

Are you a solution-focused manager?

4th Quarter 2014 Manager Newsletter



What you say matters. You may have heard employees complain about bosses who are “no” people. It doesn’t matter the solution or suggestion, “No” managers like to point out problems. The problem with “no” bosses is they tend to squash creativity and lower morale. And this can make employees feel like their manager creates roadblocks to production.

So how can you be a solution-focused manager while still keeping good boundaries? Being a “yes” person doesn’t mean you co-sign on every idea presented to you. Being a “yes” manager really means removing barriers for your staff so they can do a good job. This includes taking a hard look at yourself. Are you inadvertently getting in the way? Are you an accidental “no” person?

The importance of being positive

Being positive helps your employees grow. When you create a positive environment that empowers staff, you’re going to attract and maintain talent. Your “yes” attitude will be contagious.

Employees want to feel good about coming to work. They want to feel like their ideas matter. And when they feel good and positive, they’re more productive. But creating a positive workplace starts with you.

How to say “yes” more

A solution-focused manager likes to find solutions and strengths, instead of problems. This doesn’t always come naturally to people. If you’re risk averse, you may need to look at where that comes from. You may be a “no” manager if you find yourself saying “yes, but...” Ask yourself some questions, such as:

- What is my motivation in saying “yes” or “no”?
- What’s the worst that can happen?

It’s important to weigh the risks and rewards of taking a chance on a new idea. You may also want to talk to someone you trust to see if your fears are founded.

What does being solution-focused look like?

There are lots of ways to say “yes.” You don’t have to approve every idea without hesitation. Try some of these statements:

- “I believe in you”
- “How can we solve this issue?”
- “How can we do this better?”
- “Let’s try it”
- “I like that idea. How can we make it work?”

Being a solution-focused manager means letting your employees make mistakes. It includes listening to their ideas, taking calculated risks and trying new things.

Removing obstacles

A good boss tries to make sure his or her employees have what they need to do a good job. It’s important to check in with your staff on a regular basis so you understand their needs and encourage new ideas. Consider questions like these:

- What can I do to help make your job easier?
- Do you have all the resources you need to do your work?
- Is there anything I can do to give you more support?

By asking solution-focused questions, you show concern and compassion for your employees. It proves you understand an important part of your job is taking care of your staff. So try to turn those “no’s” into opportunities to find solutions.