

HULL &
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The Corporate Communicator

www.hullonline.com December 2007/January 2008

hullonline.com

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Thought for the Day

Happy Holidays and a
Joyous New Year!

Remember ...

> Yesterday is history...
> Tomorrow is a mystery...
> Today is truly a gift...

> That is why it is called
the PRESENT!



Terminating an Employee

More terminations occur in December than in any other month. Since terminating an employee is challenging, here are some tips to smooth the process:

Avoid surprises. Before you decide to terminate an employee, periodically inform the employee of the quality of his or her work. Give him/her feedback on how to improve—and document the conversation.

Always have someone else with you during the termination process so there is no question as to what was said and to protect yourself in case of an irrational response.

Remain calm at all times. When terminating an employee, do so in a private setting away from other

employees. No matter what is said, stay composed and do not raise your voice.

Be clear and concise. What you say is as important as how you say it. Once the decision has been made, be sure you handle the situation with dignity and integrity, being careful not to hurl insults or personal attacks.

Don't be too kind. Don't over express your feelings of compassion. Doing so may make you feel better but may give the employee cause to challenge your reasons for the termination.

Confidentiality is not negotiable. Never confide in other employees about the specifics of the termination. Divulging information will cause unrest in the office and may tarnish your own reputation as well.



Teams—Fact vs. Fable

Assuming certain “facts” about teams is not always in your best interest. Consider the following “facts” and the questions to ask yourself:

1. Teams are always good. When confronted with a new task, would it be faster and less complicated to delegate the work to one or two people, especially if the task is routine?

2. Teams should always come to a consensus. Is it possible that you just can't please everyone all of the time? Discussions and input are important, but sometimes important decisions have to be made and may not satisfy everyone.

3. There's no “I” in team. Are you

responding to your employees' individual needs? Is each employee invested in his or her task, and does he or she understand how it relates to the whole?

4. You must like your teammates. Is it more important to like them or work well together? Interestingly, Jeff Palfini says, “Conflict actually helps a team stay innovative.” As long as members show respect to each other, a general code of behavior can be followed.

5. The more the merrier. Would adding another pair of eyes, ears, and hands really make work easier and more effective or will “too many cooks spoil the broth?” The larger a team gets, the harder it is to keep members informed and focused on the task.

(From Team Building Seminar - Dr. Mimi Hull)

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Promoting Diversity

Differences among members can cover blind spots or create conflicts. Progressive organizations recognize the importance of diversity and how to make differences work. We are often asked what an individual can do to utilize the differences that exist in the workplace. Here are some tips for personally promoting diversity:

- Take some time to go to lunch with someone different.
- Reflect on your own feelings about diversity and how they are communicated to your organization.
- Make it a priority to learn about similarities as well as differences.
- Make a list of the things you say or jokes you tell that may be stereotypical and/or hurtful and stop saying them!

- Learn more about different types of cultures through reading and attending workshops.
- Ask people what makes an environment comfortable for them. Listen to their opinions and share knowledge about ways you can better meet their needs.

Discovering Diversity Workshop - Dr. Mimi Hull



Why Feedback?

THE REALITY: People need feedback.

Most people have “blind spots.” They often don’t understand the impact their actions have on others. Although well-intentioned and hard-working, they may be the only ones who don’t know they are causing problems. Feedback is essential to improve performance.

THE CHALLENGE: People rarely give and receive feedback. Most people don’t know how to affirm each other’s strengths and find it uncomfortable to confront performance issues. They talk to fellow team members, but the individual who needs the feedback never hears it.

THE SOLUTION: Optimal Feedback empowers the feedback process. People need an efficient, confidential and anonymous vehicle to give feedback. Optimal Feedback uses the world’s most versatile feedback tool. Our state-of-the-art software simplifies the process of collecting multi-source, multi-rater feedback. With this system, we can set up projects to collect virtually any type of feedback—ideas, opinions, impressions, ratings, surveys—from any number of people about the performance of an individual, a team, or

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Dr. Mimi Hull—Corporate Psychologist, Facilitator, Speaker, Trainer and Organizational Development Specialist

Build Those Relationships!

In our very generic world, relationships are the key to building a successful business. People buy from people, and the more you show that you truly care about your client or customer, the better the relationship will be. How can you do this?

Perform some kind of slow behavior. Take a moment to shake your client's hand and make eye contact. Even an extra two seconds sends the message you care and have time for your clients' needs.

Carry out your conversations at a different location from your desk. If someone steps into your office, stand up or move around to the front of the desk. Sit down and talk with them. The extra effort gives your conversations a more personal feel.

Pause and reflect. Do you respond to your clients before they are finished speaking? Your conversations may take on the air of "let's get this over with." Max Dixon suggests "stay with them a beat beyond." This means you wait for two

seconds after the other person stops speaking to respond, while maintaining eye contact.

When your clients leave your office, walk with them to the door or lobby. This gesture of respect demonstrates you have time for your clients and gives you another opportunity to shake their hands and maintain the connection you've begun.

Follow-up counts. Keep your promises. If you said you would do something, do it! If you learn that you can't, let them know why.

Customer Care Workshop—Dr. Mimi Hull



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by Dr. Mimi Hull

THE corporate couch



Q: I have been working for a company for five months now. Our boss has a coworker doing payroll. The coworker saw that I am being paid more than she is, and she told me that she believes she deserves more because she has been here longer. The tension between us has become intolerable. For example, when I ask her something, she says, "You're being paid more. You figure it out!" I am so uncomfortable that I am considering looking for another position, even though I enjoy the work and the others with whom I work. Should I tell our boss? How else might I handle this?

— *Overpaid*

A: Whoever handles payroll needs to value confidentiality. If she is making salaries a public issue, your boss needs to be informed. In addition, you might want to approach her and let her know that you would like to work out a better working relationship. Remind

her that if she feels she deserves a raise, she needs to discuss it with her boss. That is not a conversation that you need to participate in.

— *Dr. Mimi*

Q: I have a coworker who complains to me that I talk down to her because I remind her to do things. I remind everyone to do things! That is just my nature. I am not talking down to her and have tried explaining this to her. Do you have any suggestions?

— *Disrespected*

A: I am not certain why you feel the need to be the designated person to give out reminders. Is this meant to be your job? If so, please ask your supervisor to inform the rest of the staff that this task is one of your duties. If not, concern yourself with what you need to accomplish and let others be accountable to themselves and/or their boss.

— *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.