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The Corporate Communicator

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Consider This ...

You can only lead others
where you yourself are
willing to go.

- Lesch/Neu/WeLearn



Take Charge!

With more people working independently, remotely and/or from home, it is important to know how to optimize your work and **take charge of your most valued employee – YOU!** Here are some hints to be the best boss you ever had!

Translate goals into behaviors with time limits. Unclear ends are hard to achieve. Don't say to yourself, "I need to get organized." But rather, "I will spend 15 minutes filing this pile of papers."

Do the worst first! The buck stops with you. When faced with a dreaded task, refuse to give in to a short-term feeling of relief by putting it off. Take a deep breath and get it done now. If it is a long-term project, set a time limit on

how long you will work on it and/or how much of it you will get done today.

Stop blaming others. Accept responsibility for your mistakes and even your misfortunes over which you have no control. Habitually blaming others perpetuates bitterness, resentment, and powerlessness. Your feelings may be justified, but they will not help you become happy, healthy, and successful.

Ask for help. You may be great at what you do but that doesn't mean that you can do everything. Do not be afraid to admit that you don't understand something, don't know how to do it or are simply overloaded.

Keep up the good work and you will become your own "Boss/Employee of the Year!"

Office Politics – Not All Bad!

We are often asked to deal with office politics, which are not only inevitable nor are they inherently bad. If we toss out the name-calling and power-struggles associated with "politicking," we have ways to make the most of them.

Understanding Your Workplace – and Yourself! By understanding your office politics, we get a sense of your company's culture and dynamics. This enables us to understand the best approach for trickier situations, and can also help us reflect on where we fit in to the dynamic. Most importantly, taking all this into account better prepares us to advocate for the best ideas, opinions and you!

Settling Confrontation.

Understanding office politics helps us

settle disputes and potentially quarrelsome situations effectively. When we look at situations through a "political" lens, we can see approaches that address many issues without letting emotions spiral out of control.

Power and Influence. People exerting their power and influence to enact change is not always a bad thing! Influencing and understanding your organization's dynamics allows us to have a greater variety of ideas and opinions heard more frequently.

By looking at office politics as a part of organizational culture, rather than as a bad word to be avoided, we and you can better take advantage of all situations in which politics play a part – and you, too can learn how to use them to vouch for yourself along the way!

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Why Female Board Members?

Women, and other minorities, are taking higher-level positions with organizations. A diverse team – in any business capacity – adds tangible and measurable value to the organization. A variety of backgrounds increases adaptability to an ever changing environment.

So why are Boards not appointing and reaping the benefits of having more women? Women can offer a depth and breadth of insight, perspective and experience to organizations that all male boards cannot.

Boards may appoint a “token” female member to “show” diversity. However, little regard is given to the advantage of thought and experience that gender diversity adds to the discussion.

However, if there is only one female board member, she can be reticent to

express her opinion as she does not want to be the “only lonely” voice at the table. Women are more comfortable if they have other women at the table. When there are at least two, she feels like there may be an ally at the table and is more likely to express unique perspectives.

Why should a Board add more women to the mix? There is a clear financial incentive. Companies boasting Boards with more women, yield greater financial returns. Gender diversity leads to discussing significant topics like marketing, externally and internally, which contributes to a greater engagement, motivation and growth. When companies appoint Board members, specifically women, to promote diversity of thought, experience and background as opposed to having an “appearance of diversity,” they will reap true benefits and advantages.

Consultants? - Get Someone Good!

It is hard to ask for help, especially when it comes to people issues! In fact, most of us know how to do what we do... and believe that people should just do their job and get along! Sadly, that is not always the case. Engaging the right consultant can be a great investment resulting in great dividends BOTH financially and emotionally. So what should you look for in a consultant to get your Leadership and your Team working better together?

Your consultant must be a good fit for your organization. They have to “get” you and your organization and you have to trust them. You need to be honest with them and them with you, much like a doctor with a patient.

It is vital that the consultant have the highest character. For example, the consultant must be willing to tell clients things they don’t want to hear, but need to -- even if doing so means that the consultant loses business. The consultant must care deeply about her or his clients, valuing confidentiality and producing results.

Your consultant needs to have both the education and experience. Ask for

credentials. Be wary of “certificates.” Who issued them? What did the consultant have to do to earn one? Where did they get their education? Are they a consultant because they are between jobs or is this their job? Just because they have worked with people, doesn’t mean that they know how to train and consult with yours. A good consultant should have experience with the challenges or opportunities you and your company are facing. She may not know your specific company or industry but she needs to have experience addressing and improving the types of issues you face.

Your consultant needs outstanding communication skills which means being a good listener. No matter how smart a consultant is, they won’t be able to help you until they fully understand the challenges you face.

The consultant needs to be smart and results oriented, even if it means sharing some hard truths, in a tactful way. After all, you are hiring a consultant to help you resolve issues or take advantage of opportunities. Change is difficult and takes the investment of time and resources. Make sure you are both willing to make that investment!

From Adversary to Teammate – How to Turn an Argument Into Cooperation

Conflict is alive and well in the workplace – and while healthy disagreement can lead to brainstorming and new ideas - squabbles and quarrels are destructive. When a potential dispute arises, it is important to move it to the direction of conversation. This may run counter to our instincts, but, remember, it's a good thing for everyone involved!

How can you do this?

Be supportive. Recognize there is an issue. When you begin a response with support, you can immediately improve the tone of the conversation. By working on understanding, rather than dismissing the concerns and ideas of the other party – you open the door for more dialogue and a more helpful, open view from the person you're interacting with.

Ask open and meaningful questions. When we are feeling angry or stubborn, we ask questions that try to direct the other person toward seeing things as we do. To have an open and meaningful conversation, ask genuine and open

questions and really listen to the answers so you can better understand the other party and their perspective.

Address the feelings first. In an argument, it's important to understand that generally emotion, as opposed to a lack of factual understanding, is the engine of the issue. Focusing only on the facts can escalate an argument. By recognizing the underlying emotion you can often get to the root of the misunderstanding. **Remember as emotion goes up, rationality goes down!**

Pay heed to body language. Whether yours or the other person's – pay attention to the body language you're expressing, and receiving. Dismissive or disruptive body language propels a hostile conversation, while welcoming and open body language can lead to cooperation.

Remember the goal. In situations that could escalate to argument, think about the goal and do what you can to open the floor for conversation – not argument or debate. Doing this leads to better understanding and a more cooperative environment!

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FREE CONSULTATION

Have you ever said, "but I told them ..." You probably did, but the message you sent was not the message they received. Call Dr. Mimi to help improve communications!!!

Dr. Mimi Hull is a fully licensed psychologist who has helped many organizations improve communication, leadership and team building. She can help you, your organization, your board and/or your staff.

Her most requested programs are in the areas of Communication, including Team Building, Leadership, Conflict Management and Board Development.

Contact her for a **FREE consultation!**

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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 or DrMimi@HullOnline.com.

Dear Dr. Mimi:

Over the past month, one of my co-workers has missed several important deadlines and has seemed kind of "out of it" during our weekly status meetings. My boss is increasingly fed up with her and is talking about firing her.

What my boss doesn't know is that my co-worker has a serious (but manageable) disease, and that her recent decline in performance is due to the side effects of a new medication. She should improve over the next month, but she has yet to inform our boss of the actual situation. Should I talk to my boss, or wait it out?

—*Concerned*

Dear Concerned:

I hope her condition improves with this new medication.

Your co-worker needs to have a meeting with her boss. Not only would it help her, but it would also help her boss understand how to accommodate her due to this condition.

It might be intimidating or uncomfortable to have this conversation since the situation is ongoing. She could also talk to the HR department. Bringing in a neutral third party can help relieve the pressure.

As her colleague, you should be there to support her, but not to communicate this.

—*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:

My good friend submitted her resume for a job at my company and asked if I would put in a good word as she also listed me as a reference. I know she would be a dedicated employee and a good fit for the company, but when I saw her resume, I noticed that she had significantly exaggerated her background and experience. I believe she can do the job she's applying for, but I'm uncomfortable with how she has represented herself. What should I do?

—*Uncomfortable*

Dear Uncomfortable:

I admire the loyalty to your friend, and as a friend, I think you should advise her to revise her resume. Applying for a job can feel intimidating, and there's so much pressure to set yourself apart that people can choose to go to lengths like this. Start by using a supportive comment, followed by an opportunity for improvement, and then another supportive comment.

For example: "You would be a great asset to the company because you are such a hard worker, and I'm happy to be a reference. However, I was looking over your resume, and I think you may have overstated your qualifications. You're a great fit for the company with your actual experience."

This will make her feel comfortable and confident with a truthful resume.

—*Dr. Mimi*