

HULL &  
ASSOCIATES

# The Corporate Communicator

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## Consider This ...

"What I don't like  
about  
office parties  
is looking for a  
new job  
the next day."  
- Phyllis Diller



## Holiday Celebrations and Gifts

The holiday season is both fun and stressful. How do you keep the corporate festivities respectful and fun for all? Different companies have different cultures. A multi-faith, seasonal display of Christmas tree, menorah and a Kinara (the holder for Kwanzaa candles) may be completely acceptable for one company, while another may opt strictly for seasonal decorations. (e.g., snowflakes and seasonal flowers) A 'holiday party' is a typical name for the seasonal event and sounds neutral, but religions, like Jehovah's Witnesses, don't celebrate these winter holidays. In fact, their faith bars them from observing. One suggestion is to put together a multi-faith team to help you plan and

coordinate the event(s) of the season. That way, you get diversity of views.

In these tight economic times, it may be a burden for your coworkers to have to buy gifts. If gift giving is part of your organization's culture, you may want to limit the amount that people can spend and/or have a re-gifting gift exchange where each person brings something from home that they no longer need or want. Again, set a dollar limit on these. Another idea is to have a service gift exchange. Offer up to one hour of service to a fellow employee like filing or straightening out that junk drawer!



## Are You the Toxic Employee?

Before you point out your coworkers annoyances, consider that you might be annoying them by:

**Talking loudly on the phone** No one wants to hear your conversations. In today's cubicle culture you can easily annoy your coworkers by simply being too loud on the phone.

**Humming, Singing, Clicking, Clacking.** This is when you are by yourself and still making irritating noises. These sounds are really annoying ... especially if you're not the person making them!

**Forwarding obnoxious non-work related e-mails,** especially those that ask you to respond to show you care or to have good luck.

**Arriving Late, Leaving Early, and Taking a long lunch.** Flex time is great

but taking advantage of it can be really annoying ... especially if you often complain how overworked you are!

**Coming to work sick.** Sneezing? Coughing? Blowing your nose? Yuck. Stay home! Take a sick day and your coworkers will be happy when you return. Spread joy, not germs.

**Bringing daily drama into work.** Stories about your miserable mother-in-law, fights with your girlfriend or the crazy ex-husband who is late again with the child support are important to you but annoy your coworkers. Too much drama and you will be seen as the perpetrator not the victim!

If these sound familiar, stop doing them ... and get to work!



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### It Was MY Idea!

Your boss asks a coworker whose idea it was to successfully contact a new supplier. They take the credit, when in fact it was you who did the research, got the bids and floated the idea. Instead of applauding your initiative during the weekly staff meeting, the coworker receives the credit.

So how should you react? It can be tricky. You don't want to lose the well-deserved recognition, but at the same time you don't want to come off as egotistical nor do you want it to become a shouting match.

Consider if this is an important issue and, if so, you need to stand up for yourself. It does not have to be in public where the coworker feels humiliated but perhaps pulling your boss aside and saying something like, "I don't want to make a huge deal of this and I know

"Oscar" said that this was his idea, but I thought you should know that I was the one who not only came up with the idea but did the research." If you have your notes bring them with you.

You may also want to let "Oscar" know that you were surprised that he did not at least share the credit and recognition with you. Be polite but be firm. If you speak up, the chances of the incident happening again is decreased!



### 3 'T's for Leading Today's Virtual and/or Remote Workforce

Virtual and/or remote teams are composed of geographically dispersed employees who interact through various channels of technology. Virtual teams can provide a real business benefit because they reduce costs and can establish a competitive advantage within the global marketplace. Here are three simple tips for leading today's virtual workforce.

**1. Time:** Establish a specified day and time when you will check in, whether it is on a daily or weekly basis. This ensures that both parties know what is going on and feel connected. Remember: the more you communicate, the less likely your employees will feel they are "out of sight, out of mind." Respond to your employees. Follow up phone calls and emails ASAP. In doing so, you will build a high level of trust and demonstrate that

you are responsive and available.

**2. Trust:** Remind your employees that you hired them because of their specific talents and that you have faith in their work ethic and autonomy. Set standards, goals and deadlines with specific milestones and check-in points. Champion their freedom to work when they want, where they want and how they want; as long as they are performing and producing quality results in a timely manner.

**3. Training:** Ensure that your virtual team has the necessary training to be effective. For example, they may need training on cultural competence. This is because while an enduring silence is perceived as perfectly comfortable in India, Indonesia and Japan, and being unnecessarily talkative is considered rude and a lack of self-control, silence is uncomfortable in our American culture. Because they may not have been trained in cultural competence, unknowingly, they could offend someone!

Leading a virtual workforce takes training as well. Start with these three 'T's and you are well on your way!

(from Leading Remote Teams -  
Dr. Mimi Hull)



### Is Your Cultural Climate Inclusive?

Culture is important because it affects productivity, motivation and the bottom line. An organizational culture is much like its personality. It can be inclusive and open, exclusive and restricting ... or somewhere in between. The good news is that organizational culture is easier to change than personality, once you know what it is and what you want it to be.

Creating the climate of an organization is often an initiative where the leadership takes responsibility for ensuring a healthy and positive work environment.

#### What is the culture climate of your organization? Do you know if your employees feel included?

Here are three questions to determine your cultural climate:

1. Are employees able to make

decisions or is upper level approval required?

2. Do employees have the ability to work autonomously or are they micromanaged? (Do you know if they are feeling micromanaged? Most employers don't!)

3. Is the direction and the vision of the organization communicated with your employees on a weekly or monthly basis or are they typically uninformed? What they don't know will hurt not only them but also the organization.

If you have answered the second option to at least one question, chances are the climate of your organization's culture needs improvement!

Don't despair. We have worked with many organizations whose cultural climate needed fixing. The good news is that it can be done ... if you make it a priority!

Feel free to give us a call for a no obligation consultation.

(From Building Inclusive Cultures - Dr. Mimi Hull)

### LEARN LOTS!!!!

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### About Dr. Mimi Hull

Dr. Mimi Hull is a fully Licensed Psychologist who has a doctoral minor in management, and a masters in counseling and personnel services from U of Florida. Her B.A. in psychology is from Syracuse University. She holds many assessment certifications and licenses including MBTI (Myers Briggs) and DiSC® as well as the Optimal Feedback survey system.

**Her most requested programs are in the areas of Team Building, Leadership, Conflict Management and Board Development.**

**Call her for a FREE consultation!**



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### Contact us:

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 by Dr. Mimi Hull

THE corporate couch



**Dear Dr. Mimi,**

We are a two-person office. My employer treats me well ... too well. I am paid well. I get little presents all the time. I received a huge birthday bonus, and now he wants to pay for my membership in a health club. He has never made any inappropriate advances, and yet I feel uncomfortable accepting this gift. Even in these tough times, our organization is doing well. Am I being overly cautious by not accepting any more gifts?

—Overpaid

**Dear Overpaid,**

Some people are truly generous, and perhaps you are underrating yourself. If the organization is doing well, this may be his way of showing appreciation. It is less costly to give you a one-time gift than a raise. However, if you don't want to accept the latest gift, tell him thanks for the generous offer but that you are uncomfortable with his paying for your membership at this time.

—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](http://www.HullOnline.com) or [DrMimi@HullOnline.com](mailto:DrMimi@HullOnline.com).

 by Dr. Mimi Hull

THE corporate couch



**Dear Dr. Mimi,**

I will be starting a new job next month. I enjoy working at my current job, and I know that I have done a good job, but there is no room for advancement. When people have left this place before, they are talked about as if they are dirt. How can I prevent that from happening to me?

—Scared of the talk

**Dear Scared,**

Ask your supervisor for a letter of recommendation for your file. Have it addressed to "to whom it may concern." That way, you can use it later when you need it. In addition, when you give your notice, ask if you can use them as a reference ... and tell them that you have enjoyed your tenure there and hope that the separation will be a positive one with no ill feelings.

—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](http://www.HullOnline.com) or [DrMimi@HullOnline.com](mailto:DrMimi@HullOnline.com).