

Rounding 101: Nine Simple Steps to Getting Started

- 1. Give your employees a heads-up.** Before you start rounding, tell your employees what you plan to do. Any time a leader changes his or her behavior, employees tend to get jumpy. Be honest. Tell them up front: "I want to be a better leader and I need your help. I am here to recognize and reward people and to find out what's working well in this company – and what's not working so well."
- 2. Prepare a scouting report.** As you talk with each employee start out with a basic knowledge of what the current problems are. For instance, if you know a department is short staffed, put it on the report. Or if you know there's a chronic problem with equipment breaking down, write it down. When you start rounding, you'll be able to talk intelligently about the issues.
- 3. Make a personal connection.** Ask how her sick mother is doing or ask him how his child did on college entrance exams. This is relationship building. Be genuine.
- 4. Mention an issue he or she raised during your last rounding visit.** Show the employee that you have solved the problem or that you are working on it.
- 5. Ask these five questions, keeping your tone and words as positive as possible:**
 - What is working well today?
 - Are there any individuals I should be recognizing?
 - DO you have the tools and equipment you need to do your job?
 - Is there anything we, the leaders, can do better?
 - What else would you like me to know?
- 6. When someone brings up a problem, assure him or her that you will do the best you can to get it resolved.** Obviously there will be circumstances you can't control, but people appreciate knowing that you will try. Sincere effort goes a long way.
- 7. Record issues that arise in a rounding log.** This will help you keep what needs to be done "top of mind". It will also help you hardwire the process into your company. Writing things down makes it more likely that they'll get done, and it makes things seem more "official".
- 8. Recognize and reward those who are identified by peers as high performers.** This might mean conveying a sincere word of thanks – being sure to cite who complimented him or her – or it might even be a small bonus or token of appreciation.
- 9. Repeat.** Round daily, if possible. At least do it several times a week. Don't risk losing momentum or you'll give it up before you start seeing results.