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Hull & Associates

225 S. Swoope Avenue
Suite 210

Maitland, Florida 32751

Phone: (407) 628-0669

www.hullonline.com

Email:

info@hullonline.com

Twitter: **DrMimi**

Our Staff

Dr. Mimi Hull President

drmimi@hullonline.com

Barbara May ... Office Mgr.

Chandler Dalton Intern

Brett Chapman Intern

Megan Rogers Intern

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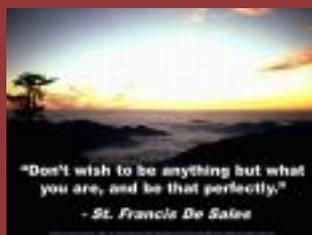
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Consider This ...



Crisis Management Planning

What is a crisis? It is an event that threatens the expectancy of stakeholders and negatively affects an organization's performance. A crisis can occur instantly and have serious consequences, including safety, financial, and/or reputation harm.

Companies often make the mistake of waiting until an actual crisis to plan a reaction. Although crises are often unpredictable, a crisis management plan (CMP) can prevent and/or reduce its negative effects. The CMP should be continually updated based upon the developments both within and outside the organization.

Here are a few guidelines for your CMP.

- **Predict:** Brainstorm everything that could go wrong. Identify possible man-made issues, like violence, vandalism, accidents, negligence, and poor planning and natural issues like hurricanes and sinkholes.
- **Position:** Base your position and policy on these issues on your ethical standards.
- **Prevent**—Take appropriate preventative measures.
- **Plan**—If it is not preventable, plan for the worst.
- **Persevere**—Professionally follow your plan and stick to the positions and values you have projected.
- **Evaluate**—After the crisis is over, review the results to determine if there are other steps to take in the future.

How to Approach Conflicts With a Difficult Boss

In the workplace, conflict can damage relationships, affect the quality of work, and reduce overall productivity. Conflict is particularly hard if it is with the CEO or your boss and they have an inappropriate management style. For example, if the leader comes from a hard-driving corporate world to a non-profit organization, their management style might not work.

What can you do?

Be diplomatic and tactful. While honesty is often the best policy, due to the sensitive nature of a conflict, simply approaching the CEO directly might hurt your position. You have to think strategically and choose your words carefully, even if you are at a "Breaking Point."

Find an ally. Another strategy is to engage a leader/manager, whom the CEO trusts or favors, who is sympathetic to your situation. There is power in numbers. If your ally is creative and empathetic, they might be able to sway the CEO and resolve the conflict. Bringing in a third party works better in large organizations.

Find a balance between passivity and assertiveness. Too much of either can deepen the conflict and you will become increasingly dissatisfied.

Focus on their positive traits. Even if a CEO's personality is disagreeable, they can still be effective in other parts of their job. What can you learn from them?

Be willing to compromise. "Learn the wisdom of compromise for it is better to bend a little than to break."
(Jane Wells)

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Motivation vs. Manipulation

I am often asked the difference between manipulation and motivation. In fact, they are really the same, but manipulation implies an evil intent! It all has to do with context and perception. It is all about the intent of the sender and the perception and engagement of the receiver. Here are 3 questions that help to determine the difference.

Who benefits? Motivation offers incentive, drive, and engagement. People feel good. Manipulation is often seen as solely benefiting the organization/person with control for unfair gain. Engaged receivers see personal benefits from improving the organization and feel motivated. If people don't see the benefits, they feel manipulated.

What's the process? If work needs to be delegated, consider if the employee would enjoy doing the work, if it's a good

fit, or if they would feel valued, then it's motivation. The employee gains valuable work-related experience, feels appreciated, and experiences more engagement. However, if the employee feels that you handed off a job because they were the first person you saw or you didn't want to do it, it's more likely to be perceived as manipulation.

What's the basis? Motivation is based in mutual understanding of what's best. Manipulation, again, only benefits one side. If the person believes in your mission, it'll be considered as motivation. If not, it's manipulation. You may have the best of intentions, but if it's perceived as a pure shirking of responsibility—rather than the opportunity to help the organization—the act will be seen as manipulation, control, or authoritative management. Manipulation kills engagement. Motivation strengthens it.



Should You Worry? Keep Communication in Context!

As I have worked with organizations to resolve issues and build teams, I have learned that communication without context can be scary. Overheard snippets of conversation can lead to worry, conflict and chaos! What can you do to clarify context and reduce your worries?

Remember that overhearing is not the same as being told. Much like gossip, overhearing information should not be treated as fact. For example, you might hear someone talking about personal concerns that don't relate to you. Don't take it personally!

Usually, if it's important, it will be formally stated. Major changes are

typically announced with great fanfare and there is usually time to plan ahead and/or ask questions. Find out what's really going on before you panic!

If it's unclear, ask. If you weren't paying attention—until it sounds like half of your department is getting cut, it's fine to ask someone to repeat themselves rather than worrying or starting a rumor.

Say, "I don't know." Wrong information causes stress. If someone asks you to elaborate on something you don't know much about, don't give them an answer for the sake of answering. Wrong information causes more stress than simply saying, "I don't know," and/or referring them to someone who does know.

When things don't add up, use logic and reason. If it doesn't make sense, it probably isn't true. Trust your intuition.

In case of discrepancies, confirm with the source. If you hear two different things, to ease your mind talk with the person in charge.

Less experienced people may have a more limited context. To put complex information into perspective, give newer people more information or history. If you are the new person, ask for the history.

Doable Healthy Work Practices

There is a growing trend for living healthy lifestyles. Pop culture and the media constantly remind us that we should be eating right and exercising. CrossFit and strict diets are for the dedicated, but what if you're not? What can you do if your schedule doesn't allow time to cook healthy meals or work on your buns of steel? Here are some tips for staying healthy at work.

- **Find a "diet buddy."** Teaming can help keep you accountable. Trade recipes and workout plans with each other. Sharing the experience also makes it more rewarding and fun.
- **Bring healthy snacks and small lunches.** A huge problem with making healthy choices is portion sizes. Bring a healthy snack to have before lunch; you will be less tempted to overeat at lunch. Multiple small meals are healthier than one large one and reduces the risk of overeating.
- **Drink water.** Bring water with you and keep it where you will see it so as to remind yourself to drink it. Try setting alarms on your computer or phone to remind you to drink your water or take a sip after each phone call.
- **Take time to stretch or exercise.** Sitting 8 hours a day, 5 days a week is bad for both your mind and your body. Take time to stretch or do simple exercises to refresh yourself. Taking a walk is also beneficial to prevent other mental or physical issues. Consider a standing desk.
- **Use your vacation days!** You can't stay healthy if you are stressed from work. Stress creates many illnesses and problems in the long run. Recharge your batteries. Whether it is a trip to the beach or visiting a museum, do something that relaxes you! Your vacation days are there for a reason, so take them. In the long run, you will be more happy, healthy and productive!

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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.

Dear Dr. Mimi:

My new supervisor isn't very clear on instructions when I'm assigned projects at work. She often gives vague criteria that are hard to follow, and I find it very frustrating when I present my work for review and she sends it back with indistinct instructions. How do I tell my boss to be clearer with me without coming off as adversarial?

—*Crystal Clear*

Dear Crystal:

When you get your next assignment, ask if it would be all right to go over it so that you can be sure that you are fulfilling your boss's expectations. Let her know what you think needs to be done and how the finished product will look, and ask her for any other ideas she might have. Take notes on any suggestions that she makes. Be patient with your boss, because some individuals are more detail-oriented than others, and it may take some time for her to get acclimated to your desire for direction. She may think that by giving you more instruction, you will feel micromanaged.

—*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 or DrMimi@HullOnline.com.

Dear Dr. Mimi:

I'm having a lot of trouble with my boss due to relentless harassment. It has become so severe that I dread coming in to work, and I feel helpless in my own workspace. He repeatedly makes crude, hurtful jokes at my expense around co-workers and refuses to respect me in any capacity. Recently, the harassment has become somewhat sexual; he stares at me intensely while I'm at my desk and generally makes me feel miserable and unsafe. What should I do?

—*Harassed*

Dear Harassed:

The first thing you should do is firmly tell him to stop his behavior. Be specific as to what he says and does to make you uncomfortable. Tell your harasser that due to his behavior, you are unable to feel calm in your workplace, and it is taking a toll on your mental well-being. If the behavior continues, make a formal report with human resources and seek out witnesses or other victims of this behavior and encourage them to speak to human resources, as well. Hopefully, appropriate action will be taken.

—*Dr. Mimi*