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The Corporate Communicator

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Consider This ...

There is no way to work with
people on conflict free basis.



Grow Up!

So, for all you relatively new, aspiring leaders, and for you seasoned veterans who are honest enough with themselves to admit that they're still trying to figure it out, here are three relatively critical tips to make it happen.

Grow up. You're not a kid anymore. Cuteness will only get you so far. Be honest and recognize your own issues and weaknesses and do something about them. Only then can you develop others, and that's what successful leaders do.

Do your homework. Learn about your organization, not just your job. Learn what people do ... really! How are positions connected to each other? What is happening in your field? What's changing? What are the current issues?

Take the time to research this on an ongoing basis as your world, like mine, is ever changing.

Work hard. Potential is great but it, too, will only get you so far. Go beyond the basics of your trade and industry. Do your job, offer to help others and ask to be cross-trained. Why? No matter how bright you are, you need hands-on experience. Doing this will engender respect from employees and help you to make effective leadership decisions in the future.

Sound simple? Not really. It takes a concerted effort to do these things; but if you do, you will succeed!



Five Leadership Keys

What are the keys to leadership? In the end, it is becoming adept at these five things: Understanding, Persuading, Presenting, Negotiating and Communicating.

1. Understanding. This is the most important! Who is your audience? What are their needs? How do they like to be treated? What turns them off? If you cannot answer these questions, you need to work on understanding. The

DISC® profile can be a great resource for this.

2. Persuading: To sell your agenda internally you have to learn how to be able to convince others. To do this you need to really understand your audience.

3. Presenting. As a leader you will be asked to make presentations. Practice, Practice, Practice. Presenters are made not born.

4. Negotiating. Negotiation skills are critical to resolve conflicts and to make a good deal even better.

5. Communicating. Great leaders are great communicators; it's a critical success skill. They make sure that the message they are sending is the one that people are receiving.

From Lessons in Leadership - A seminar by Dr. Mimi Hull

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Are You a Pushover?

When people work together, there will be conflict. In a conflict, there are times when you can be too accommodating and if you are, you may be seen, not as a “nice guy” but rather a pushover. How can you avoid that?

While not all conflicts require giving and getting, if you know that you’re going to give in, **decide in advance how much is the most that you will give.** At the risk of stating the obvious, begin your negotiation at a point where this can be your fallback position ... not the first thing

What You Don’t Know Can Hurt You!

When it comes to conflict: What you don’t know can hurt you! Here are five commonly held misconceptions.

1. There is no such thing as productive conflict. Wrong! Conflict is productive when it supports the goals of the group and improves its performance. For example, most innovations come as a result of conflict and to suppress the conflict would result in limited growth. Yes, conflict can be dysfunctional and that is when it hinders group performance and is not managed.

2. Conflict, if left alone, will take care of itself. People believe this and therefore avoid conflict at all costs. This is simply not true. Typically, if the conflict is not addressed it grows and the problem gets worse and worse. This creates more stress to both parties. As a result, tensions rise and resentments build and fester. As a result, a much bigger argument eventually occurs. At that point, often someone explodes and things get blurred out in an angry, hurtful way.

3. The presence of conflict in an organization is a sign of a poor leader.

Just the opposite may be true. Often when there is no conflict, avoidance is

you offer.

What do you want to get? Do you have an ideal target or aspiration of what you want to get? Be optimistic but not unrealistic. People do not expect to “win it all” so do not feel bad about asking for something in return. Remember: you deserve it!

Decide what is not negotiable. If something is truly non-negotiable, let people know what it is and **why** you won’t give in. Sometimes, simply by explaining the reason, the other person may learn something they had not considered and together you may come up with a mutually satisfying solution.

If negotiating is hard for you, start negotiating about something small until you build your confidence. Remember, a good negotiator wins respect. A pushover gets walked upon!

(From Negotiating Skills—Dr. Mimi Hull)

being practiced because no one wants to “rock the boat” or “get anyone upset.” Effective leaders not only manage conflict but also welcome productive conflict. A strong leader realizes that it is important to encourage people to challenge the status quo, even though there may be short term discomfort.

4. Conflict is a sign of low concern for the organization. What we have found is that when people have low concern there may be very little conflict. They simply don’t care. In fact, the opposite of love is not hate but rather indifference! When someone is passionate about what they do, they will take risks and try new ideas.

5. Confronting an issue or person is always unpleasant. When conflict exists, people feel it. When you take the time to confront a person and share your concerns, it is often met with great relief. What is important is how you confront the person. Share your concerns. Stick to the facts. Stay calm. Don’t exaggerate ... and then listen carefully to their response.

Remember no matter how flat the pancake, it still has two sides!

A Domineering Leader – Not All Bad!

You have taken the DISC® and have learned that you are a high D or you work with a High D. This leadership style has been greatly criticized. Studies say that organizations with many dominant leaders have higher turnover and absenteeism. When it comes to leading a group of highly skilled people, dominant leadership can make you very unpopular. Gen X and Millennial employees are highly resistant to this management style.

When can this be effective? Dominant traits can prove beneficial, mostly when control is needed over a group. Have you ever worked on a group project that fell flat and needed to succeed before the deadline? That happens when no dominant leader is present.

A dominant leader tells people what to do, issues orders and expects them to be obeyed. High dominance is needed in an emergency and when only the leader can make the decision.

Being a pure High Dominant is often considered the classical approach. It is one in which the manager retains as

much power and decision-making authority as possible. The manager does not consult employees, nor are they asked to give input. Employees are expected to obey orders without receiving any explanations. The motivational environment is produced by creating a structured set of rewards and punishments.

Sometimes it is the most effective style to use. For example:

- New, untrained employees who do not know which tasks to perform or which procedures to follow.
- When employees do not respond to any other leadership style.
- There are high-volume production needs on a daily basis.
- There is limited time in which to make a decision.

Dominant leadership style should not be used when:

- Employees' creative inputs are needed
- Employees have open-ended job requirements
- Most nonemergency situations!

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About Dr. Mimi Hull

Dr. Mimi Hull earned her doctorate in counseling psychology with minor in management and her masters in counseling and personnel services from the University of Florida. Her B.A. in psychology was earned from Syracuse University and she holds many assessment certifications and licenses including MBTI (Myers Briggs) and DISC® as well as the Optimal Feedback survey system.

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C by Dr. Mimi Hull

THE corporate couch



Dear Dr. Mimi,

I am thinking of taking a marketing position with a competitor similar to my current employer. I signed a yearlong noncompete agreement when I started with my current employer. My new employer wants me to sign a disclaimer stating that I am not bringing any past clients to the new job so that he won't be sued. I am working primarily on commission. How enforceable is the agreement? I would really like to bring my contacts with me.

—*Tempted*

Dear Tempted,

An agreement is an agreement. If you violate it, not only are you looking at a possible lawsuit but also at possibly being blackballed in your industry. And, you may even have to live with a guilty conscience. If you are a good salesperson, you will be successful without

violating the agreement. If you are afraid that you will starve, stay with your current employer or ask for a higher base rate from your new one.

Dear Dr. Mimi:

When can I expect to get a raise? This is my first real job, and I have been here just over a year, and no one has said anything about my salary. Would it be improper to ask for a raise? I like my job but could use the extra money.

—*Underpaid*

Dear Underpaid:

Before you ask for a raise, ask for a performance review. Raises should not necessarily be tied to length of service but should be linked to quality of performance. If you get a good performance review, then you can ask for a salary review. This is a nicer way of asking. If you truly feel you are underpaid, consider looking for employment elsewhere.

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.