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The Corporate Communicator

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Consider This ...



A smooth sea never
makes a skilled sailor!

Discover Your Listening Style

Research shows that people listen with a natural or preferred style. A good communicator can adjust their listening style to meet the needs of a particular situation.

For example, when listening to a lecture, you need to listen without judging to learn key points and understand the message that is being sent.

Conversely, it is important to judge and analyze the speaker and their agenda when in a debate, buying a car or attending a political event.

When helping a friend through a problem or to solve conflicts between coworkers, empathic or active listening is useful. In this case, you may need to look past the words and tune into body

language to discover the real message.

And there are times when the best listening approach is simply to relax, enjoy and appreciate the sounds you hear.

To discover what type of you and those around you are, **consider using Personal Listening Profile**. Contact us to find out more! Learn how you listen; be a better communicator!



Creating an Ethical Accountable Culture

Here are seven steps to foster "responsibility and accountability" or in other words—Ethics!

Start at the top. "Do as I say and not as I do" won't work. The person at the top of the organization and/or a work group sets the standard.

Promote strong internal controls. It would be great if everyone was always honest and ethical. Sorry ... that is just not the case. There needs to be checks and balances to ensure the rules are followed.

Establish a whistleblower policy. Train everyone on how to report wrongdoing. Create a culture where feedback is welcome and people feel safe. Financial incentives can reduce fears of retaliation and encourage people to

step up and to share information.

Prevent reprisals. People who let management know about ethics violations must not fear being punished.

Provide ethics and fraud training. Train on what is an ethics violation. Give examples and case studies, so people can understand the "gray" issues as well as the "black and white" ones.

Implement a confidential hotline. Sometimes people need to feel that their identity is protected.

Create a culture of doing the right thing. Discuss, train and implement ethical standards at all levels. Share and praise difficult but good decisions.

Being ethical involves hard choices. Once you make them, you will feel better, your organization will feel better and you will be more profitable and productive!

(From Ethics Training - Dr. Mimi Hull)

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Trashing a Boss – DON'T!

Your boss does something horrible. Shouldn't the world know? The simple answer is "NO!" Why not? First of all, "venting" only makes you feel better temporarily, particularly if you vent to coworkers. People get together and the stories begin and what starts out as truth gets blown out of proportion.

Another good reason is that, more often than not, your boss will discover that you have said something and you will be branded as being negative. Negativity has a way of sounding egotistical—as if you know how to run things better than anyone else. When that kind of negativity catches on in the workplace, it's distracting and reduces productivity. So, from an organizational perspective, it's usually better to **fire** a bad-mouthing employee—no matter how valid the complaints may be.

Eight Tips to Build Better Work Relationships

1. Listen without interrupting. This shows respect for their concerns and opinions. It also gives you time to formulate a clear response, especially if they ask you an important question or are disagreeing with you.

2. Ask questions and listen to the answers. It sparks conversation and the other person is more willing to share information. Ask a coworker what he's working on or why the company does something a certain way. If you seek to understand, you'll develop a friend, and you may learn something that benefits your own goals.

3. Keep confidences. Trust is important in any relationship. There is nothing worse than an office gossip. If someone shares something personal and it will not hurt anyone else, don't repeat it.

4. Beware of being the lone ranger. If you never collaborate or delegate, coworkers may see you as a loner and loser. Collaboration can create a better product and more importantly, excluding people may get you excluded from opportunities in the future.

5. Acknowledge a colleague's point of

view, even if you disagree. In addition, bad bosses don't get mad, they get even. How? By passing over you for promotions, not giving you a raise or a bonus, giving you the crummy jobs and not giving you credit for the good things you do even when you deserve it. These types of retributions can be worse than getting fired!

Remember, when you're frustrated, every little thing feels like a massive blow! Take a deep breath, take time to think things over and don't take chances. The job you save may be your own!



6. Don't take things personally. When people disagree with you, realize the disagreement is usually issue based. People can say things that sound hurtful, but realize their intent was not to hurt you, so don't let that be the effect!

7. Share your expertise. Look for opportunities where you truly have something to add—rather than focusing on what you'll get in return. For example, help a new hire understand how their manager tends to say "No" first and then comes around.

8. Don't overdo it. The line between a strong professional relationship and a friendship is a blurry one. When you are with coworkers, you are always at work. Share only the personal information you're willing to accept as part of your professional reputation. For example: "My kid has to have surgery" is OK to share, but "I really got drunk last week" is too much information.



Six Signs of a Toxic Boss

How can you tell if the person interviewing you will be a toxic boss? Here are some things to watch out for.

1. **Disrespectful Behavior** such as failing to return e-mails or delaying an interview without apology may indicate employee relation problems in a supervisor. Don't be surprised when your request for a raise gets postponed, or worse, ignored.

2. **Defensive Body Language** like avoiding eye contact, constant shifting and excessive fidgeting could be signs of insecurity. A boss in constant fear of losing

his/her job will be less likely to invest in your career.

3. **Blaming Others** for company misfortunes, especially during an interview, certainly is a sign that you might get thrown under the bus when things don't go as expected.

4. **Pessimism and Negativity** can corrupt a work environment, and over time, become a source of enormous amounts of stress for you at the workplace and also at home.

5. **Self Absorption** indicates that the boss cares mostly about themselves and that they can be very difficult to work with over a long period of time. Your potential ideas will fall on deaf ears, and if they do manage to get noted, you may not get the credit you deserve.

6. **Obsessive Tendencies** with miniscule details while failing to see the big picture is a classic trait of a micromanager. Micromanaging can squelch individual creativity and instill feelings of apathy in the workplace.

(From a Seminar on Reading People by Dr. Mimi Hull)

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Call Dr. Mimi!

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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by Dr. Mimi Hull

THE corporate couch



Dear Dr. Mimi:

I have worked in a small office for five years. Recently, we had a younger, and well, let's be honest, prettier member join our team. She prances around and flirts with the boss. This past week, we presented a project to a client in which "younger and prettier" gave little input but somehow managed to get all the credit from the boss. Whom do I confront to get the recognition I deserve?

—*Older But Wiser*

Dear Older But Wiser:

Your boss may currently be blinded by "young and pretty," but he will soon recognize who works the hardest and is the most reliable. I would not confront either party. Encourage this new member to be a team player and share her ideas. Perhaps she has them but is afraid to speak up. Show her how she can incorporate her ideas with yours and how working together benefits everyone. As for your boss, let your input on the project be known. Make an appointment and inform him about which parts of the project were yours and how others helped in different areas. That way, he will know where to give credit, not only to you but to others 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 or DrMimi@HullOnline.com.

by Dr. Mimi Hull

THE corporate couch



Dear Dr. Mimi:

Is the customer always right? We have a particular client who we just can't seem to please. They are the only customers who constantly complain, and it is wearing on my employees. This is a large contract, and I would hate to lose it. However, I have had one employee quit over this client. What should I do?

—*Worn Out*

Dear Worn Out:

Instead of customer service, I prefer the term customer management. It's estimated that as many as 90 percent of customers who perceive themselves as having been wronged never complain, they just take their business elsewhere. So angry, complaining customers care enough to talk to you and have not yet decided to take their business to the competition. Meet with them and tell them that their complaints do not seem valid and that it does not seem that you can satisfy them. You want to keep their business, but if they continue to complain and cause dissension, they will need to take their business elsewhere. Eight out of 10 times they will beg you to keep them! However, know that there are some customers who are simply not worth the effort it takes to deal with them.

—*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.