

Smart Strategies Solutions for Workplace Challenges



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*"By working faithfully eight
hours a day, you may
eventually get to be a boss and
work twelve hours a day"*
Robert Frost

A time management tip for people working too many hours:

*Learn to say no with some
humor and some empathy.*

Here are a few examples. Let
me know if you have any of
your own.

1. "I've got good news and bad
news. The good news is, I sure

Spring is just about here! In this issue we respond to comments from readers and discuss a little more about thought transference and manipulative leadership. I hope you find it helpful.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Alan'.

Alan Krieger

Thought Transference... *Readers React!*

One reader expressed concern that thought transference is manipulative. I agree! The job of a supervisor is to manipulate company resources (primarily staff) to produce high performance.

Hold on before you slam me! Let me explain. Manipulate means to "handle or control (a tool, mechanism, etc.), typically in a skillful manner: *'he manipulated the dials'*." It also means to manage or influence skillfully. And yes there is a definition that says to influence skillfully, especially in an *unfair manner* - to **manipulate** people's feelings. My take on good supervisors is that they skillfully manage and influence their staff to do their best work, which ultimately benefits both the employee and the organization.

How do good supervisors "manipulate"? With positive feedback and straight up corrective feedback... but when facing a difficult employee, we need to be more strategic (but not unfair). While last month's discussion { [April 2011](#) } might have come close to that line, it was for a very difficult situation and I don't think it crossed the line.

See the article below for a more complete discussion of thought transference in less challenging situations.

can do that for you. The bad news is, I'm so overloaded with everything else, I don't have time to tackle it now."

2. "When I get overwhelmed like I am now, I remove every third person who asks me for something, from my 'Good Friends List' and the second person just left."

Some things to think about...

You do not react to people, events or words. You react to what they *mean* to you, and YOU choose the meanings.

"Even if you are on the right track, you'll get run over if you just sit there."

Mark Twain

"And those who were seen dancing were thought to be insane by those who could not hear the music."

Friedrich Nietzsche

"Never argue with an IDIOT, first you have to stoop at his level & than he will beat you with his experience"

unknown

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About Us

Thought Transference (Part II)

When we say something to another person, that person generally reacts to our statement. They don't fully absorb it, because as we are speaking, they are formulating their response. To get them to fully hear our idea, it needs to come out of their mouth. The key is to ask a question for which the answer is the message you want to convey. For example, if you give someone some instructions, but you're not sure they fully heard you, ask them to tell you how they are going to approach the task, or what tools or materials they'll need to do it, or what it will take to do the job especially well. Any of these answers should tell you whether or not they understood you, and none of them can be answered with yes, no or OK. If they hesitate, do not give in and repeat yourself!! Be quiet and patient and let them know you'll wait until they are ready to respond.

Readers' Questions

(send us your thoughts or questions - alan@krsol.com)

1. *What do you do with a supervisor who is perceived as rude and condescending, but swears he isn't? He might admit that he can be abrupt when he's under pressure, but never rude.*

Thought transference could help here... Ask the supervisor to describe what rude and condescending behavior might look like. Use guiding questions to draw a connection between the way he acted and the example of rude behavior he described. If you can't get him all the way to seeing the parallel, ask him if it's possible that others could view his abrupt behavior as rude or condescending, even if he didn't mean it that way.

The bottom line is that intentions are less important than impact. Even if someone intends to be polite, but they are perceived as rude... then they are being rude! This is often a problem for people with the "T" style in my TEAM model. They operate in short, abrupt conversations and often they have no intent to be rude at all, but are perceived that way and therefore, in my opinion, are rude. They need to work to accommodate people's perceptions and respond in a more helpful way if they are going to be successful.

2. *When conducting a performance evaluation, what do you think about asking an employee what they need to work on and what they think their strengths are before the evaluation? Is that a cop out instead of developing an evaluation solely on what I observe? I want to be constructive but I also want get a read on how they think they are doing. Sometimes staff are*

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You may also reprint any of these articles as long as you include the following in the reprint and send a copy to me at alan@krsol.com:

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www.kriegersolutions.com"

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2011 Spring Webinars

We have two final webinars scheduled for this spring:

Promoting

harder on themselves than the actual evaluation.

I think an employee self assessment is a great first step, with three caveats:

1. The employee should be given some time - a week or two - to get his/her thoughts together.
2. You should write your own evaluation of their performance without first seeing the self assessment:
 - o So it's not a cop out on your part. You still do your work.
 - o If they write about things that they need to improve and you had forgotten about it, they incriminate themselves. You should therefore include a "hold harmless" - anything they write about that is a strength and you forgot about, you'll add in. Anything they write about that is a weakness and you forgot about, you'll leave out.
3. Run this by your HR dept. in case it conflicts with any company policies, procedures or practices, and do it for all employees.

Done well, this is very informative for both the supervisor and employee and can lead to a very rich discussion. As the reader noted, many employees are very hard on themselves and this provides an opportunity for the supervisor to be even more positive in this context, which is always a good thing. The danger is that the employee may give him or herself a glowing review which is not deserved, and then it's a bit tougher to engage them. However, it's good to know their views before you start in on the feedback, so you can let them down gently if you need to.

Upcoming Webinars

June 2nd: Promoting Accountability addresses the challenge of "doing *even* more with *even* less". We need to find ways to get maximum performance out of a limited staff. While we want to limit overload and burnout, we need to find ways to positively motivate staff to their highest possible performance. Holding staff accountable in a positive way is a key to high performance and motivation. Many supervisors are uncomfortable or unsuccessful in holding staff accountable and view accountability and motivation as opposites.

This program will present a set of tools and strategies to help supervisors and managers hold staff accountable *and* motivate them to high performance. We will focus on one key tool - the development and use of clear and specific performance

Accountability

June 2nd

1:30 - 2:30 pm

and

***Keys to Positive
Conflict Resolution***

June 3rd (NEW DATE)

12:00 - 1:00 pm

For more
information,
see article on right.

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expectations. With the right leadership strategy, these expectations both motivate staff *and* provide a format for correcting and improving poor performance. You will learn how to establish clear and measurable, outcome based performance expectations, and how to use these expectations to motivate staff; develop a strong, accountable and supportive approach to improving poor performance; and set a clear standard to hold difficult staff accountable using the organization's policies and procedures.

June 3rd (NEW DATE & TIME): Keys to Positive Conflict Resolution will show you how to better handle conflicts in the workplace. You will learn how to use a four-step process to resolve conflicts, whether you are a participant in the conflict or are trying to mediate a conflict between other people.

Conflicts can make the workplace toxic and greatly increase stress. Unresolved conflicts promote resistance, fear, anger and sabotage. Successful resolution leads to people working well together; a decrease in stress; and higher levels of trust, creativity, innovation, and productivity. The strategies you'll learn in this webinar include strategic communication skills and a new look at problem solving that can lead to a true "win-win" result.

For more information, or to register, go to
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