Interact: Sample Report: The Supportive Employee/Staff Associate

Your employee has a Supportive interpersonal style, which means that people and the quality of their relationships are their most important considerations. There can be subtle variances in the behaviors of Supportives, but for all of them trust is at the core of their relationships. They are friendly, helpful, cooperative, tolerant, noncritical and non-judgmental in their interactions with others. The self-esteem of Supportives is dependent upon solid, stable, long-enduring associations built upon mutual respect and understanding – relationships that are comfortable and easy. They like to feel that they belong , that they are accepted, and that they can work with others in a harmonious, collaborative manner. Personal competition is not a driver for Supportives, and they perceive little or no benefit in striving to outperform or out do others.

Supportives are able to establish trust and sincerity only by proceeding at their own pace in their business interactions. They do not like to feel pressured to make decisions or commitments, and they need to know that the intentions of others are genuine and non-threatening. Similarly, in handling their work activities, Supportives are most comfortable and secure when progressing step by step, building up over time to increasing levels of personal responsibility and challenge. With a cautious nature, Supportives want to be sure that they can handle assignments and meet expectations. In making buying decisions they are risk-averse and will always seek a safe solution.

Group work and collaborative efforts are where the talents of the Supportive employee are most apparent. They like to participate with other people to attain common objectives by engaging in and facilitating discussions, soliciting the ideas of others, developing consensus and reaching agreements. Strongly influenced by precedent and what they know works, your employee will seek to stay within the bounds of expectations and workplace traditions, and will show a marked preference for proven ways of doing things, especially where they perceive the alternatives to be risky or experimental.

The major challenge in selling change to Supportives is their preference for the status quo and their reluctance to make decisions. Fear of loss clearly outweighs desire for gain, and their dependence upon what works and upon trying to gain the support of everyone involved can be a source of tension in their dealings with others who are more anxious to take some action. When faced with disagreement, when they feel under attack, or where their preferences are open to challenge, the Supportive employee has a tendency to withdraw from discussions, with the result that they defer to either the group or more dominant personalities.

Supportives are more open with and expressive of their feelings, and with a natural sensitivity for the feelings of others, they most often exhibit patient , encouraging listening skills. To develop a foundation of trust before addressing task issues they take the time to get to know people, to small talk, and to share experiences - all part of the relating ritual and process of acceptance.

Most Supportive employees are systematic and methodical in the way they do things. They like to approach assignments in a deliberate manner, working at their own pace and within their own time frames. Preferring to concentrate on one thing at a time and putting closure on it before moving to something else, Supportives experience tension when they are faced with many urgent, varied activities, with tight, imposed deadlines, and with priorities that conflict. Having more difficulty coping with intangibles, abstract ideas, or decisions for sometime in the future , Supportives are more comfortable working with specific, tangible tasks that need to be done today.

Your Driver Management Strategy and Tactics with Supportives

Your Success Managing This Supportive Will Likely Improve If You…

- Turn down the intensity level and try to relate to the Supportive's feelings

- Open up your own feelings and drop your guard

- Be less controlling with methods and decisions and work at asking questions

- Show greater patience - accept that the Supportive needs more time with decisions and responses

Supportives…

- Are relationship people who seek friendship and affiliation in their associations

- Tend to resist change or unproven ideas, and prefer the safety of the status quo

- Believe that if it has worked well in the past, there is little need to change it

- Struggle with setting goals that might set them up for visible failure

- Are conservative and cautious - they fear loss more than they desire gain

- Prefer to avoid hard and fast commitments and specific, tight deadlines

- Need a lot of time to consider, reflect, and decide

- Don't ask a lot of questions or show great inquisitiveness

- Don't like to personally make decisions involving risk – prefer to have others decide

- Seek consensus, agreement, and cooperation, and feel dissonance with conflict

- Look for middle ground and compromises, but will back off or withdraw if they feel threatened

A Work Environment That Is Most Motivating for the Supportive Offers…

- Close, friendly, and harmonious co-worker and supervisory relationships – a sense of belonging

- Minimal need to personally make decisions entailing risk or unknowns or a lack of facts

- Repetitious activities with minimal change and predictable deadlines and work flow

- More routine than variety and the opportunity to concentrate on one thing at a time

- Minimal need to initiate change and relatively little change with the job or work methods

- Team work and group participation, and the opportunity to share responsibility for decisions

- Predictable, stable job activities, events, and deadlines

The Supportive's Talents Are Best Suited For…

- Team participation where group harmony and cooperation are essential

- Service, support, and care-giving types of activities

- Repetitive tasks and assignments where systematic procedures can be applied

- Tasks requiring patience, concentration, and persistence

- Working on one assignment at a time and carrying it through to completion

- Interpersonal communication emphasizing information exchange rather than influencing

- Seeking consensus, group agreement, and compromise

You Can Manage Supportives Most Effectively By…

- Maintaining a social element in the relationship - asking about non-business or family matters

- Initiating a list of goals for review, discussion, and agreement

- Establishing goals for shorter time periods and scheduling specific progress reviews

- Not trying to accomplish too much in a single meeting or interaction

- Recommending a specific solution and support it rather than offering multiple options

- Giving them time to think through and respond to questions or prepare answers

- Stressing "we", "team", and what you plan to accomplish together

- Listening attentively for both facts and feelings when you ask a question

- Scheduling in advance so as to avoid applying pressure to meet tight deadlines

Supportive Q&A – Coaching and Management

1. What motivates this person?
Supportives are motivated strongly by their relationships, and their satisfaction is greatly affected by the elements of their work environment and experience. Work environment factors and the quality of their individual and team relationships tend to be more influential than achievement. Seeking a cooperative, harmonious, and friendly atmosphere at work, Supportives also like predictability and stability in their work activities and expectations. System and routines at work are fundamental to creating the stability they prefer, and Supportives tend to be extrinsically motivated by factors outside the work itself, such as pay, benefits, relationships, security, etc.

2. What talents should be most evident with this person's style?
Supportives excel at developing and maintaining friendly, mutually beneficial relationships that require service orientation and a giving-sharing attitude along with empathy and sensitivity. Their talents include team cooperation, working to achieve compromises and consensus, listening, working with

routines, standard procedures, and systematic processes, concentration on one project or priority at a time, and working in roles with minimal discretionary time and activity.

3. What does this employee expect from management?
Supportives want management to be lower pressure, more facilitative and understanding, and more flexible with their work scheduling and personal time needs. Less fervent about their work and careers, Supportives seek clear operating procedures and expectations, less change and a stable, predictable environment, pleasant working conditions, and what they perceive as "fair" treatment. When they feel that their needs are not being met, Supportives tend to stay in place and shut down - withdrawing emotionally and mentally from their work

4. How does this person manage time and activity?
Supportives are more relaxed with their deadlines and time. They take time to deliberate and reflect on issues, work on one element or item at a time, and seek advice and input from others, all in a methodical, planned way. Uncomfortable in roles with too much change, too much variety, and too many shifting deadlines, and feeling threatened with deadlines that may force them to act too quickly and outside their comfort zone, Supportives prefer to operate at a more leisurely pace with looser, less rigid time constraints.

5. How does this person react to goals and objectives?
Supportives are cooperative people who try to meet expectations, but they have discomfort with goals and the goal-setting process, especially if they feel that there was no opportunity to have input and give their acceptance. Fear of loss and the risk of failure are threatening to them, so their preference would be to have no measurable goals at all. What works best is for you to develop a list of goals and to seek the Supportive's agreement. For fear of looking bad, Supportives may give their acceptance to goals they really feel are beyond their reach, so you have to work hard to arrive at realistic measures.