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Using Effective Leadership Strategies in the Workplace

Building More Supportive Work Environments

**FIFTEEN (15) LEADERSHIP AND
ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS:**

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1) Appreciative Inquiry: A Strength-Based Approach to Organizational Effectiveness and Excellence

At work, do you get to do what you do best everyday?

Appreciative Inquiry is a different approach to organizational development, one that calls for the deliberate search for what contributes to organizational effectiveness and excellence. It applies the systems approach of Appreciative Inquiry (focusing on building upon strengths and allowing people to contribute their best thinking vs. focusing on problems and what is not working) to the process of planned change that begins with carefully attending to, and identifying, what has worked in the past and what works in the present.

This strength-based approach to building more supportive work environments is based on the simple assumptions that every organization has something that works well, and that these strengths can be the starting point for creating positive action plans and for developing and reaching new goals. The focus is on asking unconditionally positive questions that strengthen an organization's capacity to comprehend, anticipate, and heighten positive potential for all stakeholders.

Appreciative Inquiry offers a means to meaningfully transform organizations by enabling leaders, staff, and other stakeholders to affirm the best of the past and the present as choices are made to assure a future in which services and programs are relevant.

**2) Actively Managing Conflict and Negativity in the Workplace
(Including Workplace Bullying)**

The fact is, you can't improve collaboration and build a more supportive work environment until you've addressed the issue of conflict.

Work can be hard sometimes. It's even harder when you have to deal with conflict and negativity from your fellow employees (and how's your attitude been lately?). Just as kryptonite saps Superman of all his superpowers, "toxic employees" can sap the energy right out of the workplace. These toxic employees - true to the name - can poison the business atmosphere where you work, and can make it difficult, if not impossible, to work effectively. The toxicity is insidious, and can drag everyone into an abyss of low morale, negative emotions, and decreased productivity.

This workshop will help you recognize the characteristics of toxicity and negativity – and offer over a dozen specific ideas and action steps for managing conflict, dealing with inappropriate and intimidating behavior (including **bullying**) and developing more productive relationships through the positive use of “negativity relievers”. Participants will also explore both personal and organizational policy options ideas that can help create a more supportive and productive work environment.

3) Harnessing the Power of Workplace Diversity, Inclusion and Culture

A values-based program examining why diversity, inclusion and cultural awareness is important in today's workplace

Diversity and inclusion affect not only a businesses' people and operations internally, but also their customers, suppliers, and other external stakeholders. This program is designed to present participants with a series of specific ideas to harness the power of a diverse workforce to increase productivity, creativity and problem-solving, attract and retain talent, build synergy in teams and enhance communication skills, and increase market share and create a satisfied diverse customer base.

Everyday each of us interacts with all types of people in the workplace to get things done - people who are different than us. Culture, or "the way we do things around here", is created collectively by an organization's members everyday, whose actions are then guided by the shared culture, and by acting in accordance with the culture they further legitimize and reinforce it. Dealing with diversity in the workplace means understanding and relating effectively with this wide variety of people. The workshop begins with an overview of the meaning of culture and how individual "worldviews" are developed. Included is the "iceberg metaphor" of culture.

Discussions of workplace diversity and inclusion tend to start with the topics of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, and disability. This workshop also addresses an aspect of workplace diversity that almost every organization has, but that remains largely overlooked: generational diversity and how the different generations approach work, work/life balance, employee loyalty, authority, and other important issues.

True diversity is not just about the mix that constitutes the workforce; it's also about a company's customers and business partners. The payoffs of harnessing this synergy touch every area of business growth and development.

4) Working with Emotional Intelligence

What's your capacity for recognizing and managing your own feelings, and those of others, in order to improve your professional and personal relationships?

What are some behaviors that you use to master your self-awareness, self-management, social awareness and relationship management in your day-to-day dealings with others?
Have you ever felt the need to "explode" (at yourself or others), internally berate and blame yourself, or hang your head in shame and frustration? Or are you skilled at realizing that you're feeling out of control, and able to "hit the reset button", reassess the situation, and move forward in a positive fashion?

The truth is that thousands of people in the workplace become overrun by their intense emotions on a daily basis. The good news is that we can train our brains to respond effectively to our emotions. Emotional intelligence (which dictates how we behave in social situations and make mental decisions to achieve positive results) is a flexible skill that can be practiced, literally strengthening the bond in your brain between the centers that control your feelings and your reason--making you more successful!

This workshop looks at how to practice and master a series of personal competencies (self-awareness, self-regulation, and motivation) and social competencies (handling relationships and eliciting desirable responses in others) at the core of our emotional intelligence. The focus is on the inter-relatedness of thoughts, feelings and behaviors – and thinking about what you want, what you're doing to get what you want, and how it's all working.

5) If All Else Fails, Laugh: Change, Stress, and the Effective Use of Humor in the Workplace

Your sense of HUMOR is one of your most effective weapons in handling the ups and downs of everyday life.

What's so funny? Not much, apparently. The news out there depresses you. You fret too much. The students have been terrible lately. Your best friend is getting divorced. Budgets are tight. Contract negotiations are stalled. And you're afraid you might be the next person to get "downsized".

So, what should you do? What keeps you going in the face of bad news and stressful every day pressures? A big part the answer is something that many of us often forget we have, and therefore often don't use. You used it much more when you were younger and much less now that you're older. And it's one of your most effective weapons in handling the ups and downs of everyday life. It's your ability to laugh at the absurd, acknowledge the incongruous, and appreciate the ridiculous. It's your sense of HUMOR. It's a uniquely human quality that can come to your rescue during difficult times.

This workshop examines some of the key elements of humor and it's relationship to the change and stress process. Practical applications to using humor in the workplace will be discussed, including managing conflict, motivating others, improving communications, increasing creativity, and reducing stress and increasing morale.

6) Leadership, Strategic Thinking, and Working with Teams

"Interdependent people combine their own efforts with the efforts of others to achieve their greatest success." – Stephen Covey

What are the key characteristics of effective leaders, and how do they influence the teambuilding process? This seminar examines three different leadership models and the basics of group dynamics and team development. Participants will examine the differences between power, authority and leadership in the context of building more cohesive and productive teams.

Emphasis will be placed on situational approaches to effectively implementing leadership strategies. The differences between transactional and transformational leadership will be highlighted, along with key aspects of emotional intelligence. Participants will also learn specific techniques for "scanning" the environment and developing an outcomes-based approach to strategic planning and participative management.

Using the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (a personality inventory used to help individuals and teams understand differences, particularly with respect to energy source, information gathering, decision-making, and lifestyle/work patterns), participants will actively investigate different approaches to decision-making, delegation, and problem solving.

In particular, leaders within organizations will learn appropriate leadership styles to positively affect employee job satisfaction, commitment and productivity.

7) “Hello, is There Anybody in There?” Communicating for Impact

What makes extraordinary displays of trust and cooperation possible between individuals and groups?

Individual and group success depends upon the ability of individuals to communicate with others, face to face, as well as virtually. Every interaction with another person determines how you are perceived and every interaction is an opportunity to develop trust and exert positive influence. Whether connecting one to one or presenting to an audience of one thousand, conveying information to a work group or delivering a difficult message, communicating effectively is one of the most powerful skills for achieving your objectives. And this skill is directly related to understanding techniques of positive motivation and effective listening.

This seminar develops your ability to focus on your outcome, tune in to your audience, and develop your message for clarity and impact. Your ability to create an environment for open discussion and ongoing dialogue is crucial for communication success. The communications skills covered in this program will increase your ability to exercise choice and control for every type of conversation, influence without authority and improve quality of relationships and productivity.

The basic building block of good teambuilding is for a leader to promote positive communications and the feeling that every human being is unique and adds value.

8) Moving in the Right Direction: Motivation, Accountability, and Initiative in the Workplace

The secret of getting ahead is getting started.

When you're personally accountable, you take ownership of situations that you're involved in. You see them through, and you take responsibility for what happens – good or bad. You don't blame others if things go wrong. Instead, you do your best to make things right. When you show initiative, you do things without being told; you find out what you need to know; you keep going when things get tough; and you spot and take advantage of opportunities that others pass by. You act, instead of reacting, at work.

Organizations want employees who can think on their feet and take action without waiting for someone to tell them what to do. After all, this type of flexibility and courage is what pushes teams and organizations to innovate, and to overcome competition.

Accountability and initiative start with understanding what it means to be motivated and focused. This program will examine key elements of motivation and its relationship to personal performance and meaningful interactions with others.

Topics to be covered include: measuring workplace strength, circumstantial and habitual de-motivators, “hygiene” factors, six steps to developing initiative and accountability, lifetime goals and lifetime roles, a personal SWOT analysis, and searching for balance.

9) Outcomes-Based Strategic Planning

If you don't know where you're going, how will you know when you get there?

Strategies are mere roadmaps for producing results. As such, devising strategy without defining the desired result is much like asking for directions without picking a destination: multiple enticing routes may exist, but we have no means to select the one that's best and no way of knowing if we're on track. This program is intended to help organizations approach strategic planning and program design with the right sequence of questions in mind. Namely, organizations and teams should address the following questions in this order: 1) What are the specific outcomes that we aim to achieve? 2) What actions do we need to take in order to get there?, and 3) How will we measure our progress?

Key elements of the outcomes-planning approach will be examined, including defining mission and vision, setting ambitious targets and activities in support of desired outcomes, and identifying and serving both external and internal customers.

Participants will also apply the key elements of a SWOT analysis (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats) to establish specific, measurable and verifiable action plans that reflect organizational core values – answering the key question, “So what?”

10) Providing Outstanding Customer Service

Why is good customer service important? Our future business depends on it.

Smart organizations cultivate strong customer relationships by focusing on great customer service from the first touch. Providing good service boils down to one basic principle: Treat customers the way you want to be treated. This top-down philosophy starts with the way you treat and train your employees, and it can help keep customers coming back when times are rough.

No two customers or customer service circumstances are alike. Whether you are interacting with happy customers or dealing with difficult and demanding customers, recognizing the behavior patterns and situations and responding appropriately is the key to long-term customer service success. This seminar will teach you advanced communication strategies that are proven to work on difficult and angry customers, as well as enhancing services for happy and satisfied customers. You'll learn specific tactics and what type of customer will be affected by various approaches, and how to maximize customer ideas and suggestions.

Topics to be covered include: becoming a proactive service provider, recognizing and changing customer behavior patterns, situational service strategies you can use to deal with different types of people, tactfully handling a situation when then customer caused the problem, making the customer feel valued from the start, and cutting through the emotion to get the facts you need to solve problems.

11) Essentials of Project Management

How do you take ideas and convert them into a planned, resourced and funded project?

'Project management' first became popular in the early 1960s, driven by businesses that realized that there were benefits to be gained from organizing work into separate, definable units and from coordinating different kinds of skills across departments and professions. One of the first major uses of project management was to handle the US space program, and governments, military organizations, and the corporate world have all since adopted the discipline.

Although the term is now universally familiar, not very many people fully understand exactly what project management involves. We tend to think of it as common sense, and that anyone can manage anything by being calm and well organized. These are qualities that a project manager definitely needs, but other things are essential too. Project management is, in fact, a structured way of working and recording events that can bring order and coherence to any set of tasks with a predetermined goal.

This workshop will provide participants with a hands-on primer in the essentials of project management, including PM parameters, key factors, the project lifecycle, and common mistakes made by both beginners and experienced supervisors and managers. Included will be an overview of the 20 essential tools needed for effective project management.

12) Organizational Planning and Decision-Making: Solving Problems and Building Consensus (Incl. Root Cause Analysis)

Only fixing the symptoms of a problem ensures that it almost certainly will surface again.

Most of us have trouble making decisions, especially difficult ones. And when we do make a decision, we often wonder if we made the right one. This is especially true when you have a problem at work. How do you approach it? Do you jump in and start treating the symptoms? Or do you stop to consider whether there's actually a deeper problem that needs your attention? Equally important is how you involve others in the decision-making and problem solving process to maximize consensus and collaboration,

If you only fix a problem's symptoms – what you see on the surface – the problem will almost certainly happen again, which will lead you to fix it, again, and again, and again.

This program will examine the 12-Step Decision-Making Model, as well as using the Root Cause Analysis (RCA) technique that helps people answer the question of why problems occurred in the first place. Also, basic types of problem "causes" will be identified and discussed: physical causes, human causes, and organizational causes – what they are and how they are interrelated.

Participants will leave the program with a practical and effective model for day-to-day problem solving and decision-making, and learn the keys to building critical team and organizational consensus.

13) The ABC's of Advocacy

Knowing what your organization needs, and how to get it, is the key to successful and sustainable growth and development.

In the broadest sense, an advocate must educate his or her constituents about the importance of the issues and projects for which they seek support. To be an effective advocate you must learn who your legislators are and what they do, create a continuing relationship with them and their staff members, understand the legislative process, be fully informed about the issues affecting your projects (and keep your legislators informed), and reinforce the assistance and support you do receive. You must also be able to enlist the help of others through various means and coordinate advocacy efforts, building a permanent and active advocacy network that develops relationships with community leaders and other key persons through ongoing education efforts and participation in local political events.

This program is designed to introduce participants to the key elements of effective advocacy. Topics include an “alphabet” of advocacy tips and ideas (one for each letter!), the nine C's to effective advocacy, tips for making your voice heard, a checklist for action, and the ten commandments of advocacy.

14) Supervising Remote Employees

Hello, hello, is there anybody out there?

Supervising widely dispersed employees can present unique challenges. Many of the rules are radically different in remote work environments than in co-located workplaces. Managers are concerned about productivity, accountability, and overall staff performance. How do managers manage without being physically present? How can managers accurately measure employee performance and ensure compliance with company policies? Where, when, and how, can managers best direct their energies?

This workshop will focus on the three key issues of connection, alignment, and accountability, and on how to create – and maintain - good relationships with remote workers.

15) Domestic Violence: Understanding the Basics

How do you break the cycle of domestic violence that is reinforced by cultural values and beliefs that are repeatedly communicated through the media and other societal institutions that tolerate it?

Domestic Violence is a pattern of coercive and assaultive behaviors that adults or adolescents use to control an intimate partner. This abuse can be physical, psychological, emotional, sexual, or financial – or any combination of these tactics - designed to force the victim to change behavior in response to the abuse. It is the pervasive and methodical use of threats, intimidation, manipulation, and physical violence by someone who seeks power and control over their intimate partner. Domestic violence occurs in current or former dating, married or cohabiting relationships of heterosexuals, gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered individuals.

This program is designed to help participants recognize the dynamics of domestic violence well enough to enhance victim safety and offender accountability. Specifically, participants will learn how to:

- Identify what does and does not cause domestic violence.
- Identify power and control tactics.
- Identify the impact of domestic violence on children.
- Identify the barriers to safety for victims.
- Identify how diversity may be a barrier to safety.
- Identify resources to assist victims of domestic violence.

Learn what you can do to help victims and families experiencing domestic violence!

(Dr. Bitting is a Nationally Certified Domestic Violence Instructor through Department of Homeland Security and the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center)

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