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The Corporate Communicator

www.HullOnline.com March-April, 2013

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Consider This ...

"The difficult we do immediately.
The impossible takes a little longer."
U.S. Army Slogan



You're Being Brown Nosed!

Why do people brown nose? Simply put, **they are insecure!** They don't believe their work will speak for itself and/or they think they are not as good as others so they try to flatter their way to success. Yes, they appear to have ambition but rather than taking the natural direct approach of working hard and doing well, they brown nose.

What can you do about it?

Be positive but prepared. Don't let them control your actions or the decisions that you make.

Accept their compliments with a simple "thank you" and resume the task at hand. If you dispute their remarks, they will only find another way to curry favor. If you spend too much time responding to their remarks, they will

continue to waste even more of your time.

If it gets to be too much, talk with them confidentially. Let them know that while it is always nice to hear good things, the best way to earn your favor is to work hard and do well. Give an example of something that they handled well and how it pleased you. Catch them doing something right and give them a short and sincere compliment. This will boost their confidence and provides a model for what they should do.

Remind them that a well-placed genuine compliment is appreciated but too many come across as insincere and become a turn off rather than a turn on.

(From Dealing with Difficult People by Dr. Mimi Hull)

Determining Your Training Needs

Training can take people to the next level and close a gap between current and expected performance, if and only if it is done right. Answer these **training needs analysis questions** to help your training be more effective and efficient.

- Why do you want training? What are the needs of your organization?
- What tasks or skills need to be improved? What have you done to develop the soft skills like motivation, communication and/or leadership?
- Does the training adapt to the task and conditions at hand? Will your training be customized to meet your specific needs?
- Which employees do you think need training?

- Is your company ready for the training? Do you have and are you willing to commit the resources for that training?
- Who can best deliver the training? Should it be done in-house or should you engage an outside resource?

We encourage our clients who are interested in training to simply ask these questions before deciding if training is appropriate. It makes a huge difference!

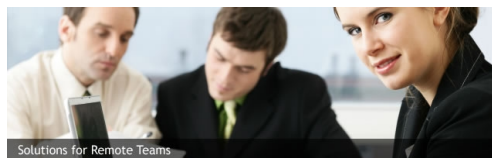


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Conflict Is Inevitable!

It's going to happen. There will be conflict! Conflict is not always bad as it shows that people can have open discussions and voice their opinions. However, personality conflicts can be painful and destructive.

If you have a personality conflict, you have to decide: *Do you want to improve the relationship?* If so, here are some tips.

Look at yourself first. Ask yourself questions like: When did the problem start? Was there a defining moment or did it build over time? What did I do to cause or escalate the conflict?

Recognize the other person's strengths. What do they do well? How have they

been helpful? If the person is trying to work cooperatively, how are you responding to the effort?

Talk to, not about them! Not talking or avoiding the other person won't help. Holding grudges hurts you more than them. When you talk with the person about the problem, be specific. Don't make accusations. Ask open ended non-threatening questions. If the conversation becomes emotional or nonproductive, suggest having a third party facilitate it. In any case, always be polite and professional.

Consider making changes. Are you willing to do things differently? If you make changes, what do you expect in return? Brainstorm ideas together and be open to suggestions. Reconvene to evaluate the changes and make further changes.

Conflict is inevitable but you can manage it.

Get Over It! Going From Failure to Success!

Winston Churchill said, *"Success consists of going from failure to failure without loss of enthusiasm."* Most people want to be successful and at the same time have a real fear of failure. What can you do?

Set Written Goals: Without written goals there is a reduced sense of accomplishment. Your goals have to be realistic with checkpoints and milestones that also deserve celebration when they are achieved. It is also OK to modify your goals once you have them ... but you first have to have them! Invest in planning and you will reap a huge return on your investment.

Believe in yourself: You have to have faith that you can achieve. Will you make mistakes? Yes, but don't give up! People fail because they don't put in enough effort to succeed. You have to work at being successful and it IS work! Remember, each failure is a step toward success. In other words, keep on trying! Focus solely on the present and realize that the past is over. If you hit an impasse, consider a break from your alleged failure and take some time to recharge your

batteries.

Be positive. The power of positive thinking is real. To quote Willie Nelson, "Once you replace your negative thoughts with positive ones, you'll start having positive results." Another one of my favorite quotes is "Whether you think you can or you think you can't, you are probably right!" Be your own best cheerleader. Recognize even those small successes and don't dwell on the misses. It is funny how we can do 72 wonderful things and not take the time to bask in our accomplishments. Then we have one thing go wrong and we beat ourselves up over and over about it.

Be realistic. Regularly assess your performance. If you have given your best effort and a situation is truly not working, have the strength to assess the situation and move on. It's all too easy to make excuses for a situation that simply isn't viable. This may not be what you are meant to do and that's OK. Once you decide to do something different, pat yourself on the back for recognizing the need to move on. That too is a step toward success!



They Talk Too Much!

Being outgoing and friendly (a DISC High I) are admirable traits. Building relationships is important. However too much of a good thing is still too much. We have all known people who ask if you have a minute and 30 minutes later, you are still being talked to.

What can you do? Here are some helpful hints.

- Set and maintain clear boundaries with everyone. Their feelings will get hurt if they think you are singling them out.
- Don't be available. Don't look up when they pass your cubicle. If they do come in, stand to greet them and don't invite them to sit down.

- Close your office door when you need to complete a project or simply don't want to be disturbed.
- Keep them focused on work. "What can I do for you?" is a more task-oriented question than, "How are you?"
- When asked if you have five minutes, either say, "No, I wish I did" or "Yes, but just five minutes." (Then look at your watch for emphasis.)
- Have a heart to heart confidential talk. These friendly people want to please. Let them know you enjoy them and you need to get your work done. Suggest getting together during a slow time for lunch or coffee to catch up.

You may be wondering how these people get their work done. They work with bursts of enthusiasm with slack periods in between. Taking time to chat is how they get their energy. They may stay late, when no one is around, to get their work done and interestingly, they do get it done!

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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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THE corporate couch



Dear Dr. Mimi:

I am having a problem in the office that I feel awkward confronting. There is a woman, "Chatty Cathy," with whom I work in close quarters, who talks and talks and talks. She tends to get her work done by coming in early and staying late. During work hours, it seems like she spends more time talking than doing. Don't get me wrong, Cathy is a great employee and I thoroughly enjoy our conversations, but she is a very big distraction to me. Is there a nice way for me to say something? I now have to stay late to finish my work because of the conversations, and quite honestly, I am resenting this. I don't want to resent Cathy, but I fear I am starting to do that as well. I know that she is very sensitive, so I have put off saying anything directly to her as I do not want to offend her.

—*Distressed*

Dear Distracted:

Remember, it takes two to have a conversation. Instead of being on the defensive, try taking a proactive approach. Begin a day by asking her if she can spare a few minutes to talk with you. Assuming she says "yes," sit down with "Chatty Cathy" in a place where there is confidentiality and explain to her that you have a hard time staying focused on your work when she is talking. Let her know that this is because you do so enjoy the conversations you share with each other. Remind her that you genuinely like her and enjoy your talks, but when you take the time to talk with her, you fall behind in your work and you are not willing or able to stay late to get your work completed.

Suggest that you can catch up at times like lunch and breaks. Be polite but firm. Let her know that you will both have to work on not chatting, as it is a mutually shared pleasure. Suggest that in the future, if you both are talking and it is not work-related, you will need to remind each other that you have work to do and will have to postpone this exchange. It may take a few times for her to get the message, but don't give up!

—*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 or DrMimi@HullOnline.com.

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Dr. Mimi Hull

THE corporate couch



Dear Dr. Mimi:

We have a mid-size office and, for the most part, we get along quite well. However, we have been having some "personality conflicts" between various members of our staff. I keep getting complaints like, "Mary and Nancy talk too much, and I can't get my work done," or "Bob is so nitpicky that we are getting behind." My typical reaction is to say, "Work it out among yourselves." However, I am noticing that the problem is not going away and the atmosphere is getting tenser. Should I get involved? If so, are there any interventions that would be helpful?

—*Hands Off*

Dear Hands Off:

Misunderstandings and communication problems remain one of the most common sources of office friction, and interpersonal difficulties are magnified when conflicting work styles coexist in one setting. If these issues are not addressed and resolved, they will continue to get worse. Respect occurs in an atmosphere of understanding and

good communication. It is apparent that neither is happening here. So yes, this may be a time when you need to get involved and/or hire a facilitator.

When we are called into these types of situations, we find that there really are personality issues and that there needs to be increased understanding, communication and utilization of different work styles. There are a variety of tools that can be used to help resolve these types of issues. Two of my favorites are the MBTI®, also called the Myers-Briggs, and the other is the DiSC®. Once people know why people do what they do, respect will often follow, and ultimately the differences are viewed as opportunities. People learn to adapt their behavior to meet the needs of the situation and the needs of their coworkers. The best news is that the office becomes more productive and people are less tired at the end of the day.

—*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 or DrMimi@HullOnline.com.