

HULL &  
ASSOCIATES

# The Corporate Communicator

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## Consider This ...



## Giving Feedback to Your Boss In 7 Easy Steps

The higher you go in an organization, the lonelier it gets. No one likes to tell the boss that they are doing something wrong. However, a fair boss appreciates helpful feedback. Here's how to do it.

**1. Don't ambush your boss.** Let your boss know that you want to speak with him/her and ask for a good time. Don't suddenly appear at the door with three other employees and expect your boss to be open to the feedback there and then.

**2. Don't call your boss out in public.** Arrange to meet in a confidential setting. If your boss' office is truly open, go to a conference room or for lunch in a place where there are booths.

**3. Explain why you are giving the**

**feedback.** Tie the reason to your organization's objectives and or values.

**4. Don't beat around the bush.** You need to be both pleasant and direct. You have a limited time to get their attention, use it wisely. Prepare notes and speak from your notes.

**5. Give your boss an opportunity to respond.** Your boss may have a reasonable explanation for what they did. Listen attentively without interrupting.

**6. Summarize conclusions and action steps.** If decisions or promises are made, before you leave, summarize what was decided.

**7. Say thank you—**No matter what the outcome, be sure to thank your boss for taking the time to listen to you.

## We've Always Done It This Way! Not! Encourage Creativity!

For many bosses, the employee's transition to negativity comes for no apparent reason. However, a common complaint I hear from dissatisfied employees is that they do not get creative freedom. They suggest creative solutions that would yield better results, but get told "No." They feel caught in the "but we've always done it this way" trap.

Creativity is essential for your employees' work to have meaning. With meaning, they are more engaged, which means less absenteeism, better teamwork, better service, and increased productivity. To foster creativity, try the following:

**Have an "idea board."** Use a large whiteboard or bulletin board. Hang it

away from the public space. Allow everyone to put new ideas anonymously on the board.

**Schedule debrief time.** It is not enough to have ideas written down. They need discussion. Don't attach names to the ideas during the discussion. You will find even shy employees can be your best creative assets if they see that all ideas are equally entertained.

**Give credit.** If an idea is selected, give credit to the person who suggested it. Even if the idea is not totally adopted, people are more likely to keep trying if they get positive recognition.

Everyone wins from this experience. Problems will be solved faster. You get group input and involvement and, best of all, your people will grow and be more engaged.

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## Make Mondays Fun-days!

Here are some things to do to jump start the week.

### Change up your Monday Meeting.

Assign seating in a new way—perhaps by height, birthday (date not year!), years of service.

**Have a Monday Morning training.** We conduct many hour-long trainings and it is amazing to see how much more energy people have after an upbeat and positive training.

**Hold contests.** The contest need not be work related. Consider trivia, with each employee submitting a question or something silly like who is wearing the most buttons, or having everyone donate their paper clips to a jar and guessing the number of paper clips in the jar.

**Find something to celebrate!** Share good news. A great bargain, baby walking, losing weight, a call from a good

friend, as well as birthdays and anniversaries are all good things to celebrate.

### Provide a healthier breakfast food.

Instead of donuts or bagels, consider fresh fruits and vegetables with hummus and peanut butter.

**Make one Monday month or even a quarter an early departure day or extended lunch day.** Even a day shortened by 15 minutes makes the day go by faster.

**Keep it cool—Literally!** Lower the temperature on Monday mornings. People have more energy in cooler surroundings ... particularly in the summer.

**Organize a fun committee—**Have people volunteer to come up with fun ideas. Remember, it doesn't have to be every Monday. After all, you don't want the fun to become routine!

(From Dr. Mimi's Keynote Speech)



## Are You a Perfectionist?

**Look at some of the characteristics and decide!**

**Perfectionists are often equally driven by a need to excel and a fear of failure.** A perfectionist will often go to unrealistic lengths to avoid being average or mediocre. They believe that if they don't excel, they failed! They may realize that they put undo stress on themselves, they continue to do more than is required and are critical of those who don't.

### Perfectionists take things personally.

While they may be critical of others, they feel hurt if someone says anything negative about who they are or what they did. To a perfectionist, even a suggestion for improvement, can be seen as a harsh criticism and they become defensive.

**Perfectionists have a hard time asking for help.** They feel they should know how to do it and if they ask for help, they are

admitting defeat. Asking for help makes them feel vulnerable or inadequate.

**Perfectionists procrastinate.** Because they want to do it perfectly, perfectionists will put off doing a task because they "don't have enough time to do it right."

**Good enough is not good enough for a perfectionist.** They will focus on what was not done rather than all they accomplished. On a rating scale, if they don't always get the top mark, there is a part of them that feels like a failure.

**Perfectionists don't forget their own or other's past mistakes.** They know that they should move on, but that is difficult for a perfectionist. They continue to beat themselves up even if others have long since forgotten the situation. A perfectionist will often bring up past issues even if they are not relevant to the current conversation.

**Perfectionists have a hard time enjoying other people's successes.** For a perfectionist, life is a competition and they feel that if someone else wins, they lose. They find themselves hoping for others to fail, even though they know it isn't the right thing to do.

Does this sound like you? If so, you may be a perfectionist.



## How to Get More From a Lazy Employee

**Tap Into Personal Desires.** How well do you know your employee? If you know them well, on a personal level, you can tap into their personal desires and goals to help you motivate them to succeed. Remember that what turns one person may turn another one off.

**Set clear goal with definite due dates.** Expectations are a wonderful thing. If you delineate specific tasks, there is a better chance you will get results. Choose goals that are both challenging and reachable. Be certain that they know what their priorities are and the time line in which you expect them to complete those responsibilities. Set up checkpoints and what you expect to be done at these checkpoints.

**Check in and check up.** Walk through work areas at different times each day to check in on them. Stop and ask your lazy employees what they are working on. Ask

for status reports on their work. Leaders have found an increased level of productivity when an employee doesn't know when to expect you to stop by and check in on their progress but feel certain that you will check in on them.

**Be a Good Leader.** People work for people. If an employee feels mutual loyalty and thinks you treat them well, then they are much more likely to work hard and help you reach your goals.

**Hire prudently!** Take your time and look for people who are self-starters, determined, and a great fit for the position and your company. If you hired the wrong person, no matter what you do, you won't motivate them to get the job done well. Remember, be slow to hire and quick to fire!

**Recognize improvement.** If your unmotivated employee is improving and you want to maintain their level of productivity, thank them for achieving their goals or milestones ... and slowly raise your expectations!

(From a Convention Talk Given by Dr. Mimi)

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 by  
Dr. Mimi Hull

THE  
corporate couch



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](http://www.HullOnline.com) or [DrMimi@HullOnline.com](mailto:DrMimi@HullOnline.com).

**Dear Dr. Mimi:**

Whenever I am responsible for conducting a meeting at work, I always lose control of the room. I try to give everyone the opportunity to voice their opinion, and pretty soon the discussion goes off in a different direction. We always run out of time and never cover the topics the meeting was set up to discuss.

—*Helpless*

**Dear Helpless:**

Before each meeting, create a timed agenda, send it out to all attendees and make the goals clear. Get an agreement on the purpose of each part of the meeting. Set ground rules and advise that topics not on the agenda will be parked and discussed at another time.

You can also make it a stand-up meeting and arrange for it to take place at the time of day when others want to go home to ensure that the meeting does not stray off course. Start the meeting on time. Set discussion and adjournment times. If someone tries to derail the meeting, tactfully ask him or her how what they are talking about relates to the subject in question. Set the tone and make careful transitions. Don't move to a new subject without summarizing the prior one. If someone isn't ready to move on, find out the reason as this will reduce the chance that they will reintroduce the same topic later. End the meeting with a final summarization of all that was decided and accomplished.

—*Dr. Mimi*

 by  
Dr. Mimi Hull

THE  
corporate couch



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](http://www.HullOnline.com) or [DrMimi@HullOnline.com](mailto:DrMimi@HullOnline.com).

**Dear Dr. Mimi:**

My boss micromanages all of my tasks constantly even though I have been in my current position for two years and have over 10 years' experience performing this type of work. This makes me feel incompetent, as if I am a kid in an adult environment. How do I approach this subject with my boss so that his behavior can change? I do not want to be insubordinate; I just want my boss to trust me to do my job and stop being so controlling.

—*Frustrated*

**Dear Frustrated:**

Do everything you can to gain your boss' trust and try to understand what motivates him. Try to anticipate the tasks your boss expects, get them done ahead of time and let him know that they are completed. Steer clear of things that agitate him and tailor your responses to his preferences. Be an overachiever and show your boss that you deserve his trust to work on your own. Follow the rules and company protocol, be reliable and do not give your boss any reason to reinforce his belief that employees cannot be trusted. Ask to take on small projects on your own and provide updates proactively. Pick something that is a low priority on your boss' list and do a stellar job. If your boss' behavior does not change, have a talk with him. Sometimes people are not aware of their behavior toward others and need someone to bring this to their attention.

—*Dr. Mimi*