

They're watching your every move

Remember what the Police said. No, not the cops you called to get the drunk guy away from the receptionist's desk.

The Police. The '80s new wave trio that told you "every move you make, I'll be watching you."

Why is that important to you? Because in your workplace, it's not the Police or the VP of operations who are watching your every move. It's your employees.

They are watching every step you take, every smile you fake, every vow you break. And they're taking mental notes. Not that what you are doing is wrong, or that the info they glean will necessarily make it up to HR. It's that those notes tell them who you really are in terms of leadership, credibility, strength, character, the whole shebang.

Here's what your employees are looking for:

- 1. Tears.** As of now, you have none to shed. Not for anything, including joy. Although tears make us all human, from the cubicle perspective, they're a sign of weakness. Don't ever let 'em see you sniffle. Save that for the ride home.
- 2. Backbone.** A strong one. What you stand up for—and who you stand up to—means everything to them. Did you tell the staff they did a great job on the project, only to have another department head criticize their efforts at the next big meeting? Take a couple of on-deck-circle swings, my friend. You're going to bat. This is the backbone they need now.
- 3. Flip-flopping.** Go ahead and say one thing today and change positions tomorrow. At that point, your words, directives and opinions have little weight for the rest of your tenure. Might as well run for mayor.
- 4. Fairness.** Employees have an uncanny knack for detecting subtle overtures of favoritism. In fact, they're scouring for it. Avoid even the perception of it. It's a quick morale killer.
- 5. Compassion.** When it's needed, show it. And don't confuse it with a lack of backbone. If your file clerk needs the afternoon off to take her sick child to the doctor, let her go. Find a way to do without her for the rest of the day.
- 6. Coolness.** This has nothing to do with your taste in sunglasses. It's about calmness in the face of workplace-shaking news. In other words, don't go flailing your arms shouting, "I can't believe they're cutting my budget!" If it's something the staff needs to know, round them up for a meeting and give it to them straight. No drama.
- 7. Sweat.** Unlike tears, sweat from the boss is admirable. It shows that the doggedness and intensity you expect out of your workers is not beneath you. Delegation has its limits. Employees' respect for you is born in the trenches. It dies there too.