Effectively Communicating Within
A Multi-Generational Workplace

Presented by:
Shirley J. Burks
Instructor Information

Shirley J. Burks

Shirley J. Burks holds a bachelor’s degree in business administration and a master’s degree in organizational management. Her educational background includes numerous professional development programs such as: Business Coaching, Project Management, Essentials of Management Development Certificate, Faculty College (UWM), Microsoft Office User Specialist (MOUS) certification, Train the Trainer Certificate and various continuing education topics related to capacity building issues.

Burks currently serves as the unit leader of the Community and Professional Development Unit within UWM's School of Continuing Education. The unit is comprised of four departments and nearly 20 staff members. Burks directs the programming activities within the Governmental Affairs department in addition to leading several workshops on organizational development, change management, stress and time management, multi-generational workplace, and critical thinking skills development. She is responsible for the planning, development and marketing of new and existing public administration and nonprofit management workshops for both the public and customized contract trainings within the department.

Burks has extensive knowledge and more than 20 years of experience working in the nonprofit sector. She has worked in various capacities as a director, employment recruiter, workshop facilitator, admissions and training specialist, and instructor. Her background includes program and curriculum development, as well as overall project implementation and evaluation.

Burks' training experience spans various educational levels; from primary school through adult continuing education. Burks has presented trainings for numerous organizations locally and internationally including the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, Solutions Inc. (Cairo, Egypt), The Neighborhood House of Milwaukee, Girl Scouts of Milwaukee Area, Goodwill Industries of Southeastern Wisconsin, Employee Solutions Inc., YMCA Community Learning Centers, Milwaukee Business Technical College, Milwaukee Public School System and The New Opportunities Program (teen pregnancy services).

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Learning Objectives

• Identify what motivates each generational group currently in the work environment

• Explore best approaches to communicate with each generational group

• Discuss how each generation best gives and receives information

Workshop Description

Effectively Communicating Within A Multi-Generational Workplace

Traditionalists, Baby Boomers, Generation Jones, Gen Xers and Millennials oh my! Put them all in one workplace and what do you do? How do you effectively communicate across the board to each group? Within this session we will explore engagement tools for each group. We are currently in a very unique position in time where we could very well have as many as four generations actively working in the same workplace at the same time.

This webinar will assist you in identifying the unique factors of each generation to help build successful teams.

Four in One!

“For the first time in history of the traditional workplace we have four generations attempting to work together to function as one organization.”

Rene’ Johnston-Gingrich
“Four Generations, One Workplace”

What makes a workplace multi-generational?
When Generations Collide at Work Quiz

Different Generations at Work

From Lynne C. Lancaster and David Stillman

Which of the following is important for a Baby Boomer (Born 1946-1964)?

A. Build parallel careers.
B. Build a stellar career.
C. Build a legacy.
D. Build a portable career.

Your response? _______________________

Which of the following is important to Generation Xers (Born 1965-1980)?

A. Give me balance now, not when I'm sixty-five.
B. Support me in shifting the balance.
C. Help me balance everyone else and find meaning myself.
D. Work isn't everything; flexibility to balance my activities is.

Your response? _______________________

Which of the following feedback do Millennials (Born 1981-1999) prefer?

A. Sorry to interrupt, but how am I doing?
B. Once a year, with lots of documentation.
C. No news is good news.
D. Feedback whenever I want it, at the push of a button.

Your response? ______________________
## How Do We Define the Generations?

### Generations

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>General age in 2015</strong></td>
<td>~ 70 years and older</td>
<td>~ 51 – 69 years old</td>
<td>~ 35 – 50 years old</td>
<td>~ 15– 34 years old</td>
<td>~ 0 – 14 years old</td>
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**Notes**

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## What is Unique About Each Generation?

### Generational Characteristics

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<th>Veterans</th>
<th>Boomers</th>
<th>Gen X</th>
<th>Gen Y</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Core Values</strong></td>
<td>Respect for authority</td>
<td>Optimism</td>
<td>Skepticism</td>
<td>Realism</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Conformers</td>
<td>Involvement</td>
<td>Fun</td>
<td>Confidence</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Discipline</td>
<td></td>
<td>Informality</td>
<td>Extreme fun</td>
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<td><strong>Family</strong></td>
<td>Traditional</td>
<td>Disintegrating</td>
<td>Latch-key kids</td>
<td>Merged families</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nuclear</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Education</strong></td>
<td>A dream</td>
<td>A birthright</td>
<td>A way to get there</td>
<td>An incredible expense</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Communication Media</strong></td>
<td>One-on-one</td>
<td>Call me anytime</td>
<td>Cell phones</td>
<td>Internet</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Write a memo</td>
<td>Phone calls</td>
<td>Call me only at work</td>
<td>Picture phones</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Letters</td>
<td>Personal interaction</td>
<td>Voice mail, email</td>
<td>Emails</td>
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<td>Personal notes</td>
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<td>Instant messages, blogs, Text</td>
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<td></td>
<td>messages</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Dealing with Money</strong></td>
<td>Put it away</td>
<td>Buy now, pay later</td>
<td>Cautious</td>
<td>Earn to spend</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pay cash</td>
<td></td>
<td>Conservative</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Save, save, save</td>
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</table>

### Notes

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# How Does Each Generation Operate Within the Workplace?

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>In The Workplace</th>
<th>Veterans</th>
<th>Boomers</th>
<th>Gen X</th>
<th>Gen Y</th>
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</thead>
</table>
| **Ethic & Values** | Hard work
Respect authority | Workaholics
Work efficiently | Self-reliance
Skeptical | Multitasking
Goal oriented |
| **Interactive Style** | Individual | Team player | Entrepreneur | Participative |
| **Feedback & Rewards** | Satisfaction in a job
well done | Money
Title recognition | Freedom is the
best reward | Meaningful work |
| **What Motivates?** | When experience is respected,
Authority | Feeling valued
Feeling needed,
Prestige,
Networking | Do it your way
Forgetting the
rules, Flexibility | Knowing You will
work with other
talented people |
| **Work & Family Life** | Clear separation of
the two | No balance
Work to live | Balance | Balance |
| **Work is ...** | An obligation
“Company loyalty”
One company
entire career | An exciting
adventure
“Live to work”
Long hours at the
office | A difficult
challenge
“Work to live”
Work is not
everything | A means to an end
“Living and
Working their way”
Want stimulation &
change |
| **Work style** | Hard work
expected | Get it done – no
matter what it takes | Find fastest
route to results;
protocol secondary | Work to deadlines
not schedules |
| **Views of Authority/leadership** | Respect for power | Respect for
accomplishments | Rules are
flexible;
collaboration is
important | Value autonomy;
less inclined to
pursue formal
leadership positions |
| **Leadership Style** | Directive | Consensual | Everyone is the
same | TBD |
| **Communication** | Formal | In person and
through structured
network | Casual and
direct;
sometimes
skeptical | Informal; email
voice mail, text |
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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Assets</th>
<th>Liabilities</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Veterans</strong></td>
<td>Experience, enhanced knowledge, dedication, focus, stability, loyalty, emotional maturity, and perseverance</td>
<td>Reluctant to buck the system, uncomfortable with conflict, reticent when they disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>** Boomers**</td>
<td>Service orientation, dedication, team perspective, experience, and knowledge</td>
<td>Not necessarily “budget minded,” uncomfortable with conflict, reluctant to go against peers, may put process ahead of result</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>** Gen X**</td>
<td>Adaptability, techno-literacy, independence, creativity, willingness to buck the system</td>
<td>Skeptical, distrustful of authority</td>
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<tr>
<td>** Gen Y**</td>
<td>Collective action, optimism, ability to multi-task, and technological savvy</td>
<td>Need for supervision and structure; inexperience—particularly with handling difficult people issues</td>
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**Discussion**

Let’s take a closer look at each generation and their attributes.

**Veterans:**

- Came of age in 30s – 50s
- Company loyalty
- Believe in sacrifice
- Duty before fun
- Adherence to rules
- Leader has command & control
- Communicate via memo

______________

**Messages from their formative years…**

- Make do or do without.
- Stay in line.
- Sacrifice.
- Be heroic.
- Consider the common good.

______________

**What drives Veterans?**

- Show them respect
- Clear direction from leadership
- Person one on one contact
- No news is good news – not a lot of need for feedback

______________

**Motivating Messages…**

- “Your experience is respected here.”
- “It’s valuable to the rest of us to hear what has and hasn’t worked in the past.”
- “Your perseverance is valued and will be rewarded.”

______________

**What was the technology that shaped the era for the Veterans?**


Discussion

Let’s take a closer look at each generation and their attributes.

Baby Boomers:

- Came of age in the 60s-70s
- Boomers grew up at a time of dramatic social change
- Experimental, individualism, free spirited, social cause oriented
- Value personal fulfillment
- Question authority
- Loves to have meetings
- ________________________________

Messages from their formative years…

- Be anything you want to be.
- Change the world.
- Work well with others.
- Live up to expectation.
- Duck and cover.
- ________________________________

What drive Boomers?

- Show them that you care.
- Fairness is important.
- Know their names.
- Give them a chance to talk-they want to show you what they know.
- Dialogue and participation is key.
- ________________________________

Motivating Messages…

- “Your opinion is valued.”
- “You can work as long as you want to.”
- “Your contribution will be recognized.”
- “We need you.”
- ________________________________

What was the technology that shaped the era for the Boomers?

______________________________
**Discussion**

Let’s take a closer look at each generation and their attributes.

**Gen Xers:**

- Came of age in the 80s-90s
- Believe in eliminating the task
- Value structure and direction
- Leaders should challenge others
- Ask why
- Communication should be direct and immediate

**Messages from their formative years…**

- Don’t count on it.
- Heroes don’t exist.
- Get real.
- Take care of yourself.
- Always ask “why?”

**What drive Xers?**

- Humor is important
- Give it to them straight; want information, not hype
- Talk with them, not at them, develop a dialogue
- Never confuse having a career with having a life
- Be visual and dynamic
- Be on top of your game; know your stuff and demonstrate it clearly

**Motivating Messages…**

- “Do it your way.”
- “We’ve got the newest hardware and software.”
- “There aren’t a lot of rules around here.”

**What was the technology that shaped the era for the Xers?**
**Discussion**

Let’s take a closer look at each generation and their attributes.

**Gen Yers:**

- Are coming of age now
- "Trophy Generation", or "Trophy Kids,"
  - Everyone gets something for participating
- Value what’s next
- Entrepreneurial spirit
- Want feedback/rewards whenever they want it at the push of a button

**Messages from their formative years…**

- You are special.
- Leave no one behind.
- Connect 24/7.
- Achieve now!
- Serve your community.

**What drive Yers?**

- Technology is expected
- Expect leaders to know more than they do
- They want more attention from authority figures
- Active and interactive: let them move
- Visually similar to Xers
- Provide supervision and structure
- Yers ARE readers so provide more back up information

**Motivating Messages…**

- “You will be working with other bright, creative people.”
- “You and your co-workers can help turn this company around.”
- “You can be a hero here.”

**What was the technology that shaped the era for the Yers?**
Yers Expect…

- Frequent and instantaneous feedback
- Skills and information that will help make their working lives less stressful and increase their marketability
- Training in people skills
- To make money

Three elements drive the ambitions of Generation Y in the workplace

1. **Impact**--Making a difference is a strong motivational force behind Gen Y’s efforts.

2. **Communication**--The instant communication framework Gen Y developed through extensive computer usage has led to a need for more professional feedback than that of past generations

3. **Flexibility**--The divide between work and life is continually growing narrower as more people shift from the bricks-and-mortar to a remote workplace.

Gen Yers, the newest generation to enter the workforce were indulged and scheduled by their Baby Boomer parents, have taken the workplace by storm. They bring benefits and challenges to your workplace. Employers are dealing with helping up to four generations of workers happily co-exist to serve customers as a team. The economic downturn has made the four generation situation even more challenging with Boomers who planned retirement, but are unable to retire - and not happy about it. Gen Yers and Xers are supervising Boomers and Boomers are mentoring those who wish to learn from the leaving generation.

Managers need to develop the skill of managing Gen Ys. The Millennials have a quest for work-life balance.

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11 Tips for Millennial Management

1. **Provide structure.**
   - Reports have monthly due dates. Jobs have fairly regular hours. Certain activities are scheduled every day. Meetings have agendas and minutes. Goals are clearly stated and progress is assessed. Define assignments and success factors.

2. **Provide leadership and guidance.**
   - Millennials want to look up to you, learn from you, and receive daily feedback from you. They want “in” on the whole picture and to know the scoop. Plan to spend a lot of time teaching and coaching and be aware of this commitment to millennials when you hire them. They deserve and want your very best investment of time in their success.

3. **Encourage the millennial's self-assuredness, "can-do" attitude, and positive personal self-image.**
   - Millennials are ready to take on the world. Their parents told them they can do it - they can. Encourage - don't squash them or contain them.

4. **Take advantage of the millennial's comfort level with teams. Encourage them to join.**
   - They are used to working in groups and teams. In contrast to the lone ranger attitude of earlier generations, millennials actually believe a team can accomplish more and better - they've experienced team success. Millennials gather in groups and play on teams; you can also mentor, coach, and train your millennials as a team.

5. **Listen to the millennial employee.**
   - Your millennial employees are used to loving parents who have scheduled their lives around the activities and events of their children. These young adults have ideas and opinions, and don't take kindly to having their thoughts ignored. After all, they had the best listening, most child-centric audience in history.

6. **Millennial employees are up for a challenge and change.**
   - Boring is bad. They seek ever-changing tasks within their work. What’s happening next is their mantra. Don’t bore them, ignore them, or trivialize their contribution.

7. **Millennial employees are multi-taskers on a scale you’ve never seen before.**
   - Multiple tasks don’t phase them. Talk on the phone while doing email and answering multiple instant messages – yes! This is a way of life. In fact, without many different tasks and goals to pursue within the week, the millennials will likely experience boredom.

8. **Take advantage of your millennial employee’s computer, cell phone, and electronic literacy**
   - Are you a Boomer or even an early Gen-Xer? The electronic capabilities of these employees are amazing.

9. **Capitalize on the millennial’s affinity for networking.**
   - Not just comfortable with teams and group activities, your millennial employee likes to network around the world electronically.

10. **Provide a life-work balanced workplace.**
    - Your millennials are used to cramming their lives with multiple activities. They may play on sports teams, walk for multiple causes, spend time as fans at company sports leagues, and spend lots of time with family and friends. They work hard, but they are not into the sixty hour work weeks defined by the Baby Boomers. Home, family, spending time with the children and families, are priorities. Don’t lose sight of this. Balance and multiple activities are important to these millennial employees. Ignore this to your peril.
11. **Provide a fun, employee-centered workplace.**
   - Millennials want to enjoy their work. They want to enjoy their workplace. They want to make friends in their workplace. Worry if your millennial employees aren’t laughing, going out with workplace friends for lunch, and helping plan the next company event or committee.

   Help your long-term employees make room for the millennials. By Internet research counts, 75,000,000 millennials are preparing to join or joining the workforce. These are desirable employees. Make your millennial employees happy in a fun, yet structured setting, and you are building the foundation for the superior workforce you desire. You are developing the workforce of your future.

   “11 Tips for Managing Millennials” By Susan M. Heathfield, About.com Guide
   [http://humanresources.about.com/od/managementtips/a/millenials.htm](http://humanresources.about.com/od/managementtips/a/millenials.htm)

**Discussion**

**Addressing Your Own Generational Assumptions**

- What do I believe are the most important attributes of an employee?
  
  ____________________________________________________________
  ____________________________________________________________
  ____________________________________________________________

- How loyal do I believe an employee should be to an organization?
  
  ____________________________________________________________
  ____________________________________________________________
  ____________________________________________________________

- What balance do I maintain between my work and personal life?
  
  ____________________________________________________________
  ____________________________________________________________
  ____________________________________________________________

- Do I feel most comfortable with people of a certain age group at work?
  
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Discussion

Tips for Working Together

• Personalize your style – be creative; find out about other’s preferences
• Build on strengths – recognize the unique talents that others bring to the table
• Initiate conversations about generational differences – being more open
• Ask about people’s needs and preferences instead of assuming
• Offer options for getting tasks done
• Respect differences
• Encourage intergenerational collaborations
• Communicate, communicate, communicate
• Be flexible

What is the #1 human need?

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Why is it important to acknowledge generational differences?

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Generational Job Satisfaction

Below is a summary taken from a survey done by Sirota Survey Intelligence in 2006-2007. Sirota's findings were derived from employee attitude surveys conducted in 2007 and 2006, reflecting attitudes of more than 300,000 workers at more than 50 organizations. The study compared data from baby boomers (ages 43-62), Generation X (ages 28-42) and Generation Y (age 27 and younger).

**Critical Thinking - Negative or Positive?**

- Critical thinking is not necessarily being "critical" and negative.
- A more accurate term would be evaluative thinking.
- The result of evaluation can range from:
  - positive to negative
  - acceptance to rejection
  - or anything in-between

What can you tell from the survey?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

Who are the most satisfied with compensation? Jobs? Employers?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

Who are the least satisfied with compensation? Jobs? Employers?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

Why do you think that group is most satisfied? Or least satisfied?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________
How Do We Bridge the Gap?

- **Create cross-generational teams** and encourage workers to share their ideas and expectations.

- **Focus on outcomes** not superficial details.

- **Embrace differences** while looking for common ground.

- **Work together** and use multigenerational viewpoints as a strength for the workplace.

- **Be flexible**, relationships are more fluid for both employer and employee – younger employees may be more mobile and appear less loyal, but the same is true of most organizations.

- **Respect each other.** While there is a collectivity of “generations,” it’s important not to make assumptions of individuals based on age. Avoid sweeping generalizations. Not every Boomer is technophobic and not every Generation Yer is carefree.

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Working Successfully in the 21st Century: Integrating a Multi-Generational Diverse Workforce and Understanding the Role of New Technologies

From Bahira Trask, Ph.D. Presentation 2013

*Checklist for managers and team leaders:*

- Identify your own generational assumptions
  - What do I believe are the most important attributes of an employee?
  - How loyal do I believe an employee should be to an organization?
  - What balance do I maintain between my work and personal life?
  - Do I feel most comfortable with people of a certain age group?

- Personalize your style
- Be creative
- Find out about other’s preferences
- Build on strengths
- Recognize the unique talents that others bring to the table
- Offer options for getting tasks done
- Keep open communication going
- Initiate conversations about generational differences
- Ask about people’s needs and preferences instead of assuming
- Be respectful of differences and incorporate them
- Acknowledge the different values that may be held by various generations
- Remain flexible and open to other perspectives
- Encourage generational partnerships and collaborations
The Power of Feedback

Why do we hesitate?
– Fear or dread
– Lack of observation time
– Lack of proximity
– Lack of skilled feedback or positive coaching themselves
– __________________________________________

Guidelines for Giving Productive Feedback

Feedback should be:
– Specific
– Well-timed
– Owned by the giver
– Based on observable behavior
– Checked to ensure clear communication
– __________________________________________

Reinforcing Feedback

• Tell them what was right
• Tell them “why” it was valuable

Redirecting Feedback

• Tell them what’s not effective
• Make a suggestion and/or a question that will help them find the right path

Final Checkpoint

1. Which generation is entering the workforce today?

2. How many generations are currently working in the workplace today?

3. Boomers enjoy having meetings.   T   F

4. What is the age of the “homelander” generation now?

5. It is best to establish small talk with a Gen Xer before you present information.   T   F

6. Creating individual work teams for each generation to address issues is the best way to bridge the multi-generational gap.   T   F

7. We hesitate to give feedback because of fear or dread.   T   F

8. When giving feedback, it is important to be very general.   T   F
The 60-Second Opening

1. The issue is:
   - Be concise.
   - Is it a concern, challenge, opportunity, or recurring problem that is becoming more troublesome?

2. Select a specific example that illustrates the behavior or situation you want to change:
   - Keep it short – you only have 60 seconds.
   - What have I seen that I can describe? What’s the “visual”

3. Describe your emotions about this issue:
   - Sharing “how you feel” is disarming.

4. Clarify what’s at stake:
   - Why is this important?
   - What is at stake for the individual, for you, for the customers, the team, the organization?
   - Speak calmly and quietly – simply “clarify.”

5. Identify your contribution to this problem:
   - Recognize any role you played in creating the problem.
   - Acknowledge your accountability as appropriate.

6. Indicate your wish to resolve the issue:
   - Use the word resolve.
   - “Resolve” communicates good intent on your part.

7. Invite the other person to respond:
   - Ask them to offer their perspective. Sit. Stay. Listen.

Source: Fierce Conversations by Susan Scott, 2002
Case Study

“When Things Go Wrong – Redirection”

Scenario:

Shorty Long is the CEO of a mid-sized computer company, Cables and Wires, Inc., who has a problem to resolve. Shorty is a thoughtful leader and a really caring, concerned human being. His staff admires and respects him for his professional savvy, but they also genuinely like him.

Currently, he’s very excited because he has just recruited and hired a new vice president, Jack Askew, for the software development unit. Jack Askew comes highly recommended with an outstanding reputation in the industry for getting results and meeting deadlines. Getting Jack on board is a real coup for Shorty, as Jack had many other options; but he chose Cable Wires, Inc. Shorty thinks this is a grand opportunity for the company for his senior staff in the unit to work with and learn from additional outstanding talent.

30 Days Later

Shorty has a huge headache, and he can’t find his bottle of aspirin. His new hire Jack seems to have alienated his staff. Shorty pulled into the parking lot yesterday and was confronted by two senior staff people from the software development unit. They wanted to know “where” Shorty found Jack. It seems that Jack made some comments that did not set well with the team. One of the team members shared that he was in Jack’s office earlier in the week asking some questions. Jack’s response to the team member was, “I don’t have time for private tutoring sessions. Work this out on your own time.”

In addition, another team member shared that there seems to be a “glitch” in the new software, and at this point no one knows how to resolve the problem. Jack’s response to the team at the morning meeting was, “I thought you guys were better than this. This team is not what I signed up for.” The entire team left the meeting and updated their resumes.

Shorty had been getting some “vibes” about the inner-team conflicts for a couple of weeks, but he figured everyone was an adult, a professional; all of them would figure it out without his intervention. Now he has also been told by one of his top folks in that unit, Susie, that she is talking with a headhunter that recently called her. She hasn’t set up a meeting yet, but she is entertaining the possibility and she wanted Shorty to know.

Now, assume you are Shorty. At this point you don’t want to fire Jack; at least not yet. His “talent” is still there, and you would like to tap into it; and save the relationship as well. Remember the first 60 seconds of your feedback or confrontation is critical. So think about it.

Instructions:

Within your group, write the 60-second opening Shorty needs to have with Jack using the 7 steps in the 60-second Opening handout as your guideline. Everyone will have an opportunity to share.
Activity

“Recognition Report Card”

1) An award, preferably given in front of your peers. _____
2) A plaque to hang on the wall. _____
3) A thank you, in writing, from your supervisor. _____
4) A note to my supervisor’s supervisor about my excellent performance. _____
5) A chance to be on a really exciting, cutting-edge project. _____
6) Opportunity to work with people from other parts of the company. _____
7) Some flexibility in your schedule. _____
8) A chance to lunch with senior management. _____
9) A day off. _____
10) A bonus of some sort. _____
11) A promotion. _____
12) A change in your title. _____
13) * ________________________________ _____
14) * ________________________________ _____
15) * ________________________________ _____

*Are there any that you would add?

OVERALL GPA _____
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