



Exercise: Spreading Positive Talk

One of a manager's most effective tools for combating negative emotions and reactions in the workplace can be to enhance positive emotions. This can be accomplished through direct and indirect communication with workers. Speaking personally with individual workers and expressing your respect and appreciation for them and their work is a powerful way to build morale. Less often considered are the benefits of taking an indirect approach and **spreading positive** talk about a worker.

Negative talk can be highly destructive of morale, and can easily lead to negative emotions in the workplace. Positive talk, on the other hand, can have just as strong a *beneficial* effect.

Spreading positive talk is simple. Just slip a compliment about work performance or some other expression of respect or gratitude about a worker into a conversation when the worker is not there. Keep it short and simple and easy to pass along. Whoever you were speaking about is very likely to soon hear the uplifting comment.

There are a number of important benefits to spreading positive talk. First, you are leading by example and encouraging workers to also speak highly of their colleagues. Second, you are letting the workers know that you speak well of people in the workplace, and therefore making them feel comfortable that you may speak the same way about them. Third, you are motivating workers who want to elicit the same words of praise. And fourth, you get to enjoy the emotional reactions that arise in you when you communicate appreciatively about a worker. Even if your positive talk is not passed along, it can still serve many purposes.

Try to spread five pieces of positive talk this week. Pay attention and see if you notice any positive reactions from those about whom you have spoken positively. They may not say anything directly, but you may notice more subtle reactions, such as a particularly friendly greeting, and you'll know your compliments have been passed along.