

Smart Strategies Solutions for Workplace Challenges



Alan Krieger
President
Krieger Solutions, LLC

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Leadership and Being Nice

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A Great Little Book...

Dear Alan,

The newsletter took a short vacation. Hope your summer is going well. We've been busy here at Krieger Solutions with a large number of projects on leadership, communication, problem solving and team building.

We've been running a free on-line series for leaders based on the book the Power of Nice. If you'd like to find out more about that, visit our website. It feels good to actively focus on being nice instead of always focusing on solving problems.

This issue is about leadership and being nice. Hope you enjoy it.



Alan Krieger

Feel free to forward this newsletter to friends and colleagues.



Leadership and Being Nice

"Nice guys finish last" has been advice many managers take to heart. "If you're too nice, they'll walk all over you."

People confuse "nice" with "weak". Weak leaders do finish last and get walked all over. Nice,

The Power of Nice; How to Conquer the Business World with Kindness

by Linda Kaplan Thaler and Robin Koval; published by Doubleday 2006

In an effort to expand my "nice" moments to completely fill my day. And by following the tips in the above mentioned book, I think I can get there.

To help me (and you), I've put together an on-line class to build up our powers of nice. I'm not charging anything for it - you'll be doing me (and hopefully you!) a favor by signing up for this free on-line class. I find I learn best when I teach others, so I'm hoping you'll join me on this quest for strengthening our powers of nice.

We are very happy to report, and you may be interested to know, we have over 1,000 subscribers to our newsletter!!

Now we'd like to get some feedback - what topics would you like to see us address in

powerful leaders finish first. People work hard for them and do a great job.

What is a "nice, powerful leader"?

Let's start with the powerful, so no one dismisses this out of hand. A powerful leader needs two tools: clear and specific outcome-oriented, performance expectations and a back bone.

Let's define these terms:

Clear and specific: you are able to clearly state, in measurable and objective terms exactly what you expect your staff to produce

Outcome-oriented: your expectations are stated in terms of outcomes or results you want to see

If you can state exactly what results you want your staff to achieve, you have the foundation for successful leadership. The second essential piece is being able to act on it.

Back bone: able to take on the difficult conversations when staff are not producing the desired results.

It helps to have some skills in giving constructive feedback and coaching which we'll address in a future issue.

Let's put this together:

Joe, I expect your actions on the job to contribute to a positive work environment, a high level of accuracy in all your reports, and to meet all deadlines. The positive work environment will be measured by conversations I have with your co-workers over time. Accuracy will be measured by how many times you need to make corrections to your drafts. Deadlines will be specified for each project, including milestones for specific steps.

I don't say what Joe should be doing to achieve all this. That can be addressed in initial orientation and later coaching. I do say what outcomes I want Joe to achieve:

future issues?
And / Or... send us a
challenging scenario
and we'll send you
some suggestions.

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Krieger Solutions, LLC
5223 Scotch Ridge Rd
Duanesburg, NY 12056

518-895-2939
518-895-2947 fax

Alan Krieger
President / Owner

Pam Fenoff
Office Manager

Krieger Solutions, LLC

- a positive work environment - I can give Joe feedback in relation to this when his actions result in a more positive or more negative environment. I don't have to spell out all the details because you can't cover them all in a list: time and attendance, team work, communication, respect, etc.
- a high level of accuracy - I can count the number of times Joe's reports go back for correction.
- Deadlines - if I'm clear about them when giving assignments, this one is easy to measure and give feedback on as well.

I really don't care what Joe does all day, as long as at the end of the day he has produced the results I'm paying him for. Most of us focus on the actions of the employees and unless we're out there watching all the time, we can't get a fully objective picture of it. If we focus on results we are better able to evaluate that.

That covers the "powerful" part - easier than you thought?

How about the "nice" part? Another objection I hear to "nice" is in this era of do more with less... "Who has the time for this?" Nice doesn't have to take much time.

Here are a few tips.

Follow the Platinum Rule - treat people the way they want to be treated. If you haven't learned about our T.E.A.M. model of work and communication styles, email me and I'll send you a free link. This is the key to being nice - not everyone wants to be treated the same way and if you want to really be nice, you have to treat them the way they want to be treated. We're not giving up on "powerful". They still have to meet our expectations. Nice is about how we interact with our staff and colleagues.

Take time to listen - this doesn't mean hours, but it does mean minutes. Minutes well spent! Listening is enough to counteract the negative feelings that lead to conflict: feeling unappreciated, disrespected, powerless, stressed, treated unfairly, and

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fearful. The boss who doesn't take time to listen, who directs without engaging promotes all the negative feelings. By listening you let your employees know that:

- you appreciate and value them
- you respect their thoughts and ideas
- they have power, they have opportunities to influence you

And from this experience, they feel less stressed and fearful and more likely to be treated fairly. Listening is easy! It does take time, but what better way could you invest a few minutes of your time each day?

Give feedback early and often - we'll address this in more detail next time, but positive feedback is certainly being nice. Be specific about what you're praising or you'll confuse employees and they won't believe that you're sincere. Corrective feedback done right is also nice. Who wants to do a bad job? Corrective feedback can help people improve their performance. It's nice!

Give it a try - being powerful and nice. Let me know how this works for you! This isn't for managers only - all of us have expectations about our workplace and powerful and nice is a great way to be assertive.