

When you have to reprimand

Every manager has to deal with employees whose on-the-job performance is unacceptable. Reprimanding employees is an unpleasant but necessary task of all managers. Here's how to handle it:

☛ Don't smile.

The moment you smile, even if you do it to try to put the worker at ease, you reduce your effectiveness. Smiling indicates approval. When reprimanding, you're talking about performance that doesn't merit your approval.

☛ Don't gunnysack.

Gunnysacking is saving up all your complaints and problems until the bag is full and then dumping it on the employee. Reprimand as soon as possible after the poor performance occurs.

☛ Be specific.

Tell the worker what he did wrong. Explain what you or another supervisor observed and how that differs from what is expected. Give him a chance to clarify the issue, but don't accept excuses.

☛ Tell the worker how you feel.

If you're upset, angry, surprised or disappointed by the employee's job performance, tell him.

☛ Put the reprimand in perspective.

You're reprimanding an employee for a specific action in a specific situation, not for being a "bad person" or a "bad employee." Let the worker know you value his work in general and in other situations, but not in this instance.

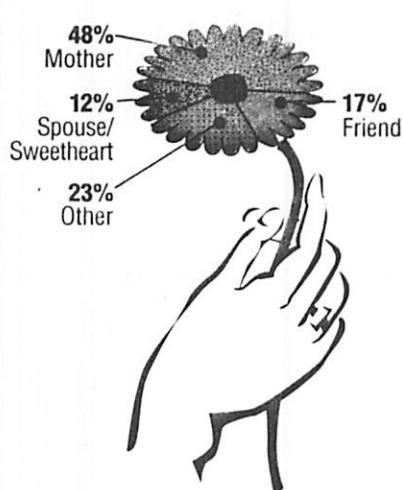
☛ Don't repeat the reprimand.

Once you've given the reprimand, you're done disciplining. You and the employee should go back to work and not dwell on the subject.

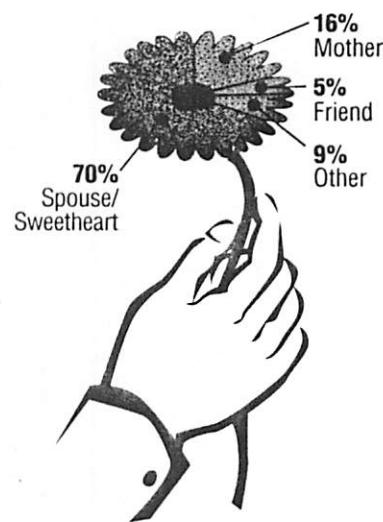
Source: Practical Supervision newsletter, 210 Commerce Blvd., Round Rock, Texas 78664

Sexes differ when it comes to flower giving

Q Which people do you give flowers to most often?



Women Give to Their Mothers



Men Give to Their Spouse or Sweetheart

Credit: The Gallup Organization, Inc. for the American Floral Marketing Council

The differences between men and women are apparent even when the subject is flower giving. In a recent Gallup survey conducted for the American Floral Marketing Council (AFMC), men named their spouse or sweetheart when asked to whom they give floral gifts most often. Women are more sentimental—they're most likely to give floral gifts to their mothers, the survey revealed.

According to the Gallup survey, nearly half (48 percent) of the women queried said they most often give flowers to their mothers. Seven in 10 men (70 percent) indicated they most often give flowers to their sweetheart or spouse. Men said their mothers were their second most frequent choice.

Source: AFMC, 1601 Duke St., Alexandria, Va. 22314

The customer's always right

Never assume the customer is wrong. Instead of saying, "Your account is in arrears," try, "Our records show your account is . . ." Avoid blaming the customer for errors. Instead of, "You made a mistake on your order," it's better to say, "We're having a problem understanding part of your order." Avoid punitive language, too. Rather than, "You'll have to come in and fill out a complaint form," say, "We're sorry for the inconvenience, but could you please come back to the shop

so we can personally replace the item or refund your money?"

If you and your employees learn to think before speaking, you'll be able to extinguish many customer "fires" before they become full-blown infernos. A little kindness and attention go a long way in calming irate customers.

Source: Boardroom Reports newsletter, June 15, 1991, 330 W. 42nd St., New York, N.Y. 10036