

Beyond the Horizons Consulting

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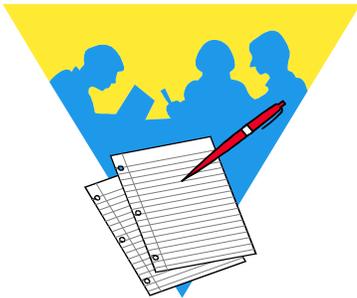
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Therapy for Business®

Have you ever wondered why some organizations function so well, while others seem to have nothing but logjams? — Leaders need to have vision which they communicate clearly to their employees. Leaders also need to engage their workers emotionally in the tasks at hand. **Sometimes an organization needs a little therapy!**

Beyond the Horizons Consulting offers a variety of services for individuals, teams, and organizations.

- ◆ Individual coaching for managers is a process that begins by identifying your style, what you want to retain and strengthen, and what you



want to modify. Objective assessments are part of the process, as are also a mutual give-and-take process of creative problem solving and supportive guidance.

- ◆ We offer group seminars on identifying and dealing with stress in a relaxing and supportive environment.
- ◆ Our team building seminars will help your team or department run more smoothly, whether it is a brand-new team or one that has been put together after a reorganization.
- ◆ Our communication seminars identify crucial

parts of the communication equation and help you put them all together by using role play, among other practical, hands-on experiences.

- ◆ **Critical Incident Stress Debriefing (CISD)** is a special tool we are equipped to provide to your business whenever there is a traumatic incident — death of a coworker, robbery, layoffs, etc. — in the workplace.
- ◆ We also offer group seminars utilizing excellent tools, including the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator or the DISC, to help you see *in black-and-white* differences in personality type and behavior.
- ◆ Our conflict resolution services help opposing parties identify mutual purpose(s) and restore harmony to the workplace.
- ◆ It is our pleasure to tailor a seminar to your company's, department's, or team's needs!

Take a look at our May and June, 2005, Newsletters to see pictures of our serene, off-site location, a place we invite you to take advantage of!

Call us to schedule a complimentary consultation for yourself or your business!

Our helpful Office Administrator, Stan, will work with you to schedule a meeting time that fits your schedule.

Stan and Jean Eva can be reached at (505) 466-4990, or on-line at

Performance Appraisal of Teams

An interesting way of improving overall employee performance is to appraise team performance. This should never be a substitute for individual performance review. However, it does offer several benefits. Relationships with peers are a key component to any performance review, even though they rarely appear in formal documentation. Just how important they are can be gleaned from a comparison of two or more teams' performance. Even with a weak player a team can excel if its communication skills have been honed and the various personality types on the team show respect and understanding for each other.

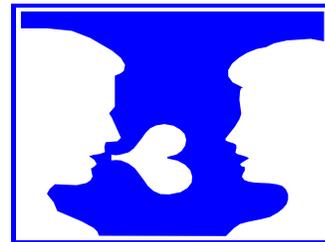
A review of team performance can help identify those areas of processes which are weak. These can then be discussed and amended. Managers may also find it useful to bring in an outside consultant to do some team building. This is especially helpful after a reorganization has occurred, where there are strong undercurrents of both loss of the old, familiar routine and relationships, and anxiety about the new structure and relationships.

Progressive Discipline

There are five steps in progressive discipline, all of which must be documented:

- ◆ **Verbal warning:** The employee is admonished about the behavior by his/her supervisor. The unacceptable behavior could be negligence in terms of fulfilling duties listed in the job description. It could also be poor interpersonal behavior, unethical behavior, or discriminatory/harassment issues. The supervisor puts a dated note in the employee's file.
- ◆ **Written warning:** The supervisor lodges a written complaint about behavior that has already been addressed verbally.
- ◆ **Suspension without pay:** In parenting, this would be the equivalent of a time-out. This action is presented to the employee in writing, outlining the dates of earlier warnings and the issue(s). Sometimes adequate time must be scheduled to investigate thoroughly an incident of misconduct.
- ◆ **Probation:** Employees on probation have a specific period of time to "prove" to management that they are putting forth every effort to amend their behavior. Such individuals probably get what they have wanted all along — closer supervision. If probation is carried out in the interest of "rehabilitating" the employee, there is opportunity to reintegrate the employee into

- ◆ the work group or team. However, many — if not most — colleagues may be so disaffected toward the offending employee that it will be difficult to achieve the goals of the probationary period.
- ◆ **Termination:** It is often said that "when one door closes, another opens." This is certainly true if a person has an attitude of acceptance and trust. However, at the moment when a person is laid off or terminated, s/he is only experiencing the loss and all the feelings that go with it — shock, denial, anger, devastation, abandonment, to name a few. That is why it is so important to conduct termination interviews with respect for the individual and understanding of the situation. Furthermore managers should point out positive aspects of the person's employment and be willing to offer career placement suggestions. These can be given in written form so the former employee can look through them later, or some phone numbers may be given for career counseling. (See our Newsletters which deal with violence in the workplace for further suggestions.)



In the Interest of Clear Communication

Let's look at the first step, verbal warning. Communication is the basis of all soft skills, so it is not surprising that managers need to make clear what the problem is. Some people learn best by listening, some by reading (seeing), and some via hands-on communication. One thing is for certain, a verbal warning delivers less impact because it comes only through the hearing channel.

At the verbal warning stage of progressive discipline, you have the greatest investment in salvaging and improving the employee's performance and his/her relationship with you and others on the team. Thus it is advisable to begin by reflecting back to the employee a number of his/her positive contributions.

Then you can make your verbal warning more powerful by having some notes, which you assure the person-

will

will not be immediately added to his/her file. The notes are your reference point to make sure you have utilized a number of examples to illustrate the behavior changes which need to be made. You may have, for instance, your own perceptions of the employee's performance with dates on which you observed specific transactions. Or you may have evidence corroborated by a number of peers.

After relaying your message, you will want to make sure the employee has heard you correctly. You ask for feedback, clarify the wording if necessary, and ask for feedback a second time.

Now is the time either to tell the employee how you want him/her to fix the problem or to elicit options on how to resolve it. If safety issues are concerned or if the complaint alleges that the employee has made threats, the unsafe or threatening behaviors must be dealt with *immediately*. If an employee has put teammates in harm's way by not following safety measures or through deleterious communication via e-mail, for example, there should be zero tolerance for similar breaches of conduct. On the other hand, if an employee is stirring up trouble through rumors or by setting one team member against another, there needs to be a reasonable period — say, 10 workdays — for the offending employee to make things right through apologies and follow-ups.

At this point, it is probably advisable to tell the employee that his/her cooperation means a great deal to you and that you feel certain s/he can make the changes which the two of you have discussed. This step seals in the good will you have tried to build during the confrontation and allows the employee to know that you really do want him/her to succeed.

Employees also need to understand the consequences of not remedying an unacceptable behavior. They need to know that they will be monitored more closely for both behaviors and attitudes, and they need to understand the process of progressive discipline. When a manager "shoots straight from the hip," the employee quickly learns that only honesty will work. Games and manipulation will be recognized for what they are and will be negatively rewarded. In a sense, managers may at times have to institute "corrective parenting" and tough love with certain employees.

FEBRUARY 2008'S NEWSLETTER

Next month we will continue the topic of "Perform, Review" with an article on dealing with manipulative

employees.

We sincerely hope your holidays have been refreshing and wish you all a good start to this new year!

Jean Eva and Stan