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The Corporate Communicator

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Hull & Associates

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We must not only
give what we have.

We must also give
what we are.



Getting to the Root of Conflict

As a leader, you will be dealing with conflict and it is important to get to the real issues, which may be different from the presenting ones. Here's how!

Create a safe environment. Ask if it is a good time to talk. If it is not, set a date for the talk and have a conversation where no one can hear or see you. Let them know that you are on a fact-finding mission and are not looking to blame anyone.

Let people know that you are aware of the conflict. You don't have to reveal your sources. If you noticed the conflict, let them know what you experienced. Address the conflict as soon as possible. The closer to the event, the better.

Don't ask yes or no questions. Use phrases like "Tell me what happened

and be as specific as possible." or "Please explain the issues, from your perspective."

Ask for details. Ask questions like: "What do we not know but should know?" "How can we get that information?" "How did it start and how did it escalate?"

Ask for solutions. "How do you suggest that we resolve this?" "What could be done differently, moving forward?"

Then be sure to actively listen! Your job is not to rebut, but rather to fact-find and hear their perspectives. Encourage the speaker to provide more information. Let them know that you sincerely want to hear what is being said. **Only by knowing all the facts can you find the best solution!**

Destigmatizing Mental Health Issues

There has been an increase in mental health issues causing organizations to increase their mental health benefits. However, if the workplace culture does not support mental health and continues to contribute to its stigma, employees won't use the benefits and will continue to decline mentally. *Here are three tips to support mental health issues:*

1. Be vulnerable. Everyone has their "off" days. Share your personal experiences with mental health issues. Be honest. Letting people know that you're having a bad day reflects humanity and encourages others to be more open.

2. Demonstrate mentally healthy behavior. Demonstrate healthy work-life boundaries. For example, tell your

employees that you won't be responding to emails after a certain time. It is one thing to emphasize the importance of taking a break, but unless the leader takes their own advice, employees won't feel free to do the same.

3. Check on your employees, but don't pry. Be proactive about checking in on your employees, but also be careful to not jump to conclusions. If someone seems off, it could be a sign of depression or they could just be tired. Instead of assuming something is wrong, name what you are noticing and ask open-ended questions like, "You seem down. Is it anything that we can talk about?" Don't pressure someone into disclosing information they don't want to, but do open the door so that they can talk and you can suggest options.

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Promoting Optimism at Work!

Employees' lives and livelihood were put at risk during COVID, making it difficult to be optimistic. A lot of these realities still exist during this "post-pandemic" period. Therefore, to retain your employees, it is vital to continue to promote optimism. Here are some tips:

Help employees find their purpose.

Optimistic workplaces encourage employees to discover their purpose and why they do what they do.

Focus on opportunity. Be positive, even when there are issues. This motivates employees to find solutions rather than focusing on the negatives that come with these challenges.

Have wellness opportunities to promote healthy behavior. Encourage employees to put their health first. Inspire employees to eat well, exercise, stay calm, and also to stay home when they

are ill.

Conduct employee surveys and interviews. When we conduct surveys and interviews, we learn and tell you how your employees really feel. With anonymity, you will get more honest feedback, making it easier to enhance your organization. People share ideas about how to improve so that they can truly appreciate their work and, hopefully, not resign.

Be transparent. Being transparent with employees generates trust and improves employer-employee relationships. Be positive. Share the joys and also be honest.

Pandemic or not, it is always vital to promote optimism in your workplace.

People need hope. They want a clear vision of the company's mission, vision and values, a sense of belonging, and a positive outlook going forward.

Improving Your Work Environment

Why are some organizations more productive than others? It's all about the way they handle their employees. Here are 5 tips to help create a positive and productive work environment:

Keep Stress Low. Some work environments are too stressful for employees to stay productive. This is often caused by poor management. Having high levels of stress among employees leads to lower work qualities. Find out what is stressful for your people. Acknowledge it and work to lower that stress.

Manage the Workload. You don't want your employees to dread coming to work. Make your employees' workload equitable and not overwhelming. Be careful not to "reward" good performance by overloading your stellar employees.

Do Team Building. People tend to work better on a team when the team is worked on! They feel connected when they know how their team members think and act. This motivates them to "want to do right" by their teammates, as well as to better communicate their ideas with each other and receive feedback from

their peers.

Improve the physical work environment. This can include poor lighting, uncomfortable or worn office chairs, a messy break room, or walls that need to be repainted. If the physical aspect of the work environment seems "disorganized or depressing," then employees act that way as well, causing production to decrease. A clean-up day can be a good Team Building activity and a production booster!

Provide Training Sessions. Training sessions allow employees to learn new skills and feel like they are advancing in their jobs. Focus on the "Soft Skills," like communication, leadership, and personality styles by using instruments like DISC.

Although these may seem minor, they mean a lot to employees. These tips can highly affect employees, and by implementing them you can increase morale and productivity among your employees as well as create an uplifting, more productive environment.

For more information, contact Dr. Mimi at drmimi@hullonline.com

A DISC Holiday Season!

The Holiday season is now upon us and here are our holiday DISC behaviors! If you go to one store and get everything, you may be a D. If you love holiday parties, You may be an I. If you prefer to stick with your holiday traditions, your S is showing. If you have a holiday budget and you stick to it, you may be a C. **Here are some holiday movies and their DISC characters.**

The D: Dominant Type – Ebenezer Scrooge is an example of a D in overdrive! In A Christmas Carol, he does things his way. Through the visitation of his former business partner and the three ghosts of Christmas, he becomes a kind and generous man, allowing others to take the lead when need be. *If you are a Dominant: D, make sure you allow others to take some control and try to relax.*

The I: Influential Type – The Nightmare Before Christmas makes way for Jack Skellington, who is influenced by the spirit, joy, and the decorative nature of Christmas Town. Though he is from Halloween Town, he goes above and beyond to bring the festivities of Christmas

Town to Halloween Town. Throughout the movie, Jack Skellington is a great example of the Influential: I personality. *If you are an Influential: I, be careful you don't schedule too many festivities!*

The S: Steadiness Type – Buddy the Elf, from the movie Elf, is a great example of the Steady: S personality. Buddy is able to provide support to anyone who needs it. Throughout the movie, he consistently spreads the love of Christmas. This can be seen through his decorating abilities and his knowledge about the North Pole. *If you are a Steady: S personality, be sure that while you provide support for others, you also take care of yourself.*

The C: Conscientious Type – The Grinch is a character who is a strong C. He strived for the perfection of the imperfect Christmas. *For Conscientious: C personalities, be sure to accept imperfection. If things do not go as planned, take a breath and get some quiet time!*

Whatever your DISC type, we wish you a Happy, Healthy, Holiday Season!

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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 boss sent an email about me to our whole company stating they need someone to do my job. I want to respond to let him know I saw it. How can I do this without causing issues?

—*Shocked*

Dear Shocked:

Before you let him know that you know, I would start by checking on yourself. Why have you not been able to perform your tasks to his satisfaction? Answer that honestly. Then, consider what you could change to be able to get past this, like more education, training, an attitude change, etc. Talk with your boss and let him know how much you appreciate your employment and that you want to improve. Ask for help and feedback. This will show you care and strengthen your case, despite the unprofessional actions of your boss.

—*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:

I have an employee who usually reports sick about two days per month, but she is a really good worker and manages to meet her goals. Should I fire her?

—*Frustrated*

Dear Frustrated:

Once every 10 working days is a lot. But if she is as good as you say, keep her. Since she is saying she is sick, you might ask her to produce a doctor's note. Having said that, I have two concerns: Are her goals challenging enough? And how do the other employees view this? It could be a morale issue—both for her and her co-workers.

—*Dr. Mimi*