

HULL &
ASSOCIATES

The Corporate Communicator

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Consider This ...



A smooth sea never
makes a skilled sailor!

Stop Bad Behavior!

Show transparency

Let employees know about how and why decisions are made. Employees who understand *why* are more productive and have greater long-term commitment.

Distribute assignments fairly

Yes, employees enter your organization with different abilities, and not every assignment fits every employee. Your employees tune in to each other's skills and abilities, and will notice when they or their coworkers are not being fairly challenged.

Provide non-monetary rewards

Employees who are not receiving positive recognition are more likely to "steal" from the organization under the pretense that they are owed

something. Reinforce good behavior!

Have a true open door policy

Some open door policies seem like closed-door policies when employees feel uneasy about bringing up issues. This leads to absenteeism, depression, and lower productivity.

Punitive justice

First, allow employees opportunities to self-correct by bringing issues to their attention. However, consistency is key and it is important to have clearly written rules and enforced consequences.

Fairness, recognition, and consistency are key for creating a work environment where your employees stop behaving badly.



Solving Team Building Bloopers!

"Teamwork makes the dream work." This refers to the concept that team cohesiveness accomplishes great goals. Maintaining an effective team requires communicating, organizing, and engagement. You have to respond to everyone's individuality, while establishing support. Here are some key team building bloopers and how to resolve them.

Failure to get buy in: In many instances, not everyone on the team is on board with a certain idea or the role that they play in a project. This can lead to less effort and lower engagement in a project.

Solution: Ensure that everyone on the team be informed about the project early and knows the importance of their role and responsibilities.

Failure to establish and enforce norms or expected behaviors: If some people are allowed to get away with things and others are not, the team suffers.

Solution: Establish guidelines for what is expected from each individual and discuss how they will be enforced by the group and not just one person.

Failure to provide a safe environment: If people think that expressing ideas and disagreement will have negative consequences, good ideas are often lost and mistakes are made.

Solution: It is crucial to create an environment that permits team members to voice their opinions openly and truthfully. Instead of the boss facilitating discussions, having an outside facilitator frees employees to state their opinion and take an educated risk.

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Are They Really Lazy?

Have you ever encountered someone at work who is unable to plan, organize, or even remember things? You might have labeled that person as lazy or uninterested in working. In reality, there are cases where people want to plan and follow through, but just can't. The mental skills that help the brain organize and act on information are called executive functions. These skills help individuals: plan, organize, reflect on work and make adjustments, prioritize, pay attention, initiate tasks and use past experiences to solve a problem. When a person suffers from Executive Functioning Problems, it is more difficult for them to succeed in the workplace.

Usually problems in Executive Functioning are identified during childhood; however, in some instances people are unaware of their problem until

they fail at work. As a psychologist, Dr. Mimi Hull has learned that while this situation is difficult, it is not impossible for people with Executive Functioning Problems to succeed. To improve the productivity of people who have this problem:

- Provide structure through clear communication, expectations, and rules
- Break down long-term tasks into smaller manageable ones
- Provide the employee with the needed priorities
- Give positive reinforcement to the employee

The good news is that with these accommodations you could have an excellent employee. The even better news is that by following these suggestions with all employees, you can have higher productivity throughout your organization!



Networking: Buy Before You Sell!

Networking is an investment in others, and to do so, you must be the buyer **before** you are a seller. In a world where everybody is in a frenzy to sell themselves, a person who is a receiver is appreciated. In other words to be a "buyer."

Here are some tips for "buying."

- **Repeat their name** – When you shake someone's hand, repeat their name back, "You said your name was Ken? It's great to meet you!" By repeating their name aloud, it helps you remember it later.
- **Ask questions that are not really questions**– This prevents your sounding like you're giving the third-degree. To do this, use phrases like, "Tell me more about ..."

- **Don't interrupt!** – People who interrupt appear to have their own agenda- themselves! You may think you have a wonderful add-on to the story but the other person will take it as not caring.
- **Repeat and agree when you can.** - People like people who have similar beliefs and thoughts. For example, you can say: "Yes, that relates to what you said about ..., I can see why you have that opinion! I agree!"
- **Make it a habit!** – If you're going to become the buyer and not just the seller, commit to engaging others into conversations. Word will get out that you are an interesting person to be around and people will seek you out!

Author, Keith Ferrazzi once said, "The currency of real networking is not green but generosity." Be generous with your time and your ears when networking and the rewards will come!

(From a talk on Networking by Dr. Mimi Hull)

How to Win an Argument!

Benjamin Franklin said, "In this world nothing is certain, except death and taxes." In the workplace, we can add another certainty – arguments! Arguments are prevalent in every work place. Winning an argument involves incorporating a multitude of things to get the desired result.

When we train on Negotiating Skills, some basic pointers we share to win an argument include:

- **Stay calm:** Some arguments can get heated. It's crucial to not lose your cool. The second your emotions take over; the greater the chance you'll lose the argument. As emotion goes up, rationality goes down!
- **Listen attentively:** Most people focus so much on winning and making their point that they completely ignore their opponent's ideas. The more you let others talk, the more you know about their position and the easier it is to uncover flaws in their arguments and refute them.
- **Use facts as your main weapon:** No matter how ignorant the person, facts are difficult to refute. Keep records, including time and dates, to support your case. Ask your opponent to give you facts to back up their position as well.
- **Ask questions:** Asking questions allows you to direct the conversation and possibly make your opponent lose control of their argument.
- **Use logic:** Demonstrate how one concept leads to another through logical reasoning. Use logic to boost your argument and undermine your opponents. Numbering your points might also be helpful as long as you keep a pleasant tone of voice.
- **Admit your mistakes:** If you realize that you are wrong, state it. It will show that you are honest and more likely to be trusted. Also if you admit your mistakes, the other person is more likely to admit theirs as well.

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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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C by Dr. Mimi Hull

THE corporate couch

**Dear Dr. Mimi:**

I don't want to look like a braggart; however, I've been having a problem in getting the recognition I deserve at work. Can you make any suggestions how I could handle this issue?

—*Unrecognized*

Dear Unrecognized:

Don't be afraid to speak up and blow your own horn regarding your work. Often, if you don't inform people of all that you do, they don't know that you are doing it. If you are working on a project, keep your manager in the loop so that he or she knows your specific contribution to the assignment. Arrange for a one-on-one meeting with your supervisor so that together you can go over what you have been doing. When you receive praise, accept the praise graciously and add this accolade to your resume.

—*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.

C by Dr. Mimi Hull

THE corporate couch

**Dear Dr. Mimi:**

My office mate loves to talk! In fact, she drops by my desk several times a day to chat, and frankly, I just don't have the time to spend chatting. She tends to stay late to finish her work. I need to leave on time. What should I do? She is very pleasant and I don't want to hurt her feelings.

—*Disturbed*

Dear Disturbed:

Your office mate probably doesn't realize that you are giving her subtle cues that you are busy, so it is time to be more direct. Go to lunch or find a quiet, confidential place and let her know that while you enjoy her company, you are not free to chat about things that are not related to what you are working on. Also, let her know that it is very important for you to be able to leave on time, and as a result, you have to spend your time working, not chatting, as much as you might enjoy it and her. Suggest that you find time over a monthly lunch or a break to "catch up." If she still stops by, politely remind her that you can't talk now and look forward to getting together at another time and then get back to work!

—*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.

