# The Essentials Of A Healthy Employer-Employee Relationship

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It's no secret that when a new employee comes on board, the employer who hired them is effectively beginning a new relationship.

It is the same relationship that he or she shares with every single one of their employees, and it is this relationship that will determine the success and impact of that employee's time at the company.

An employer's relationship with their employees has to be nurtured and taken care of in order to be beneficial for both individuals; their co-workers, and the company as a whole. It has long been noted that strong employer-employee relationships often lead to greater employee happiness and significantly improved productivity.

Many typical employer-employee relationships will vary on the scale of closeness and familiarity, but it is essential that all employer-employee relationships involve at least these five major characteristics.

## 1. Mutual respect

It's perfectly fine to instigate a closer relationship with your employees to the point of socializing with them outside of work. (This is particularly common in smaller businesses and start-ups).

But even in a relaxed workplace, it is crucial to retain the traditional hierarchal structure and encourage awareness of this in your employees. As a leader, you need to be ready to give your team honest and frank feedback, whether this is about projects, employee appraisals, or constructive criticism.

Romantic relationships in the workplace are always a bad idea, but you should also bear in mind that these relationships can have an effect on the workplace even before they are public or common knowledge — possibly without either party knowing it. You can find more about the best ways to handle romantic relationships here.

## 2. Mutual reliance

There should be a balanced amount of reliance on both employer and employee. The employer relies on the employee to do his or her job well for the benefit of the business; the employee relies on the employer to treat them fairly and pay them equitably.

When this mutual reliance becomes imbalanced or one-way, problems will inevitably occur.

The employer may start to feel that the employee's efforts are no longer instrumental to the company and view them as disposable, while the employee may no longer value their job and start to become disengaged. When either of these things happens, it's time for the employer to re-evaluate the employee's role at the company – whether a new agreement can be reached, or whether it's time to part ways.

## 3. Openness & communication

Any healthy working environment involves openness and transparency.

Employers can help create a forum of openness and honesty by asking employees candidly about their lives, families, and interests. Employees can, in return, contribute to this setting by being forthcoming about their lives outside of work.

Openness and communication is even more important for situations sensitive to the company, or that require an otherwise serious approach.

For employees, this might mean informing their boss of a family emergency that could affect their performance, or a desire to find a new job. When it comes to the latter, employers shouldn't deter their employees from leaving, but should be understanding and supportive of their natural want to progress.

Meanwhile, employers should keep their employees in the loop about business matters and seek their input in important company decisions. Not allowing your employees to have an active role in the growth of the company not only wastes valuable insight and energy, but may also encourage them to become disengaged.

## 4. Support (and nurturing)

Employers should want their employees to reach their full potential and recognize when their capabilities exceed their current role. Leaving natural abilities to stagnate will cause boredom and frustration to grow in the employee, and as mentioned earlier, waste valuable energy that could better help the team.

Draw up your ideal business structure, or your current business structure as it is now, and outline every role and position that is necessary for it to work effectively. Not only will this enable you to identify gaps in your current team, it will also encourage you to take stock of who is performing well and who might be better off in a role with more authority.

Supporting employees even extends as far as helping them spread their wings and fly away to a new job when the time comes. Employers ought to be invested in their employees' success as a whole and understand that they may not be at the company forever.

Employers have the option to help employees or to stifle them — but only the former will lead to trust, higher skill levels, more productivity and more motivation.

On the other hand, employees should be willing to show support for the company's welfare and progress, which may mean making sacrifices from time to time. Whether it's working late to fix an unexpected problem, or covering somebody else's duties as well as their own, employees need to be ready to show that they are invested in the success of the company.

## 5. Gratitude

Gratitude should exist on both sides of the relationship, but it is probably a larger responsibility of the employer to recognize and appreciate exceptional effort from their employees.

When employees consistently deliver and receive little or no appreciation, it can become very easy for them to become disheartened, frustrated, and apathetic about their job, which destroys productivity.

A simple thank you is often enough (and this works both ways), but employers may wish to actively reward their employees for truly great work. They should use their intuition and knowledge of the person to decide what this might be.

In some cases a discreet gift might be enough, while others might relish recognition in the office. Some companies even host annual awards ceremonies where outstanding employees are given public recognition for their achievements.

Overall, gratitude and recognition help to ensure that employees know they are valued and that good actions and efforts are repeated.

**Final note**

It is simply not enough to draw up an office code of conduct, or a set of rules or policies detailing the ideal dynamics of the employer-employee relationship.

Natural habits are formed only in practice, and it is often through leading by example that employers can hope to encourage these practices.