



EQ Management Group

## Management and Your Employee's Eyes

By Ronald M. Foss

There tends to be a certain complacency that rests within some employees and never more so than when you ask how they are doing. Many will simply say they are fine when fine is the furthest thing from reality. A talented manager will watch as much as listen and look for the body language that is portrayed as the words are spoken. The eyes will often tell another whole story and with the right approach should be investigated. What is within someone's heart or soul is often exposed through his or her eyes. Broader questioning and an empathetic ear will provide you with an opportunity that might never have been brought to life if specific body language hadn't been observed. You will be surprised at how many employees just want someone to listen and to provide empathy. At times, you may feel more like a psychologist as once individuals open up, they may provide a wealth of information that will allow getting to the root of many situations or issues. This will allow you to develop and build action plans that are mutually agreeable to employee and manager as well as the results that employee and manager can then celebrate together.

During a period of corporate uncertainty, we were working hard at maintaining employee and customer confidence. The softer the ground the employee was standing on in regards to their own role security, the greater the employee's confidence was at risk of diminishing. I remember walking into an office and being greeted by an employee (not a direct report) that on the one hand said things were fine, but her eyes indicated to me, anything but. As I probed further, I uncovered a whole host of challenges for this employee including the questioning of her own ability for the tasks that she was already completing, a lack of realistic goals for her future, and a husband who was facing unemployment. She had these multiple layers and confidence dynamics to face, that her direct manager was not completely aware of. After an hour of listening and probing, we were able to diminish her concerns for employment stability and provided her with a learning curriculum for a progressive career. As well, I personally followed-up with her every few months to support her progress. A couple of years later, she was one of the most celebrated employees in our organization.

Additionally with the insights that this employee provided me during that hour long discussion brought more clearly to my attention that many employees in fact had many of these same layers to deal with allowing us to completely alter our corporate investment in people and the activities of our front line managers – All from one look into those eyes!



Ron Foss is the Senior Partner of EQ Management Group committed to improving management capability. He can be reached at [rfoss@eqmg.com](mailto:rfoss@eqmg.com). Additional information can be discovered at [www.eqmg.com](http://www.eqmg.com)