

I NSIDE THE TENT

There can be a “startle effect” when you unexpectedly share information with staff members that they would not normally anticipate having. An example would be to casually ask a member of the staff if they have ever seen a monthly financial report. Spending fifteen minutes with them in your office going over that monthly financial statement and explaining how it is structured provides an opportunity to build your relationship with that staff member while increasing their investment in their company. If the news is good, and you can contrast it to what is typically seen in other organizations, it can also help to increase pride. You are helping an employee to feel more knowledgeable and better connected with their company.

We can achieve a similar impact by asking members of the staff to share their thoughts on significant matters under consideration. Such solicitation of thoughts sends a powerful message of respect and deepens the level of involvement that a staff member has with his or her company.

Finally, an effective technique (if used carefully) is to meet with individual staff members to have them briefly “rate” the performance of their colleagues. This provides an opportunity for staff members to acknowledge those they appreciate and respect, as well as to express concerns or irritations regarding others. It also gives the leader an

opportunity to respond, and in doing so to provide staff members with additional information about a colleague – perhaps giving them a different perspective or more understanding as to why that otherwise problematic colleague is nevertheless viewed as a valuable asset to the company.

