

HULL &  
ASSOCIATES

# The Corporate Communicator

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"Honesty is the first  
chapter of the book of  
wisdom."  
- Thomas Jefferson



## Dealing With a Complainer

A constant complainer can drain you emotionally and make you lose motivation. Here are ways to deal with a complainer so you have a more efficient rather than exhausting environment.

**Make sure you are the right person to hear their complaints.** If they are complaining ABOUT someone, let them know that they need to talk WITH that person if they want the situation to change.

**Really listen!** The person complaining may keep repeating themselves because they feel like they are not being heard. Show you are listening by reflecting back what they have said and asking applicable questions. If appropriate, give brief advice.

**Call them out.** If the complainer continues to complain and you've already listened and engaged, tell them that you have heard their story and there is nothing else you can do. Perhaps they need to take it to someone who has the authority.

**Redirect.** If the conversation starts to go into "complainer land," change the topic! This can switch the tone and stop the complaints.

**Avoid them.** This sounds obvious, but sometimes we forget that we have the freedom to walk away, get some fresh air and return to doing our work.

It might be hard to deal with someone like this, but following these steps may make your life easier, and perhaps redirect the complainer in a better direction as well.

## Board Members...Term Limits?

**Having trained many Boards, I am often asked, "How long should someone serve on a Board?" Why not forever? Why have term limits? Here are some of the "pros" for term limits.**

1) **Diversity of thought.** You need new Board members who can offer new ideas, skills, and opportunities. With new Board members, there are multiple perspectives and talents that can be accessed as well.

2) **Involving more Board members improves fundraising.** New Board members bring new constituencies. More people get to know about your organization and more people support it with their time, treasure and talents.

3) **Term limits reduce burnout.** Term limits offer Board members a break from the workload that comes with the

position. Motivation will be higher if members know that an end is in sight. This may drive them to do their best in their allotted time.

4) **Term limits allow a respectful leave.** When it is time for the Board member to exit, they can do so gracefully. You can always reappoint them if desired.

5) **Not every Board member is perfect.** Some may have poor attendance, be disruptive during meetings, or cause other issues. With term limits, these people can roll off the Board without confrontation.

6) **You can grow a base of "alumni."** Past members can be called on to share their experiences on the Board, and help guide new members to their greatest potential.

(On a Board? Call Dr. Mimi to train it!)

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## Giving Negative Feedback

Negative feedback is something we try to avoid. Whether giving corrective feedback to an employee or receiving criticism from a coworker, it causes stress and anxiety. The ironic part is that despite it being a strain, it can help the individual perform better moving forward. Here are some tips that will help you give tough but productive feedback:

**Don't hesitate!** If you need to address something, initiate the conversation at the first opportunity. Remember, you aren't here to prove anyone wrong; you're here to help someone grow.

**Keep it short and to the point.** If the conversation drags on, or you beat around the bush, the message might end up being diluted or misunderstood.

**Share your concerns behaviorally.** When explaining the incident, deliberately use the word "notice" when describing

their actions ("I noticed that you...") to focus on concrete evidence. You can notice behaviors not attitudes.

**Allow questions and feedback.** Ask what happened or what's going on. The people involved need a chance to talk. By doing so, this helps clarify whether the situation was a one-time thing or something that is ongoing and needs more attention.

**Build their confidence.** Let the person involved know your expectations and then collaborate on a solution that solves the problem. Ask them how they will handle similar situations in the future. This way you can see if your message was clear and they understood it.

**Conclude.** End with a positive message. Let them know that you appreciate their time and that you're sure they can handle the situation in an appropriate manner in the future.

## Communication Blunders

**Good communication occurs when the message sent and the message received is the same message, not just in content, but also, in feeling and impact.**

Poor communication not only causes embarrassment, conflict and stress; but it also hinders production and the bottom line. **Here are some communication blunders and ways to handle them:**

**Reacting.** When your emotions take over, your reactions may be more hurtful than helpful. Don't jump to the negative and lash out. Take a breath and think before you react. Take time to understand the message, process how to handle it, and then respond in a professional and polite manner that will make your case.

**Interrupting.** Cutting people off can cause chaos. It is all too easy to hijack a conversation and veer off into your own world without really understanding what the other person is saying. Let people finish before making comments and suggestions. Once everyone's ideas are expressed, it is much easier to make your point...and have people consider it!

**Technological Miscommunication.** Technology has consumed our lives. Although e-mailing and texting are

expedient ways of communicating, face-to-face communication is the best way to convey your message. Consider: Would you lay-off someone via a text message? Hopefully not! Body language and tone of voice speak louder than words.

**Assuming.** Not knowing where people are coming from can lead to thinking the worst about situations. These assumptions can inhibit open communication. Keeping an open mind rather than assuming the worst can reduce hostility and conflict. Being receptive improves everyone's mentality and reduces stress.

**Gossiping.** Once an issue appears, it is important to make sure that everyone understands what is going on rather than having the gossip mill prevail. Address concerns promptly and as openly as possible. This prevents one issue turning into multiple problems!

These are just a few of many possible communication blunders. By acknowledging and fixing them you will enhance the quality of your environment and create an outstanding work environment. Let Dr. Mimi help. **Call her today at 407-628-0669.**

## Be Aware of Your Organization's Privacy Policies!

It's no secret; companies monitor their employees! In doing so, they can be reassured that the best work is getting done with minimal distractions, as well as feeling secure that their employees are behaving in a manner that doesn't tarnish the company's reputation.

Thanks to technology, the amount and variety of ways that an organization can monitor their employees has grown dramatically. For example, companies have the ability to observe activity on their computers, have surveillance set up around the office, track company cars, check all social media, etc. An organization has the right to essentially observe anything that is created on company equipment or anything that interferes with a company's production. They can do it in a manner that is virtually undetectable.

As an employee, this information can feel rather intimidating, to say the least. Companies don't want to lose the trust of their workers; violating privacy can hurt

morale and cause tension between employees and management. This means a company should always make their policies clear. Whether it is in the employee handbook, on the job application, written policies, etc., the company's policy will be communicated to the employee and should always be available. Looking at this in terms of being an employee, it's important to understand that a majority of times, a company is only monitoring to cover any liabilities. The good news is that most organizations aren't monitoring for malicious purposes and handle their monitoring similarly, and are transparent about their doing so.

It's important for everyone to have a full understanding of what the privacy policies are when working for a company. Having transparency about monitoring situations will build a trust between management and the work staff. Behaving appropriately is the best way for both employers and employees to work effectively and cohesively with minimal conflict.

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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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**Our Contact Information.**

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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:**

It has been two months since I started a new job. I am having a hard time adjusting to the workplace culture, and some of the jokes and language that my associates use make me feel really uncomfortable. How do I go about addressing my misgivings without being ostracized?

—*The New Guy*

**Dear Mr. New Guy:**

Dealing with inappropriate jokes and comments, whether they are racist, sexist or offensive, can be tough. Speaking up is the right thing to do because silence signals agreement.

Instead of making accusations, explain how you feel about the comments. Another approach is to simply ask what they meant by a particular comment. Do this when you are one on one with the person rather than in front of a group.

Misinterpretation happens when you do not know people well, and some associates do not realize how their behavior is being perceived. Understanding increases when people hear a different perspective.

—*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 associates and I have a list of procedures that we have always followed, but our new manager has been pushing his new methods on us.

We loved our old boss; we all worked well together and developed a close relationship with her, and the way we accomplished our tasks before has worked perfectly fine. How can we get back to doing things the way we always did?

—*The Bewildered Veteran*

**Dear Bewildered Veteran:**

Being the new boss can be challenging for anyone, so be empathetic and open to change, and remember, your old boss is not coming back!

Share with your new boss the resources, tools and support the office has used and the success you had, while emphasizing that you are open to changes that improve productivity and results. Every person has their own unique management style, but a good boss will listen and choose the most productive methods for their people.

While it might take time for you all to adjust, you may learn that the new methods are really better than you originally thought!

—*Dr. Mimi*