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# The Corporate Communicator

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## Table of Contents

Office Camaraderie . Pg. 1

Millennials ..... Pg. 1

A Better Board ..... Pg. 2

Avoid Mediocrity ..... Pg. 2

Revamp Brainstorms . Pg. 3

Call Dr. Mimi ..... Pg. 3

Follow Us Online! ..... Pg. 3

Corporate Couch .... Pg. 4

DISC Training ..... Pg. 4

## Consider This ...



"Every new idea looked crazy at first."



## Build Office Camaraderie

We have found that simple actions can foster positive relationships which can reduce turnover and increase productivity.

**Train:** Employees will work better together if they know how to best communicate and that takes training.

**Plan Events:** Do fun activities. Have a retreat. Go out once a quarter for lunch. Do a service project together. Employees who "play" with their coworkers are more loyal to the company and work harder.

**Teamwork:** Instead of individual tasks, have your employees work together. Employees who collaborate feel more secure because they have a team to turn to in difficult times. Be sure to give the team credit when the project is completed.

**Development:** Professional development allows your employees to grow and better solve problems. Employees will realize your investment which results in them feeling more invested in return.

**Listen:** Encourage employees to share ideas. If employees believe that they can affect the organization, they will buy into the ideas of others, which leads to increased productivity.



## Discovering Successful Millennials

Because I train on the Generation Gap, I am often asked, "How can we hire the best Millennials?" Here are some tips to do just that!

Look for Millennials who have done more than just go to school. Volunteerism, internships, as well as real work experience, are great things to look for when recruiting and selecting new talent because it shows balance, task management and leadership skills, especially if they also managed to maintain above a 3.0 GPA.

Look for quick thinkers who easily grasp new concepts. When it comes to coaching and development, they'll be more flexible with the way they receive instruction and training. If the Millennial has good communication skills, is sociable and energetic, that is a definite plus. Because Millennials often want work/life integration, look for candidates who are independent and have shown good decision making in the past.

So how do you find these things out? Be sure to do behavioral interviewing. Give case studies, and ask, "what would you do if ... " questions and then let your candidate do most of the talking. Your job is to listen and learn about them!

(From Bridging the Generation Gap, Keynote Address by Dr. Mimi Hull)

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## Did You Know That Hull & Associates Offers ...

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## 5 Ways to Build a Better Board

**1. Select well.** You've heard the mantra, "We need people of affluence and influence on our board." Affluence and influence are fine. But these characteristics need to be backed by wisdom, integrity and commitment. Select people who believe in who you are, what you do and how you do it.

**2. State your expectations.** Let them know why they were chosen for the board. Tell them what you expect them to do, what you expect them to know and what you expect them to give. Don't assume that they are well-versed on your organization. What they think they know, and what is so, may be entirely different.

**3. Train them.** Everyone needs to be on the same page when it comes to explaining to others what your organization is all about. Therefore, create a training complete with documents that

include an "elevator speech," and supporting statements that clearly articulate your organization's mission, activities, history and traditions.

**4. Send Board members back to their communities.** Once they understand, and can articulate who you are and what you do, encourage them to speak in front of their other organizations to tell their colleagues and families about your organization and the important work it performs in your community. Let them be "friend-raisers," as well as "fund-raisers."

**5. Make your Board a team.** Board members need each other's support and to know each other as colleagues. Team building is essential. Consider a facilitated retreat where members can exchange ideas both formally and informally.

(From Board Basics, a workshop by Dr. Mimi Hull)

## Are You Breeding Mediocrity?

**You are if you:**

**Expect too much, too soon:** Most new employees enter their jobs with enthusiasm, then fizzle if they don't see the results they'd hoped for. Often, managers who expect employees to know everything from the outset grow impatient when they have to answer too many questions so employees stop asking and "do the best they can." Set scalable goals that are timed and measured. Expect less quantity and more quality at first while setting the expectation that a greater output will be expected when they get more experience.

**Reward mediocrity:** What are your expectations and do you enforce them? Even an enthusiastic employee gets discouraged and slows down if they see others get away with it. In fact, if the norm is to be sloppy or slow, chances are your new employee will adopt these bad habits. Why work hard if nobody else is? The onus is on leaders to create a sense of urgency and pride in the work.

**Put more emphasis on style than substance:** Some people are more show than go. Others are quieter but get the job done. Be sure to put a premium on

what the employee does for the company, not his sociability. Don't mistake charm for results but rather charm and results!

**Criticize more than praise:** If employees only hear what they did wrong and what mistakes they made, that is demotivating. A worker who feels good about what they are doing is typically a more productive employee. Find things to praise and if you need to criticize, let them know, as clearly and specifically as possible, how they can correct it.

**Spread workers too thin:** If you consistently overburden competent employees, you may be breeding mediocrity. If staff must be cut, it is important to help remaining employees stay competent. There really is a limit to how much a person can get done. Eventually an overburdened employee will let things fall through the cracks and adopt a "why bother attitude." Get the truly overloaded person help. Cross train and distribute the work as evenly as possible.

As my Dad used to say: Encourage people to shoot for the moon, because even if they miss, they will still be among the stars!

## 5 Unique Tips to Revamp Your Brainstorms!

Almost every business uses brainstorming to help develop new ideas. However, rarely is it conducted optimally. These five tips will help you have more effective brainstorming.

**1. Kick out the boss!** Often the fear of generating new ideas in front of the boss can limit or even deteriorate a group brainstorm. Idea generation requires a safe environment where all ideas can be shared freely and sometimes that is better done without the boss present.

**2. Use technology.** Try incorporating chat messaging or any other form of messaging into the session. Consider letting everyone have an option to be anonymous.

**3. Swap in some alone sessions.** Group sessions can occasionally create conformity. Have members come up with ideas by themselves and put them on "stickies." Setting time for members to think on their own can bring different ideas to the table. It also levels the playing field and allows your quieter

person to really think and contribute.

**4. Take a break!** Studies show that most idea generation starts to drop after 5 minutes of continual brainstorming. Therefore, it's imperative that you take breaks so that your brainstorming can take place in more effective in short bursts.

**5. Change seats.** When you take that break, encourage people to change their seat. It can also help to change their perspective.

Becoming a master at brainstorming is no easy task. There is a lot to learn when it comes to effectively generating new ideas. Trial and error can help any brainstorm session, just don't give up!



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## HULL & ASSOCIATES

### 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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page 3

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by Dr. Mimi Hull

THE corporate couch



### Dear Dr. Mimi

My company recently suffered a big loss. We are a small firm (fewer than 30 people) and the effect will be felt by all. I am dreading breaking the news to all of my employees. I will not know if I have to lay anyone off for about 60 days. What is the best way to go about doing this? I do not like confrontation and was thinking about sending out an email.

— *Dreading It*

### Dear Dreading:

The longer you wait to tell them the news, the harder it will be and the greater the chance for inaccurate rumors, which are often more destructive than the reality. Do not send an email, because they need an opportunity to react and ask questions of the source, not each other. Gather them together for a meeting.

Be straightforward with your employees and tell them as much as you can. If there are certain things you are not permitted to disclose, be honest and say that. Be sure to differentiate between possibilities and realities.

If you know who might be losing their jobs, speak with them later and give them as much notice as possible. Often people, when they know the circumstances, will rise to the occasion, make concessions and work with management to get through the crisis.

If there were mistakes made, you have a great learning opportunity. Instead of placing blame, let people know what was done and ask them to brainstorm on how they can avoid something similar in the future and/or how they can work to improve the situation so that the same issues do not recur. You may be pleasantly surprised with the solutions that are offered. In other words, give people a chance to help!

— *Dr. Mimi*

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).

by Dr. Mimi Hull

THE corporate couch



### Dear Dr. Mimi:

I recently heard bits and pieces of a conversation on behavioral interviewing. I was wondering if you could give me more insight into this topic.

— *Just Wondering*

### Dear Just:

Behavioral interviewing is a great tool because it focuses on examples of past behavior that can be useful to help predict future actions and attitudes. The benefit of using this method is that you are able to get the person to tell you more. They can relate information about specific experiences and anything they may have learned from those experiences. In traditional interviews, we find people ask questions that elicit simply a yes or no answer, and the onus is on the interviewer to keep the conversation going. Behavioral interviewing will give you more information to decide if the person is right for your particular job.

Here are samples of traditional interview questions and behavioral interviewing questions developed from them.

- Do you like to work hard? (Traditional)
- Tell me about a time in which you had to be persistent in order to reach one of your goals. (Behavioral)
- Are you good at making decisions? (Traditional)
- Describe a situation in which you had to draw a conclusion quickly and take immediate action. (Behavioral)

Not all questions in an interview need to be behavioral. Tailor your questions to get the information that you need to determine if the candidate is right for your particular position.

— *Dr. Mimi*

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).