

# COACHING TIP

From Rex C. Houze

## POSITIVE CONFRONTING

Many people think confrontation is negative. Childhood sayings run through their mind – for example, “If you cannot say anything nice about someone, don’t say anything at all” or “Play nice.” These thoughts can get in the way of appropriate confrontation.

If someone’s behavior is inappropriate, you do him or her a disservice by not bringing it to his or her attention. Most, if not all, people want to know if their behavior is counter-productive for achieving the desired results and contributing to the team’s success. Here are some guidelines for effective confrontation:

- Focus on specific issues or behaviors an employee can control. Avoid personal attacks.
- Deal with the facts. Avoid using rumors, innuendos, or sarcasm as a basis for confronting an employee.
- Avoid inflammatory words such as *should*, *ought to*, *have to*, *always*, *never*, etc. Instead, focus on desired goals, results, and appropriate behavior.
- Train yourself to listen for what’s important or key to the issue, and “block” words like those listed in the previous bullet point.
- Be direct without being rude, obnoxious, or otherwise offensive.
- Treat the employee with dignity and respect and never show your anger. Remember, people will always remember how you made them feel long after the specific words are forgotten.
- Help the employee develop a plan of action for correcting an unproductive situation or inappropriate behavior.
- Approach the situation as soon as you have the facts and an opportunity to meet privately with the employee.
- End your session by stating your belief that the employee will do better in the future.