

HULL &
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The Corporate Communicator

Hull & Associates

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THOUGHT FOR THE DAY



Training Equals Profits

Recently, I was asked if I was going to fire an employee who made a mistake that cost the company "a lot of money." "No," I replied, "That was 'a lot of money' I just invested training him. Why would I want somebody else to benefit from the training that he just got?"

Training is an investment. It takes many forms, and the return is long lasting positive results. A study by the American Management Association found that when companies increased their training after going through significant changes,

- 63% reported higher productivity;
- 69% reported higher profits;
- 74% reported higher quality.

In contrast, those companies who

did not increase training after changes only observed a

- 34% productivity increase;
- 40% profit increase;
- 24% quality increase.

In many instances, when there are changes in a company, employees find it difficult to adjust to a new environment. Training not only increases profits but also increases employee satisfaction and reduces stress.

Hull and Associate provides the insights, consulting and training needed for organizations to

- improve their processes;
- accelerate their development;
- succeed in a world of constant change;
- reduce stress and
- improve productivity.



Personality Testing in Employment

Many employers are turning to testing as a way to improve their workforce and reduce turnover. In a recent survey, 40% of Fortune 100 companies indicated that their employment selection systems included personality testing. In a world where skills

may be equal, reducing personality conflicts is a real plus.

Personality profiles are self-report measures of what might be called traits, temperaments, or dispositions. Employers use these tests for different purposes, and it is important to know your reason for testing before you select a particular one. There is no point in gathering data unless you are going to use it. Likewise, using data inappropriately is worse than not having it at all.

To that end, you may want to consult with a testing professional who can provide critical information related to test validity as well as utility analyses that show how testing would impact your organization's profitability and efficiency. One size does not fit all. Discover and use the tests that best suit your particular needs.

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They're Not Old, They're Seasoned

People are working longer. In fact, people are starting second careers in their 60s. How can you reap the maximum benefit from the older workers on your team?

1. Get rid of your stereotypes. Older people are not slow learners. They are often faster learners than those with less experience, and they typically make fewer mistakes.

2. Don't teach them what they already know. Seniors already have a lot of job skills that transfer to a new position.

3. Don't assume seniors will resist technology. Many of the older workers welcome training on the newest technologies.

4. Do train them. Invest the time to train your older workers. What may appear as resistance may in fact be fear of failure.

5. Create a positive learning environment. Good lighting, good acoustics and reduced background noise can play a positive role in reducing learning time.

6. Praise and encourage. Seniors are like all employees. Honest praise and sincere encouragement are always great motivators.

Six Ways to Deal with Harassment



1. Establish a sexual harassment policy and a set of procedures for implementation. Use legal counsel to ensure your policy is legally sound. Publish your policy and make sure it is reviewed regularly.

2. Clearly communicate disapproval of any harassment activity. Include specifics in your new employee orientation process. Hold refresher training for your current employees.

3. Create an environment where victims are encouraged to come forward. Be sure that they speak to actual behaviors, not just suspicions.

4. Pursue and investigate ALL allegations of harassment. Treat all complaints as truths until proven otherwise. Take actions based on evidence.

5. Maintain as much confidentiality as possible. If confidentiality is breached, trust is gone.

6. Create effective remedies which will protect the harassed person from retaliation. Likewise, protect your employees from false allegations.

Ideas for Diversity Training to Achieve Cultural Competence

Idea 1: Content—The focus of training needs to be framed around the objectives of the organization and the needs of the participants. These are the three areas of content essential to diversity training:

1. Defining the dimensions of diversity and their impact in the business world;
2. Increasing knowledge of culture and how it affects behavior;
3. Improving inclusive behavior.

Idea 2: Time —Things don't change overnight or in an hour! Generally, a half-day session is the minimum amount of time needed to conduct basic awareness training. A full day allows time for additional focus on knowledge and skills.

Idea 3: Positive vs. Negative—Never shame or blame. Present diversity training as a growth opportunity. Make the training upbeat and interactive. Let employees and managers choose between an array of diversity-related training measures and activities.

Idea 4: Grouping—Having managers and non-managers attend training allows for both to hear first-hand what each other's concerns and perceptions related

to diversity are. Consider your goals. If your goal is to improve communication between departments, combining employees in training can be a real benefit. If the objective of the training is to build teams, separate training sessions may be more effective.

Idea 5: Share Your Ideas—Let us know what you have done that has improved cultural competence in your organization. E-mail us at info@hullonline.com and we will include them in a future newsletter.



What Not to Say!

The following are phrases that we often hear at the workplace. While they might sound like innocent comments, they could prevent you from reaching your potential.

1. **"They didn't get back to me"**—This suggests that you did not take initiative, nor were you persistent. Be proactive, not reactive.

2. **"I thought someone else was taking care of that"**—This can sound like an excuse. Keep moving on a project, even if that means you have to help other team members with their part.

3. **"No one told me"**—This implies that you are not paying attention, or, at the very least, not asking questions necessary for you to keep informed. Ask questions and stay informed. Remind people to keep you in the loop.

4. **"I didn't have time"**—This suggests that you do not manage time well. Reprioritize to make your day more efficient. If you do not know your boss's priorities, ASK! Remember, if everything is a priority, then nothing is. Organization is

the key to getting things done. Make lists and plan out your day so that you know what you need to accomplish. Then do it.

5. **"I didn't think to ask that"**—This might show a lack of ability to see potential future events. Don't be afraid to ask questions.

6. **"I'll do my best" or "I'll try"**—This suggests that you may be doubting your own ability or avoiding responsibility. Ask for help, then make a commitment and stick to it.



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by Dr. Mimi Hull

THE corporate couch



Q: One of my new employees—a very hard worker with a lot of talent—is having trouble getting along with another long-time employee who also is very good at her job. When I ask him what the problem is, he just tells me, “It’s as simple as this: Jane and I just have a personality conflict.” What is he really saying and what can I do to help resolve the problem? I would hate to lose either one of them.

— *Frustrated*

A: What he is really saying is that they are having a communication problem. It is time to get them together to discuss their individual needs and communication styles. A team-building program would be helpful for looking at and understanding differences in personality styles. You also might need to provide a program on listening.

— *Dr. Mimi*

Q: I have been looking into ways to get better feedback from my employees on their performance. However, all of the programs I have looked into are very expensive and seem to be very time-consuming. We have limited resources in both areas. What do you recommend?

— *Hesitant H.R. Manager*

A: Any good business person recognizes the importance of feedback. And it’s true that getting good feedback requires an investment both in money and time. The ability to customize a feedback program is essential for any organization, and many programs are available. You simply need to find the one that will offer you the most accurate data, at the best price, to promote a climate of open, honest communication among your employees. Such programs are out there, so just keep looking.

— *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.