



MORALE: IT'S ALL ABOUT YOU

Individuals must take responsibility for their own interpersonal communications to improve morale in the emergency communications center.

By Suzanne Ladd

Emergency communications is a difficult field to work in. The very nature of the job calls for a higher level of oral communication and active listening skills in order to extract vital information under the most extreme circumstances. Public safety telecommunicators work and answer hundreds of 9-1-1 calls and respond to thousands of radio transmissions daily. They must comprehend what has and has not been said, make quick and decisive decisions, provide lifesaving instructions to callers or send help to units in the field. For the most part, they do this seamlessly without error and attitude. Telecommunicators are experts at communicating ... with everyone but each other.

If you attend any APCO conference or work related training, or just listen to your co-workers, you will undoubtedly hear dispatchers, supervisors, managers, and directors say the same thing: "Morale is an issue." They identify the culture as the problem or they make a broad statement about the industry and how it usually pulls predominately Type A personalities — which of course to them is the problem. What's amazing is that they — the telecommunicator, supervisor, manager, etc. — are talking about themselves!