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The Corporate Communicator

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Table of Contents

| | |
|-------------------------|-------|
| Millennials | Pg. 1 |
| Politics at Work | Pg. 1 |
| Are you Listening | Pg. 2 |
| Communication Tips .. | Pg. 2 |
| Assertiveness | Pg. 3 |
| Thanks | Pg. 3 |
| Our Blog | Pg. 3 |
| Corporate Couch | Pg. 4 |

Thought for the Day

Remember ...

"You can be thirty years old or
seventy years young.
Decide in your favor."
Unknown



Meet the Millennials

The generation of workers born roughly after 1980 is known as the Millennials, Generation Y or the Boomlets. Eighty-million strong, they will soon account for the majority of American workers, especially as Boomers start to retire.

Millennials share a lot of information about themselves, including their

political views and expect others to do the same. They are on MySpace, Facebook, The Knot and a variety of other websites, where they tell all.

Millennials are forcing a cultural shift on employers. They won't do something just because you say so. Three of the ways employers go wrong with Millennials are:

- discounting their ideas for lack of experience,
- allowing negativity and
- not meeting their high expectations.

Millennials will work hard for someone who truly mentors and trains them. They are team-oriented and eager to tackle huge challenges.

(From the program "Bridging the Generation Gaps" by Dr. Mimi Hull)

Discussing Politics at Work - DON'T!

Along with sex and religion, politics is one of the most controversial topics that exists ... especially in the workplace. Few people are able to discuss politics without emotion. In addition, discussing politics can lead to other controversial topics like abortion, religion and gender issues. These topics may be stimulating in a personal setting but can be devastating in a professional one. What may start out as a polite discussion can turn into a loud shouting match with each side thinking the other is "stupid." These interchanges can have lasting effects on relationships and can possibly lead to perceived bias in such things as performance reviews, raises and promotions.

How do you keep from participating in political discussions?

1. Change the topic.
2. Don't start conversations that would lead to politics. (Like "Have you voted yet?" or "Where are the polling places?")
3. Be assertive and let people know that you are uncomfortable discussing politics at work.
4. Don't share "news reports" on the candidates.
5. Quickly excuse yourself.
6. Let people know that you are not willing to engage in discussions because you are busy doing your work!



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Does Your Listening Need a Tune-up?

Breaking poor listening habits may not be easy, but it can be done. It can also mean the difference between success and failure in the workplace.

Here are some clues to help you determine if your listening skills need a tune-up.

Do You:

- Tend to daydream when slow speakers are speaking?
- Tune out when the subject is dry?
- Judge the delivery and tune out?
- Tend to mentally argue with the speaker?
- Find yourself unable to listen to heavy, detailed material?
- Let trigger words divert your attention?
- Plan your response before the speaker is finished?
- Listen passively?

If you said yes to any of these questions, you need to improve your listening skills. Here are some helpful hints to improve your listening skills.

- Listen “between the lines.” What are the feelings behind the words?
- Fight Distractions. Shut your door.
- Stay focused. Don’t check e-mail or do other things when you should be listening.
- Judge only when comprehension has been checked out.
- Do not let delivery style get in the way of the information.
- Listen for the central ideas and the main points.
- Make eye contact and maintain an active body state.
- Keep your emotions in check.
- EXPERIENCE A HULL LISTENING PROGRAM!



Communication Tips

Successful communication is the key in any relationship. Improve your communication skills and see how your relationships at home and at work will improve. Effective communication occurs when two important things take place: the expression of a thought or feeling and the reception of that expressed concept. Good communication skills can be learned. Here are some tips that will help:

- Think before you talk. It sounds so simple but many of us think as we talk. Feel free to say, “Let me think about it.” These five words can make a big positive difference.

- Avoid having your nonverbal body language contradict your words—For example, don’t fold your arms in front of you and have a big frown when you are saying you are open to suggestions. When the verbal and the nonverbal conflict, the nonverbal is the message that screams the loudest.
- Be specific about what you are expressing. The greater the generality, the greater the possibility of misinterpretation.
- Avoid expressing a belief or judgment, using a “you” message like, “You make me so frustrated.” It is better to use an “I” message like, “I feel frustrated.”
- Consider how you would react if the role was reversed; be other-oriented and think about the impact of your words on your audience.
- Good communication needs ongoing practice, training and experience. You can do it if you try.

(Taken from “Communications Seminar” by Dr. Mimi Hull)



Assertiveness

To us, assertiveness is a philosophy for interacting with others. In other words, it is a communications tool. When we have coached people to be assertive, we have found that they feel respect for themselves as well as respect for the other person in the interaction. Assertiveness is not being aggressive; it is not being passive. Assertiveness is a way to ask for what you need, state difficult feelings and negotiate well with others without anyone feeling violated.

In most interactions, we have found it is not just one person assertively asking for changes, but rather two people wanting to express their feelings, opinions or wishes (and maybe get their way). So, each person must take turns being assertive and then listen empathetically ... and that's good communication!

("Assertiveness Workshop" by Dr. Mimi Hull)

10 Reasons to Be Assertive

Here are ten reasons to be assertive.

1. To assume responsibility for asserting your share of control of the situation – and to make things better.
2. To ask why and question authority or tradition.
3. To initiate, carry on, change and terminate conversations comfortably.
4. To share your opinions, feelings and experiences with others.
5. To deal with minor irritations before your anger builds into intense resentment and explosive aggression.
6. To speak up, make requests, ask for favors and generally insist that your rights be respected as a human being.
7. To overcome the fears and self-deprecation that keeps you from doing these things.
8. To show positive emotions (joy, pride, liking someone, attraction) and to give compliments.
9. To refuse unreasonable requests.
10. To accept compliments!

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An Interesting Twist

We often do not appreciate what other people at our place of business do. Spice things up around the water cooler by celebrating National Boss/Employee Exchange Day on Sept. 8. The switcheroo for a day promotes workplace appreciation by sharing in each other's point of view. It also can help give people a different perspective on what people do. This is not a new idea. For years, at Walt Disney World, each employee has been required to work one day in the park.

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page 3

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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.

Q: Everyone is always telling me that I do a great job in my position.

However, each day when I come to work, I count the hours until I go home. I have been at the same job, doing the same thing, day in and day out, for six years. While I am bored with my job, I am afraid it is too late for me to learn the skills I need to pursue other positions within my company. I hate to leave the company because I really do like the people and my salary is decent. Any thoughts?

A: It is never too late to learn a new

skill. The brain is always open to new information. Think of it as a muscle that needs some exercising. Talk with your supervisor and explain that, while you are good at the job you do, you are open and eager to learn and gain new experiences. Suggest becoming a backup for other jobs and ask whether it would be possible to get cross-training to do so. You will not only acquire the new information and be doing some different activities, but this new knowledge also makes you an even more valuable employee.

— *Dr. Mimi*