

HULL &  
ASSOCIATES

# The Corporate Communicator

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## Hull & Associates

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If a problem can be solved...  
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## Not All Praise Is Good Praise!

**If you hand out praise in the wrong way, it can do more harm than good! Here are some "Don'ts"**

**Don't generalize.** If the praise is too general, it may not sound genuine. Be explicit about what you praise. Rather than just telling people that they have done "a good job," let them know specifically what you liked about what they have done and/or how you appreciate how they did it.

**Don't hit and run!** Spend time with the person when you give them praise. Whether it is a one-on-one call or a face-to-face meeting, let them know how they made a difference and/or what their actions meant to you. Don't rush it. The time you spend is truly an investment!

## Don't praise poor performance.

People know when they are doing well AND when they are not. There is a difference between encouragement and praise. It is okay to encourage people as well as acknowledging when you have been let down.

**Don't always do or say the same thing.** Vary the praise. Use different words. It is important to develop your repertoire. Your words will start to sound fake and meaningless if you always say the same thing.

**Don't just use words.** Sometimes words are just not enough. Gift cards, bonuses, interesting job assignments, an afternoon off, or a longer lunch hour will add sincerity to the message that your people are valued and appreciated.

## After You Make a Mistake...

You messed up. You made a mistake. Now, what should you do???

**Admit and apologize sooner than later.** It is easy to fall into the trap of thinking that it wasn't your fault. Don't do that! The sooner you admit it, the quicker you can work to correct it. Make your apology and start the process of fixing the situation.

**Set clear intentions.** Think about what happened and what you intend to do to fix it. What do you want the new outcome to be? Set up a process to remedy the situation. Did you hurt someone's feelings? Go to them and let them know you are genuinely sorry and ask how you can make it up to them. Be honest and sincere.

**Don't give up.** Just because you made a mistake doesn't mean you

can't be the one to correct it AND it might take time. If you hurt someone's feelings, and they did not immediately accept your apology, consider how you can continue to show remorse and/or make it up to them.

**Don't repeat the mistake.** Learn from your error. Do you need to work slower to be more precise? Then work slower. Do you have to think before you speak? Take the time to think. If you don't know how to "do it right," ask someone to show you how to correct the situation. Use it as a learning opportunity.

**Forgive yourself.** Realize that everyone makes mistakes and that you can use this opportunity to grow and learn. You can't change the past but you can change your outlook. You can have many failings without being a failure. Be positive and move forward!

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## Motivating Part-time Employees and Volunteers

It is hard to motivate volunteers and part-time employees. They often do low-level work and have few opportunities for growth. *So, what can you do?*

**Prepare your full-timers.** Let them know that the volunteers and part-timers are not a threat to their jobs and having the help will make their jobs easier. Let your full-timers know what they can and cannot delegate to them.

**Orient new people properly.** Take time to describe their duties and review basic rules like who they report to and who can give them assignments.

**Assign a coach.** There will be confusion and they need to know where to go for information. Pick someone who is patient and has time to answer their questions.

**Vary the tasks.** Many of your part-timers and volunteers have other skills

that you can use. Ask what else they would be able to or want to do. Be sure to have an assignment for them to complete each time they work.

**Offer flexible hours.** Whether working from home or at your organization, find out what situations require them to work part-time. Clear up scheduling conflicts to avoid confusion later.

**Offer incentives and recognition.** Give them a reason to get excited. Be generous with your praise. Keep them in the loop about what is happening in your organization. Allow them to compete for things like "Employee of the Month." If you are doing a celebration for the staff, invite them also. They want to feel a part of your team.

If you do these things, you will have loyal employees and faithful volunteers that will stay and work hard for you and your organization.

## Stop Working Too Much!

*Everyone needs a break and it is important to take time off, especially if you are working from home.* Constantly working is not good. You get stressed, cranky, and can even make costly mistakes. We punish ourselves by not stepping away from our work and/or when we do step away, we beat ourselves up for having taken a break. As a result, no matter what we are doing, we think that we should be doing something else. That is not psychologically healthy and as a result, mental health issues are on the rise.

### Stop the madness!

**Set time limits.** Give yourself a lunch hour. Take your breaks. When you go to work, work! When you leave, leave!

**Separate work from home – even if you are working from home.** A good way to mentally divide your work and off times is to exit by one door to go to work and walk in another to arrive at work. Try taking a walk around the block "to go to work." It is good exercise and will get those endorphins going so, in the long run, you will be even more productive!

**Set realistic expectations.** We waste time fretting about "How am I ever going

to get all this done?!?" What can you realistically get done in a day? In a week? Sometimes we don't give ourselves enough time to complete a project well and thus we create our own stress. If you are prone to doing this, add 20% to the time that you allot for a project.

**Let your boss know what you are working on.** Because your boss is not seeing you, he or she may not know what you are doing. Bosses are human. They forget what they have assigned you. When you are given a new assignment, let your boss know what else is on your plate. A good way to do this is to say what you are working on and ask where the new assignment fits into the priority.

**Know your personality.** Different personality types relax in different ways. Some people enjoy projects when they relax. Others need to just veg out. Some want to be with people and they get energy by calling and talking with people. Others find people exhausting and need quiet and alone time. Relax in a way that works for you!

*In the end, maintaining your competitive edge is working when you are working and playing when it is time to play! So go play!!!*

## How to Address Conflict at Work

Conflict resolution is often viewed as a negative. However, it can be positive if handled correctly. Work to gain mutual understanding between the conflicting parties. **Here's how!**

**Address the Issue(s)** - By addressing issues early, they can be stopped from becoming larger problems later.

**Listen to Both Parties Separately and Unemotionally.** Do this before bringing all the parties together. Listen to all sides of the story without picking sides. Let them know that the purpose of the meeting is to learn not to judge. Remain calm when addressing the problem and set your emotions aside. If you involve or state your feelings, you may escalate the situation.

**Let Both Parties Speak on the Issue and Suggest Remedies.** When you get them together, have each side share their thoughts to the other and have them each come up with a solution and/or a compromise. You want this to be a positive exchange rather than one that creates more tension.

**Express Ideas for Resolving the**

**Problem.** If a compromise isn't coming easily, you can try suggesting ideas. It is better for **them** to come up with solutions on how they can resolve the issue, but do have some ideas should theirs not be workable.

**Reiterate the Agreed-Upon Solution.**

After there is an agreed-upon resolution to the conflict, have each member say how they have interpreted the solution and how they will implement it going forward.

**Follow up immediately.** Review what is decided and share it in an e-mail or text so that they have something in writing. It is good to do this to discourage any backtracking on the decision.

**Continue to Observe.** After the conversation ends and a compromise is made, continue to observe to be sure that the solution is being implemented and to be aware if any other issues arise. If you see a problem, reconvene and repeat the process as soon as you can to prevent future conflicts from arising and to retain an overall positive workplace.

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**CC** by  
Dr. Mimi Hull

THE  
corporate couch

**Dear Dr. Mimi:**

I am the manager of a large company and I have hired an employee who seems to be costing my company more than he is earning for us. Customers love him, but his mistakes are really beginning to have an impact. I don't want to have to let him go. Do you have any suggestions on how to possibly work through this issue?

—*Confused*

**Dear Confused:**

Meet with this employee as soon as a mistake is discovered and pinpoint the exact problem that he is having and how to remedy it. Do not make corrections for him. Have him make them and then bring the corrected product back to you. Consider putting him on probation for a specific amount of time so he knows he is being held accountable for his actions. This may mean a time investment for you, but in the end, it may not only benefit the company and your customers, but the employee as well.

—*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).

**CC** by  
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**Dear Dr. Mimi:**

My manager yells at employees in front of other employees and sometimes even in front of customers. The manager needs to be more tactful in the way he goes about correcting his employees. I hate being corrected in front of others, and I just want him to take me and the other employees aside if there is a problem that needs to be discussed. I feel like saying something in front of everyone so he can know how it feels. It would serve him right!

—*Highly Annoyed*

**Dear Highly Annoyed:**

No one likes to be reprimanded in front of others, as it is uncomfortable and demeaning, and yes, it is time to talk with him. However, do not follow in his footsteps and say something in front of everyone. Make an appointment for a confidential conversation. Explain to him that you know that you and other employees make mistakes, but you would appreciate it if he would talk to you privately about the mistakes, as no one likes to be embarrassed, especially in front of others. It also sounds like your office is ripe for some conflict management or team building training. When tempers keep flaring, it is better not to fight fire with fire. A trained facilitator can help you get resentments off the chest and onto the table in a civilized and productive manner.

—*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).