

Smart Strategies Solutions for Workplace Challenges

Issue #9-4
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Dear Reader,

As you can see, we're also challenged with time management. We've gotten the June issue in just under the deadline.

So for both you and me, here's another time management lesson - what is important and not urgent and how do I make sure I get that done?

Also, last issue, we talked about how to receive difficult feedback. This issue, we explore how to give it.

Hope you enjoy!



Alan Krieger

Feel free to forward this to friends and colleagues.

Not URGENT But IMPORTANT?

Last issue we talked about the difference between urgent and important. Let's look at what is important but not urgent... and how ignoring it gets us into trouble.

IMPORTANT tasks are those that, when accomplished, will provide a significant positive payoff and/or will prevent a significant negative impact. The urgent *and* important ones are obvious.

The ones we're discussing today are the ones that no one is yelling at you to get done anytime soon. Some examples include:

- Taking time to build good relationships with your co-workers - there's no deadline for this, but when crises hit it will be good to know that you have a team working with you.
- Take time every day to plan - it only takes a few minutes, but doing so will increase your output as you take time to consider what is really important on your to do list.
- Take time to think long term at least once a week - scan



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We offer training, leadership coaching, facilitation, team building and organizational consulting services.

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the horizon for issues that might come up and think about what you can do now to be better prepared if and when they surface.

Take time to recharge - another tip from Steven Covey - if you cut wood with a saw, it eventually gets dull. Continuing to cut, it gets more dull and the work goes more slowly. Take time out to sharpen the saw and you more than make up for the time lost in sharpening as the work goes more quickly.

Same goes for you - all work and no play makes you dull and the work output slows down. Some of the [stress management](#) tips from earlier issues www.krsol.com/oldnews/index.asp can help with this.

Let me know what you consider to be important but not urgent. Email me - no rush!! - at alan@krsol.com

How to Give Corrective Feedback

Last issue we talked about how to receive corrective feedback. Here are some tips on how to give it.

Whether at work or at home, it's tough to tell people they've disappointed us. However, if we don't they're likely to keep doing whatever it is we don't like and resentment will build in us. Do both parties a favor and get it off your chest in a constructive way.

There are only a few basic steps:

First, be sure about what specific behavior or actions you want them to do. Take a few minutes and see if you can describe this in specific, action-oriented words, such as *"remove all the food, trash and dirty dishes from the table"* instead of "clear the table".

Next be clear about the impact, or the "so what" of the action. *"When you failed to get the report done on time, Joe and I had to stay late to finish it, costing the agency overtime, and causing me to miss out on plans I had for the evening."*

STOP! That's it! (See that wasn't so bad.) You've said your piece. No need to go on with how upset you were, how much the report mattered, etc. You've said what you needed to say, and right now the other person is getting defensive and won't listen to you anyway.

Now switch to listening. Give them your full attention. Let them vent, throw out excuses, blame others... just listen. When they finish, acknowledge what you heard by paraphrasing and then either admit that you were wrong, state that they had a good reason to do what they did... or if you are still convinced that their actions were wrong, say so calmly.

"I heard what you said about the pressure you are under and all the work that's piling up. I agree that you have a lot on your plate. I still am concerned that you did not get that report done on time."

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For Laughs!

Valuable advice:

"When you come to a fork in the road, take it!" - Yogi Berra

And, to state the obvious:

"If we don't succeed, we run the risk of failure." - Dan Quayle

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STOP again. At some point they will acknowledge that the report was important and was not done on time. At that point, ask them, *"What can we do next time something like this happens to make sure Joe and I aren't stuck staying late?"*

It is not productive to insist that they apologize or take responsibility for their actions. What is important is that they agree to change in the future (no one can change in the past!) and that they develop a plan by which to do this.

We call this "corrective feedback" not "negative feedback" or "criticism". No one likes to be criticized, and it hurts less when the feedback is clearly pointed at changing future behavior, not replaying the past. If done well, it can lead to better relationships and improved performance.

To summarize:

1. Be clear about your expectations - let the other person know in action-oriented, behavioral terms what you would like them to do.
2. Deliver the corrective feedback in one or two short sentences - what the action was and what negative impact resulted.
3. Switch to listening and repeat your feedback as needed.
4. When the person acknowledges that the behavior happened and the outcome resulted... you're done with feedback! Switch to problem solving mode.

And remember the T.E.A.M. styles - keep it short and direct for the T and the E, detailed and factual for the A, gentle and supportive for the M.

For new readers who want to learn more about T.E.A.M., go to www.kriegersolutions.com/team to take the assessment and follow the link to the article.

Send an e-mail to me at alan@krsol.com if you try out these feedback strategies or if you have a situation which stumps you.

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