A Selection of Best Practices

HIGH PERFORMANCE WORK TEAMS

FROM LEADPOINT'S ONSITE MANAGERS & LEADERS

LEADPOINT
High Performance Work Teams.

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Introduction

OUR COMMITMENT TO YOU

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When the trust account is high, communication is easy, instant, and effective.

Stephen R. Covey

LEADPOINT

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OUR COMMITMENT TO YOU

The strongest working relationships are built on trust and open communication. This is easy to say, but tough to live.

The relationships Leadpoint builds and maintains with our clients and employees are critical to our mutual success.

We make these commitments to you, which we believe will foster communication, build trust, and create productive outcomes.

We Will:
1 – Get to know you. We will spend face time with you and get to know you as a person first, business associate second.

2 – Listen. The greatest compliment we can offer you is to listen when you talk, take notes, and confirm that we heard AND understood you. We will show that we value what's on your mind.

3 – Ask questions. We will ask what your concerns are and how we can help your operation succeed.

4 – Make meetings meaningful. We will actively participate in daily informal meetings as well as structured weekly meetings.

5 – Learn your business. We will learn your business, research what's going on in the recycling industry, and commit to understanding the challenges you face at your plant.

6 – Act. If you make a request of us, we will act on it promptly, not put it off, and share our progress with you.

7 – Follow-up. When we make a promise or a commitment to you, we will carry it through to your satisfaction.

8 – Own mistakes. Mistakes happen; we're all human. If a mistake happens, we will own it, be honest with you about it, and let you know how we will resolve it.

9 – Be accountable. Your priorities are our priorities.

10 – Put ourselves in your shoes. We will strive to see what you see, think like your partner, and continuously learn. We will also look for ways to innovate and improve the current state, because that's what you would do.

Frank Ramirez, Founder & President
Leadpoint Business Services

Chapter One

A STRONG FOUNDATION

START AT THE INTERVIEW

Every new employee wants to do a good job, and every MRF manager wants their new employees to stay. That strong foundation is a recipe for long-term success. It starts at the interview and continues with open, clear communication every day.

Leadpoint's onsite managers offer these suggestions for laying a strong foundation.

Q – What's your best advice for a successful interview?

Start by setting up an interview room that includes all the necessary hiring materials, PPE and other equipment. This communicates that we are an organized, prepared and reliable employer. We are upfront and honest about the job experience and our expectations of every employee.

Q - How do you make new hires feel welcome?

Always make a follow-up phone call to each new hire after the interview and before the start of their first shift. This makes them feel like they are a part of the company from the beginning and sets us apart from other employers. Making the job more relatable and purposeful can make returning the next day more enticing.

Q – What about after employees are hired. How do you keep them engaged?

It's important to build a personal rapport with each employee. Always keep a communication pipeline with employees and keep them in the loop about what's happening at the site. It's also important to get your hands dirty with your employees and show that you are willing to do everything that you ask of them.

Q – Is there a right time to build that rapport?

Arguably the most crucial time to engage with employees is within the first two days on the job. The production environment is fast paced and chaotic. Motivation and direction can easily be lost. Make sure each new hire is catching onto the main duties and answer their questions. A suggestion is to pair new employees with more seasoned workers who can help them get the "lay of the land."

Q - What are some pointers for dealing with "no call, no shows?"

NCNS happens, and it's always upsetting to the operation and to onsite managers. Before the new employee leaves the office after the interview, have them call your work phone and save it in their contacts. That removes one barrier to a "no call" and builds that early connection their supervisor.

Chapter 2

SET CLEAR EXPECTATIONS

SET CLEAR EXPECTATIONS

Monitoring the workforce at your MRF can help you identify and fix potential problems before they happen. In a sense, it's like building a preventative maintenance program for performance.

This performance monitoring and tracking is a hallmark of what Leadpoint's onsite managers provide at the MRFs where we're embedded.

We asked a group of our tenured onsite managers for their input on the performance monitoring tools they use, the pros and cons of each, and the effectiveness of each to keep MRFs operating smoothly.

Here's a summary of what these experts had to say.

Question: How do I let my crew know what is expected of them and how they are doing?

- Post hand speeds and quality on a bulletin board in the break room. It's something everyone can use to understand expectations and to check their performance against a goal.

- We make job expectations a topic of our daily meeting at least once a week. It's important to keep job performance top-of-mind. You can't cover it once and move on; it's something to come back to again and again.

- One site is experimenting with a monthly Performance Meeting, extending the lunch break by 15 minutes. Of course, the customer must agree to this first. There is an upside to Leadpoint, the customer and the employees.

- It sounds corny, but communication is key. Always. It's been said that the best way to communicate is "seven times, seven ways," meaning that you should think of seven different ways to communicate each message and not expect it to really take hold until it's been delivered seven times. For example, you could communicate performance expectations in a daily meeting, on a whiteboard, a handwritten note on the pay envelope, by text, one-on-one coaching, make a poster, during the job interview, in an email.

Chapter 3

EMPLOYEE MORALE & MOTIVATION

THE MOST SUCCESSFUL MOTIVATOR

The most successful motivator is the team. Reinforce to everyone that they’re not just employees. Everyone on the line or on the shift is a member of the team. When you’re not here, not doing your best, or taking shortcuts, you let the team down.

Let every employee know when we’ve succeeded. Even small accomplishments are meaningful. When we meet our standards of production or hit our tonnage or quality goals, it’s something to celebrate. Thank employees for the work they do, and also let them know where improvement can be made at the individual and team level.

When employees walk in the door, 99% of them don’t understand why they’re doing the job. They know they’re getting a paycheck but often that’s it. Helping every employee understand what their job is, what their role is on the team, and how their individual effort contributes to the team’s success is the most powerful motivator of all.

Question: What are some ways to improve morale and motivate employees to perform better?

- It takes continuous coaching throughout the day, every day.
- Praise publicly when an employee is doing something correctly, and coach publicly when they need help. Other employees are listening and may need help as well but are afraid to say anything.

• Never yell at someone or belittle them for asking for help…or no one will.

• Always coach on negative performance privately.

• Make it a practice to interact with employees and give them praise and support when they are doing something right, not just when they make a mistake.

CHAPTER 4

TEAMWORK

TEAMWORK IS AN EVOLUTION

TLDR: Here's the truth about teamwork.

- **Teamwork is an evolution.**
- **Weak teams lead to weak profits and productivity**
- **Teams that work well together are more productive**
- **Communication is key: when communication is effective, trust is built. An environment of trust empowers employees to work well together and become more productive.**

Can you think of a business, an environment or a situation where teamwork isn't a good idea? Probably not. Any organization benefits when its leaders and employees work together like a well-oiled machine.

Recycling operations are no different: strong teams drive the plant's productivity, efficiency and profitability.

Great teamwork doesn't just happen. It's not a magical outcome or fortunate circumstance. You can't throw people together and expect a team to emerge. Teamwork requires sound processes, leadership and commitment.

Leadership & Teamwork

Leadership is the key to building successful teams.

Whether an organization has one leader or a matrix of managers across the business, it’s imperative for leaders to align and to spend time and resources on creating a culture of teamwork.

There are three pillars in this work.

1 – Trust. Teamwork is built on a foundation of trust within the team. This is the slowest and hardest part of creating teamwork.

Leaders can start building trust on Day One. New employees are suddenly working with 30-40 people they don’t know. It’s the role of leaders to initiate relationships among employees that build trust and confidence.

Take the time to welcome new employees to the team and personally introduce them to each other. Nobody likes being a stranger.

Partner new employees with strong, tenured team members for the first week or two on the job. Creating a sense of comfort and friendship is an excellent start to incorporating new employees into the organization’s culture of teamwork.

2 – Clear Expectations. Leaders must communicate goals and expectations for each individual and the team as a whole.

Every employee needs to understand the purpose of their specific job and how it contributes to the big picture. Team members, especially new ones, seek a sense of purpose in their work and how they help the organization achieve its goals.

At the end of the day, every employee wants to know that they’ve been successful and have done a good job.

3 – Recognition. Successes and milestones need to be recognized - publicly. Individual contributions also need to be noted and rewarded – 1:1 and publicly. This is a leadership role.

Recognition and reward can take many forms. Financial compensation isn't the only option. In fact, money doesn't directly change behavior or build teamwork.

What works is a simple thank you. When leaders take time to tell an employee that their pick rates per minute have improved, or that bale quality has gone up because of their efforts, they'll feel the impact they're having on the bottom line. That type of recognition instills pride and is a catalyst for continuous improvement.

Want to know about Leadpoint's advice on Teamwork? Read more [here.]

Chapter 5

FOCUS ON SAFETY

Make the Most of the Daily Safety Huddle

The daily safety huddle is a standard occurrence for MRF managers and their employees, but the routine of it can cause some employees to tune-out. Motivating employees to participate and keeping them engaged in your safety meetings, day after day, is critical. Engagement can help pinpoint areas of confusion, test employees' knowledge of safety programs and procedures, and allow them to share their views on potential safety risks.

Speak up!

Here are some of the best ways to encourage participation in the daily safety huddle, collected from Leadpoint's onsite managers at a recent roundtable discussion.

- Have a structure – and agenda and a plan – but keep the mood relaxed and informal. This may help employees feel more comfortable and willing to participate, voice their concerns, and bring up new ideas.
- Let employees choose the safety topic of the day. This may help them feel more included and give them a greater stake in the meeting's success.
- Ask for volunteers to read the topic and notes you've prepared. The entire team may feel more engaged if information is presented by one of their peers.
- To get employees to participate during the safety huddle, let them know you are there to help them. Show respect by asking what you can do for them and by demonstrating that the safety meeting is for their well-being, not just for the MRF's benefit.

Gaining Attention

Getting employees to pay attention during the safety meeting is another challenge our onsite managers tackled. You can simply ask people to pay attention, or you can try some of these suggestions.

- Put some excitement in your voice. Sell the sizzle!
- Gesture, move around, and stay animated. Standing in one place can be boring; movement can be engaging.
- Make a safety football, a soft foam ball with “safety” written on it. Toss the football to an employee. Whoever catches it must recite one of the safety action points you’ve prepared for the meeting.
- Insist that employees put away their cell phones.

Involve Me & I Will Learn

•You may wonder how much information your employees retain after the daily safety huddle; were they really paying attention, and can they put to use what you’ve shared? The old saying, “Tell me and I may forget, show me and I may remember, involve me and I will learn,” is a good one to remember.

Click here for ideas about how to involve employees so they learn and remember the key points from each safety huddle. Here are some ideas for how to involve your employees so they learn and remember the key points from each safety huddle.

- Create a short quiz to test the team’s knowledge. The quiz can be read out loud and answered as a group, or it can be on paper.

- Single out someone after the safety meeting, when they are on the line or getting ready for a break and ask them questions from that day's meeting. You could even ask them what the safety topic was. It sounds simple, but if done consistently employees will learn that they may be asked a question and be more motivated to pay attention.
- Incorporate active learning in your safety huddle by moving the location of the safety meeting to somewhere relevant to the topic. For example, if you are discussing the fire drill and evacuation procedures, take the group to the first rally point. Sound the alarm so employees know what it sounds like. This type of participation solidifies the topic and helps employees remember key points.
- And be sure to reward employees when they answer questions correctly or participate in discussions. The reward can be as simple as a Gatorade, soda or candy.

BUILDING A HIGH-VALUE SAFETY COMMITTEE

Safety is the most *personal* practice at any MRF. That's because every employee – from the top down and the bottom up – is subject to the hazards of the jobsite, can experience pain and injury, and can make individual choices about behaving safely.

A MRF's safety culture is built on standard behaviors that everyone knows and believes in. It's "the way we do things around here" combined with common attitudes and behaviors. You can't mandate a safety culture. It has to be nurtured and developed.

One key to a strong safety culture is *effective* safety committees.

It Begins with Management

Safety committees aren't new – but there are relatively few that reach their potential and generate the maximum value for the MRF.

Management's commitment is key to unlocking the value of a safety committee. The local leader has to be willing to enable a safety committee, listen, and act on the committee's recommendations.

There are three things that can kill a safety committee.

1 – Deaf ears. When a safety committee comes up with ideas, brings them to management, and gets no response, the committee is quickly "trained" to believe that their work doesn't count. Even if the answer is "no" or "not right now," management communication and responsiveness are important. Local leaders must be willing to listen.

2 – Prying eyes. It may seem like a good idea to put managers on the safety committee, but as soon as you put a supervisor or manager on the committee, the employees start to hold back. Committee membership should be employee-based. That means no managers.

3 – Tight Grip. Management needs to be comfortable relinquishing a certain amount of control and giving the committee members visibility to data they may not typically have access to. Management has to be willing to take the committee's recommendations and act on them (within reason, of course).

Grassroots Leadership

The most effective safety committees include the right employees. [Click here](#) for seven characteristics to look for in your safety committee.

Let's Get Safer!

Safety committees are one of the most effective resources a MRF has to improve safety productivity and quality. It takes a little time, management commitment and clear direction, but the benefits gained are well worth the investment.

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Chapter 6

SAFETY: SPECIAL TOPICS

BALE SAFETY

When it comes to safety in the recycling industry, the most overlooked safety hazard is bale storage. With pressure on product quality, difficulties in finding buyers, and increased inbound tons, bale storage areas are overcrowded and full of employee activity. It is critical to mitigates the hazards presented by these conditions.

Here are three recommendations your MRF can use to improve safety in bale storage areas.

1 - Limit employee access. According to ***ANSI Z245.41 – 2015 - Section 4.6.5,*** bale storage areas should be designated as special work areas, with access limited to authorized personnel only and have clear signage indicating this restriction.

Simply put, this means limiting the area to trained and authorized personnel, typically forklift operators and supervisors. Given the limited space available in some facilities, bale dressers may be working very close to the bale storage area. Be sure that interaction between mobile equipment and personnel is tightly controlled and that bale dressers and forklifts maintain safe distances from each other.

2 - Safe Storage. The ANSI Standards ***ANSI Z245.41-2015 Section 4.6*** provide guidance on bale stacking and industry best practices for bale storage areas. Here are a few highlights.

Bales in a stack should be consistent in composition and shape, and contained by straps, ties or similar devices that suit the size, shape and material of the bale. This is covered in detail in ***ANSI 4.6.1***.

Bales stored in tiers should be stacked, blocked, interlocked or limited in height so they are stable and secure. To prevent collapse, loose, incomplete, or out-of-shape bales should not be stacked or used to support other bales in the stack. ***ANSI 4.6.2*** provides specific guidance on bale stacking arrays.

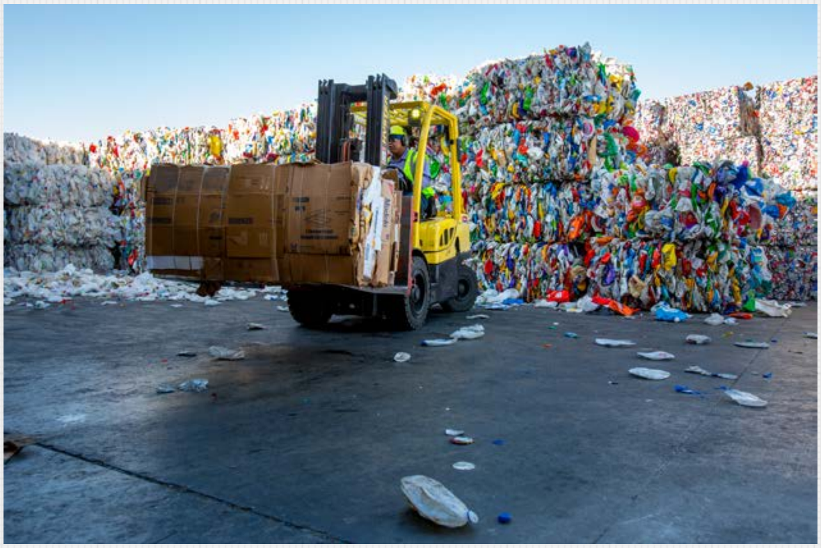
Bales in stacks should be visually inspected on a daily basis, with an eye to stability of the stack and condition of the bales. Any unstable conditions should be corrected immediately. Learn more in ***ANSI 4.6.3.***

Training should be provided about bale content, quality and stacking, and correction and reporting of unstable bale conditions. Remember to include authorized employees and other affected team members in this training. ***Reference ANSI 4.6.4*** for more.

3 - Forklift Operators. Forklift operators should have the authority to stop operations if they see unsafe conditions in the bale storage areas, such as unauthorized employees in the area, damaged or off-balance bale stacks, or any other situation or procedure that could cause injury or damage. They should also be trained to always be on the lookout for pedestrian traffic.

When it comes to bale safety, the bottom line is this: regardless of position or title, it's up to safety leaders to reduce or eliminate hazards from the workplace and ensure that all employees have a safe and healthful work environment.

To learn more about Bale Safety and the other topics in this chapter, email Brian Haney, Leadpoint's Vice President of Safety & Compliance.



HEAT STRESS

Every summer, managers and employees inevitably deal with the question of how to prevent heat stress in the workplace. Leadpoint's onsite managers share these best practices for keeping employees and MRF jobsites safe as the temperatures rise.

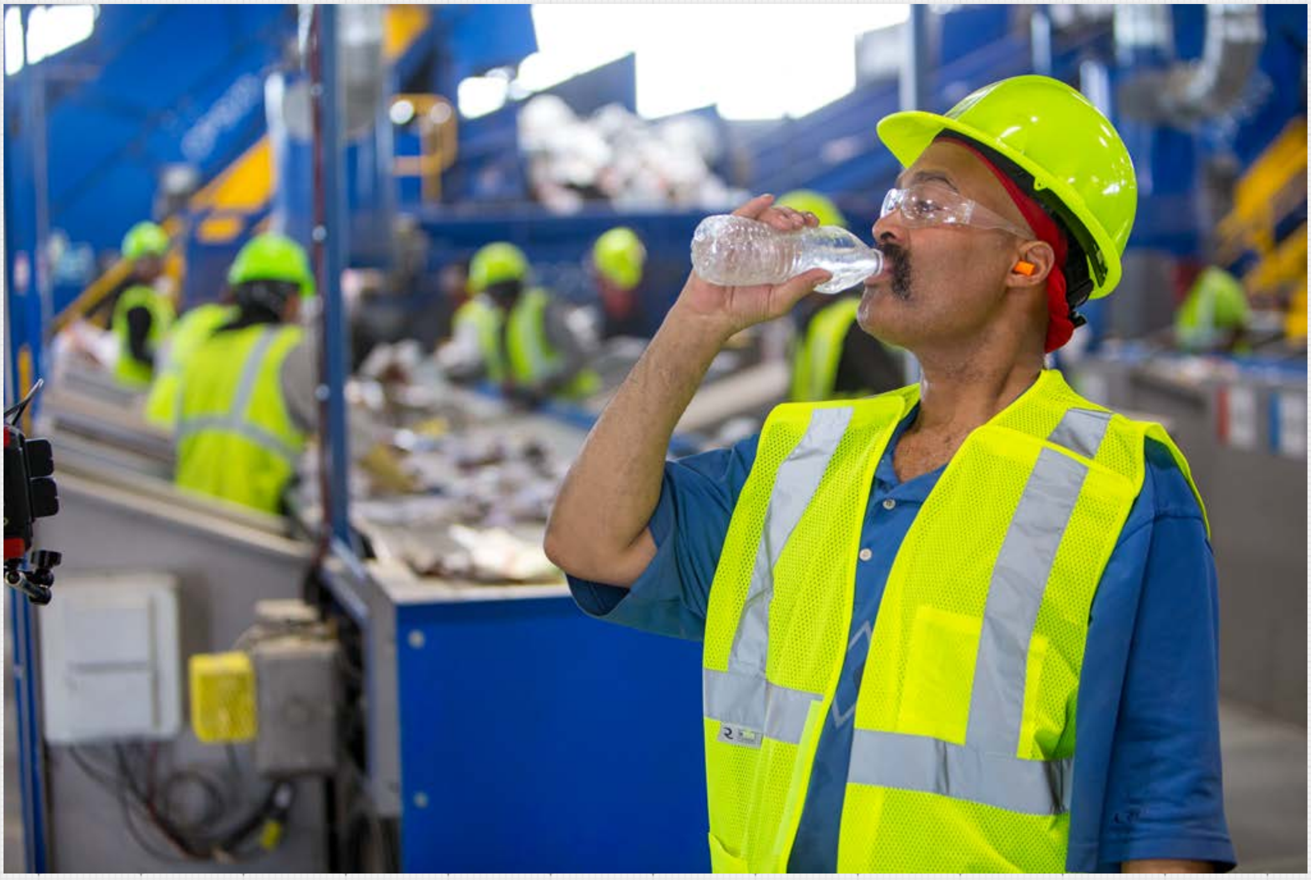
How can I prepare for the hot weather and be ready when it gets here?

- Create a plan to help alleviate heat stress issues at your MRF. Communicate your plan with MRF owners and managers and get their buy-in.
- Communicate with employees early and often. Get them to start thinking about their personal hydration plans – at work and away from the MRF.
- Make sure fans and misters are in good working order. Get them repaired or replaced before you need them.
- Order Gatorade-type drinks and additional water bottles ahead of time so you don't run short while waiting for an order to come in.
- Watch the local weather report so you know when those extremely hot days are coming.

What precautions can be taken to prevent heat stress-related injuries?

- Communicate with employees early and often. Yes, this is a repeat from the preparation tips! Every employee should understand the importance of staying hydrated before, during and after work. Their health and heat safety are a top concern!
- Make heat stress a regular topic at safety meetings.

- Post bulletins about heat stress and how to identify and prevent it in high-traffic areas where employees can read it.
- Train line leads to recognize the symptoms of heat stress and how to differentiate it from the more dangerous symptoms of heat stroke. They should know the signs and what to do if they see an employee exhibiting those symptoms.
- Monitor employees throughout the day to make sure they are drinking enough water and have it readily available.
- Allow more frequent breaks. Rotate one or two employees off the line at a time and send them to the break room for short breaks so they can cool off. This is especially important on days with excessive high heat.
- Encourage employees to wear lighter, more breathable clothing in the summer months.



Chapter 7

TIME MANAGEMENT

TIME MANAGEMENT

There is only so much time in a day, 24 hours, and no amount of negotiating or money can get you more of it. With so many tasks to complete every day, running out of time or failing to complete priorities is common – and stressful!

The best onsite managers have mastered techniques to manage time, prioritize tasks and minimize interruptions that can side-track productivity.

Eight Time Management Tips

1 - Have a daily plan. Write down your daily tasks and prioritize them in order of importance. Complete them one at a time and mark them off as they are completed. RAIL boards can be a handle visual as well. These visuals will motivate you to keep moving forward to the next task.

2 - Be flexible. Give yourself time to handle the unexpected. By staying organized and on-task, you can more easily get back to where you left off.

3 - Use technology. Use your desktop calendar or smart phone to set reminders and alerts of what's due and by when.

4 - Empower others. Train and employ line leads to handle small tasks that can take big time. This is also a way to help build their skills and set them up for advancement.

5 - Follow the 2 Minute Rule. If a task is going to take two minutes or less, handle it right now. No delays.

6 - Keep it neat. A messy workplace can interfere with your efficiency and slow you down.

7 - Self-service. Make commonly used forms, like requests for time off or direct deposit forms, accessible to employees and leads so they can self-serve and interrupt you. Then, create a designated place in your office for the completed forms.

8 - Communicate. Share your daily task schedule during new employee orientation and update the team regularly. If they know when you're available, you'll both make better use of the schedule.

A productive and effective workforce is the ultimate time management resource. The only question remaining is, "What will you do with the time you save?

Chapter 8

PREVENT BURNOUT & TURNOVER

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Question: What’s the one thing you can do to improve safety at your MRF?

Reduce turnover. That may be an odd answer to a safety question, but we’ve found that employees who have tenure tend to work more safely and understand the safety rules better than those who are new on the job. Retention and safety go hand-in-hand.

KEEP EMPLOYEES ENGAGED

We’ve all seen it happen. Promising employees start strong then leave within their first 30 days on the job. High performers lose interest in the job and move on, leaving you perplexed and creating a big hole in the team.

We studied this problem using data collected through Leadpoint Data Tools, and we gathered insights from the workforce managers embedded at our customers’ MRFs. Some burnout and turnover are due to factors none of us can control, like travel time to the jobsite. But others can be mitigated and controlled.

Here are three suggestions to keep employees engaged and on the job beyond that first 30 days.

1 - Build Cooperative Teams

Take time to introduce new hires to the rest of the team. Everyone likes to feel like they are seen and recognized, especially when they’re new on the job.

Pair new hires with a more experienced employee as their guide and “buddy” during the first week on the job.

Work to create a culture that is focused on wins and opportunities, not strengths and weaknesses. That openness can make everyone want to pull together.

2 – Consider Flexible Schedules

For the first week, schedule new hires to work a half week, or on the days that they do work, don't have them sort for a full shift. This can help them learn the job and become acclimated more quickly.

Offer new hires the option to choose their preferred shift. Of course, this option has to work together with your openings on each shift.

Rotating schedules and specific assignments can keep employees from becoming overworked or bored on the job.

When there's a schedule change, deliver the message right away, clearly and face-to-face. Remember to explain the reason for the change.

3 – Keep Communicating

Follow up with new hires regularly, especially during the first week, to keep them engaged and to get to know them as people…not just sorters.

Communicate new job opportunities and be up-front about the expectations of each.

Implement an attendance point system. This communicates that each employee's attendance matters to the team's success. It signals that attendance is a performance measure that can lead to future success. And, it creates a reason to celebrate when point goals or milestones are achieved.

CONCLUSION

The productivity, efficiency and profitability of your MRF is your #1 goal. It's ours, too.

We hope this guide helps us achieve your goals together.

CONTACT US TODAY

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