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The Corporate Communicator

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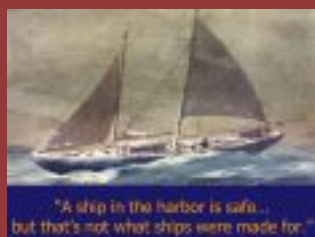
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Consider This ...



Office Party Etiquette

You're at a party. You can relax. Right? Wrong! You are still at work! So behave!

- #1 Rule: **Don't drink too much!** You can harm your career if you lose control or say the wrong thing.
- Find out if you are meant to bring a guest. If not ... don't!
- Dress appropriately. You'll ruin your image if you wear something too tight, too short or too revealing.

- Don't be the last to arrive nor the last to leave.
- Greet and introduce yourself to the higher ups and people from other areas. Parties are great to network **BUT ...**
- Don't monopolize either a person or a conversation.
- Listen. Ask questions. Pay attention and keep eye contact with whomever you are talking.
- Don't just talk business and don't complain. It's a party. Be positive.
- Quiet your cell phone. If you must take a call, do it in private.
- Thank the host, the planner and anyone else who was involved in giving the party. A follow-up email can go a long way!

(From Dr. Mimi's workshop on Etiquette)

Gender Differences in Communication

Do you feel communicating with male coworkers is different than communicating with female ones? It's not your imagination, men and women communicate differently. This impacts the way they persuade, make decisions and relate to others. Here are some examples:

- Men use less eye contact. Women use more eye contact.
- Men tend to smile less. Women tend to smile more.
- Men shift positions when talking. Women tend to sit still.
- Men nod their head when agreeing. Women nod when listening.
- Men use more small talk. Women prefer going in-depth.

- Men will express opinions directly. Women often start with an apology or disclaimer. (I may be wrong, but ...)
- Men typically process information internally. Women process out loud.
- Men tend to talk and interrupt more. Women tend to talk and interrupt less! (Surprising, huh?)

To better communicate, try adjusting your style to the gender of your coworker. It makes a difference!



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Choosing a Board Consultant or Trainer

You need to find a good consultant or trainer for your Board. What do you look for and what questions should you ask? The order of the questions are What, Who and lastly, How much?

First define the **“What.”** What are your needs and your expectations? What are the issues, what do you want done and what is the time frame? Is this meant to be a long-term commitment or a one-time project?

Then consider the **“Who.”** Does the consultant have the appropriate experience and qualifications?

Is she/he familiar with your organization and not have any conflict of interest?

Does she/he understand the goals of the project?

Do the personalities fit? Is there good

“chemistry?” Are they good listeners? Are they realistic? Can they fulfill their promises in a timely manner?

Do previous clients give her/him good references?

Lastly, consider the **“How much?”** Balance the importance of experience and quality with your budgetary needs. Would an hourly, daily or a project price work best for you?

Be careful. The cheapest consultant may not be the most economical. You get what you pay for!

(From Building Better Boards - Dr. Mimi Hull)



5 Ways to Cope With Competitive Coworkers

Having a competitive spirit in the workplace can be viewed as a positive force. However, sometimes an overly competitive spirit can lead to a negative work environment. Here are a few ways you can deal with excessively competitive coworkers constructively to make a happier and more productive workplace.

1. Focused on YOUR Goals. Focus on what your job requires. In simpler terms—don't compete unless it's with yourself. Don't let other coworkers draw your attention away.

2. Build Relationships. Instead of focusing on competing with the overly competitive worker, put your energy into being a valuable team player and join

forces. It is hard to compete with a “partner.”

3. Reinforce Positive Behavior. To have the competitive person see you as a collaborator instead of an enemy, offer a compliment when deserving, ask for advice when working on a project, and stay away if he or she isn't responding in a positive manner. It is not fun to be negative when you don't have an audience. So don't be one!

4. Defend Yourself. Some acts such as harassment, attacks on your work, and stealing ideas without giving proper credit need to be accounted for. Talk first to the competitor and let them know how they offended you. If that doesn't work, talk to your boss.

5. Evaluate the Culture. If you look around the workplace and find that many of your colleagues are overly competitive, this may be a sign that the company's culture creates and fosters such behavior. When organizations are too competitive, many good people leave. This may indicate it is time to bring in a consultant to determine if the organization is healthy and if not, to help heal it. When people work in a “sick” environment, they also become ill.

The Positives and Pitfalls of Being a Perfectionist (High C on the DiSC)

For each DiSC behavioral style, there are both strengths and challenges. Perfectionists, who are often High Cs on the DiSC® Profile, aim to be the best in everything they do; they set absolute ideals and are highly conscientious. They research their work and then check and recheck it. Accuracy and high quality are priorities for perfectionists.

It is important to note that when you have a great strength and overuse it, it may get you in trouble. Extreme perfectionists have been known to stress more, and, as a result, enjoy life less. Extreme perfectionists may suffer from anxiety and depression. They may feel like what they accomplish is never good enough and it is often difficult for them to put things in perspective.

Perfectionists are very hard workers. They will work until they feel they have achieved beyond 100 percent. On the down side, they may be late turning in projects because they feel they have not yet met their own extremely high

standards.

While they are often quiet, perfectionists may come across as controlling because they often find something missing or wrong in other people's work. Their standards are high and can sometimes be unrealistic. Good enough is rarely good enough for them!

A High C or perfectionist can come across as indecisive because they don't feel like they have enough information on the matter. They worry about making wrong decisions so they hesitate to reach a conclusion. There is always one more place to check!

What's a perfectionist to do? Instead of perfectionism, strive for excellence—do your best and focus on things that matter. Have someone review your work and let you know that if it is "good enough." Realize you may not be perfect, but you are excellent and effective!

(From Dr. Mimi's DiSC training. If you would like to sample a free "taste" of DiSC®, contact us at 407-628-0669 or Drmimi@hullonline.com.)

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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:

The owner of our organization does not believe in recognizing his employees. He says that the paycheck is recognition enough. Is he correct? We have a huge turnover rate and I can't help but think that the costs of this turnover are huge as well.

— *Unrecognized*

Dear Unrecognized:

You are correct. Turnover is costly. Besides the costs of advertising, screening, interviewing and training a new person, there are other hidden costs that are equally expensive. Turnover decreases morale for the people who

stay. In addition, people have to make up the work of the missing person. More mistakes are made and productivity suffers. It is unfortunate that your owner does not realize that, yes, money is a motivator, but not the most important one. People will sacrifice pay for perks such as training, recognition, a sense of belonging and a positive working environment. Everyone likes to have contributions and efforts acknowledged. Recognizing and celebrating achievement helps to reinforce the positive behavior, helps keep good people and in the long run cuts costs and builds profit—so he can have a larger paycheck!

— *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 staff has always enjoyed the holidays, and we typically do some type of gift exchange. We have done exchanges under \$5, ornament exchanges and cookie exchanges. I would like to keep the exchange idea, but do something unique. Any ideas?

— *Exchanger*

Dear Exchanger:

How about a service exchange? Have each person write down a service that they would be willing to perform for a member of the staff. They can specify starting and expiration dates and other limitations. It can be either office- or home-related. One might be willing to provide one dessert per month for three months. Another might be willing to drive a fellow employee to work and back five times or pick up their dry cleaning. A third might offer to do two inches worth of filing. Someone might be willing to babysit for a certain number of hours. Let them come up with ideas. You will be surprised how creative your group can be.

— *Dr. Mimi*