

Member's Quarterly

Fall 2020 Edition

Feature

Harmonious Relationships at Work

Keep them happy and build the best teams

The corporate world can be a very scary and competitive place. As managers we need to create harmonious relationships where people are working together towards the realization of each other's goals and the mutual benefits of all. Let's examine the common human factors that affect the way people act, react and make decisions. Understanding these factors can help you to motivate positive behaviour, build confidence in your team and create an atmosphere of harmony.



Judy Suke
President,
Triangle Seminars

People base many of their decisions on emotion, not logic.

People do have to like you. Be likable. Don't be like the people at Union Station in Toronto. You see the stress on their faces – they have that wrinkle in their forehead, their eye brows are at an angle and they have a frown on their face. Who wants to work for you when you look miserable? Smile and spread joy instead.

They do have to feel that you like them – show you care. Speak to people and listen to what they have to say. Give them your full attention. Don't look at your papers or look away to see what's going on. Look them in the eye and speak from your heart. Listen intently and get to know them. If their child was in a hockey tournament on the weekend, ask them how it went.

Be honest. In the book *'Don't Sweat the Small Stuff'*, Richard Carlson says, "Stop sweeping your frustrations under the rug. Speak what's on your mind, when it's on your mind, in a gentle way." As an HR manager, I noticed that many of the issues in the organization started as a little annoying habit that no one talked about. Dealing with issues openly, quickly and fairly avoids the major problems.

Constantly show appreciation and say thank you. Give certificates of appreciation, employee of the month awards, tickets to movies, vouchers for dinner or even a thank you note.

Discourage gossip. Nothing is worse than hearing someone repeat word for word what you should not have said in the first place. I had the following sign laminated for all of the managers' desks: 'If you wouldn't write it, sign it and hang it on the wall by your desk, don't say it.'

People use perceptions as facts.

What people think they hear is what they hear. What you say is not always what they hear. Have you ever had someone repeat word for word what they thought you said? Then you find yourself saying that is not what you meant. It could be the actual words you use and it also could be the tone of voice.

Double check everything. Say it, write it, label it and show them. Use simple words and be specific. People can only meet your expectations when they totally understand what they are. Asking specifically for what you want is better than complaining about what you don't like.

What people perceive to be true is true. Be understanding. If they think there is a problem, there is a problem. If they are upset, acknowledge their right to be upset. Say "I am sorry you are upset." Don't be defensive – find the problem and correct it. Concentrate on the solution, the procedure – without laying blame.

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People are quick to judge.

Remember the old saying "If Mamma ain't happy, ain't nobody is happy"? Managers are the 'Mammas' of your groups. Live by your example. Be what you want from others. Deepak Chopra said "If you want joy, give joy to others! If you want love, learn to give love! If you want attention and appreciation, learn to give attention and appreciation! In fact, the easier way to get what you want is to help others get what they want!"

At the end of the day, if you think the world is full of miserable people, look in the mirror. What you send out is what you get back.

People have preconceived feelings about how to do things.

Managers have this insatiable need to judge people for their behaviour, to closely examine the things they do for mistakes and then they feel compelled to point out the error of other people's ways. Basically, we just want people to do things the right way – our way. Remember that there is more than one right way to do almost everything. Look at the outcome instead of the process. People can and will be more productive when allowed to do things their way.

People think that they are unique and want to be treated that way.

Remember the little things. I kept special notes on my team members: birthdays, names of spouse and children, interests, pet peeves, what they liked and did not like and what their goals were.

People including you need to have fun.

Take heed of this quote from Loretta La Roche in her book *'Life is not a Stress Rehearsal'*: "Your inner child is miserable because your outer adult isn't having any fun." Bring fun into your workplace. When people laugh and enjoy each other's company, everyone benefits! Morale rises, absenteeism decreases, overall health improves and productivity and creativity go up. Plan some fun. Share your funny stories. Laugh often!

These are just a starting point. One of the best ways to create harmony and excellent teamwork is to hold workshops and events to allow people to get to know each other. When they learn how to understand each other and how to show respect for each other, they will care about each other. When that happens, you will have an effective and productive team.

Judy Suke is President, Triangle Seminars (www.triangleseminars.com) and can be reached via email at judysuke@bell.net.