Developing a Healthy Competitive Climate

To promote a healthy competitive climate, make every effort to hire people with the right attitude. Look for genuine and sincere individuals who display a sense of humor. Then look for people who are self-starters, who convey confidence, and who appear to be oriented to cooperative effort, innovation, and teamwork.

- Lead people wisely. Good leaders delegate more, control less, and let employees know what the organization needs to survive in today's competitive market. Effective leaders are willing to take risks by providing employees with opportunities to make decisions. They also give subordinates opportunities for upward mobility and salary enhancements. These investments pay-off in increased productivity, improved morale, and greater "bottom line" profit margins.

- Establish thoughtful and reachable performance standards. If you overwhelm your employees, they will be preoccupied, experience difficulty in concentration, and function at a lower level of work performance. The answer is to put "stretch" into the performance of your staff, but not exhaustion. Then it is also essential to monitor performance patterns to assure that the goals you have established are indeed within reach and being met.

- You and your employees need to know how things are going and where the organization can improve. If you want to stay ahead in today's competitive market, you must promote continuous improvement. Policies that restrict flexibility must be examined both in terms of time and their real value to the organization and employees. Move quickly. The ability to respond fast is an important advantage in a quick-paced competitive environment.

- Post results. Be fair and factual in your measurements but once you know how everyone is doing, share the information. Effective employees almost always wish to do well and be recognized for their achievements. Since that's true, the secret is to establish goals that are responsible, forward moving, and fair. That way you will be demonstrating leadership in the best interest of your staff and the organization you represent.