



## *“Turning Possibilities into Realities”*

2010 “TOGETHER, READY FOR THE FUTURE”...

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## Communication Briefings (part two)

### *Ideas that Work*



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**A man with a new idea is  
a crank until he succeeds**

*Mark Twain*

# Sharing of Ideas

The briefings are to provide us with down-to-earth ideas and techniques we can put into action to persuade clients, influence peers and motivate employees: to help us earn approval, command respect; spur productivity, gain recognition and win community support.

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## Team Work

### HOW TO DEAL WITH CONFLICT

*To handle conflict among your team members:*

- **Ask those** who disagree to paraphrase one another's comments. This may help them if they really understand one another.
- **Work out** a compromise. Agree on the underlying source of conflict, then engage in give-and-take and finally agree on a solution.
- **Ask each** member to list what the other side should do. Exchange lists, select a compromise all are willing to accept, and test the compromise to see if it meshes with team goals.
- **Have the** sides each write 10 questions for their opponents. This will allow them to signal their major concerns about the other side's position. And the answers may lead to a compromise.
- **Convince team** members they sometimes may have to admit they're wrong. Help them save face by convincing them that changing a position may well show strength.
- **Respect the** experts on the team. Give their opinions more weight when the conflict involves their expertise, but don't rule out conflicting opinions.

Source: Making Teams Succeed at Work, Alexander Hamilton Institute, 70 Hilltop Road, Ramsey, NJ 07446.

## Face-to-Face Communication

### IF YOU MUST CRITICISE SOMEONE

*Here are some suggestions for giving criticism in a way that motivates others to do a better job:*

- **See yourself** as a teacher or coach – as being helpful. Keep in mind that you're trying to help someone improve.
  - **Show you** care. Express your sincere concern about sharing ways the other person can boost his or her success.
  - **Pick the** right moment to offer criticism. Make sure the person hasn't just been shaken by some incident.
  - **Avoid telling** people they "should do such and such" or "should have done such and such." "Should" make you appear rigid and pedantic.
  - **Avoid giving** the impress that you're more concerned with seeing your recommendations put into practice than in helping the other person improve.
  - **Show how** the person will benefit from taking the actions you suggest.
  - **Give specific** suggestions. Being vague might only make the situation worse by creating anxiety and doubt.
- Tip:* Be sure you can take criticism yourself. If not, you may not be perceived as a credible source.

Source: How to Love the Job You Hate, by Jane Boucher, Thomas Nelson Publishers, P.O. Box 141000, Nashville, TN 37214.

## IF YOU HAVE TO FIRE SOMEONE, DO IT RIGHT

There's never an easy way to fire someone, but there is a right way. Effective leaders clearly recognise that compassion and good business sense play a part in how you dismiss an employee. Combine the two and you'll find the firing process less demanding on you personally and less disruptive to your organisation.

Here's a checklist of what to avoid and what to do during a dismissal:

### The DON'TS

- **Never fire an employee when you are angry** – no matter what the provocation. Words said in the heat of the moment can come back to haunt you. Also, acting in anger makes you look petty in the eyes of other employees. Take time to calm down and evaluate your decision, then proceed in a businesslike manner.
- **Never fire anyone in public.** It demeans the employee and makes you look vindictive. Do the deed in your office or some neutral, private place.
- **Some employees will try to bargain their way out of dismissal.** (I'll try barter... Give me another chance, etc.) Don't give into justifying your decision or negotiating with the employee. You'll look indecisive. If you yield, other employees will think they can manipulate you – and they'll be right.
- **Never fire anyone based on another party's word,** even if you suspect the move is justified. For your own legal protection you should have firsthand knowledge and proof of the employee's unsatisfactory performance.
- **Don't give advance notice to the employee,** especially if you've previously discussed the individual's unsatisfactory performance. Remember, you want the person out of the organisation as quickly as possible.
- **Never denigrate former employees in front of remaining employees.** They'll wonder what you might be saying about them.

### The DO'S

- **Fire people on Fridays, preferably in the late afternoon.** The weekend cushion gives the employee a chance to cool down. Also, others will have less office time to discuss "the news".
- **Be direct and clear in you language** so that there is no misunderstanding. Inform the employee that he or she is being fired and why, but also ease the blow with some reassuring phrases. For example, "I'm sorry the job didn't work out."
- **Settle money issues immediately.** Be fair in terms of money owed, but don't waste time disputing small amounts. Your goal is to avoid a former employee's repeat visits and follow-up phone calls dealing with small change.
- **Make sure you collect company property** – files, computer records, etc. don't make a big deal out of it. Simply treat the matter as routine. Firing people can be traumatic, but it is part of your job. Approach it with the idea that it is simply another responsibility and carry it out with the same diligence.

Source: Steve Lauer and B. Jack Gebhardt, *Now Hiring* (Amacom: New York)

