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Have you noticed? Ever since the doctor was dragged off the United Airlines flight, I have noticed that airline employees (not just at United) have been nicer. An airline attendant actually thanked me for my business (shocker!). Another smiled at me while I boarded the plane, (not just when I exited!) *and smiled throughout the flight*. Each time I witnessed this seemingly abnormal behavior, I have complimented the crew, which in turn, brings more smiles. I am reminded that all it takes is a bit of respect for each other. Recognizing that we all want to do our best and be our best. Sure, we all have a bad day here and there, but we shouldn't take it out on others. Hope you have many more great days than bad days,

Kristin

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STRATEGIES TO REDUCE WORKPLACE BULLYING

by Joseph Sherren

Recently, Barbara Mayhew commented in a blog about the P.E.I. WCB ruling that awarded benefits to a widow after her husband's death was linked to workplace bullying and harassment.

Unfortunately, bullying is not relegated to the schoolyard. Many workers are victims of bullying by their bosses or co-workers. Research shows that people who feel insecure about their own abilities or have been bullied themselves are most likely to engage in bullying.

Barbara points out that most people are familiar with the overt bully - the one who publicly berates employees. But bullying in the workplace is often more covert. It can also be non-verbal, psychological, and involve subtle humiliation resulting in emotional breakdowns and destroyed careers.

Bullying involves everything from spreading malicious rumors, gossiping, excluding an employee from day-to-day activities, or even making jokes that are offensive, intended to humiliate and embarrass an individual. I have personally witnessed managers using profane language, sidelining, or giving an employee meaningless work that is not in alignment with their qualifications.

It is hard to believe, but a number of recent studies are saying that some workplaces are growing even more toxic. The Ottawa-based Canada Safety Council reports that one-in-

six employees have been bullied. I think it is more. A 2010 study by the U.S. based Workplace Bullying Institute (WBI) found 35 percent of U.S. employees have been bullied, with 58 percent of victims being female. Of note is that nearly 80 percent of female victims say their abuser was another female. Remember the movie "The Devil Wears Prada"?

The good news is many companies are putting bullying in the same category as sexual harassment or discrimination; Ontario, Quebec, and Saskatchewan have made workplace bullying illegal.

However, some managers worry that too much legislation and oversight may inhibit them from properly doing their job. Companies need to run efficiently, hence matters like job realignments, transfers, demotions, addressing poor performance, and terminations are not bullying. Nevertheless, these need to be carried out professionally and within ethical and legal guidelines.

Bullying will affect the overall well-being of an organization. It often results in increased absenteeism, higher turnover, increased stress, and more participation in employee assistance programs (EAPs).

Here are some suggestions for your company to reduce workplace bullying:

1. Start at the top: Senior management must make it clear that bullying isn't acceptable.
2. Incorporate personal assessments into the hiring process. No matter how great a resume may look, avoid hiring those who are prone to aggressive behaviors.
3. Review every claim: Do not assume a bullying complaint is just a personality conflict between two people who should sort it out between themselves.
4. Proceed with caution: Take all allegations seriously, but don't assume they're all true.
5. Be diligent: Interview others (privately) who may have witnessed the activity.

One of the best things an organization can do is address bullying in their on-boarding process and any management training curriculum.

My question for managers this week:

"What practices does your organization have to eliminate all forms of bullying?"

HOW TO MINIMIZE "MANTERRUPTING"

To achieve a collaborative consensus, it's crucial to hear from everyone at the table. But what happens when you want to be heard, but get interrupted all the time so your ideas never see the light of day?

In a well-known 1975 study, two researchers systematically examined and categorized interruptions by men and women during conversations. They surreptitiously recorded 31 two-person conversations overheard in various public places (coffee shops, drugstores, and other public places in a university community). The results were staggering: In mixed-sex conversations, men were responsible for all but one of the 48 interruptions they overheard.

These findings have been replicated in more recent research. In a similar 2014 study with 40 people, in mixed-sex conversations, the man interrupted the woman, on average, 2.1 times over the course of a three-minute dialogue; if his counterpart was male, however, that number was 1.8 times.

So men are more likely to interrupt....period; men or women, and will more likely interrupt a woman more frequently than a man.

But here's the kicker: The 2014 study showed that women are less likely to interrupt men. Women interrupted the conversation an average of 2.9 times if their partner was female and just once, on average, if their partner was male.

So what's that all about?

So let's take a look at the 2015 review of the US Supreme Court dynamics over the last twelve years. The researchers reported, "Even without adjusting for the low representation of women, the effect is stark. On average, women constituted 22 percent of the court, yet 52 percent of interruptions were directed at them. Overwhelmingly, it was men doing the interrupting. Women interrupted only 15 percent of the time and men interrupted 85 percent of the time, more than their 78 percent representation on the court."

Even in the bastion of democracy, male justices interrupt women justices and women justices are less likely to interrupt men.

So what should be done about this "man interruption" problem?

We can't expect women (justices, executives, managers, etc.) to be able to fix the "man interruption" problem on their own. Women can take responsibility for proactively jumping into the conversation and holding their ground when being interrupted. Women can also "cut back on a tendency to pose questions politely with prefatory words and phrases like 'sorry,' 'may I ask,' 'can I ask,' 'excuse me,' or by addressing the advocate by name. That kind of language gives other justices an opportunity to jump in."

You can also enlist others on your team to become more aware of this dynamic and appeal to them to play a larger role as a referee or facilitator. Or male team members could simply learn to let their female colleagues speak.

EXECUTIVES: SHIFT YOUR PRESENTATION TO A PANEL DISCUSSION

At some point in their professional development, most executives learn how to give a speech. They are able to share information with their investors, stakeholders, employees and customers in a compelling way.

But I gotta tell you, more than 30 minutes of an executive telling us what they think we need to know is a bit too much. I don't care how eloquent you are. After 30 minutes, you need to change it up by changing the format and/or engaging the audience.

I'm a big fan of the executive shifting into a panel discussion (what a surprise)! Here's why:

1. Break. After 30 minutes, it's great to shift the energy in the room.
2. Spontaneous. While the first presentation might be scripted, the ensuing panel conversation between the executives is live!
3. Team. It's not just the executive who is going to lead the charge. Why not bring up others who have key roles in the transformation?
4. Perspectives. If you are trying to show solidarity or the differences of opinion, this is the format where you can highlight the meeting theme and views.
5. Symbolism. Finally, visibility demonstrates how well your team gets along!

So next time you want to keep talking during a presentation, shift the energy with a panel discussion.

FROM THE BOOKSHELF: LIFESTORMING by Alan Weiss and Marshall Goldsmith

If you are looking for a coaching primer to help you rise above when your world is falling apart, I don't recommend this book. BUT, if you already have some modicum of success and strive to get better, I highly recommend Alan Weiss and Marshall Goldsmith's latest book, [Lifestorming: Creating Meaning and Achievement in Your Career and Life](#). Both of these gentlemen are top-notch consultants who coach successful business executives and professionals. This book assumes that you too, are already successful and want to take your career and life to the next level. It's filled with simple models, challenging theories, and practical tools that provide keen insight into what may be keeping us from being successful, and how to propel ourselves forward.

Not to worry, *Lifestorming* is firmly grounded in real-world best practices based on their consulting practices and Weiss and Marshall share a bevy of stories to bring the key points alive. Most importantly, what I REALLY like about the book is the final chapter where the authors have created a "guide" that tests our current state and then challenges us to apply the principles and integrate them into our daily activities.

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