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Thought for the Day

Remember ...



To lead people, walk beside them.
-Lao Tze- Chinese Taoist Philosopher

Transform Your Group Into a Team

I get calls saying, "We need team building next week." Team building starts with an event and continues with a process. Here are some tips to work the process:

Have People Work Together to Tackle an Issue

This doesn't have to be a "big" thing. Issues pop up. The more people work together, the more likely they will function as a team.

Celebrate the Outcomes

Congratulate the team on a job well done. Bring the team back to reflect on how it felt to work closely together. Expect some resistance. People may say they can't imagine working this way and getting their own work done. Emphasize the excitement of a shared

model, where anyone on the team initiates things, rather than waiting to be told what to do. As for the perception that teamwork will lead to a heavier workload, the opposite is true. Without teamwork there is friction, duplication, and wasted time.

Give the Process Time

People who have spent their lives simply following orders are task rather than process oriented. They may regard the process as too touchy-feely. Help employees understand that teamwork isn't about being nice; it's about smart business. A team atmosphere calls on everyone—not just the leader—to generate ideas, initiate projects and produce top-notch work.

(From Dr. Mimi's Team Building Workshop)

The 8 Realities of Change... and What You Can Do!

1. People hate to hear that there are going to be changes. The sooner they hear of the change, the more readily they will embrace it. Even those who hate change would rather know about it earlier than later.

2. People will feel uncomfortable, ill at ease and unnatural when you first implement change or ask them to do something different. Recognize this and let them know their feelings are normal.

3. Not everyone is at the same preparedness level for change and will, more often than not, focus on how they are unprepared for the change. Be sure to point out and emphasize the strengths they have to implement the change.

4. Even if everyone is going through

the changes at the same time, people often feel like they are alone. Encourage everyone to support and help each other.

5. People will be concerned about what they have to give up, even if the change will help them.

6. People will be concerned that they don't have enough resources. Let them know what resources are available and that they are sufficient.

7. People can only handle so much change. Be careful not to overload them or do too much at the same time.

8. If unchecked, people will go back to doing things the way they always have in the past. Be prepared for a setback and have a process in place to get back on track.

(Taken from a "Change Management" program by Dr. Mimi Hull)

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Surviving Office Politics

You realize you work in a political environment. What do you do?

- **Observe** the political style without getting involved in political struggles. If you notice inconsistencies in the way the organization operates, learn what the patterns and motivations are, as well as identifying potential allies.

- **Be subtle** as you observe and stay true to your own values. Don't betray your own sense of what's right merely to fit in - it will lead to internal conflict and stress. You can't please everyone all the time; use your own integrity to make decisions that you can live with.

- **Build an internal and external network** of trusted allies—not for political battle but moral support and to create options and opportunities for yourself. There's always perspective—and options for potential new employment—beyond your



Get Feedback!

Performance feedback is critical as an informative gauge of our behavior and a tool to improve it. It shows us how others see us...which we may not correctly appraise ourselves.

Ignorance is not bliss. Just because we don't know what others think doesn't mean they're not still thinking it. Seeking and using feedback demonstrates eagerness to develop professionally, emotional maturity and leadership.

Ask for feedback - Sources of feedback are abundant. Supervisors, direct reports, co-workers, customers, friends and family can all provide you relevant insight. Be creative! When you ask for feedback, let your sources know why you want it and ask them to be frank. Some people are comfortable sharing it verbally and others prefer a confidential, anonymous arena, like an online 360° feedback tool.

current organization. Use your network to broaden your focus and reconfirm or realign your values.

- **Expose**, gently with finesse, other people's politically motivated behavior. When coworkers say one thing and do another, or seem to be trying to sabotage your decisions or work relationships, challenge their motivation using your assertiveness skills: "You seem to be unhappy with the decisions I've made, would you like to discuss them?" They may deny your suggestion or be confrontational, but at least the issue will be out in the open.

- **Find yourself a coach** with whom you can discuss your observations and concerns. You may gain a deeper understanding of the political processes at work and some insight into how you can manage these more effectively.

Ask about importance - Along with getting feedback on how well you perform, be sure to ask how important it is for your development. If it's important and a weaker area, this is an issue that needs immediate attention. On the other hand, if it is not important, this may not be a priority issue.

Be prepared - What you may hear, may surprise you. Like medicine or a physical workout, it may be tough at the time, but so rewarding in the long run. Remind yourself of the ultimate goal—becoming a better you!

Be open, listen, and display positive body language. Remember, when people give you feedback they are helping you. Why repay them with defensiveness? If you are anxious about receiving feedback, ask someone you trust. Be honest about your anxiety and let them know you value their observations.

Thank your feedback providers and share how you will use their advice.

By Lakeesha Flowers, Human Resources Specialist

Hull & Associates can provide you with an online 360° tool that is customizable, affordable, and confidential.



Surviving Meeting Nightmares

When leading a meeting, be prepared for potential hazards such as differences of opinion, personality conflicts, or even outlandish remarks. Here's what to do.

"If you disagree with an idea, you should..."

Propose an alternative without being immediately dismissive. Use the "sandwich technique": put a piece of constructive criticism (the meat) between two positive or at least neutral statements (the bread). For example: "Your idea has potential. One thing we'd have to address is... But let's consider your idea." Relate all critiques — be they yours or others — to the goal of the meeting.

"If tempers flair, you should..."

First listen. Ask others to listen without commenting as well. Then try to calm people down and, if necessary, suggest they leave the room to take a breather.

If conflict between two employees becomes a habit, talk to them individually to try to get their personal differences resolved.

"If someone makes a horribly inappropriate comment, you should..."

If the remark is offensive, address the person during the meeting and let them know that what they said was inappropriate. Say something like: "That's not how we see it here. I want everyone here to understand that I disagree with what's just been said, and that as an organization we need to do better." Then say, "Let's discuss that one-on-one," or "We can discuss that more later." It is better to cut them off than to argue with them at the time or to ignore it.

"If someone falls asleep, you should..."

If a person is nodding in and out of sleep, it's probably best just to leave them alone — they'll likely come to on their own anyway. However, if someone starts snoring, go ahead and wake them up. It's not necessary to scold them; the fact that you woke them up will be embarrassing enough!

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C by
Dr. Mimi Hull

THE
corporate couch



Q: With the current economy, what can I do to ensure that my employer recognizes my value to the company?—***Scared of the Chopping Block***

A: Winning has become another word for survival in today's economy. People are worried about being terminated, but hard work rarely goes unnoticed. Fear and doubt can be your own worst enemy. If you have doubts about keeping your job, so will your boss.

Here are some helpful hints that will make it hard for your boss to make that dreadful decision when he or she comes to your name:

- When everyone else is having a case of the Mondays, walk in with a smile ready to focus on the future. Make the best of the situation in front of you.
- Be visible. Volunteer to do things so your boss will know you. It is easier to fire a name on a list than a visibly positive go-getter.
- Build your network with people who will look out for you as a person.
- Finally, be loyal to your boss. To be a credible and respected employee, you must be trustworthy and competent. Treat your gained trust with the utmost care because it is easy to lose.—***Dr. Mimi***

Dr. Mimi Hull heads Hull & Associates, a team of trainers, speakers and consultants. A licensed psychologist, she has a master's in counseling and personnel services and a doctorate in psychology with specialization in business management from the University of Florida—Gainesville. Her B.A. in psychology is from Syracuse (N.Y.) University. Reach her at www.HullOnline.com or DrMimi@HullOnline.com.