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HELPING ORGANIZATIONS BECOME EXEMPLARY

Tips & Techniques For Dealing With Overt Angry Behavior

1. When an employee expresses anger, deal with it as soon as possible. That doesn't mean in two weeks! By showing a desire to make time to discuss the situation, you are showing that you are concerned and value the employee and his/her perceptions and feelings. Many performance problems reach crisis proportions as a result of delay in dealing with anger.

2. Certain situations require privacy for discussion since some people will be unwilling to air their feelings at a public staff meeting. However, if anger is expressed in a staff meeting, you can develop a positive climate in the organization by dealing effectively with it in public. One technique is to ask the angry employee whether they would like to discuss it now, or prefer to talk about it privately. Let them call the shot.

3. Always allow the employee to talk. Don't interrupt. If they are hesitant to talk, encourage them by using a concerned, non-defensive tone and manner, and gently use questions. For example:

"You seem a bit upset. I would like to help even if you are angry with me. What's up?"

Continued on page three – Dealing With Angry Behavior



"One primary concern regarding change is the stress it imposes..."

The Effects Of Change On The Manager

One of the least mentioned effects of change relates to how it affects the manager leading that change, and his or her ability to undertake the leadership role. We have already talked about the effects of change on the individual employee, and of course managers are subject to the same reactions, resistances and strains. Some types of change, such as restructuring, or downsizing can put considerable strain on the leaders of an organization.

Stress, Stress & More Stress

One primary concern regarding change is the stress it imposes on those undergoing the change. Managers, because they have obligations to their staff, not only have to deal with change as employees but also need to carry some of the concerns of their staffs. In the case of downsizing, the stress levels can be extremely high, because the manager is charged with conveying very upsetting information.

Stress is part of the job, but in times of change, it is critical that you recognize that it may cause you to act in ways that are less effective than usual. As with anything connected with change, the major concern is not short-term but long-term. If your stress levels result in marked loss of effectiveness, the risk is that a vicious cycle will be set up, where ineffective leadership results in creating more long-term problems, which increases your stress, which reduces your effectiveness even more.

Continued on page two – Effects Of Change

Motivational Quote

"You cannot consistently perform in a manner which is inconsistent with the way you see yourself."

- Zig Ziglar

Inside This Issue

1. Tips For Dealing With Angry Behavior
1. The Effects Of Change On The Manager
2. Qualifications Of The Leader
3. One-Minute Ideas
4. Selling New Ideals

Continued from page one – Effects Of Change

Avoidance - A Common Response

A common response to unpleasant change is to ignore the situation. Avoidance can take many forms. Most commonly, the avoiding manager plays only a minimal role in moving the organization through the swamp. After announcing the change and doing the minimum required, the manager "hides" from the change, through delegation or attending to other work. This tactic involves treating things as "business as usual".

The outcomes of this tactic can be devastating. By avoiding situations, the manager abdicates any leadership role, when staff needs it most, during and after significant change. In addition, the avoidance results in the manager becoming out of touch with the people and realities of the organization.

While avoidance serves a need for the manager in the short run, it destroys the manager's credibility, and results in poor decisions. The long-term consequence of such action is that the organization tends to deteriorate in terms of morale, effectiveness and productivity. Sometimes this deterioration is irreversible.

Denial - Another Ineffective Tactic

Sometimes the manager deals with change by denying its impact. Usually, the denying manager takes a very logical approach to change. Decisions get made, systems are put in place, or new procedures are developed. Unfortunately, this "logical" approach denies the impact of change on the people in the organization. The denying manager tends to refuse to understand "what the big deal is", and shows little empathy with employees in the organization.

As with avoidance the denying tactic tends to drop the manager's credibility and destroy any personal loyalty on the part of employees.

Key Points

- 1) Managers are put under stress by change, and that stress, if mishandled can result in loss of managerial effectiveness. Managers need to be alert to the signs of stress upon their performance.
- 2) A common management tactic is to avoid involvement in change when that involvement is unpleasant. The affects of this withdrawal can be lethal to the organization and to the manager.
- 3) Another common tactic is denial of the effects of change. Managers who do this tend to under estimate the impact of the change, and demonstrate an inability to respond to employees' emotional reactions to change.

Qualifications Of The Leader

It is by no means enough that a leader should be capable in his or her profession. He or she must be that, of course, but also a great deal more. He or she should be as well a gentleman or gentlewoman of liberal education, refined manners, punctilious courtesy, and the nicest sense of personal honor.



A leader should be the soul of tact, patience, justice, firmness, and charity. No meritorious act of a subordinate should escape his or her attention or be left to pass without its reward, even if the reward is only a word of approval. Conversely, he or she should not be blind to a single fault in any subordinate, though, at the same time, he or she should be quick and unfailing to distinguish error from malice, thoughtlessness from incompetence, and well meant shortcoming from heedless or stupid blunder.

Adapted by Thomas S. Baer of Baer Resources from *Qualifications of the Naval Officer* based on letters of John Paul Jones.

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Continued from page one - *Dealing With Angry Behavior*

4. If an employee refuses to talk about what's bothering them, consider adjourning by saying:

"I can understand that you are hesitant to talk about this, but we would probably both be better off if we got it out in the open. Let's leave it for a few days and come back to it." Then follow up on the conversation.

5. Respond to the employee's feelings first, not the issue underlying the feelings. Use empathy first by saying something like:

"It sounds like you are pretty annoyed with me. I would like to hear your opinion".



"Deal with feelings first and then move to issues and problem-solving."

6. Before stating "your side" or your perception of the situation, make sure you have heard what the person said. Use active listening.

"George, if I understand you correctly, you are angry because you feel that I have not given you very challenging assignments, and you feel that I don't have any confidence in your abilities. Is that right?"

7. If the employee's perceptions do not match your perceptions express your perceptions in a way that tries to put you and the employee on the same side. Your job is not to prove the employee wrong (even if they are). Trying to prove the employee is wrong is likely to increase the anger level even if you are right.

"George, I am sorry you feel that way. Let me explain what I think has happened so you can understand my thinking. Then we can work this out together."

8. A technique used by expert negotiators is to establish agreement about something. Before getting into the issues themselves, lay the groundwork by finding something the two of you agree on. Again, the point here is to convey the message that you are on the same side. For example:

"George, I think we agree that we don't want this issue to continue to interfere with our enjoyment of our work. Is that accurate?"

9. At the end of a discussion of this sort check with the employee to see how they are feeling. The general pattern is:

- a) Deal with feelings first
- b) Move to issues and problem-solving
- c) Go back to feelings (check it out)

Ask the employee if they are satisfied with the situation, or simply ask, "Do you feel a bit better?" You may not always get a completely honest response, so be alert to tone of voice and nonverbal cues. If it appears that the employee is still upset or angry, you may want to let it pass for the moment. Allow the person to think about the situation away from you, *then* follow-up in a day or two. This is important because someone who is angry initially may "lose face" by letting the anger go immediately. Or, the employee might just need time to think about your discussion. Good luck!

Source: *Work911* - Reproduce permission by Bacal & Associate

one **minute ideas**

Projects At A Glance

Color-code your calendar so you can tell at a glance the status of projects or assignments.

Examples: Red ink for high-priority items that day; blue for anticipated project deadlines; green for following up on other people's work; black for daily scheduled work.

Faster Decisions

According to research at the University of Southern California, sitting at your desk may cause inefficiency. When you stand, your pulse rate increases by ten beats a minute. This increased blood flow to the brain helps you to make difficult decisions 20% faster than if you were sitting down. So, if you need to think faster, get out of that chair and stand up!

Cold Calling Tip

When prospecting a company for the first time and the voice mail system asks if you want to hear the company directory, listen to it. You may hear titles with the names and you can also learn the correct pronunciation of names.



SELLING NEW IDEAS

Do you sometimes feel that you have lots of good ideas that will benefit your customers but you have a hard time getting new ideas and approaches accepted? Changing a customer's mind and getting them to accept new ideas can be a great challenge. Try these approaches to get their attention:

- ☆ Provide solutions to your customer's toughest problems and then tailor your new ideas to the customer's special needs. By solving their toughest problems, they'll be more open to your new ideas.
- ☆ Appeal to the customer's personal needs. Tailor your ideas to their personality.
- ☆ Provide specific information, it is far more convincing than general information. Examples and case histories generally have more impact than statistical data.
- ☆ Make sure you present your new ideas in a friendly, down-to-earth way. Do not talk down to your customers. By using phrases such as "You probably don't realize" or "You probably haven't thought of" you will put your customers on the defensive.
- ☆ Reinforce a new idea with hard facts and figures that relate to the potential benefits to be derived if the idea is converted into action.



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