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The Corporate Communicator

Www.HullOnline.com July-August, 2010

hullonline.com

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Consider This ...



Hard Vs. Soft Skills

Technical and job-related skills are a must, but they are NOT sufficient if you want your people to grow. To this, the answer is harsh but real—a professional who wants to do well does not really have a choice; soft skills are essential.

Initially, technical abilities are important to get good assignments. However, when it comes to growing, it is your personality that matters, especially in large organizations where several people with similar technical expertise compete for a promotion.

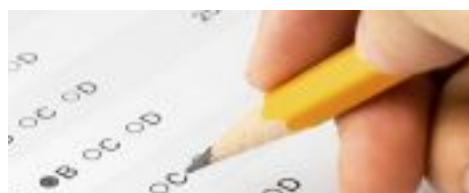
The soft skills that are required include:

- Interpersonal skills
- Team spirit
- Business etiquette
- Negotiation skills

Behavioral traits such as attitude, motivation and time management “Soft skills training is essential because we do not have it in our academic curricula. Therefore, organizations have to take up the task of grooming employees who are the link between the company and the external world, so that they are able to present themselves better,” says Sumeet Mehta, an equity research analyst with Fortis Securities Ltd.

Do you and your people have great soft skills? If your answer is yes, good for you.

But if your answer is no, then you know it is time to approach either a training organization or a training consultant. Call us today ... We can help!



Faking It: Can People “Outsmart” Personality Tests?

“Faking” is a big concern for employers using personality tests.

Steps for Employers

Cover the basics. Choose a test with proven reliability and validity like the DISC®.

Become knowledgeable about the test through a certification program.

If this is not possible, then use an outside consultant.

Consider the personality requirements of the job and measure them using a tool like the Role Behavior

Analysis. For instance, the ability to work long hours without social interaction is far more “natural” to some than others.

Monitor the process. If you are concerned about having someone else taking the test, have him or her take it at work. Tell participants they will be discussing their answers at a later date. This holds an applicant responsible for consistent answers.

Conduct interviews that are based on the test results. Some test publishers, like the DISC® provide interview recommendations with the test reports, which can save time. If someone has intentionally provided false or inflated answers, you may spot discomfort or hesitation during the interview.

Do the profile “on the other person.” If you find that your perception and theirs is radically different, talk about the different perceptions.

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Difficult People—Your Best Friends

Objective language can be your best friend when communicating with difficult people, and it is often the only way to get the response you want. *Trust me, it's helpful outside of work also—with difficult neighbors, children and even friends.*

What is objective language? If you tell a coworker he or she is disruptive, that is your subjective opinion. But if you rely on what you saw and heard, then the true situation becomes clear.

Does your coworker talk too much at meetings? Stop in your office to chat ... on an hourly basis ... and break your work

flow? With those facts at hand, now your coworker can identify the problem exactly.

Look at the difference between subjective and objective language here:

Subjective: You are irritating to other employees who want to get work done.

Objective: You interrupt people by dropping by their work space to chat.

Subjective: You're really annoying in meetings.

Objective: You need to stay in the meetings and talk only when the facilitator calls on you.

Subjective: You don't respect other people.

Objective: You call other people derogatory names.

Once the person can understand the problem objectively, he or she can find the solution. Call other people names? Well, stop doing it!

Motivating Your People

When we think of motivation, we think of praise and awards, but there is a more to ensure that members of your team know their importance.

Recognition won't work without respectful relationships. There's no excuse not to know all your employees' names, what they're working on and what their aspirations are. Once you solidify a superior relationship with them, it can be as simple as verbally reinforcing positive behavior. With under-performers, discover what they do well and recognize them for it and they are more likely to do more things well.

Research has found that the cornerstone of meaningful recognition was actually opportunity. "An award may be a tangible sign of recognition, but employees see an opportunity as a sign that their manager truly values them."

Opportunities don't have to be expensive. It could be as simple as trusting employees with important customers and/or assignments, introducing them to an instrumental figure within the organization or having a training event.

If you can reaffirm your employees' value while your organization is having

difficulty, you will keep your best people. Some people believe if you praise someone, that person is naturally going to say, "If I'm that good then I should get a raise." This simply is not the case. They do not go hand in hand because employees can see the economy around them. They know what things are like and they just want to feel valued.

Then again, if a company starts to bring in a ton of money and doesn't distribute some of it, people will get conflicting messages and think they're not actually appreciated.

How do you know if your "motivation program" is working? Ask your people. If you have built the relationship first, they will let you know.



How to Choose the Right Trainer or Speaker

There are so many trainers and speakers to choose from. How do you select the best one for your next event?

There are some basic questions you can ask yourself:

- Is the speaker credible and trustworthy? Does he or she have the credentials and experience to deliver a quality presentation? What is their education? Who else have they worked for? Can they do a variety of programs or are they a "one trick pony?"
- Does the message make sense for your audience? Does the trainer take time to learn about your organization? Is the program a customized one or simply the same program done over and over again?
- Do they motivate or, better yet, educate your audience? Stories are great but stories without substance are simply entertainment.

We have all been to these events—the speakers are great; they pump us up; we

go home and share our enthusiasm with our families; and by time Monday rolls around we have lost the energy and it is business as usual. The message simply wasn't sustainable. We feel good but we have not added to our repertoire or have anything practical to put into practice.

When choosing a trainer or speaker, the real question comes down to ... What are the results you desire? In other words, at the end of each engagement, what do you want them to know? How do you want them to feel and what do you want them to do better or do differently?

Is it worth it to have professional speaker? If you choose them carefully, then absolutely.

If you need an engaging speaker or trainer, call us at (407) 628-0669. At Hull & Associates, our programs are always upbeat, interactive and fun, as well as productive and inspiring. No two people or organizations are alike. Therefore, we customize our programs to meet your unique and specific needs.

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About Dr. Mimi Hull

Dr. Mimi Hull earned her Doctorate in Counseling Psychology with minor in Management and her Masters in Counseling and Personnel Services from the University of Florida. Her B.A. in psychology was earned from Syracuse University and she holds many assessment certifications and licenses including MBTI (Myers Briggs) and DiSC® as well as the Optimal Feedback survey system.

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counseling and coaching applications and EARN CEUs at the same time. DiSC® Certification is sponsored by Valencia Community

College, with Dr. Mimi as the instructor, in Orlando!

The next DISC Certification is Sept. 22!

Contact us:

Phone: (407) 628-0669

E-mail us at:

drmimi@hullonline.com

THE corporate couch by Dr. Mimi Hull

**Dear Dr. Mimi,**

What are some things I can do to ensure a positive work environment for my employees?

– **Concerned Manager**

Dear Concerned,

Keep your employees informed. The more information your employees receive, the less they assume ... and the less chance for miscommunication and useless rumors and gossip.

- **Transparency:** Don't hide things. If the goal is to work as a team, access to information is essential to success.
- **Honesty:** Information that you pass on to your employees must be true 100% of the time!

Balance criticism with praise. Correcting an employee's mistakes is necessary and deciding on

disciplinary action is appropriate, but also understand that people need to hear the good things they have done as well. People are motivated when they hear at least two praises for every criticism.

Public vs. private. Praise in public, and more importantly ... criticize in private.

Don't over-work. Emphasize the importance of getting work done on time, meeting deadlines and being productive. However, don't forget the human factor. Unexpected circumstances occasionally arise and flexibility and caring build loyalty.

Learn to laugh. Laughter is good for you. Smile. Tell an appropriate joke here and there. Remember that if you are poking fun at someone, it needs to be yourself. We spend way too much time at work to not enjoy the people we have around us.

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.