; try to keep yourself as accessible as possible so that the employee can come to you if they feel their situation has not improved. Always make an effort to be concerned for each of your co-worker's well being, and always be sincere.

There is one final thing to think about. It is important to realize that there are certain things you cannot control as a manager. Occasionally you will find yourself in a situation where an employee is unhappy with a store policy that you cannot change. In these cases all you can do as a manager is explain the reason for the policy, be empathetic with the employee and hope that the individual will understand.

If you trust people and treat them with respect, the workplace will be more pleasant for them, and your co-workers will hopefully be more content and motivated.

Remember, when it comes right down to it, we do not really manage or motivate people – rather we try to manage the environment, and support and appreciate the individuals in it. Then their motivation to do good work should most naturally come from them.

Creative Problem-Solving

Problem-solving is a part of the regular workday for just about everyone on staff, but especially for managers and coordinators. When a co-worker comes across a problem that stumps them, they come to you. Some problems are immediate and require a manager to make an on-the-spot decision while others allow for a process of problem-solving.

What is the Problem?

The first step in problem-solving is to figure out what the problem is that you're trying to solve. An effort should be made to make this process a challenge, not a duty, an annoyance, or a confrontation. Don't get defensive or entrenched. Stay open. Don't automatically shut down or disregard the problem because you don't care for the person who is presenting it, or perhaps the way they are presenting it. Don't disregard it out of hand because you don't happen to think it's a problem – they think it is and you need to hear them out.

Especially initially, it's important to try to think about the problem on its own terms, without constraining it to "how things are done" or "policy." Thinking in these terms can limit your solutions and, if you're dealing directly with a customer or a co-worker, you can seem more interested in policy than in their problem. Once you have figured out what the problem is, there are several tools available to help you in the solution process.

Creativity

The main tool that you have is creativity. It does not mean that you need to invent a whole new way to do something, though sometimes that is what is called for. What it usually involves is thinking of new ways to combine things (ideas, process, materials) that have not been thought of before. Your creativity is limited when your thinking is limited (as to "That's the policy"). Real creativity in problem-solving can make the difference between regular Tattered Cover service (which is by no means shoddy) and legendary Tattered Cover service. Don't be afraid of trying something new; of tailoring a unique solution to the unique problem with which you are faced. Take whatever time you need to explore the options. Keep your ego out of it. Be willing to re-evaluate and re-consider previously held beliefs and actions. Consult with other managers and co-workers, as appropriate. They may offer an entirely different perspective on both the perceived problem and possible alternatives. You can think of the rest of the tools presented here as "things" to combine when problem-solving creatively.

Tools

An important tool for problem-solving is your knowledge of Tattered Cover systems. Knowing the various parts of our organization and how they relate to each other is important in figuring out what is and isn't possible when faced with a particular problem. Also, in situations of both quick decisions and solutions requiring a longer thought process, it is important to keep in mind how your solution may impact other related systems or departments. For example, if you decide to send a customer a book at Tattered Cover expense, but don't follow through with letting Customer Shipping know the details, the customer may get billed, defeating the purpose. If you decide to change a procedure in your department you must be aware of the impact that may have on another department.

Another tool at hand is your manager colleagues. Take problems to your group. One of the reasons that we take a team-based approach is that, again, it gives us more ideas and options to work with. Taking a problem to your group will give you all kinds of ideas on handling it, ideas that you might never have

thought of on your own. And, when it is not a private issue, and it is appropriate, use your staff. Get their ideas!

Lastly, just as there are many resources for booksellers, such as Book-in-Print, CD-ROM, Internet, e-Tattered Cover, you have this manager's training manual, the Employee Guide, and the Emergency Book to help you manage. Since you already know what's in this manual re-acquaint yourself with the Employee Guide. And, here's a list of what procedures are covered in the Emergency Book (kept in the Personnel office in CC and in LoDo:

- ◆ Customer injuries on the premises
- ◆ Ride Arrangers
- ◆ Worker's Compensation
- ◆ Leave of Absence / F.M.L.A.

Thinking about problems as challenges can turn them into opportunities. Creative problem-solving can make an angry customer happy and turn a bad situation into a productive process. It can take a frustrating and potentially divisive co-worker or inter-departmental problem and turn it into an effective team solution for all. We must remember that problems, or perceived problems, are part of everyday life, and an attitude of open, creative problem-solving helps us all to benefit from these experiences rather than feel besieged by them.

Representing the Tattered Cover to the Public

Every staff member of the store is a representative of the Tattered Cover and should consider this in the ways he or she presents the store to the community, both while at work and in their private life. Managers in particular are seen, both from the public's point of view and from their co-workers' points of view, as representatives of the store. This role covers a wide spectrum of possibilities, ranging from simply interacting with the customers and vendors with whom we come in contact, to conducting tours, answering inquiries from the media, dealing with authors and speaking to groups in or outside of the store.

When representing the Tattered Cover to the public, there are a number of issues to keep in mind:

- You should maintain a professional look, both in your dress and in your manner.
- The Tattered Cover has a positive relationship with the community and this is an opportunity to reinforce that.
- It can also be an opportunity to extend our thanks to the community, for their support and their interest in the store.
- Sometimes it can also be an opportunity to articulate the store's mission and to talk about what we do here. We do not want to sound like salesman here, nor do we want to boast. We are not perfect but yet this is a wonderful enterprise comprised of many hard-working, creative people, and we are providing a unique blend of ideas and service.
- It can also be an opportunity to educate a bit about the book business, and the importance of independent bookstores in it. We never give out our sales or financial numbers or divulge the reading tastes of a particular individual, but we can share the challenges of our business in a positive way.
- When speaking to groups be prepared:
 - ◆ Know something about your audience
 - ◆ Use humor, it's a helpful tool
 - ◆ Choose appropriate anecdotes
 - ◆ Don't answer what you don't know, but offer to find out and get back to them
 - ◆ Be as service oriented as you would be at work
- When speaking one-on-one socially:
 - ◆ Don't launder gripes in public
 - ◆ Represent the store positively – our image has a huge impact on us
 - ◆ Be proud – you're part of making this place unique and wonderful

When speaking with the media be very careful with what you say. It's easy to let your ego slip in here and try to appear knowledgeable and quotable. But remember, you don't actually have to answer the question asked. Don't be pressured into answering something you don't feel comfortable speaking to. It's okay to say "I don't know . . . I'll find out what I can and get back to you." – no matter what their timeline is. We have a good relationship with the media and we're willing to be helpful, but feel free to defer to Joyce or a GM whenever you are not comfortable with the situation.

In speaking with our industry colleagues, both in bookselling and publishing, it is important to remember that the Tattered Cover does not have all the answers. While it is fine to try to answer the questions that they may have of us, it is also fine to ask questions of them. We are eager to learn new approaches to bookselling and to expand our understanding of our publishers' concerns.

We do not, however, share certain Tattered Cover information with anyone outside of the Tattered Cover, such as people from the media, in the industry, customers, our friends, and family. Information

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such as sales figures or the reading tastes of a particular customer is private information and should be protected by us.

It is fine to be honest, yet tactful, when asked about the effect the chains, the internet, etc. have been having on the Tattered Cover. Often people see the “busy-ness” of the store and look at its size and this leads them to believe that we are unaffected by all the competition around us. This is an opportunity for you to educate them about independent bookselling and to thank them, if they are customers, for shopping with us. You might say something like, “yes, we certainly do feel it, and we very much appreciate your support of us.”

Sometimes we are called upon, as managers, to speak with a customer who is upset with us for carrying a certain book, which they find objectionable, or for hosting a certain author, whom they do not care for. When you find yourself in this situation, first remember that this is a customer, someone who cares enough about the store to take the time to share their feelings with us. If they did not feel a certain sense of ownership or connection with the Tattered Cover, they would probably not even bother talking with us. Your main job at this moment is to listen. You should empathize with their feelings, express your appreciation for their caring enough to talk with us about this, and gently and simply explain our position in this regard. Do not preach. Try not to get into an argument. Just let them know that we feel that it is our job to provide to the public any information, any book that is legally available; and that while we each personally have our own values of what we may think is good or bad, we do not believe that it is our right to inflict that on someone else. Yes, we cannot afford to carry every title that is out there and so we are forced to make decisions on what we do carry, but we will carry any title that we believe someone may be interested in purchasing. Most of what you will have to do in this situation is to listen and empathize and thank them for talking with you. If you feel a more extended conversation is in order, you can always refer them to Joyce or get their name and number and she will call them back. She is always willing to talk with people about this.

Legal Issues

Employee Files

What's in an employee file?

- ◆ Original job application and subsequent job apps (for internal positions)
- ◆ I-9 form (proof of ability to work in the US) and W-4 form
- ◆ Performance reviews and ongoing evaluations
- ◆ Benefits forms (direct deposit, Belco, etc., NOT health benefit forms)
- ◆ Complaints and good job forms
- ◆ Warnings and documentation

Who can look at an employee file?

- ◆ Members of the Personnel team
- ◆ General Managers
- ◆ Coordinators or other mid-managers may request to see someone's file or get copies of past performance reviews from Personnel
- ◆ An employee can access his or her own file with Personnel or a GM attending

Anything in an employee's file is considered confidential and should be treated as such.

The Employee Guide

It's a good idea as a new coordinator to go back and re-read it. It contains not only the policies and guidelines that we hold our employees responsible for, but also displays the philosophy and character of the Tattered Cover as an organization. The Guide can be a good tool in that it clearly spells out what is expected of each employee. When you run across discipline or policy problems in your area, a look into the Employee Guide can be helpful in clarifying the issues involved. Also, we work (deliberately) within loose guidelines. For the sake of consistency, if nothing else, we must all know what those guidelines are before we can go outside of them.

Documentation

What is documentation and why do we do it?

Documentation is the writing down of a conversation or other interaction with a co-worker that was disciplinary in nature or in which you were required to point out non-compliance with store policy. Note that what is documented are interactions. You should not document situations that you have observed or things that you have heard from third parties unless you have checked them out with the co-worker involved first. This gives the co-worker an opportunity to air his or her side of the situation, and is just what's fair.

One of the reasons for documenting is legal. If we document well and in a timely manner, there is little chance of losing a Personnel Law court battle (unless we're breaking the law). If, on the other hand, we are haphazard and inconsistent with documenting and have to go to trial for some reason, we could be in trouble. Another reason is that it helps us to be more conscious, as managers, of remembering to take the necessary steps in dealing with a personnel problem. In working to effectively solve the problem,

we want to make sure that whenever appropriate and possible, we are systematically moving toward a conclusion. Of course, a mitigating factor in this and a strong reason to document consistently is that Personnel Law is muddy and confusing at best. It is also constantly evolving and being interpreted differently through case law. One thing that has held true, through, is that good documentation has won more cases than its lost. With this in mind:

When do you document?

This is actually a tough issue. A good guideline is to document anything that you discuss with a co-worker which, if continued unabated, could end in termination. On the other hand, don't be paranoid. You won't be documenting every discussion that you have. If you've talked to someone about a performance issue and he or she seemed to understand at the time but has not modified his or her behavior, its time to have another chat and document it. Hopefully, most people are cooperative enough and most managers are timely enough with feedback that documentation will be a rare thing.

Given all of that, there should still be a case by case evaluation. We try to treat each person as an individual, taking into account their history here at the store (which may positively or negatively reflect on the person). Written or verbal warnings should always be documented. Now on to:

What id included in the document?

- ◆ When the exchange took place
- ◆ Who was there
- ◆ What was at issue and what was presented
- ◆ What were the reactions and issues that then came up
- ◆ What conclusion was reached **OR**
- ◆ What follow up will there be and when it will be

Benefits

As a coordinator, you will be asked about many things for which you just don't have the answers. It's common for co-workers to think that you know all that there is to know about store policies. Isn't that why they made you a coordinator? Benefits is a topic that falls into the category of things that you don't necessarily have all the answers to but will be asked about eventually. Below is a cheat sheet that lists all of the benefits and who the contact for each is.

Health Insurance or monetary adjustment	Personnel
Dental Plans	Personnel
Vacation	
--who to notify when you take it	Schedulers /your coordinator
- who to talk to when there's a problem with your vacation paycheck	Sharon M. or Regina
Discounts	Employee Guide
Borrowing Books	Employee Guide
Eco-Pass	Personnel
401 (K) retirement plan	Barbara Bush
Bellco First Federal Credit Union membership	Personnel
Holiday Pay (Labor Day, Memorial Day, 4 th of July, Thanksgiving, Christmas Day, and New Year's Day)	Employee Guide/Schedulers
For holidays, if you work:	You get: no pay
1-19 hrs./wk.	4 hrs. pay
20-29 hrs./wk.	8 hrs. pay
30 + hrs./wk.	

WORKER'S COMPENSATION

Worker's Compensation forms **must** be filled out and sent in within 3 days of the accident or injury. They are kept in the emergency notebook, of which there are copies in personnel's offices in Cherry Creek and LoDo and in each General Manager's office. The form must be filled out by a coordinator or Personnel person with the injured person. All of the information that you need to fill it out and send it in is in the notebook.

Discrimination

Sexual Harassment

This is a very complicated issue with many legal implications, not the least of which is that, in certain instances, an employer can be held liable for sexual harassment even when unaware that it is happening or has happened. The Employee Guide contains good definitions of sexual harassment and the steps that an employee should take when in a harassment situation. What follows is a step by step guide to handling a harassment incident that has come to your attention.

When someone comes to you:

Being harassed can be an upsetting and confusing experience. A line of behavior has been crossed and a trust has been broken, either in a staff/customer or staff/co-worker relationship. The harassed person sometimes feels shamed or guilty, making it hard for them to come forward. With these things in mind, here are some guidelines to follow in talking to a person who feels that he or she has been harassed:

- Be in a private, comfortable place.
- Get specifics, down to specific actions and words used by the harasser and the context in which they took place.
- Ask if there were witnesses and get names.
- Take the complaint seriously. In no way should the harassee be made to feel judged or uncomfortable about having come forward with their accusation.
- Don't ask why the person didn't come forward sooner. He or she has been dealing with it as best he or she can.
- Ask what the harassee wants to happen (keeping in mind the rest of the steps outlined below).
- Outline with the harassee what sequence of steps will be taken next.
- Write it down (unless you have a PERFECT memory).

Has the harassee talked to his or her harasser?

If yes, and the behavior hasn't changed, it's time to have a talk with the alleged harasser. Here are some guidelines to follow:

Speak in private and assure confidentiality.

Find out from him or her what happened in his or her own words.

Be direct, but don't be confrontational or combative. Don't make light or joke about it; it's not a laughing matter.

- Speak directly to specific behaviors, don't conjecture about motives.
- Get responses to each allegation, but be patient if the person is confused or upset.

- Remind the person of our policy and the law on sexual harassment and make it clear that any behaviors that could be perceived as such must stop or there will be consequences which may include termination.
- Try to remain impartial and non-judgmental; your role is to gather information and make policy clear.

A person being accused of harassment is liable to be defensive and feel persecuted. It is up to you to make the policy on the matter clear to him or her while also trying to keep him or her from feeling judged. The person may feel that he or she was just being friendly. It is okay to acknowledge that, while that may be the case, if it is making someone else uncomfortable at work, it still needs to stop.

If the harassee has not confronted his or her harasser, encourage him or her to do so. Many instances of harassment can be stopped cold by confrontation. Following are some guidelines that you can pass along to a person going into such a confrontation:

- Be clear about what behaviors are causing discomfort.
- Be clear that you want these behaviors to stop.
- Do not use humor, as this may dilute or obscure your communication.
- Don't be apologetic or feel like you need to explain or debate.
- Tell the harasser what your next step will be if the harassment continues. (Specifically, going to a supervisor or a GM)

Keep close tabs on this situation. You want to make sure that anyone going into such a confrontation knows that he or she has your support.

If the harassee absolutely does not want to confront his or her harasser, get permission from him or her to conduct an investigation, assuring confidentiality. Your first step in an investigation is to confront the alleged harasser using the guidelines previously given. In a quid pro quo case, one incident is enough to take action. For a hostile environment case, there must be a pattern of harassment. It is possible that friendliness, thoughtlessness, or innocent remarks could be interpreted as harassment, and harassment is in the eye of the beholder.

If, after speaking to the alleged harasser, it is not clear what took place, you may wish to speak with witnesses, if there were any. It is rare that an investigation will go this far. After speaking to any witnesses, your best judgement (along with that of whichever GMs have become involved by this point) is your main tool in deciding what happened and what steps need to be taken.

Any cases of sexual harassment should be documented diligently.

Age Discrimination

The Age Discrimination in Employment Act (ADEA) was passed in 1967 to insure that workers over 40 years of age would not be discriminated against in any work-related decision on the basis of age. The easiest way to comply with this is to take age out of the picture completely and concentrate on job skills and behavior. Hire based on skills and compatibility, discipline behaviors consistently, and let people go based only on performance and job skills. Keep in mind that courts have found age-related jokes to be evidence of a discriminatory attitude. Do not carelessly use the term "older staff" when you are really referring to long-term staff or staff who have worked here longer. It can be easily misinterpreted by others as a statement about the age of a staff member. A manager's assessment of a colleague's ability to perform his or her job or take on a new job should only be connected with the colleague's performance never his or her age.

ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act)

The ADA prohibits discrimination on the basis of a physical or mental disability. It protects disabled persons who can perform the essential functions of a job, with or without reasonable accommodations, from not getting or losing a job because of his or her disability. If a disabled person needs an accommodation to perform a job, the employer is obligated to do whatever is necessary unless it will cause the organization undue hardship. What an employer is not required to do is change the functions of a job or create a new job for someone who is disabled.

The definition of a disabled person is one who:

- has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits a major life activity;
- has a record of impairment; or
- is regarded as having an impairment.

The act specifically protects workers with AIDS, HIV, alcoholism, cancer, cerebral palsy, diabetes, emotional illness, epilepsy, hearing and speech disorders, learning disabilities such as dyslexia, mental retardation, muscular dystrophy, and visual impairments.

That's what the act is. How it affects us, basically, is that we must be aware in our job descriptions of what the essential functions of each job are. Part of our interview process, then, must ask the applicant if he or she can perform those functions with or without reasonable accommodation. If the person responds that he or she needs accommodation, its okay to ask what accommodation he or she may need. Its not okay (nor is it legal) to ask whether someone is disabled, how someone got disabled, how long someone has been disabled, or whether someone thinks that his or her disability will affect his or her job performance. Questions should be based solely on the job and what is necessary to perform it, not on the disability.

Addressing Personnel Problems

Coordinator Guidelines for Dealing with Personnel Problems

These are guidelines only. This is not a script to be followed verbatim. These issues are as varied as the people who work here.

When dealing with personnel problems it is important to be open to the situation, to be ready for the unexpected and to adjust your assumptions, your approach, and your thinking based upon your actual encounter with a person.

Be aware of how problems fit into the larger context of the department or organization. We must look at the rights and well being of the individual as well as those of their co-workers and the organization as a whole. Any action you take affects the person in question, but also has an impact on others. Dealing with a person in the wrong way may create additional problems, especially if they or their co-workers think they have been treated unfairly. It is critical that we act and be perceived as acting in a fair and ethical manner.

Problems and conflicts can sometimes involve issues of control: Who controls the workplace and for whose benefit? If people with chronic problems are not dealt with they can begin to set the tone of the department and to varying degrees can end up being in control of it despite what other people and the coordinator may want. Failing to deal with a person can demoralize others and make them feel like their hard work counts for nothing.

This is an ongoing process. It should have begun well before you reach the stage of issuing verbal warnings, contracts, or written warnings. Elements in this process should be a daily – and routine – part of a coordinator's life. There should be many informal, hopefully non-threatening, “chats” about a problem before it reaches the stage of verbal warnings, contracts, and written warnings.

Do it! Deal with problems before they get too big. It is often easy to put off dealing with small problems, but that rarely causes them to go away. Look upon small problems as routine matters, and address them as such. When you approach people in this fashion, with less stress and anxiousness, it is easier for them to be receptive to your perspective and easier for you to listen to and honor theirs even if you don't agree with it.

Before approaching the person:

- ◆ Clarify in your own mind why you think there is a problem and what the problem is. Also try to figure out what the person you are going to approach might be thinking. Do they think there is a problem? Will you be approaching them out of the blue?
- ◆ Get help if you're not sure about the problem or situation. Brainstorm. Consult with other coordinators or managers as necessary. Let other coordinators or managers know you are dealing with this problem. Involve them. They may have already been through a similar one or have insights into it that you don't have.
- ◆ Decide how and when you will approach the person. Then do it.
 - Don't approach people when you are mad or upset over something they've done or some unrelated problem in your own life.
 - If necessary take time to cool off, collect yourself, and perhaps consult with another Coordinator who is not directly involved in the situation.
- ◆ Decide whether you should have another coordinator in the meeting as a participant or witness.

- In routine situations it is important and more productive if a person does not feel ganged up on.
- In more serious situations it may be very important to have another person present during the discussion to avoid a “his word against mine” situation:
 - ▶ Is there likely to be serious disagreement?
 - ▶ Is there a concern about the possibility of future legal action?
 - ▶ If there are allegations of sexual harassment it may be wise to have another person present, and it may be wise to consider carefully whether that person should be male or female.
 - ▶ Is there concern about violence or personal safety?
- ◆ Be conscious of the setting in which you approach the person. Maintain confidentiality. There is a balance here:
 - You certainly do not want other people to overhear your conversation with the person. However, it may be helpful if they observe that you are talking to them. In many cases this will be unavoidable anyway since such conversations usually mean approaching a person in their workplace and the two of you leaving for a place where you can speak in private.
 - Since this may be in public, be conscious about how you handle it. In many cases it’s good for a person’s co-workers to have some degree of awareness that you are trying to deal with a problem.
 - ▶ In many cases they are already well aware of and may be aggravated by the problem. Your action may help ease their minds.
 - ▶ If co-workers know you are working on a problem, or think that the person in question is also working on it, there may be a little more space, a little more slack, for all parties to deal with it.
- ◆ There are situations where you may not want anyone to know that you are speaking to a person or where it is essential that others do not know. This is almost always the case with allegations of sexual harassment. In this case it’s advisable to pre-arrange a meeting time and place away from the department.
- ◆ Always be aware of the ways in which the problem and your solution to it might affect other people. There are very few problems that do not have social repercussions in the workplace.

Talk with the person and identify the problem:

- ◆ Listen! Treat the person with respect. Take your time. Be honest.
- ◆ Find out where they’re coming from. The person may have surprisingly different perceptions than yours about what is going on. They may also agree with you about the problem. You need to know where they’re coming from in order to deal effectively with them.
 - If their perceptions are different from yours, listen to them. They may be right or the problem may be different from what you were seeing.
 - ▶ You might consider it a scheduling problem. They might see it as you arbitrarily harassing them while ignoring more serious problems with other people.
 - It’s also possible that you may not have been seeing the whole picture. The issues may be more complex than you first thought. Try to find out if there’s something else going on that you may not be seeing:
 - ▶ Is there something going on at work or at home that is contributing to it?
 - ▶ Are there things we can do to help?
 - ▶ If it’s appropriate, ask the person for suggestions as to how improvements or changes might be made to make things work better for them.
 - Before proceeding, make sure there really is mutual understanding and agreement as to what the problem is. Make sure you’re both talking about the same thing. One useful technique is

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to have the person describe it to you in his or her own words. Once you know you're both talking about the same problem, finding a solution will be easier and less stressful.

- ◆ When there is no agreement:
 - Sometimes it helps to try “exchanging” your points-of-view:
 - ▶ Articulate to them what your understandings of their perspective. In other words, attempt to summarize their understanding of the issues even if you do not agree with them.
 - ▶ Ask them to articulate to you the problem you have raised even if they do not agree with you.
 - It's important that you both understand that this exchange does not require either of you to agree with or accept the other's point of view. However, by each of you articulating the other's perspective it creates the possibility of some common ground, some mutual understanding, even in the absence of agreement.
 - In this exchange it is important to keep an open mind. Their point of view may be legitimate or contain elements you had not considered.
 - ▶ You may not see this until you have put their perspective into your own words.
 - ▶ Be open to modifying your approach based upon the other person's reality.
 - If, however, after this exchange you still consider your position the correct one, you may have to assert that position. If this is the case make sure the person clearly understands what that position is, what your definition of the problem is, before leaving this stage of the conversation.
 - If you're really beginning to question your position or course of action you can delay making a decision. Tell the person you need to think things over. It rarely hurts to give everyone time to think, so long as this is not an excuse for inaction.

Make sure the person knows what's going to happen and where they stand.

- ◆ They need to know what you're going to do and what they need to do as a result of this conversation.
 - Clarify your expectations of them. Sometimes, it is important to put it in writing and get it signed by all concerned.
 - Make it clear how they will know if they're meeting your expectations.
- ◆ Follow up. Review progress. Keep talking to the person.
 - If there is improvement, give them positive acknowledgement of that, but temper your words with caution.
 - ▶ It's often tempting to gush over any improvement because you're so relieved to see some progress.
 - ▶ Keep in mind that it's not unusual to see temporary improvement followed by a return to the old patterns.
 - If there is partial improvement, e.g., the person is keeping their schedule but still not getting the work done satisfactorily:
 - ▶ Acknowledge the improvement and continue working on the remaining problems.
 - ▶ It's important to let the person know that you've seen improvement where it exists. This helps provide incentive or perhaps a lever for further change.
 - If there is no improvement or things have deteriorated further, try to find out why. What's their perspective? What's your perspective? How do the two differ? Was there a miscommunication about goals? Did they clearly understand what was expected from them? In other words, keep going through the process.
- ◆ Set a time to review progress again.
- ◆ Other considerations:
 - Is the problem rooted in this particular job and the nature of the work being done? Is it rooted in personalities, in the particular mix of people in the area? Would it help the person to change jobs or work areas? Would they be open to that?

- Is some other type of help in order? Sometimes a person is dealing with problems unrelated to the workplace, but these are having an impact on the job and until some resolution comes they will continue to have problems at work.
 - If this is the case, knowing it can help determine the strategy and approach to the person. Often this kind of a situation allows more slack, especially if the person has not previously had problems.
- Some people need psychological help we cannot provide. But we may be able to help them realize that they need that help and even help them find it.
- Occasionally there are people who seem to thrive in disruptive situations. Often these folks are skilled at exploiting ambiguities in the workplace or tensions between people to their own advantage. Some people have had a lifetime of practice at avoiding issues, at verbal evasion, at not working. When dealing with such people it may be wise to quickly go to written agreements: contracts or warnings.

Each step in this process should be documented:

Good documentation of problems is essential because we need good ethical and legal justification for our decisions and actions in all personnel issues.

A “document” can be a note scrawled on a piece of scrap paper (date every scrap).

A document can be a note in a day-timer (“spoke with K about schedule problems”) that will jog your memory. The day-timer technique can be helpful in tracking the history of problems from the first chat you may have had, before you realized it would become a larger issue, to the point where you may realize that it’s necessary to write something down after each conversation.

It is best to document immediately, but if you don’t you can later summarize what happened. Just make it clear that you are summarizing past events. This is where the note in the day-timer is helpful.

More than any other factor, the absence of good documentation is what prevents us from acting upon serious problems. If we cannot prove that a pattern of behavior has existed and has been addressed without success in the past we often end up starting the process over from scratch.

The inability to deal effectively with or, when necessary, fire people who are not pulling their own weight or have obviously gone over the line of appropriate behavior is one of the biggest morale killers we encounter. This perceived inaction gets good people down very quickly and makes them feel like the quality of their work or their conscientious approach to the job does not really count. In the past one of the most commented upon frustrations in this organization has been the sense that even the most outrageous actions have no consequences.

Performance issues are some of the most challenging opportunities that you will come across as a manager. When a co-worker is not performing up to expectations, it is an opportunity on many levels. As managers, it is part of our job to make expectations clear to co-workers and to inform them of when they are not meeting the expectations of their job. As human beings, it’s natural to want others to do a good job and to shy away from having to tell someone that he or she is not doing as well as expected. Part of the reason for this is that it can feel confrontational. Also, it can feel like you’re telling someone that he or she is a bad person. For these reasons it is important to think about how such situations are approached. Your approach can set a positive or negative tone for the exchange.

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Most performance issues do not need to be handled confrontationally and, indeed, a good manager will approach such situations with tact and sympathy. Most performance issues stem either from not knowing or misunderstanding policy or procedure, or from personal problems. An approach of “How can we help you” usually creates a cooperative atmosphere in which you help co-workers to do their jobs better, and they, in turn, feel better about their jobs and more comfortable with you. Sometimes in these situations, a co-worker may know that he or she is doing something wrong, but doesn’t know what to do about it or feels like a pest for coming to you with a problem. It can be a relief to him or her to know that, not only are you paying attention, you want to help each co-worker get the training and support that he or she needs to do the job. This is one part of a positive approach.

Each co-worker is unique in his or her skills and needs. It is seldom the case that these are clear. More often, a manager finds these out through observation and giving feedback to co-workers on what they can improve and on what they are doing well. While such feedback can sometimes feel like a judgement (i.e., he’s doing a bad job so he’s a bad person) a good manager will consciously avoid feeling this way and/or appearing to feel this way to co-workers. Your job is to help co-workers improve and they simply can’t improve if they don’t know that they’re doing something incorrectly. This is a normal part of your job and should not carry judgement.

Approaching performance issues positively and with the goal of helping co-workers do their jobs better can turn potential confrontation into an opportunity to learn about the employee’s values and job-related expectations, an opportunity to teach the employee what the expectations of the store are, and an opportunity for the employee to get feedback and to feel involved and listened to.

Dealing with Problems:

You must first determine whether or not the performance problem can be resolved by training or coaching. The difference between training and coaching is important. Training is basically teaching someone how to do a task from scratch. Coaching, on the other hand, involves assisting someone who has already been trained in improving their performance skills. You should not automatically assume that a problem can be resolved by training and coaching. You should first attempt to discover the reasons a person is not performing a particular task properly. You need to analyze the situation thoroughly so that you can find out if a person cannot do the job or will not do the job.

Usually, if the person understands how to do the task and also understands that the task is essential, but still does not perform the task, you may be dealing with a behavior or attitude problem. If this is the case, the problem cannot be remedied strictly through training. Of course the problem might still be solved through conversations, the exchange of ideas and feelings by describing the negative impact of their behavior and through commitment to change.

First, determine if the person understands how to do the task. Have you observed this person performing this task in the past? If they are no longer performing the task, they might have forgotten how to do it. They might not understand that it is an essential task. If the improper behavior is due to lack of understanding as to why or how the task needs to be done, the behavior might well be changed by coaching.

Generally speaking, if a person must perform a task and has the desire to do so but still cannot, you are dealing with a problem that can often (not always) be resolved through training. Once you have determined that training or coaching would probably be beneficial, analyze what will be necessary in order to successfully complete the training or to set up a coaching relationship.

Training & Coaching

When planning a training schedule, first determine what type of training sessions are appropriate. Training sessions could be conducted in a classroom setting or actually on the job. If you are responsible for initial counter training or floor training, you will be training in a more formal classroom type of setting. If you are you are training coffee personnel or reserve desk folks, you will more than likely be conducting on the job training as well.

Once you have decided which format you will be using, try to determine how long each session will last. Try to remain on schedule, although, situations may arise which may cause you to adapt your schedule. Also consider what activities and training tools are going to be necessary in order to complete the training. Take full advantage of training aids such as training manuals, videos, written and oral exercises and role-playing activities when applicable.

Once you have completed the training schedule, decide who will conduct the training sessions. The trainer doesn't necessarily have to be a manager or a person from the personnel team. Obviously the person conducting the training sessions must have a thorough understanding of the subject matter. In addition they must have an interest in doing the training and have enough time to train properly. Good communication skills are necessary. The trainer must be patient, enthusiastic and have the respect of their colleagues. Finally, a good sense of humor can also be helpful.

Next you must train the trainer. Be as specific as possible when describing how training should be done. First, explain how the trainer will provide the trainee with a general overview of what is going to happen during training. This overview will include an explanation of what the trainee is about to learn and why it must be learned. Point out to the trainer that they must not only explain how to do a task, but they must also remember to demonstrate how the task should be done. They should then have the trainee perform the task. During this phase of training the trainer should ask the trainee questions in order to determine if they fully understand what they are doing and why they are doing it. If they do make errors when they are performing a task, make sure the trainer understands that they need to both demonstrate the correct way to perform the task as well as explain why the trainee's method was incorrect.

The final thing to point out to a new trainer is the importance of reinforcement. Feedback should be used to review and to measure the trainee's performance in ways which will ultimately reinforce the trainee's achievements. It can also be used to set specific goals for improvement. Remind the trainer that feedback from the instructor should be frequent; in fact, the more the better. Feedback must be as immediate as possible. The trainer must be clear, concise and specific. Finally, point out to the trainer that feedback is meant to help a person improve their performance; therefore, it must always be constructive and positive.

Feedback can be formal or informal. Informal feedback may be in the form of a spontaneous comment about something the trainer has just observed the trainee doing. This type of feedback is often immediate and, if positive, may actually occur on the floor. If it is negative or more sensitive in nature, the conversation should occur in private.

Feedback can also be more formal as in an evaluation or a review. These can be addressed verbally, and/or in writing. In most instances both are used at the same time. An evaluation of a trainee's behavior may be in the form of a spontaneous comment about something the trainer has just observed the trainee doing. This type of feedback is often immediate and, if positive, may actually occur on the floor. If it is negative or more sensitive in nature, the conversation should occur in private. Reviews should be scheduled in advance and conducted in private without interruptions.

You should also point out to the trainer that feedback should also come from the trainee. Again, it can be formal or informal. The trainer should encourage the trainee to ask questions during the course of training. The trainer should also give the trainee the opportunity to make specific comments about the trainer and their training experiences.

A good trainer should:

1. Be prepared. (Have materials ready: handouts, video, etc.)
2. Make opening remarks. (Let trainees know generally what will happen during training).
3. Make the class comfortable. (1. Physical comfort 2. Mental/psychological comfort).
4. State objectives clearly.
5. Be organized (organized presentation, follow through on ideas).
6. Use training material (manuals, handouts, audio, video, role playing exercises).
7. Know your material (you don't need to know everything, but make sure you are not giving wrong information).
8. Answer questions (in order to avoid confusion, try to answer questions immediately. After you've answered the question, ask the trainee if you've adequately answered their question).
9. Provide feedback and reinforcement. Tell trainees when they are right and when they are wrong.
10. Show enthusiasm (be enthusiastic about your subject; be enthusiastic about teaching).
11. Maintain control (be aware of personality conflicts, domineering students, etc.).
12. Be flexible (you should have an outline but be prepared to adapt training schedules to meet the immediate needs of the trainees).
13. Encourage participation (encourage questions and discussions. An active class learns; a passive class might learn).
14. Establish rapport (be sensitive to trainee needs. Listen).
15. Evaluate progress (ask questions; check for understanding).
16. Be yourself.

Don't do any of the following:

1. Break time agreements (make sure you keep on schedule and stop for breaks).
2. Waste time (try not to digress especially at the expense of relevant material).
3. Monopolize classroom conversation (encourage two-way discussions. Use other materials to enhance presentation such as video or audio tapes).
4. Be pompous or condescending.
5. Ridicule or intimidate the trainees; don't be insensitive. Be careful when humor is part of your style.
6. Be dictatorial (use a style that is conducive to two-way communication and shared problem solving).
7. Speak too fast or too slowly (try to speak clearly and succinctly with a well modulated voice).
8. Read your material (try to keep reading to a minimum. When you read there is no eye contact or spontaneity).
9. Interrupt answers (allow trainee to complete their answers fully. Also don't finish a question for a trainee which they have begun to ask).
10. Fake it (if you don't know the answer to a question, be honest with the trainees. Tell them you will find out the correct answer to their question is and then get back to them).
11. Lose the trainee's respect (act in a professional manner. Always remember that you are responsible for the trainee's learning situation).
12. Be undignified or act without self-respect (don't act in an uncivil manner, be lazy or use profanity).
13. Display distracting mannerisms (don't overuse phrases or particular words. Try not to fidget. Always make eye contact. Don't slouch).
14. Argue with trainees (don't allow personal feelings to get out of hand. Treat everyone equally and with respect. If personality conflicts arise, resolve them promptly and privately).

After training has been completed, the trainee may still need assistance in order to perform their job effectively. This additional guidance can be accomplished by means of coaching.

The goals of coaching are ultimately linked with the goals of training. We want to provide an environment where our employees are able to further develop those skills which they initially learned during formal training sessions. In addition, a good coach must establish an atmosphere of trust in which the trainee is encouraged to learn at a pace which is realistic for both them and the store. Effective coaching will not only enable people to improve their skills, it will also make them more productive and motivated.

Many of these issues addressed during training must be re-addressed when we prepare to coach an employee. Make sure the person doing the coaching is willing to take on the extra task. Everyone involved should be reminded that coaching is an on-going process; therefore, whoever is assuming that responsibility should be prepared to make a long-term commitment.

When considering who might make an effective coach, try to find someone who can teach, facilitate, lead, guide and communicate knowledge. They must have the ability to recognize that each person is an individual whose needs, motivations, perceptions and goals are unique.

The good coach must also realize that the person they are working with already possesses the skills and knowledge necessary to do the job. Therefore, their responsibility is to attempt to create a supportive environment that is conducive to learning. The successful coach should trust their co-worker and provide them with an opportunity to develop their skills at a reasonable and realistic pace. In many instances practice with supervision is all that the trainee requires.

An effective coach should also understand the importance of positive and constructive reinforcement. Feedback, as in training, is absolutely essential. Again, it should be immediate and specific. It should be designed so that the coach can periodically check and evaluate the trainees progress. Further, it should be analytical, constructive and goal-oriented.

As a final reminder, make sure the people who are responsible for coaching remember the following:

1. Establish specific goals for the person being coached.
2. Be supportive and focus on positive accomplishments.
3. Provide an environment which is conducive to learning.
4. Keep the person being coached informed about their progress by using positive and constructive feedback.
5. Remember that coaching requires a long-term commitment because it is an on-going process.
6. Give the person being coached the latitude to learn at their own pace within reason.
7. Be flexible. Treat each person as an individual with unique abilities, priorities and goals.
8. Work together as a team. Explain the advantages of working in a team setting, such as increased resources.

Customer Service

As a manager, you must exemplify the best of our customer service philosophy and practice. You should train and encourage the same with your staff. Managers are often called upon to problem-solve the more difficult customer situations. In doing so, you should keep the following in mind:

1. Listen to the customer, as well as your colleague, when assessing the situation.
2. Problem-solve the best possible solution, keeping the customer's feelings and needs of paramount concern, while balancing that with the needs of the store.
3. Offer support or empathy or appreciation for what has been done so far.
4. Be sure to follow through with the situation.
5. Remember: "WHEN IN DOUBT AS TO WHAT TO DO ALWAYS ERR IN FAVOR OF THE CUSTOMER" And do so graciously, willingly, and professionally, offering it before the customer feels as if they had to drag it out of us.

Our job, in general, as staff is to figure out how to say "yes" to our customers. The "no's" should be few and far between, and always regretfully given. As managers it is particularly your responsibility to live this out in ways that demonstrate this and encourages this behavior in your colleagues. Sometimes we must overrule an approach or a stand that a staff member has taken. As a manager this is done when you believe that the best interest of the customer has not been served. It should be done tactfully. Involving your colleague in the problem solving process, when it is possible, is a good idea, both in terms of support and training for future situations.

Sometimes a staff member may feel that they have "gone the normal route" and may be puzzled as to why a customer is upset. It is important to remember that when it comes to service it is definitely not a "one size fits all" situation. You must be creative about service and graciously willing to go beyond what you might personally or "normally" think is appropriate. A manager must be especially tuned in to the power of our body language and how that may have affected our colleague's exchange with the customer, as well as how it will affect your exchange with that customer.

All staff members, but most importantly managers, should be alert and willing to offer special acknowledgements of our regrets when we err or the customer's perception is that we have done so. Examples of these are: discounts, gift certificates, letters of apology, arranging for books to be delivered, having books or postage (or both) paid for by us, etc. While we are not in business to give away books, we are definitely in business to provide books with a great deal of attention afforded our customers' needs and perceptions. Ethically and financially it is a wise use of our limited resources to make sure that every customer feels well cared for. When mistakes occur it is up to us to go out of our way to follow up with even more special attention to these customers.

Improving customer service should be a regular topic of discussion in all areas of the store. All internal systems and processes should be predicated on providing the best service. The most effective way we do that is to continue to create and maintain an internal environment amongst the staff of trust, respect, and involvement.

As a manager you must choose between a variety of possible responses when you are dealing with a conflict or potential conflict with a customer, or for that matter, a co-worker. In these situations, your behavior often speaks louder than your words, so be sure to be attentive, polite, and empathetic, and be sure that your body language is expressive of these behaviors and not their opposites. Get your ego out of it. Do not personalize the situation or the solution. Remember, you are a representative of Joyce and what she would want you to do. These situations can be difficult and none of us do them perfectly, so it is important to stay open to feedback from your colleagues so that your repertoire of options and behaviors can grow as you grow with the job.

Conducting a Meeting

Meetings called for a special purpose

In any meeting, the first thing to determine is the purpose of the meeting. If you don't know why you're meeting, it is very likely that you won't have a productive meeting. The two most basic reasons to hold a meeting are either to get information or to give information. A meeting should never start with "It's been a while since we had a meeting." Better would be "We need to get caught up on how these procedures have changed." For instance, reasons for a floor meeting could be: to catch up on recent book releases, to give information on changes in procedures that affect the floor, to create a sense of team spirit, or to get feedback on how the implementation of a procedure is going.

Next, determine whether you need a meeting or not. A meeting should seem worthwhile to those in attendance. Keeping this in mind, would a memo better suit your purpose or be more timely?

If a meeting is in order, decide who needs to come (and invite them in writing), where the meeting will be, and when. Always check the meeting calendar and / or check with the schedulers before scheduling a meeting to make sure that there won't be a conflict.

Before the meeting, write up an agenda. Get input on the agenda from everyone who's going to attend (i.e. what they feel are items that they would like addressed or that they would like to address) and pass out the agenda beforehand, so that everyone is prepared. This way, at the meeting, everyone will be prepared to discuss the items on the agenda and a lot more will get done.

Regular Meetings

Regular meetings are often taken for granted, ill prepared for, and consequently not very productive. This can be solved by using the above guidelines about special purpose meetings with one exception and one important addition.

The exception is attendance. Attendance at regular meetings is set, so you won't be sending out invitations. However, it may be good at the end of each meeting to check with the participants that everyone will be at the next meeting and that the next meeting doesn't conflict with something else that's come up (like an autographing or a holiday). If a meeting is cancelled or the meeting time is changed, be sure to notify all participants.

The addition is a decision about what the meeting can and cannot do. This is really what makes or breaks regular meetings. What kinds of things should and shouldn't be allowed on the agenda? Is it okay to bring up topics not on the agenda? If it is, should the person bringing it up be required to bring solutions, too? This will keep the meeting focused, which is often a complaint about regular meetings.

Agenda item selection:

If an item does not affect more than half the participants, it might better be addressed outside the meeting. An exception here is when a participant needs advice on the handling of a situation.

If you think that a suggested agenda item is inappropriate, get back to the person who suggested it and clarify why they think that this is the proper channel. If it is not (the proper channel), give the person another route. Be fair about this.

At the Meeting

There should be only one facilitator. It should be very clear who is running the meeting and the person who is running it should take responsibility for keeping the meeting flowing appropriately. The following are suggestions for the facilitator:

Be prepared. Know what's on the agenda and follow it.

When focused on an agenda item, see it through. Let all relevant information be presented, evaluate that information, and come up with a solution. If the conversation gets sidetracked, it's up to you to get it back on track.

Occasionally summarizing what has been said can be helpful in sorting out what is relevant to a decision.

Make sure that solutions are defined. "Someone should talk to her" is not a solution. "Geoffrey will talk to her" is.

Use good communication skills. When something is unclear, ask for clarification. When stating an opinion, label it as such. Listen and try to see both sides of each item.

Have someone take notes where appropriate.

Encourage participation. Approach the meeting as relaxed and friendly as you can. People are different. Be prepared to focus those who need it, accept those who seem difficult to you, and give opportunities to those who are timid. Accept criticism.

Respond to signals. Much of how we communicate is nonverbal. As a result, you need to be aware of and respond to the nonverbal as well as the verbal. For example, fidgeting and wandering eyes is a signal of inattention; to counter it, you may ask questions or otherwise engage the fidgeter. If you sense anxiety, address it. Ask what's troubling the person

Be impersonal. Don't dominate, minimize interruptions, and don't point out personality traits. It's all right to encourage a shy person, but not by prefacing it with "I know you're shy, but..."

When closing a meeting that will need follow-up or to be reconvened, schedule it right then, while all the participants are still together.

Warnings & Contracts

Warnings and Contracts are tools which can be used to get an employee's behavior within standards acceptable to the Tattered Cover. If warnings are conducted properly, the manager will be able to determine which steps are necessary to help an employee correct or improve their behavior. The following are guidelines only. Each step in the process may cover a very short or lengthy time period, and is looked at on a case-by-case basis.

Verbal Warning

There are no hard and fast rules as to when to give a verbal warning. If an issue has been discussed repeatedly with an employee, or a serious violation of Tattered Cover policy occurs, a verbal warning may be in order. This is a formal warning, alerting an employee as to the exact behavior that needs to be changed, performance standards that need to be met, and a time frame as to when this change must occur.

1. Speak to an employee in a private place, away from co-workers where you will not be interrupted.
2. Define the expectations to be met. Make sure the employee knows what is expected of them, and try to get the employee to repeat the expectations in their own words. Be sure they realize this is a formal warning.
3. Keep focused. Don't stray off the topic. Be professional, honest, and specific.
4. Don't allow your personal feelings to interfere with the warning. Be objective.
5. Focus on behavior, not personality. Concentrate on what is observable or can be quantified.
6. When the employee is presenting their side, listen attentively and don't interrupt. Respond honestly and directly to their comments. If comments are inappropriate or not pertinent to the issue, guide them back to the main issue.
7. Set a date and time to review progress. Ensure that the employee leaves the meeting with the understanding that if they do not improve in the area that needs work, further disciplinary action may be taken, up to and including further warnings or termination. Be as specific as you can.
8. Document the conversation in detail and let them know it will go into their personnel file.

Written Warning / Performance Contract

A written warning usually follows a verbal warning. However, it is possible that certain behaviors will call for skipping a verbal warning and going directly to a performance contract. A contract is an agreement signed by all participants in the process, stating exactly what needs to improve and by when. Consulting with a General Manager can help determine which step should be taken. A GM should be involved in the writing and terms of the performance contract, as the next step is usually termination if the terms are not met.

Like a verbal warning, the intent of a written warning is to correct behavior. When an employee is to be given a written warning, the course of action must be fully planned out. The contract is prepared in advance. If the employee complies with the terms of the contract, they must understand what the positive, as well as the negative consequences will be.

All written contracts should:

- Contain clear, concise, performance-related language.
- State exactly what behavior is unacceptable.
- Focus on what is observable; not what you feel or is subjective.
- State what we have attempted in the past in order to correct the poor behavior (training, discussions surrounding the issue, verbal warnings, etc.)
- Detail what is expected from the employee.
- Inform the employee what will occur in the future if the terms of the contract are not complied with.
- Schedule a time to review if terms have been met.
- Include a section where an employee can write their own comments if they desire to do so.
- Provide signature lines for all parties involved.

Managers / Coordinators should be prepared to deal with the possibility of the employee refusing to sign the contract. Know ahead of time what to say to the employee if they do not sign. A note is added to the contract that states that the employee refused to sign the contract.

The outline below is to be used as a guideline for drawing up a contract. Excerpts from past contracts are included to get a feel for the basic elements of a contract, but you are not limited to the verbiage given. (Some are written in the third person, while others are addressed to the employee.)

Description of past conversations or verbal warnings given in connection with issues.

“On June 22, 1995 you were given a verbal warning, by your coordinator, for continually failing to arrive at work on time.

“We discussed your manner when dealing with co-workers, such as commenting negatively about fellow employees and treating them as subordinates.”

Description of unacceptable behavior / performance.

General areas, e.g., schedule reliability, extended personal phone calls.

Specific examples of unacceptable behavior.

“You have missed 10 of your last 42 scheduled shifts.”

Tattered Cover principles / values violated.

e.g., trust, teamwork, non-approved overtime.

“Our intent with this contract is to create the habits and the environment conducive to your continued self-reliant employment at the Tattered Cover.”

“You have taken advantage of the fact that it is impossible for us to closely monitor your daily movements and activities. You have played the system to your own short-term advantage and avoided doing the job you were hired for.”

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Minimum requirements to be met to continue working at Tattered Cover.

“You take only the authorized amount of time for lunches and breaks and you take no extra breaks during the regular work day.”

“You stop taking long personal phone calls at work. You take all personal calls during scheduled breaks.”

“You punch in when you arrive at work and punch out when you leave. You do not enter time after the fact.”

“You alter your behavior so as to establish that you are not taking advantage of the trust the Tattered Cover has extended to you.”

“Alexis will work scheduled times without calling in late, coming in late, calling in absent, not coming in, or leaving early with only two (2) exceptions for a period of sixty (60) days.”

Consequences of behavior

If the terms of the contract are met:

“At the end of the 60 day period, the managers will review your performance to determine if another contract is required.”

“If Jimmy upholds the terms of this contract, it will be re-evaluated by (coordinator) and (GM) October 18th.”

If the terms are not met:

“Your continued employment is conditional upon your immediate and permanent correction of the above problems.”

“This is a written warning that no additional conflicts will be tolerated. It is a last step before dismissal.”

“Any instance of schedule deviation will result in an immediate enforced leave of absence and Cara’s duties will be apportioned to others.”

“Failure to comply will result in termination.”

Signature lines

There should be lines for the employee, a coordinator, a GM, and a date line for each.

“Your signature below indicates that you have read and agree to these terms.”

If the employee is unwilling to sign, find out why. If the contract can be adjusted in some way to better meet their needs and still meet the store’s needs, then do so. If it cannot and the employee refuses to sign the contract, understands the contract, but is unwilling to sign it

Leaving the Employ of the Tattered Cover

Voluntarily

If someone is quitting, Personnel should be notified as soon as possible with the person's expected last day of work. There are several reasons for this. First, Personnel must get the necessary paperwork out to the leaving employee. They try to do this about a week before the person's last day of work. Among this paperwork is important health insurance information. Also as part of this process, you, as the person's coordinator, will receive a short review to fill out regarding the person's performance. This is important for Personnel to have to establish the person's rehire status.

Second, Personnel must set up an exit interview. They try to set this up on the person's last day of work. At the exit interview, all the loose ends are cleared up: clearing hold screens, pending special orders, getting back the person's card key and Eco-pass. It is also an opportunity for the person to voice any concerns that he or she has. On occasion, you may find yourself for one reason or another in the situation of having to do an exit interview. If this is the case, there are exit packets in the Personnel offices in both Cherry Creek and LoDo that contain everything you need to do one.

Lastly, Personnel may have to post the leaving person's position.

Here is what is included in an exit packet:

There are 3 forms that should be included in this packet.

1. Leaving the Employ cover letter.
2. **COBRA for health insurance and dental insurance (This is for FT only – 24 hours + per week).
3. Exit review (goldenrod).

Don't forget to fill out (if you are the employee's coordinator) or send the employee's coordinator a co-worker review form.

Procedure for the exit interview:

1. With the employee, fill out the Leaving the Employ of the Tattered Cover form. Go over the "Please be sure you have completed the following procedures before leaving" list and check the box when each item is finished. If you cannot check a box, indicate the reason why on both the form and the cover letter. Have the employee initial the list when you are done.
2. Make sure they understand COBRA. You must get the form from them before they leave, regardless of whether they elect to take it or decline it. COBRA is for departing employees (or employees reducing their hours to part time) who have elected the Tattered Cover Health Benefit Plan or the Tattered Cover Dental Plan. Two copies of the elected coverage page are included with the COBRA packet. The second copy is for the employee to keep and includes payment information.
 - a. They have 60 days to elect to continue if they decline it upon departing from the store.
 - b. Make sure they understand that they will be responsible for making the monthly payment. **NO REMINDERS WILL BE SENT.** If they elect to take the coverage on the form when they depart from the store, and do not send in timely payment, COBRA assumes the departing employee has elected to decline coverage.
 - c. Checks should be made out to the Tattered Cover Health Benefit Plan, NOT to Sloan's Lake.
3. Safeco Life Insurance 2-part card. Every employee working 25 scheduled hours or more has a 25,000 Group Term Life Insurance policy that they can elect to continue. Make sure they fill out the top part – it goes in their file. If they wish to receive information about life insurance, they can send in the bottom part to Safeco.
4. Go over the exit review and their coordinator / manager's review of them. Make any notes you feel should accompany the review and go into their file.
5. Take down their staff photo to go into the permanent file.

Involuntarily

The circumstances surrounding the letting go of an employee vary. A general manager should always be involved in the process that is followed to arrive at the decision to let an employee go. The decision must never be made without careful consideration by all the managers involved. This may be one of the above-mentioned occasions when you may need to do an exit.

When a person is let go, he or she may or may not be eligible for unemployment depending on the reason for being let go. (An employee who quits is ineligible.) We pay into an unemployment insurance fund, the rate of which is determined by our size and the number of claims that are filed against us. When an employee is fired, if he or she wishes to collect unemployment, he or she must go to the unemployment office and file for it. On filing, the unemployment office sends the claim to us requesting our reasons for letting the person go. They then make an initial ruling on the eligibility of the ex-employee to receive benefits. At this point, the employer or ex-employee has the right to dispute the initial ruling, at which point a trial is set.