

Communication

Bulletin TM for Managers & Supervisors

A fast-read source of information to help managers communicate better within and between departments, twice a month.

January 3, 2022



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3 keys to negotiating: Get what you – and your team – need now

Promotions, resources, raises – you name it, these tactics will help

If anyone ever needed to master negotiating skills, it's the front-line manager.

After all, aren't you almost always in the middle, working toward what's best for your employees and championing what's best for your company? On top of that, you often need to propose – and win – ideas that help your team succeed.

And every once in a while, you need to negotiate for yourself to get what you want professionally.

Expert help

So here's help – three top negotiation strategies from experts at the Kellogg School of Management at Northwestern University.

The best part is they're good in nearly every situation – from getting resources for your team or a raise for yourself to getting employees to adopt new procedures or accept change.

Focus on the other side

Most leaders don't negotiate, thinking they're negotiating. They just tend to focus on what they want and how they'll get it.

In contrast, the Kellogg researchers say the better bet is to focus on what the other side needs and how *you* can help them get it.

You're the vehicle for the change you want, not a roadblock to what the other side wants.

*Please see **Negotiating ...** on Page 2.*

Sharpen Your Judgment

Fired for 'realignment' or because of his age?

"We're realigning departments," said Manager Suzanne Holgate. "As you can imagine, big changes like this come with difficult decisions."

"Actually, Suzanne, I've been here longer than most employees and worked through many changes," said Frank Andrews, an employee. "I don't see why this one would be any different."

"For you, it is," Suzanne said. "We need fewer people in a role like yours. In fact, your role soon won't look like it does now."

A series of questionable events

Frank sat quietly for a minute, reviewing what he just heard and some things he witnessed in the past several weeks.

Suzanne could barely stand the silence, and finally broke it. "Do you understand, Frank?"

"More than you can imagine," he said.

"First, you let Loretta go. She's about my age," Frank said. "Then I heard the manager from the department you're aligning with say he looked forward to bringing on 'younger people to take us in a new direction.' Now you fire the last old guy, even though he's a great performer."

"You're reading too much into it," said Suzanne.

But Frank didn't believe that. He contacted the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), saying he was the victim of age discrimination. The EEOC filed a suit.

The company fought it. Did it win?

This regular feature sharpens your thinking and helps keep both you and your firm out of trouble. It describes a real legal conflict and lets you judge the outcome.

Make your decision, then please turn to Page 4 for the court's ruling.

The Purpose of Communication Bulletin for Managers & Supervisors

Communication Bulletin for Managers & Supervisors provides relevant and actionable business ideas to help managers and supervisors improve communication and increase effectiveness.

The Bulletin helps improve communication within and between departments, a major goal for most businesses seeking better performance.

All in a fast-read format, twice a month.

Negotiating ...

(continued from Page 1)

For instance, if you want a promotion – and a hefty pay raise that should come with it – focus on the responsibilities you’ll take up and alleviate for the boss. Or talk about the processes you’ll make more efficient so the department realizes cost savings.

To be sure you have the other side in focus, take what Kellogg professor of management and organizations Victoria Medvec calls a “pronoun check.” If you find yourself saying “I” and “me” a lot, you’re probably on the wrong track – the one to nowhere.

Differentiate yourself, your cause

When you set out to gain something – and end up in negotiations – recognize that you aren’t the only one pining for more time, money, attention or resources.

Because others are negotiating for what they want – even if it’s not exactly what you want – you need to differentiate yourself or your cause.

Highlight what makes you stand out or what will make the biggest impact in the near future. Remember that it needs to hold context for the person or people whose approval you want.

For instance, if you want more

funding for new software in your department, focus on how your team is the only one that deals with customers daily. Your enhanced capabilities will bring new, profitable insight to the organization.

Bring options to the table

You may only want one thing when you go into a situation where you’ll need to negotiate, but you’ll want to offer a few things to the other side.

Consider all the issues you want resolved. Then look at several ways that could happen. You can mix and match issues and solutions to create a few options to put out there.

“Multiple offers let the other side feel like they have a choice,” Medvec says. “They feel better about having a choice. And they’re going to react better to having a choice.”

For example, you want your team to earn a bonus for a project they dread. You might present this to the CFO: a percentage of the sale divided between team members, additional paid time off or a one-time larger bonus based on the timeliness and quality of the finished project.

Leave wiggle room in your options, knowing what you’ll compromise on, what the other side is likely to compromise on and what could be contentious.

Source: tinyurl.com/negotiate515

TECH CORNER

3 essential tech ‘tricks’ every employee should know

Most employees know how to use your office technology.

But many probably don’t consider themselves tech savvy.

Become tech savvy

You can help employees up their game by sharing “tricks” that everyone should know, but few actually do.

- **Restart a computer.** This tip doesn’t circulate as much these days, but it’s been handy since PCs were born. Hold the “Ctrl,” “Alt” and “Delete” keys for a few seconds to restart.

- **Take a screen shot.** On a keyboard, hold “Ctrl” and “Print Screen” for a shot. Then open the program (email, for instance) or document (Word, for instance) you want to add it to, and hold the “Ctrl” and “V” keys to paste it in.
- **Find almost anything.** Hold the “Ctrl” and “F” keys on almost any open page – from a web page to an Excel or Word document – for the word search tool to pop up in the top right corner of your screen. Type in a word you’re looking for and it’ll highlight it everywhere on that page. You can toggle up and down to find exactly what you need.

Source: tinyurl.com/techtips515

COMMUNICATION BRIEFS

■ Inspire your team with a touch of humanity

Leaders don’t need to relate to everyone in their audience when they speak. But they want to be relatable.

That helps inspire others – whether it’s your team or a larger group you’re training or speaking to – says Gia Storms, a leadership coach and member of The Boda Group. To relate and inspire, Storms suggests you:

- **Ready failure stories.** When you tell others how you failed – and bounced back – you create intimacy.
- **Be real right now.** Tell others how you feel when you answer questions or share off the cuff. Say, “It’s a bit scary to share this ...” or “I hesitate to bring this forward ...”
- **Share your top of mind.** In smaller groups and informal meetings, prepare some thoughts on something that’s impacted you recently at work or in life. Ask others if they’d like to share on it, too.

Source: HBR, tinyurl.com/teams515

■ 3 expectations every team must share

One of my favorite personal mantras is, “If you don’t expect anything, you’ll never be disappointed.”

While practical in life, it is NOT a good idea for teams. In fact, you’re better off laying out more expectations than fewer. Here are three that are often left unsaid, but when established, will help you and employees work more effectively. The expectation of:

- **Understanding.** Everyone needs to ask questions until they have clarity. They need to explain until they’ve ensured others understand them.
- **Outcomes.** Everyone needs to explain the results they want by asking others to restate the expected outcome until everyone is aligned.
- **Engagement.** Everyone needs to understand what work engagement looks and feels like. Anyone who doesn’t see or feel it needs to say so and pursue help getting there.

Source: SmartBrief, tinyurl.com/expectation515

Real Problems, Real Solutions

Our subscribers come from a broad range of organizations, large and small. In this regular networking feature, three of them share their successes in improving workplace communication.

1 New way to reward, recognize in-person or remotely

Before COVID-19, we celebrated successes with the whole group as much as possible.

We recognized employees' successes and rewarded outstanding work so everyone could get involved in the congratulations.

That kind of pomp and circumstance couldn't happen when many employees started working remotely or hybrid.

Everyone can join in

We wanted to continue our reward and recognition efforts because they contributed to positive momentum and boosted morale. So we needed a new

plan. What worked for us was an internal app that allowed leaders and employees to call attention to great work.

Other employees could jump on the bandwagon, too, congratulating colleagues for their achievements.

We could also pass along rewards to employees through the app.

Now, whether employees work side-by-side or remotely, we can reward, recognize and celebrate in ways so everyone is still involved and can show they care.

(Jeff Cates, CEO, Achievers, Toronto)

2 Stay connected to grow professionally

Networking is critical for most leaders. When you connect, you can learn new ways to manage employees, operate and develop your own career.

But it's been more difficult to network throughout the pandemic as we've all worked remotely for some time or generally avoided close contact with others.

I had to get more creative to network.

Plenty of possibilities

One of the most effective ideas I had was to host reunions.

I had friends from elementary, middle and high schools, college, graduate school, and former jobs. I planned reunions with them. I contacted or reconnected with them through email and social media. We met virtually at first and in-person later.

The informal meetings gave us opportunities to strengthen ties and continue to network and learn.

(Deborah Grayson Riegel, Instructor, Wharton Business School and Duke Corporate Education, shared this success in the Harvard Business Review)

3 Build team confidence: Teach them to fish

I was always willing to help when my employees asked for it.

If they needed someone to pitch in, I had their back. I wanted us all to succeed.

But I wondered: By being a leader who was also a team player, was I holding them back?

I shifted my approach for a bit: Instead of being the go-to person, I aimed to be the *leader of a go-to team*.

New focus

I started to coach more, guiding employees through the process, rather than doing a task with them. Essentially, I taught them to fish instead of giving them the fish.

Sure, it took more time in the beginning, but it built their confidence to the point they recognized their potential. And then they used their talents to build a better team.

(Cara Streb, Chief Operating Officer, Take 2 Consulting, Vienna, VA, shared this success on the Eblin Group Blog)



YOUR LEGAL COACH

■ Must we make vaccine exception for religion?

Question: An employee claims she won't get the COVID-19 vaccination for religious reasons. Even though we require the vaccine to work on-site, do we have to accommodate her?

Answer: Normally, yes, you need to make religious accommodations. But vaccinations are different, say employment law attorneys Ashlea Edwards and Karen Buesing of Akerman LLP.

That's because employees try to avoid vaccine mandates for political, not religious, beliefs. To evaluate if the request is valid, ask yourself:

- Has she always behaved in ways consistent with the professed belief?
- Could anyone seek the exemption for a secular reason instead of a religious one?
- Is the timing of the request odd?

If you find her beliefs are sincere, and it's reasonable for your business to honor the accommodation, do it.

Source: tinyurl.com/vaccine515

LIGHTER SIDE

■ Sometimes you just have to get away from it all

Sometimes we all need to just get away from work, life or whatever stresses us.

That may not have been more true than during pandemic lockdowns. For some people, the fix was a fake getaway.

Sixty people in Taipei won a contest for a getaway that included checking in at the airport, clearing security, boarding their plane and experiencing the preflight routine.

Then the plane departed for nowhere.

It sat on the tarmac for 15 minutes. The passengers then de-boarded, happy for the pre-pandemic nostalgia without the jet lag.

Source: [RD.com](https://www.rd.com)

COMMUNICATION NEWS

New employee anxiety – and how to beat it

Employees are anxious – and it’s not the same old, same old.

Before the COVID-19 pandemic, employees mostly asked for help via benefits for anxiety, depression, relationships and resilience, according to research from LifeSpeak.

Since then, there’s been a slight uptick in those concerns and a major uptick in requests for sleep issues and return-to-work anxiety, says Anna Mittag, Senior VP of Products and Services at LifeSpeak.

Build resilience

When employees face issues, they don’t perform well. One way to help employees

proactively manage: teach resilience.

“Your bottom line is positively impacted by a resilient workforce,” Mittag says.

How can you help build resilience? Try to:

- **Foster friendships.** People who have good relationships in the workplace tend to have more confidence and places to turn for advice and reassurance. Give employees time, resources and the space to get to know each other personally.
- **Talk about failure.** When leaders share failures they’ve experienced, they create an environment where employees know they can fail and bounce back.

2 ways to keep employees who are thinking about leaving

About 40% of employees say they’re at least somewhat likely to leave their job in the next six months, a McKinsey study found.

They’re overwhelmed, stressed – and looking for a better way.

New opportunities out there

“With over half of the workforce considering new job opportunities, money is no longer the No. 1 motivator for employees,” said Laura Sage, CEO at Chill Anywhere. “Employees know when their employer is

genuinely looking out for their best interest, which ... results in a more stable workforce.”

To encourage employee loyalty:

- **Promote your mental well-being resources.** Send email, create internal app campaigns, and host on-site and virtual meetings.
- **Address it.** “It’s imperative to create a culture in which your team feels comfortable discussing mental health issues,” Sage said.

Source: HRMorning.com

Sharpen Your Judgment – The Decision

(continued from Page 1)

No, the company lost and had to pay employees, who were in their 60s and let go, more than \$300,000 in pay and damages.

The attorney representing the employee and the EEOC claimed he was the victim of age bias, proven by a string of events: a similarly aged colleague was let go, a manager commented on hiring younger employees, the victim was fired. On top of that, the employee had a solid record of good performance.

The company’s attorney argued that the employee was fired for a single, justifiable, business reason: The company was realigning departments and they needed fewer people in the role he held.

That didn’t appear to be the case, the court ruled in the EEOC hearing. The timing, manager’s comment and ages of those fired pointed directly to age discrimination.

Decide based on past, not future

The EEOC District Director, Judy Keenan, offered every manager a warning on this case: “An employee should only be judged by performance, and not his or her age.”

Make decisions based on past performance, not future predictions.

(Based on *EEOC v. AZ Metro*. Dramatized for effect.)

Quotes

You never know what you can do until you try, and very few try unless they have to.

– C.S. Lewis

It’s kind of fun to do the impossible.

– Walt Disney

Success only comes to those who dare to attempt.

– Mallika Tripathi

If people are doubting how far you can go, go so far that you can’t hear them anymore.

– Michele Ruiz

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