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The Corporate Communicator

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Thought for the Day

Remember ...



Salute the Spouses and Kids

Month of the Military
Family takes place from
Nov. 1 to 30.

Seven Traits of Successful Leaders

Having studied leadership for many years, I have found that there are some attributes that seem to be constant. They include:

1. Successful leaders have a purpose, and they pursue their dreams with fervor. They do not fear rejection as much as they fear living without a purpose.

2. Successful leaders work hard. Not only do they have big ideas, they work to make them happen.

3. Successful leaders are resilient. They see failure as an opportunity to learn and grow. They become masters at overcoming obstacles and staying focused on the positive outcome.

4. Successful leaders know that they cannot always control how they feel,

but they can control how they act. They keep their tempers in check.

5. Successful leaders seek feedback. They play to their strengths and get help to overcome their weaknesses.

6. Successful leaders surround themselves with good people and share the recognition and rewards.

7. Successful leaders are constantly learning. They value training both for themselves and others.

I know that there is much more to being a leader, but I have found these seven qualities to be constant in the successful people who I have met and studied. What do you think?



Working With Veterans and Boomers

The workforce is getting older. The fact is that most middle and upper managers are boomers and veterans who aren't going anywhere anytime soon, so young professionals must learn how to interact with older coworkers.

To get on the good side of veterans (born before 1946) at work, compliment their work and ask questions about their experience. Veterans enjoy talking about the past and mentoring young coworkers with a good work ethic. You can impress veterans by working hard for the "greater good of the company." If you have only been with the organization for six months to a year, a veteran is not who you want to ask for a raise!

To get on the good side of boomers, compliment them on their hair, clothing

or style in general. Boomers still think they are young; so, they want to feel a part of the group. Ask questions that will allow them to talk about themselves. If you need to request money from a boomer for a project expense, be sure to show the value added.

It is important to understand the need for older coworkers to see your talents, skills and experience before they notice your age. Be assertive but not aggressive. Older people have a tendency to compare you to the young people in their lives or neighborhood. This can be a gift as well as a curse! The key is to find a common ground to build working relationships. Keep the focus on getting the work done, not on judging or measuring each other.

(From Bridging the Generation Gap -
Dr. Mimi Hull)

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Please Explain

Explanation is important to leadership. Leaders often inject their communications with enthusiasm to persuade, but they also need to include an explanation for the excitement. “What does it mean” and “why are we doing it” are critical questions that every leader must answer.

Three keys for effective explaining.

1. Define what it is. The purpose of an explanation is to describe the issue. For example, if you are pushing for cost reductions, explain why they are



Conflict—Symptoms, Causes and Resolution

1. What are the symptoms?

- Poor performance and quality
- Being unresponsive
- Gossip, complaining, hostility
- Finger pointing, verbal abuse
- Tardiness and absenteeism

2. What causes conflict?

- Poor or no communication
- Lack of clarity in purpose, goals, objectives, team and individual roles, resources and support
- Poor time management
- Lack of leadership and management
- Team members bored, not challenged, not really interested
- Personality conflicts
- Personal problems

3. How to resolve conflict?

A. Define the problem—Don’t start by solving the problem. Defining the problem often contains the solution.

B. Gather data—Collect facts that are

necessary and what they will entail. Put the issue into the context of business operations. Be certain to give the benefits.

2. Define what it isn’t. Move into the “never assume mode.” Be clear to define the exclusions. For example, in our cost reduction issue, if you are asking for reductions in costs, not people, be explicit. Otherwise employees will assume they are being axed. This is not simply true for potential layoffs but for any business issue.

3. Say what you want done. Establish expectations and call for action. Cost reductions mean employees will have to do more with less. Be specific. Leaders can also use the expectations step as a challenge for people to think and do differently.

Remember: Too much detail can put an audience to sleep, but too few details won’t be convincing.

observable and measurable, not hearsay or opinions.

C. Analyze the data—Analyze dynamics. Instead of saying we have personality conflicts, ask: Can team members get the work done or not? Have they been trained on different personalities?

D. Choose a solution—Make a decision. Realize that you can’t always be right. If it doesn’t work, evaluate it and retry.

E. Implement and refine—Create a plan with actions, timing and measurements that will address each problem. Don’t try to fix it all at once. Work on one or two areas.

Remember.

- Attack the problem, not the person.
- Focus on what can be done, not on what can’t.
- Encourage different opinions.
- Express feelings in a way that does not blame.
- Accept ownership for your part of the problem.
- Listen to understand the other person’s perspective before giving your own.

(From Conflict Resolution Program - Dr. Mimi Hull)



Brilliant Brainstorming

From years of facilitating, we know that brainstorming requires skill and experience. Here are some tips:

• **Don't brainstorm if people live in fear.** If people believe they will be teased, demoted, fired or otherwise humiliated, brainstorming won't work.

• **Brainstorming instructions are essential for creative idea output.** "Quantity breeds Quality" has proven correct, and deferring the evaluation of initial ideas is

the key to successful brainstorming.

• **Set a specific, difficult target** for the number of creative ideas per person. Difficult targets consistently produce more high-quality ideas than unmotivated brainstorming.

• **Individuals, not groups, should generate initial ideas.** Group interaction may cause people to forget some of their ideas and to rehearse only a few while waiting for others to express theirs.

• **Use group interaction to amalgamate and refine the individuals' initial ideas.** Groups of five or seven work best. Going around the room, focus on pros and cons for each idea rather than a final evaluation.

• **Individuals, voting privately, should make the final selection.** Individual voting for final idea selection is better for predicting successful ideas, especially for increasing commitment to them.

• **Time should be kept short:** Try 15 minutes for initial idea generation, and a total of two hours with refined idea production and selection. "Incubation" over longer periods is not necessary.

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THE
corporate couch



Q: My boss doesn't hide his contempt for me. He constantly criticizes me, and he gives me the assignments no one else will do. I don't know what I did to deserve his rude behavior, but I'm starting to lose my cool with him. Any advice?—*Scorned Staffer*

A: The term commonly used to describe your supervisor is "toxic." Here are the four tips I commonly offer clients who work with a toxic boss:

- 1) Don't take it personally. You are a person first and an employee second. If your supervisor starts screaming at you or acts in some other way that is inappropriate, be polite but make a choice not to buy into it.

- 2) Don't compromise your ethics. If you are asked to do something you know is wrong, speak up, ask questions and politely decline.
- 3) Don't seek revenge. Remember, success is the best revenge. Do not stoop to the level of your supervisor; it's only likely to make the problem worse.
- 4) Don't play the victim. Victims lose control and get dumped on more. Choose to have the personal power and toughness needed to succeed.

Are these things easier said than done? Of course, but they sure beat crawling into a hole and sucking your thumb!—*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.