

## Activity I

Describe three issues / behaviors you and your staff feel are positively impacting staff morale.

1. New job titles / responsibilities. Two of our recently created Tech 1 positions were Help Desk Specialists for almost 10 years, the position didn't allow for getting away from their desk much as we keep our IT Help Desk phone attended 100% of the time when our libraries are open to ensure everyone is able to contact IT with any problems. The new merger of the Tech 1 / Help Desk Specialist position still provides 100% phone coverage, but adding an additional person and moving our ¾ time position to full time also allows us to get the Tech 1's out on the field handling field-service type work such as repairing printers, doing quarterly preventative maintenance on our equipment, etc. They are really enjoying their new positions and being able to get out and see some of the faces of the staff they've been helping over the phone for the past 10 years.
2. Love of the IT / Tech field in general. Self-determination to learn more about the IT field. The love of this type of work alone and being able to actually do it for a living is a morale boost on its own.
3. Open communication in our office. Anne has always been great about communication what is going on in the system to the staff and making sure none of us are in the dark.

## Activity II

Describe three issues / behaviors you and your staff feel are negatively impacting staff morale.

1. Loss of several perks / benefits in a short amount of time has made many of us feel unappreciated and not valued at all.
  - a. Losing market adjustment completely. Some of us recall in past years when the library was ahead of the other systems in the area in pay, we reduced the market adjustments to lower amounts until the gap was narrowed. While there were some complaints, it's nothing compared to what I've heard by having it completely eliminated for at least a couple of years.
  - b. Losing department recognition. We realize this appears to be a misuse of taxpayer's money. But spending \$13 per year per employee on something that gave staff something to look forward to every year seemed like a good investment since the benefits of having happy staff is always translated to the customers. Maybe the way it's budgeted and labeled could be redone in a way where it's part of a benefits package. The reason why places like Google are dominating in their field is because they provide a lot of fringe benefits / perks that make the staff eager to get up and go to work every day. I'm a firm believer that the kind of work you get from happy staff is much higher in quality with less errors than a high-stress environment where people do not feel valued. It's well known that the library has a good public perception in the community. There hasn't been any sort of community uproar about misuse of tax dollars for a small amount of money to show staff they are appreciated.

- c. Losing the staff appreciation banquet. On its own, this didn't have the same amount of disappointment among staff as the others. There were a lot of people that didn't attend because it was a black-tie affair and finding sitters isn't easy, especially for parents of special needs children like myself. Compounded with the others in this list, it's still one of several things many staff looked forward to, but no longer exists. It's good that the system is looking at new ways to replace the banquet. But it might have been a lesser blow to the staff if the replacement was realized and implemented before eliminating the banquet.
- d. The next couple of items weren't things that were actually taken away from staff, but postponed. The timing of these two things are what made it seem worse than it was. Regardless if they were taken away or not, the perception was still there, and the loss of morale was the byproduct. It still felt like we were just continuing to have things that we looked forward to every year... disappear.
  - i. Focus. We know the main "focus" of Focus is staff development, enhancing our knowledge and skillsets in our job to become better at what we do every day. However, one of the main reasons staff look forward to Focus every year is actually getting to see other employees in the system in which you have only ever interacted via email or phone in the past.
  - ii. This is just for downtown, but our annual Christmas dinner. I think everyone knows the reason it got canceled is because we lost Candace and it was too much for Julie to try to get it organized in such a short time on her own. It's just the timing of it piles on to the rest of those things that made staff perceive that we were not valued or important.
- e. At our table, it seemed that the people that were new didn't have the same overall perception. It makes sense, they didn't lose so many things, so fast. But they did tell us they could understand why we felt like we weren't valued.

### Activity III

In your group, discuss the issues / behaviors each of you listed. Identify three (positive or negative) that you all agree should be resolved or enhanced.

1. Losing benefits / perks. Feeling unvalued as an employee.
2. The lack of training and networking opportunities.
  - a. Someone clarified the networking as networking within our own staff and actually having opportunities to get to know each other. One thing that was suggested is what a lot of organizations do... have a company picnic. Something that isn't black-tie where staff can bring their family and get a chance to get to know some of their fellow coworkers.
3. Fewer staff members doing the work of many as positions are dissolved when staff members resign or retire. (I wanted a little more clarification from the group on this one, but we were writing it down right as you were assigning us our homework and dismissing us from the meeting.)

## Activity IV

Describe at least two actions that you, your staff, or your supervisor / Library administration should take to resolve or enhance the issue / behavior you mentioned.

1. Action one: New Job Title / New Responsibilities
  - a. **Your Action:** Continue to encourage the staff in their new positions. Make sure I'm available to answer questions they have no matter how busy I am. Try to stay more aware of when my staff do great things and make sure they know I notice and give them praise. Make sure the staff have all the tools they need to do their jobs effectively and efficiently.
  - b. **Your Staff's Action:** Staff should stay positive and realize that although things might seem difficult right now, we still work for a good organization that wants to do great things for our communities.
  - c. **Supervisor / Library Administration's Actions:** Continue to communicate with staff and be completely transparent with staff as to gain their trust and confidence.
2. Action two: Love of the IT Field
  - a. **Your Action:** Encourage staff about the future of IT, especially in the context of technology in the libraries. Everything we are seeing indicates Technology in the Library is about to see some cool and exiting changes and growth, and we get to be part of it.
  - b. **Your Staff's Action:** My staff should, and I know they will, continue to develop their skillsets so they are able to keep up with the fast-paced changes we'll be seeing in libraries.
  - c. **Supervisor / Library Administration's Actions:** Anne has always been great about creating a good atmosphere in IT. We've always felt like a family and I think the longevity of the current staff here shows it. I know Anne will continue to make us feel valued and she will listen to every idea we have, even when she doesn't necessarily think it would work. She's always encouraged IT staff to submit ideas to enhance technology in the libraries and even when she doesn't think it would work, she's respectful and explains the reasoning and is open to solutions to work around those reasons for not initially liking the idea.