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The Corporate Communicator

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Consider This ...



Should We Have a Board Retreat?

If your Board is in a rut, or simply mediocre, consider a Board Retreat. A retreat allows time to discuss issues while building close relationships in a productive environment. Retreat locations include anything from meeting rooms to resorts to campgrounds. They can last as little as a few hours to as long as a few days.

Engaging a facilitator is vital to help you:

- Set clear goals, leading to practical outcomes.
- Develop a focused agenda to maximize time.
- Provide an appropriate pace, monitor topics and ensure progress and closure.

- Create a frank, courteous atmosphere so you can examine, discuss, disagree, then productively resolve issues and next steps.
- Enable informal contact: Breaks, meals, and time between sessions provide the environment in which people get to know each other and learn more about what they can contribute.

Consider a facilitated retreat to enable your Board to be more focused, a better team, and achieve more.



I Love Millennials!

Millennials like to work as a team and aren't intimidated by age differences. They work well with diverse coworkers. They build relationships. Being a people person, I love that!

Millennials love technology. I didn't know what I was missing in tech shortcuts and web based opportunities until I watched and learned from our interns.

Millennials are self-assured. They want to take on the world and represent a whole new client base. By listening to them, I learn what's important to their generation. No matter what your business, Millennial input is essential.

Millennials understands personal branding. As a speaker and trainer, the least favorite part of my job is selling

myself and my skills. They encourage me to promote myself.

Millennials like work/life integration. They are attached to their iPhones and a 24/7 work schedule and I reap the benefits.

Millennials have lots of energy. My days are filled with travel, speaking, trainings and other "stuff." I have lots of energy and they do as well. They also share my enthusiasm for what I do.

Yes, Millennials are different from Baby Boomers, but the benefits of having them on your team is worth the difference.



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we can help you satisfy
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development needs.

Managing Your Own Stress

When we do workshops on stress, we find that people blame the company for their stress, but in fact they create their own stress. Stress is real and needs to be managed. Stress can lead to physical and psychological illness, reduced morale and productivity. Some tips to reduce stress are:

Be responsible for your physical well-being.

- Eat a healthy snack like fruit or nuts every 2-3 hours.
- Take a stretch break every hour.
- Exercise to improve your mood and boost energy!

Don't confuse working hard with overworking.

- Avoid "bringing work home."
- Silence your phone during meals and don't answer unnecessary e-mails.

Ten Ideas for Creative Changes

Are you looking for fresh ideas, new approaches and positive change? Here are some ways to get the juices flowing:

1. Book Clubs: Find the "best book" on a pertinent topic and start a group to read it together and discuss suggestions for your company.

2. Employee share events: Have a lunch and learn where your employees lunch and you learn about what "wild and crazy" ideas they have to improve your organization.

3. Change it up: You can change your routine, your desk, your office space or even your pictures and it will help you think differently.

4. Vendor/Customer share event: Invite your customers to a one-hour event to give you ideas on how you can improve your business. Focus the conversation by having an outside facilitator.

5. External training: Sending team members to outside training can be very inspirational. Be sure to have a forum for them to report their learnings.

6. Hire a Consultant: Consultants can be a worthwhile investment to inform, educate and empower your employees.

7. Attend Conferences: Here you can

Make time for yourself!

- Get extra sleep, read a book, or meditate.
- Take time to digest each day's achievements.

Practice Communication.

- Notify your supervisor of stressful issues. They can't fix what they don't know!
- Create trusting relationships with your coworkers. ***A joy shared is twice the joy and a burden shared is half the burden.***

Access your resources

- Perhaps HR can help or direct you to someone who can.

- Suggest a stress management workshop. It is amazing how the investment pays off!

(From Stress Management seminar by Dr. Mimi)

network with other professionals, gain insight from consultants and attend presentations on new topics.

8. Professional Networks: Professional networking groups offer a wealth of knowledge sharing and inspirational ideas even among competitors!

9. Use your Intranet: Encourage employees to submit new ideas and suggestions. Then, allow the entire organization to rate each submission. The best ideas should rise to the top.

10. Performance Objectives: Have employees bring in new ideas and alternative approaches by including it in their performance objectives.

Your people can be creative ... just give them the freedom and the forum to make it happen!



So You're the New Manager ...

1. Accept that you have much to learn. Be humble. You haven't done this job long enough for a real track record.

2. Observe and listen. Rather than risk moving too much too soon, learn what's critical and what's not by engaging those with institutional knowledge.

3. Know your team and how they work. What is their work style? Their personality? Doing a DiSC® profile can shorten your learning curve.

4. Give everyone a clean slate. You have a fresh start; they want one, too. Avoid rumors and gossip. Watch to see who'll tell the truth, help, or inevitably disappoint. Get buy-in from your stars and respected veterans.

5. Set Objectives. Set ground rules and expectations early. Outline your short-term and long-term vision. Identify what mission is critical, why, and how everyone's role contributes to the end result. Establish time lines and benchmarks.

6. Develop Each Person. Do individual plans and seek out opportunities where they can learn, contribute and move out

of their comfort zones. The more you train, the more invested they'll be.

7. Communicate clearly. This is essential to establish your credibility and gain support of your team. Provide direction and welcome questions and feedback.

8. Set a good example. Demand from yourself the same professionalism that you expect from others. If you expect the team to be friendly, then be sure you are! If you expect others to be on time, don't be late!

9. Encourage feedback. Ask (more than once) for opinions so your team knows that you are willing to listen to their concerns and ideas as well as to provide solutions.

10. Share recognition. Publicly and informally recognize efforts and achievements to build confidence, and encourage future contributions and effort.



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Have you ever said, "but I told them ..." You probably did, but the message you sent was not the message they received. Call Dr. Mimi to help improve communications!!!

Dr. Mimi Hull is a fully licensed psychologist who has helped many organizations improve communication, leadership and team building. She can help you, your organization, your board and/or your staff.

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

Contact her for a FREE consultation!

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 by Dr. Mimi Hull

THE corporate couch



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.

Dear Dr. Mimi:

I have been asked to facilitate a meeting next month. This could be a chance for me to show off my strengths. The group tends to go off on tangents and not get much accomplished. Do you have any suggestions on how to keep them on track?

— *Fearful Facilitator*

Dear Fearful:

Many people think that a meeting begins when it is called to order. The key to a successful meeting is the work done before the meeting to prepare. An agenda is essential. Estimate the time each item will take and note that on the agenda. Make sure you have the needed information and right people there. Send out the agenda prior to the meeting with the purpose and desired outcomes clearly stated.

At the start of the meeting, suggest a ground rule that it will be your function as the facilitator to keep the group focused and on track, as this is what a facilitator is meant to do. When people start to go off track, remind them of the ground rule and ask how their comments specifically relate to the subject. If they don't, remind them of the ground rule of keeping on track, and bring them back to the subject at hand.

If other interesting ideas start to emerge, suggest that you will make note of them and they will be available for discussion, if time allows, at the end of the meeting or they can be on the agenda at a future meeting. While it may be uncomfortable at first to enforce this ground rule, it will become easier with time. People will start to police themselves, and you will be seen as someone who knows how to run a better meeting.

—*Dr. Mimi*

 by Dr. Mimi Hull

THE corporate couch



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.

Dear Dr. Mimi:

I have an employee who I am certain has great ideas, but she is very shy and introverted. Others in our group are very outspoken, and if there is a silence, they will fill it. I would love to have my shyer teammate express her ideas and suggestions, but fear that she will not say a word. How can I coax her to speak up?

— *Extrovert*

Dear Extrovert:

First, let me explain the difference between introverts, extroverts and shy people. Introverts do not fear social situations, but prefer solitary activities. Extroverts love social situations and speak up freely. People who are shy are not necessarily introverts. They would like to socialize and speak up, but are often restrained by inner fears. Perhaps your employee is afraid of what others will think of her ideas, so she is hesitant to express herself. You may want to talk with her ahead of time to learn if she is truly shy or simply an introvert. Here are some tips to help her feel more at ease:

- Build a safe climate. If she is indeed shy, do not allow anyone to criticize ideas or tease within the strategic planning setting. What may seem like a benign joke can be a thought-stopper.
- Use an outside facilitator. An outside facilitator is invaluable both before and throughout meetings. With a neutral facilitator, we conduct interviews, focus groups and/or surveys prior to meetings and learn so many things that people will never say aloud.
- Permit silent participation and use alternative methods. People process information differently, and while they may not speak up, they are still participating by listening. Give everyone an alternative way to submit their ideas before, during or after the meeting. This can be in written or electronic form. You may want to allow people to make anonymous recommendations.
- Give positive reinforcement. Shy people are very critical of themselves and their mistakes. When they give an idea, encourage it and ask others to build on it.

—*Dr. Mimi*