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The Corporate Communicator

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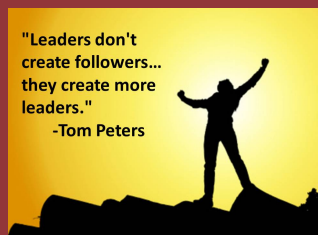
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Consider This ...

"Leaders don't
create followers...
they create more
leaders."

-Tom Peters



Selecting a Coach?

Choosing the right coach is critical. With plenty of coaches out there, proper diligence helps ensure a successful experience.

Determine your need. Ask yourself: What are your coaching goals? What are the changes you want? What are your expectations around coaching?

Credentials matter! One of the problems in the coaching industry is that anyone can call themselves a professional coach, life coach, personal coach, etc., as *coaching is not regulated*. There are 'schools' that offer a certificate after 3 hours of training and people read a book or watch a TV program and decide 'I'm a coach!' As a result, the quality of coaches varies dramatically.

Ask coaches about their style and methods. Beware of coaches who use the latest buzzwords and catchphrases. A coaching model should be clear and direct. Is there substance? Will they use assessments? Or is it a lot of enthusiastic hype and hyperbole?

Talk with Potential Coaches. Do you feel comfortable with him or her? Is rapport easily established? Will they keep confidentiality?

Trust your intuition and your gut. If it doesn't feel right, you probably need to select someone else. On the other hand, if it feels good **and they have the credentials**, get started! A good coach can make a huge difference in your career and your life!

(Dr. Mimi Hull is a fully licensed psychologist and coach!)

Stages of Board Membership

Having trained literally hundreds of Boards, we have found that the typical Board member goes through stages.

When people accept a Board position, they feel special for being asked and are eager and excited. However, that enthusiasm does not mean they have knowledge about their position and/or the organization. They need a strong orientation program to better understand the organization as well as to clarify roles, responsibilities and expectations. It is also important to involve them quickly with activities that require an extra measure of energy, such as committee work and/or fundraising activities.

The second year brings with it a comfort zone in terms of their understanding of both the organization

and their role as a Board member. They also start to consider if they want to serve in a greater leadership/executive role. In this second year, reliable board members often make their greatest contributions to advancing the organization.

If a Board member serves for more than three years, one of three things happens. 1. They are extremely valuable to the organization, 2. They meddle in the operations of the organization or 3. They become dead weight. This is why it is important that your bylaws include the length of board terms. In two out of the three cases above, you may have to thank them for their service and suggest that they play a different role in the organization. Remember a good Board member drives the organization forward rather than dragging it down.

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The Power of Goal Setting

It is January, the month when the most resolutions are made ... and broken. Why? Because they were not real goals.

Goals drive achievement. They keep us focused and determined. The person with defined goals knows exactly what they want out of life and how they will achieve it. They are the masters of their destiny.

First visualize your goals. What do you want? Write it down and keep the list handy and close. Cut out pictures that reflect your goals and keep them close as well.

The acronym **S.M.A.R.T.** has stood the test of time.

Specific: Identify what you are passionate about and why ... really.

Measurable: How will you know when you will achieve your goal? What will you take as evidence of its accomplishment? You also need to pick an exact time and date for the goal to be achieved.

Attainable: Can your goal be achieved? Is it realistic? If so, write it as if you are owed it and it is coming, no matter what.

Relevant: Make sure your goal will make a difference in your life and is something you are passionate about. Why do something that you don't care about?

Timetable: What will be the interim, tiny steps that you will take to accomplish your goal? What will be your milestones and check points. What will you do if you get sidetracked? This timetable is key to your accomplishing your goal!

OK, you have the steps ... so now get started ... Ready, Set, GOAL!

(From Time Mgt. - Dr. Mimi Hull)



Communication Essentials

We are often asked what makes a person a good communicator. In our classes, we help people to do these four things that form the cornerstone of good communication, be they written or oral.

Be confident and open. Do not apologize before you say something. Statements like "I may be wrong but I think ..." dilute your message and turn off the listener. It is okay to be strong in your opinions and statements, as long as you remember that whomever you're communicating with has their own thoughts, feelings, perspectives, ideals and objectives.

Listen and do not interrupt. Listen carefully, not just to what people are saying, writing or emailing, but for the meaning and feeling behind the words. If

you are formulating your response as the other person is talking, you are not fully listening. Remember you need to tune into how something is said as much as what is said.

Be direct and concise. Say what you mean and mean what you say. The same goes for writing. Make your point upfront. On e-mail, people should not have to scroll down through lots of verbiage to learn what you are wanting or saying. Communicate as directly, concisely and economically as possible. Time is important and people want you to use their time wisely.

Be honest and authentic. Trust is essential and when you are both truthful and real, people will listen and feel comfortable working with you. You can be both honest and diplomatic by thinking before you speak and choosing your words carefully.

These four principles sound easy enough, but implementing them takes time, training and practice. Having said that, the rewards are great. When done well, you will find that people will also follow you, which, by the way, is the core of leadership!



Combating Tardiness

Employees have interesting excuses for being late like ... "I dreamt I was fired, so I didn't bother to get out of bed." "I went to the office and realized I was still in my pajamas and went home to change." "When I saw you weren't in the office, I went looking for you."

Yes, these are actual excuses that our clients have shared. All humor aside, tardiness is an increasingly problematic issue and one of the top 3 reasons why employees are fired. *Please note that punctuality and a flexible work schedule are not mutually exclusive and that tardiness can be an issue with a flexible work schedule.*

An employee who is habitually tardy sets a bad example for others. Having an entire group of employees that are habitually tardy is detrimental to overall productivity.

What can you do?

Establish written attendance policies that are direct, specific and include consequences for tardiness.

Have a "heart to heart" conversation about the tardiness. Let the employee know their tardiness is noticed. Show concern, share ideas as to how they can be on time, and emphasize the importance of punctuality.

Reward punctuality. Even though being on time is "an employee's job," it is still helpful to reward employees for consistently being on time. Something as simple as a verbal thank you can help reinforce positive behaviors.

If tardiness persists, take action. Having all bark and no bite shows you're tacitly agreeing to the tardiness, and others notice that as well. Follow your disciplinary procedures. It may be necessary to let go of employees who are blatantly tardy. This sets an example that excessive tardiness will not be tolerated.

One more thing ... be sure to be punctual yourself!

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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!

E-mail -

DrMimi@Hullonline.com

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by Dr. Mimi Hull



Dear Dr. Mimi:

We have a bully in our office. He is in sales and a top producer. I do not want to lose him. However, when he has a bad day or a bad week, he becomes mean, loud and ugly to his coworkers and even to me. He does not bully his customers, thankfully. How can I better handle this?

—**Bullied ... And I Am a Manager!**

Dear Bullied:

It is time to stand up and deal with the bully. Do not stay silent. The silence, shame and denial accompanying workplace bullying are exactly what the bully needs to succeed. If, as a manager, you continue to tolerate his behavior, you are setting a poor example and tacitly agreeing with and rewarding his behavior.

Track each incident. Note the behaviors, the date, time and nature of each infraction. This helps you avoid vague claims like, "You're a bully," "You are too aggressive" or "You are rude to coworkers."

Approach the individual and request a private meeting at his convenience. Do not deal with this in front of other employees, because this adds tension and can draw others into the conflict. Bring a copy of your personal notes to the meeting. Calmly and professionally explain every incident in detail. Tell him why his behavior hurts you and ask him to stop. The key here is diplomacy. Let him know that this behavior will not be tolerated and future infractions will result in disciplinary action.

—**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



Dear Dr. Mimi:

We have 22 employees in our company and have been experiencing increased turnover. We don't know why. We are committed to improving our organization, but we don't know what to do. Do you think doing a survey would be helpful? What should be the goal and the key areas covered, and how can we make sense of the results? We have never done anything like this and do not know where to begin. Help!

—**Survey Oy Vey!**

Dear Oy Vey:

An employee engagement survey is a wonderful tool to help you determine how committed employees are and how this commitment influences their work effort. Studies have found that highly engaged employees are 1.3 times more likely to be high performers than those with lower engagement—and five times less likely to leave the company!

If you are committed to making changes, I suggest that the engagement survey should cover how satisfied people are with their organization, their job and their boss. Be sure to carefully customize the items to reflect your particular organization so the resulting data will help you discover the real issues that need to be addressed. I recommend using an online platform that not only helps ensure confidentiality but also allows people to make comments and suggestions for improvement. In my experience, if you act on suggested areas of improvement, the whole organization improves and the right people stay and support it.

—**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.