

**Transportation Leadership Council**  
**Minutes for: October 24, 2019**  
**Hays CISD Transportation Center, Training Room A**

Call to Order: 9:30am

Attendance: 8

- Mona Durham
- Richard Rodriguez
- Patricia Lira
- Tommie Martinez
- Darby Major
- Phyllis Scurry
- Kathy Rye
- Lilia Peterson

As a result of our last TLC meeting and with all respect, we consider unrealistic the comment made about we have been really good in finding all the negative of our department. We believe our department continues to experience low morale and high staff turnover rate. *(NOTE: it is reported that we are at the lowest turnover in the past 3 years.)*

We all consider it important to have a better understanding of what is happening in our department, so before going any further, it was actually a great question for us to consider. How would we describe our workplace? And how can we retain employees?

The first step in creating a motivating work environment is to stop taking actions that are guaranteed to demotivate people. So, how can we fix something when we don't know what's broken? Maybe we have to train ourselves to be honest with ourselves about the things that broke us. We know that most people tend to protect themselves. It is surely a nature of survival. But, if it leads to the state of denial until we cannot see what's wrong with us and what needs to be fixed, until we neglect to be the better version of ourselves, maybe we have to start being honest about what is broken within us. If we know what is broken, it could be easier for us to fix it; we need to identify what our problems are and why we have these problems.

So, without further ado, these are the words that our co-workers use to describe our workplace:

1.- Poor Leadership: We see the lack of leadership talent from the lead drivers to all above to the top in all the areas of our department. We all know that talents are innate and are the building blocks of great performance. Knowledge, experience and skills develop our talents into strengths. But unless people possess the right innate talents for the job, no amount of training or experience will lead to exceptional performance. We see that most of the time our department promotes employees into lead positions because of tenure or performance on the interviews, or maybe based on friendship, rather than talent. Rewards and promotions are not based on objective criteria, and this discourages competition and

affects team morale. This practice is showing that doesn't work. Experience and skills are important, but people's talents, the naturally recurring patterns in the ways they think, feel and behave predict where they'll perform at their best.

The good news is that sufficient management talent exists in every workplace. Our leaders need to maximize this potential by choosing the right person for the next leadership role using predictive analytics to guide their identification of talent. Specific tools such as talent audits and talent evaluation offer a good way for finding those employees who have the natural talent to be great leaders.

2.- Favoritism: All employees, regardless of their skills and experience, are entitled to equal treatment. For example, it is completely wrong to fire a specific employee for one mistake and not to fire another employee that made the same mistake just for the difference in their gender, or, another example; if one of our co-workers is constantly just walking around, talking around the halls, not having any work done, disrespecting other employees, breaking rules, but he gets away with everything. You see them hanging out in the supervisor's office almost every day, laughing and having a good time. But if another employee ever does something like this, the consequences are dire. The injustice of the situation will affect your team as a whole, leading to diminished performance, low employee morale, frustration and complaints of discrimination. Nepotism = individuals showing favoritism to the family members by providing them more hours or giving them summer jobs based on their relationships. When employees are hired for new positions because of favoritism or nepotism, other employees may question whether the new hires have the necessary knowledge, skills and attitudes to perform their jobs. If employees question their abilities to do their jobs, they may show them less respect, ignore their ideas and instructions or comment to the employees that they were only hired because of their relationships with our leaders. Getting shown little-to-no respect can cause conflicts between employees hired because of favoritism or nepotism and their co-workers. These are just few examples of favoritism in our workplace that are actually happening.

3.- Retaliation: We need a reliable way for submitting complaints or concerns. Train our leads and supervisors on ethics and laws banning retaliation and discrimination. We need to make sure our employees understand that retaliation will not be tolerated and that violators will be disciplined. We need to respond to these kinds of allegations immediately and investigate quickly, without confrontation. Also, is very important to communicate with the person who complained or reported wrongdoing and show you are taking the complaint seriously; this is an example of good investigation protocol in general.

4.- Lack of respect: Respect in the workplace breeds a healthy work environment. A professional, respectful work culture encourages productivity and growth. Everybody works optimally knowing they are valued and respected for their ideas as well as their role within the department. Part of respect is praise and feedback so that people know how they are doing at work. Employers express respect for employees when they treat employees as if they are adults who are capable of making smart choices. In a respectful workplace, everyone is equal; they just have different jobs and roles. Provide information to everybody as quickly as anyone else in our department, do not hold the information until someone has time to share. Employees hate to feel as if they are excluded from the information that they need to understand and support their department's mission, vision,

and goals. Employees like to know that someone who is trustworthy is in charge. When we assign an employee to conduct meetings make sure that employee has the communication skills to conduct the meeting with respect and avoid personal comments to the audience.

5.- Lack of empowerment: We need our leaders to be empowered. We do not need to be waiting for something to happen. We need to be able to perform our jobs more efficiently and effectively without feeling as if we are waiting for a decision, direction, and/or permission to act. We will become more responsible and accountable when self-direction is the norm in our leaders.

6.- Lack of value: Our staff is one of our most important assets, what sets our department apart from other departments? Is it our pay rate, our district name or our website? The truth is, it's all down to our employees. It's their hard work that determines whether or not our department is a success. When our department is at a high, it's important to acknowledge fairly that this success wouldn't have been possible without our employees, so make sure that their efforts are celebrated appropriately.

7.- Unbalanced workloads: When employees put in extra hours, it's not necessarily a sign of engagement. It could be a sign that you're giving them too much work and they feel unable to handle it. Furthermore, if employees feel unable to handle their workloads and you don't realize it, then that means they don't feel comfortable, or secure enough, to express their concerns. If too many people are working too many hours too often, then employee morale could be rapidly sinking. Take a deeper look at workloads if employees constantly work long hours. Evaluate what everyone has on their plates according to task urgency. Plan some time to have candid conversations with employees who put in the most overtime to find out why they're working so hard. It could have nothing to do with the actual work.

8.- Compensation: [Pending]

Our recommendation: Resolving all the above will create a culture of encouragement and motivation and this for sure will elevate the morale in our department and our employee turnover will decrease, then we can concentrate on bringing new hires on board and offer a better workplace.

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Written by Lilia Peterson