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The Corporate Communicator

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Dealing With a Dominant Boss

You have done the DiSC profile and have learned you have a Strong **D** – Dominant Boss. You know that they are **Doers, Decisive, Determined and Daring. How can you best work with him or her?**

Speak up, both literally and figuratively. They want to hear from you and they want to hear you. If you mumble, you will lose credibility.

Keep your boss updated on relevant matters. They don't like to be blindsided or appear ignorant.

Get to the point. Skip unnecessary details but be sure to have the facts available, should they ask for them or challenge your assumptions.

Don't tell "stories." You will be seen as wasting their time, even if they are entertaining. Unless the story is short and

will prove a point, skip it.

Avoid generalizations. They are seen as vague and ambiguous. Be clear and specific but don't overload your boss with too many facts and figures.

Focus on challenges and solutions rather than problems and issues. Give suggestions that are practical and easily implemented.

Spark their competitive nature. Remember, if it is not worth winning, a dominant boss won't want to play.

Don't take their blunt comments personally. It is not a personal attack. They just like to tell it like it is and want you to be straightforward as well.

Speak up if their dominating characteristics become disrespectful. There is a difference between a dominant boss and a bully!

Autistic Workers Can Work!

National data indicates that a majority of adults with autism can be productive employees. Their strengths include intense attention to detail, commitment to quality, creativity, excelling on repetitive tasks, lower turnover rates, honesty and loyalty. **Here are suggestions that can help maximize working with them.**

Build a relationship with your autistic employee to understand how they communicate and how they might work better with others.

Give simple, direct instructions as well as frequent performance feedback. Constructive criticism and explanations need to be direct and sensitive so they can understand what is wrong and how to improve. Positive feedback is also always welcomed.

Give them flexibility to customize their work environment. Ask if they need any modification of sensory distractions, such as reduced light or wearing headphones to reduce sounds.

Simple supports like written instructions, a smartphone or tablet for reminders and visual cues can be extremely effective.

Many autistic employees work best with **routine, stability and repetition.** Their work needs to be structured with daily tasks and routines. Breaking tasks into clear manageable activities and small steps helps to clarify expectations.

Train your other staff on how to respond to their autistic colleague so they too can better relate.

Consider these considerations as an investment, not an expense and you will reap the rewards of a loyal and competent employee.

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Taming Monkey Mind

Buddhism refers to “monkey mind” as being unsettled, restless, or confused. At work, our mind swings from one stressful topic to another, avoiding what really needs to be done. While some stressful tasks can’t be solved at work, such as a conflict at home, our mind focuses on them, causing the job at hand to take longer, and be less enjoyable.

Mindfulness helps solve the monkey mind, allowing us to be present. With mindfulness we take control during stressful situations and make clear decisions. It reduces stress and anxiety, and increases being focused. Mindfulness also improves creativity, communication, and emotional intelligence!

How can you implement mindfulness?

Before work, set an intention to be focused and present. When your monkey mind brings you to that conflict at home,

intentionally acknowledge the distracting thoughts and then refocus on your task.

If you find that monkey mind is taking over too often, take a VERY short break. A minute or two is enough! **Connect to just one of your senses.** For example, focus on the sounds around you or **take a deep mindful breath.** In other words, do something short and measured and then immediately choose to do your task.

There will always be pressure at work.

The good news is that if you mindfully deal with stress, you can use it to your advantage! **Next time you feel that flight-or-fight response, don’t try to ignore it.** Instead, **focus on your heart rate and breathing. See it as a burst of energy and harness it to solve a problem.**

Although these mindful changes seem small, they can make a huge impact on your productivity while simultaneously giving you more joy at work!

Why Have a Board Retreat?

Board retreats can make a positive difference for your organization if they are well planned and well executed. Whenever I facilitate a Board retreat, I ask, **“What are the goals of the retreat?”** Here are some possible answers.

Ownership of the Mission. Do your Board members really know the why and what of your organization? Do they say, “We” or do they say “They” when talking about your organization? Do they talk with others in the community about your organization? Can they share the mission with others succinctly and enthusiastically? If not, you need a Board Retreat!

Re-energize and re-engage your Board. Your Board needs to be a team and to be a team they must engage on an emotional level. A Board retreat is a great time to **regroup, reconnect, recharge and remind** your Board that they need to work together to forward the mission.

Networking and socializing. Board attendance and output is increased when people build relationships. A retreat provides social and networking time, so members can get to know each other.

Build Staff/Board relationships. The Board is the “what” and the Staff is the “how.” Often these lines get crossed and resentments occur. Staff needs to hear what the Board thinks. At a retreat, have the Staff present an issue and/or ask a series of questions that they can discuss together and have both Staff and Board share insights.

Review Board expectations. Many Boards become “Meet, Eat and Greet Boards” and do very little! Use a Board retreat to review the roles, responsibilities and expectation of your Board members and have them recommit to doing what needs to be done.

Plan for the year. “If you fail to plan, you plan to fail!” Do you have a strategic plan? Is it followed, reviewed and revised? A Board retreat is a great time to set doable goals and action steps. Assign specific members to “champion” them.

Raise more money. People don’t give because they are not asked! A Board retreat is an excellent time to talk about giving and getting money. Train your Board on how to ask. Brainstorm people who can be asked. Be sure to emphasize 100% Board-donor participation.

Generation Z - So Different From Millennials!

Being the youngest members of a technologically immersed world, Gen Z is at the forefront of their careers.

Because they are old enough to remember the great recession,

Generation Z searches for jobs with stability and security and a leader invested in their success. But what does this mean for your organization?

Gen Z values individual expression and avoids labels. They're more confrontational and are less willing to accept diverse points of views. They support social causes. Over 1/3 of Gen Z members will avoid organizations that have opposing views on social causes that they are passionate about.

Gen Z values financial security, independence and competition. While Millennials prefer collaboration and teamwork, Generation Z wants to be judged on their individual merits rather than being a part of a team. They prefer to work alone and manage tasks without help.

Gen Z will multitask more than Millennials. Because they've grown up in a connected world, they constantly switch between apps and seek constant updates, thus making switching between tasks easier for them.

Gen Z is more likely to start a business than Millennials. This correlates with their need for independence and motivation. They are also the offspring of Gen X who, as a generation, have an entrepreneurial spirit. They can absorb a lot of knowledge and are willing to pursue their goals despite encountering challenges.

Gen Z seeks authenticity when making decisions. If a company shows real people in their ads, instead of celebrities, they're more likely to trust a brand. They quickly size up whether you are someone they can trust.

Gen Z prefers a user-friendly experience when going through a job application. They want a quick onboarding process. As with other parts of their life, they want to keep it simple!

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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:

I am a fairly new manager, and I have recently seen various organizations start to diversify their staff. I have no problems with my current staff. In fact, we all get along and think similarly. What exactly are the benefits of making this change? How much diversity do I need for a group of 15? Will this cause conflict?

—*Mr. Dream Team*

Dear Mr. Dream Team:

The goal is not to have two of these types and three of those types, but rather to have people with various backgrounds on your team so you can get multiple perspectives. Without diversity, teams are more susceptible to groupthink and can get very stale. This can be a negative, especially when you want your product or service to appeal to a variety of individuals. Different insights create newer, fresher and stronger ideas. You also get to see things through a different lens and gain a new perspective. This is positive conflict. So instead of fearing it, embrace it.

—*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 started this job six months ago, and my life has not slowed down since. The demands of the position have me running all over the place. A lot of last-minute tasks come up, and I have to adjust my personal life—what is left of it—to get the jobs done. My boss asks me if I'm OK, and I keep saying "yes" to him, but I can feel my stress levels rising. Don't get me wrong, I love my job, but I feel like I'm running myself ragged and don't see an end in sight.

—*Stressy Bessy*

Dear Stressy Bessy:

Working your passion is a dream come true, right up until your job starts overworking you. Be sure to pace yourself with tasks so you do not end up experiencing burnout. It sounds like your boss is checking in on you, and you are not being honest about your stress level. That is not fair to either of you. Be honest. Let him know that you love your job but you are getting stressed. Be specific about what is working and what is not. Only then can things be adjusted so that your stress level will go down.

—*Dr. Mimi*