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Beyond the Horizons Consulting

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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!**

Our February Newsletter is devoted to helping you identify manipulative employees, one category of what we term “problem employees.” **The article begins on page 2 of the Newsletter.**

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 info@beyondthehorizonsconsulting.com.

Manipulative Employees

Part of developing emotional IQ is learning when to be compassionate and when to “hold an employee’s feet to the fire.” Many of those who most need corrective parenting or tough love have learned in their families of origin how to manipulate authority figures. Why should they stop these dysfunctional behaviors when they enter the workplace?

PETTY THEFT

Many employees will deny that they were ever involved in petty theft from the office. They may protect themselves by pretending to be dismayed, by becoming withdrawn, or even by becoming hostile. Yet the evidence shows that a certain number of boxes of were supplied to that office just a month ago. As manager, make sure that you have evidence and then stick to it. Refuse to become befuddled by an employee who may actually believe s/he did nothing wrong and is being persecuted by management.

ELICITING SYMPATHY AND/OR MAKING A DEAL

Another manipulative technique is trying to evoke a manager’s sympathy by reciting a long litany of painful events in the employee’s life. While all or some of this may be true, employees’ personal struggles are not the issue at hand. You can convey understanding, but you need to redirect the conversation to the employee’s issue, for example, his/her use of the phone for personal calls during work hours.

Still other employees may try to negotiate a deal with you. “I’ll talk with fellow team members and get them to work with me to plan our annual picnic. I know how stressed you are, and this should take some of the load off you.” Well, that’s not the issue. The issue is that the employee failed to complete assignment C, which has put the entire team in a bad light. What’s more, irresponsibility has been a pattern with this employee.

MINIMIZING ONE’S BEHAVIOR

Another common tactic is to minimize one’s behavior. “I didn’t really yell at the customer, I was simply firm.” What you and this person’s peers have heard over a period of time was not firmness but a raised voice, an angry tone, and name calling or labeling. Don’t allow the employee to minimize his/her behavior, because that is *not* the reality. Along with minimizing, there is the common teenage defense, “Everybody’s doing it.” It may be the case that

others in the department are behaving in similar ways, but that does not make gossiping or rudeness acceptable. You *will* be dealing with the other offenders in time as well!

PERSONAL ATTACK OR THREAT

The worst of all manipulative tactics is the personal attack or threat. This behavior probably comes from bullying tactics which had worked earlier in this person’s life. The personal attack is meant to put you as manager on the defensive. For a moment it stuns you. “How could someone call me a *milque toast*, crazy, or whatever?” The antidote is quickly to become aware of your breathing and allow yourself to inhale and exhale fully and slowly. *Do not allow yourself to react in kind, lowering yourself to engage in name calling.* Instead begin by responding, “You may feel/perceive my behavior in that way, but we are not here to discuss my management style. We are here to discuss (name the issue).” In this way, you take control firmly but without practicing one-upmanship. If the person refuses to listen or to behave in a nonabusive way, end



the conversation.

Threats come in many forms. There are explicit threats, which may be uttered in a seemingly rational way or in a heated manner. There are also subtle threats, in which a person can insinuate that “something bad will happen to you (your associates, or even your family).” All threats must be taken seriously, including visual threats which appear on drawings or scrap paper. Follow the company’s violence prevention policy, and make sure any and all threats are reported to your own boss and to human resources. Please refer to our Newsletters on “Violence in the Workplace,” June 2006 - January 2007.

March’s Newsletter continues the topic of performance appraisal by beginning a detailed review of the process itself. Later Newsletters will present several methods that have been used more or less successfully by companies and organizations through the years. Stay tuned! —*Jean Eva*