

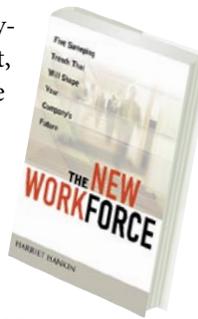
The Benefits of Workplace Trust, Respect and Ethics

BY HARRIET HANKIN

Companies that are paying attention to trust, respect and ethics are getting ahead of the curve and are reaping rewards. Studies suggest that companies that lead and succeed in the future will have strong cultures of trust, respect and ethics at the core of their organization. In some ways, it will be overt; in other ways, it may be more subtle. The spirit of trust and respect, or lack of it, however, will be the compass that ultimately guides a company.

Employees who feel that their companies are committed to a higher purpose were found to be less fearful, more open to committing themselves to their job, and less likely to compromise on values. Employees who are less fearful and more trusting are better able to tap their natural creativity more effectively. Regardless of the business role or context, creativity breeds better solutions, which can lead directly to a better bottom line. A sense of higher purpose encourages expression of innate talents, enhances cooperation and contributes to a sense of loyalty and belonging. This leads to lower turnover, less need for supervision and less waste.

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Tips for Preparing Your Employees for a Crisis

BY DR. ANDY EDELMAN

Imagine you are driving down the highway on your way to work, your mind on everything but the road. Suddenly, the screech of tires jolts you back to reality and you are three seconds away from crashing into the back of an 18-wheeler. If you are fortunate enough to reduce your speed in time, you will survive the encounter unscathed thanks to a variety of physical and biochemical processes that trigger the "fight or flight" response.

This response may also unfold during critical incident events that occur in the workplace, especially those that involve an escalation of violence, such as a robbery or an irate customer. When employees and managers are transformed from a feeling of relaxation to one of terror, their ability to perceive events in a normal manner is changed dramatically.

Contrary to popular belief, most individuals will neither flee nor fight during a critical or traumatic event: they will freeze. Once people are paralyzed with fear, their performance under pressure and their ability to make effective decisions deteriorate rapidly.

Here are tips for professionals to effectively cope with work-related critical incidents:

Plan for possibilities. Role-playing practice under the watchful eye of expert trainers is one of the most effective methods for learning how you and your staff members will react under the pressure of dealing with angry, irate, or out of control



individuals. This is the place for making mistakes and it is okay to make lots of them during this training.

Manage anger on the phone. Irate customers who call on the phone, often just want

to vent their anger. Other times, they can escalate to verbal abuse. To bring customers back to reality, use language that controls their behavior. "Mr. Smith, can I ask you a question?" This technique stops the customer's tirade and interrupts their train of thought.

If their language continues to escalate, suggest, "Mr. Smith, if you would please stop yelling and cursing, I can help you. Or if you're still upset, will you please call me back when you've cooled down?"

continued on next page

AMA Soundings

To what extent are companies experiencing disruptive change? The AMA/HRI study *Agility and Resilience in the Face of Continuous Change* found that:

- 31%** did not experience a severe surprise or unanticipated shock, but
- 17%** reported a major business strategy shift was required
- 17%** reported that core operations were impacted
- 29%** noted only minor disruption and operational impact
- 3%** felt that long-term viability and existence was threatened
- 3%** spoke about overall mission and vision being challenged

For the complete study results, visit www.amanet.org/research

Tips for Preparing Your Employees for a Crisis continued from preceding page

The goal is to disengage them and let them contact you when they are less upset.

Understand the human factor. Remember that even with the best preparation, no one is truly prepared for the effects of a critical incident. Well-meaning managers may often strive to get things back to normal as smoothly and quickly as possible. Yet, not everyone may be able to bounce back in the same manner or within the same recovery time frame.

De-brief and document all pertinent and relevant events. Anytime there is an incident in the workplace, you should be documenting the situation. If anyone should come back with a lawsuit or complaint, then your company will have records about the incident for protection.

Implement crisis counseling for all who request it. Not everyone will want or need counseling but you should monitor changes in behavior for those involved with the incident. Those who don't seek help may be in denial and possibly needing such assistance the most.

Watch for significant changes in emotional and behavioral indicators in your personnel and seek assistance if necessary. Crying spells, panic, feelings of "going crazy," reoccurring nightmares or flashbacks, uncontrolled anger, depression, or feelings of or expressing desire for self-destructive or suicidal outcomes are all signs and symptoms that the individual may need additional counseling or support.

Having a sound crisis intervention plan in place can go a long way towards moving stress-affected individuals, groups, and organizational divisions to recovery. Implementing and practicing such strategies can effectively minimize the physical and psychological effects of trauma and accelerating the transition back to normalized work routines with enhanced and renewed health and productivity.

Dr. Andrew Edelman has more than 20 years of experience in conflict, crisis prevention and juvenile justice. A certified law enforcement officer, Dr. Edelman serves as a consultant with the National Association for Bank Security. For more information: www.drandedelman.com

Three Ways to Emotionally Aware Management BY LIZA SIEGEL, PH.D.

Effective leaders know how to align their emotions with their groups' emotions and thus create "resonance" and shared understanding. This alignment means sharing both negative and positive emotions. Effective leaders are



comfortable with a whole range of emotions and can help others move from experiencing negative emotions to feeling more productive emotions.

The following suggestions for increasing emotional awareness will help you tune in to those around you and gain sensitivity in selecting the right style for the job.

1. Be authoritative, not authoritarian. With the exception of the Armed Forces and crisis situations, when employees are expected to do it "because I told you so," being forced into compliance without an explanation generally creates dissatisfaction.

2. Provide social and emotional support. This is an essential part of the

work environment: something that has been recognized in the research since the days of the Hawthorne Effect. Things like family days, rituals to celebrate success, and willingness to revise policies to reduce

stress are all ways to enliven the social atmosphere. People need times to come together and socialize; it is a mistake to expect "all work and no play."

3. Give sensitive feedback. Feedback is perhaps one of the most powerful tools of an emotionally aware leader. The transformative influence of a valid critique can be astounding. Done well, it has turned an angry, disgruntled, unhappy employee into a cheerful worker who was a delight to be around.

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Exploring New Scenarios BY GERARD H. GAYNOR

Out-of-the-box thinking involves exploring new scenarios. In our search for solutions, we too often jump on the most apparent one without giving sufficient thought to its consequences. Developing several scenarios allows further consideration of alternatives.

Assume that you're attempting to introduce some new activity or a product or process in the group that you manage. You know that any new idea will be met with resistance from someone in some sector of the organization. So why not explore possible solutions rather than take the most obvious but not necessarily the most effective solution for the long term.

The process for developing scenarios is not much different from what you may be already doing but is formalized

into some form of document to provide guidance. The process includes:

1. Developing a statement of the problem
2. Developing appropriate scenarios to solve the identified problem
3. Analyzing the scenarios
4. Identifying the common elements from the various scenarios and evaluating them
5. Going through as many iterations as necessary
6. Selecting the best scenario
7. Stating your reasons and rationale for accepting a particular scenario

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The Strategic Importance of a “Sweet Spot”

BY ROBERT GORDMAN

Your company will thrive over the long haul only if you're able to leverage your strengths to create a customer-relevant position in the marketplace, a “sweet spot” that your competitors can't touch. Creating that sweet spot will enable you to successfully compete—and win—against the strongest competition. With a sweet spot, you know your strengths and you utilize them to create a competitive advantage. You're no longer in direct competition with your industry rivals.

Three great companies that have created and that thrive in sweet spots are Wal-Mart, Target and Walgreens. Wal-Mart's sweet spot is built around “Always Low Prices. Always.” Every element of its culture focuses on cost reduction and efficiency. Next on the price continuum is Target. It may be slightly more expensive, but it has built its sweet spot around being a “cool” place to shop. Every communication with the consumer says that Target is hip and cool. On the high end of the price scale is Walgreens. Everyone knows it is the highest priced. Its sweet spot is all about convenience. It's easy to get into the store, easy to get out, and anything you want is in stock.

All three companies sell a significant amount of the same or easily substitutable merchandise. For example, they each sell Crest toothpaste, often in stores located on the same street corner. The

customer who is strongly motivated by price is likely to buy toothpaste at Wal-Mart. “With it” people will purchase their toothpaste at Target. The Walgreens core customer is willing to pay a little more for toothpaste as a trade-off for convenience.

There's a lesson to be learned in the recent demise of Albertson's. Companies fail if they don't have a sweet spot.



Albertson's couldn't find its sweet spot in the marketplace. Instead, the company followed the age-old strategy of lowering prices in an attempt to attract the same customers that Wal-Mart appealed to. This strategy, instead of knowing exactly what core and must-have customers want, doomed the company to failure.

So how can companies avoid Albertson's fate?

■ **Use research to determine where your core and must-have customers position your company and other similar companies in the marketplace.** Your core customers are loyal to you and love the products or services you sell. They can describe why you are their preferred supplier and help you to understand your sweet spot.

Your must-have customers are potential customers who can become core customers if you let them know you have what they want. Very often, these customers simply don't know that you can satisfy their needs.

■ **Don't go heads up against the biggest competitor in your industry.** Build your business around a sweet spot that offers the right merchandise or services that meet the needs of your core and must-have customers. The end result? A healthy company with loyal customers who will provide profitable, sustained growth for the future.

The magic for a company happens when management matches the realities of the business with a meaningful customer-relevant “sweet spot” in the market. If you can't find it, you're not looking hard enough.

Robert Gordman is president of The Gordman Group and author of *The Must-Have Customer: 7 Steps to Winning the Customer You Haven't Got* (Truman Talley Books).

Gaining Team Consensus

BY JOSEPH STRAUB

Although they usually take longer to come to, consensus decisions typically receive more support because team members have all their oars in the water and are pulling in the same direction. Here are five questions to help you assess your team's readiness to reach a consensus:

1. Will all team members be active and voluntary participants? Members who conceal their true opinions or have hidden agendas can frustrate the process or produce a false consensus.

2. Do team members clearly under-

stand the key issues and concerns behind each of the tasks involved? If in doubt, you might propose a preliminary question-and-answer session to help them grasp the importance of each item they'll be asked to examine as they can set rational priorities.

3. Are they aware of all the circumstances and conditions that should influence their determination of priorities? For example, they may not understand the relative urgency of some tasks or realize how much time, budget or other resources they have at their disposal.

4. Will they be willing to reach a consensus on how to attack their various jobs? Before pursuing a consensus, it's important for group members to agree that they want to agree!

5. Are they willing to let the team's, department's and higher management's concerns override any personal agendas?

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Here's what you'll find on the
AMA Members-only Website www.amamember.org

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Everything You Need to Know About Your Office Holiday Party. If you want to have a job after the holiday season, take some advice from business etiquette expert Lydia Ramsey: don't underestimate the importance of the word "office" in the phrase "office party."

LEADERSHIP

Hooray for Providence! Are you one of those people who has always known exactly which professional path you've wanted to pursue? Sometimes, as John Lennon wrote, "Life is what happens while you're busy making other plans."

MANAGEMENT

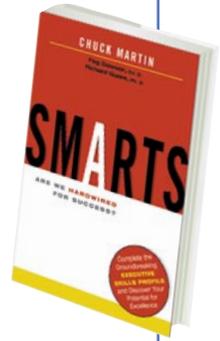
Is Your Organization a "Red Zone" or a "Green Zone?" Red zone workplaces are full of unhappy, blame-seeking, non-cooperative people. If this sounds like your workplace, perhaps it's time to seek out "greener" pastures.

GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES

The Bigger Picture. From the Human Research Institute, here's a sneak peak at the hottest international trends: controlling costs, raising productivity/performance and orchestrating execution on a global scale.

Book of the Month:

Smarts: Are We Hardwired for Success? by Chuck Martin, Peg Dawson and Richard Guare. Find success by learning how to play to your strengths and stop wasting time on your weaknesses, with the authors' groundbreaking executive skills self-assessment.



For more information about this book and AMACOM's extensive catalog of business titles, visit www.amanet.org/books

AMA Conferences/Special Events Calendar

JANUARY 10 WEBCAST • RED FLAGS: How to Spot—and Stop—Fraud in Your Business. This hour-long briefing will offer real-world examples of fraud and gives you proven tactics for uncovering and curtailing fraud in your organization.

JANUARY 24 WEBCAST • Difficult Performance Reviews: 10 Strategies to Keep You on Track. For most managers, the toughest discussions are coming up soon in the form of annual performance reviews. Naturally, the sessions can lead many to feel a little uncomfortable. This webcast provides 10 guidelines to help you prepare for your discussions in a way that invites balanced participation, stays true to your message, focuses on performance and reduces defensiveness.

JANUARY 31 WEBCAST • Winning the Talent Wars: Planning for the Baby Boom Vacuum. This Webcast gives you a clear picture of the

coming labor shortages as Baby Boomers retire—along with the steps required to attract and retain motivated, loyal and productive Gen X employees. Based on a wealth of statistics, research, interviews and firsthand experience, the webcast explores these sweeping trends and provides advice critical to keeping your company ahead of the curve.

FEBRUARY 7 WEBCAST • Turning Strategy Into Execution. This program presents results of the latest AMA/HRI global survey focusing on determining the key factors that are influencing the execution of strategy in organizations, now and in the future.

FEBRUARY 16 WEBCAST • Leading Extraordinary Customer Service. To survive in today's challenging business climate organizations need to create customer loyalty by providing remarkable and outstanding service. This webcast shows you how to build and manage

world class service delivery within your organization. Dr. Chip R. Bell, best-selling AMACOM author of the newly revised *Managing Knock Your Socks Off Service*, will discuss proven approaches for building service excellence and practical tools, tips and techniques you can use to have a real impact on your organization's bottom line.

MARCH 7 WEBCAST • The Successful Insider: Internal Consulting Skills for the HR Professional. HR professionals must recognize and analyze an issue and develop a plan and solution for moving forward and implementing project goals which are in alignment with the overall organizational goals. In order to do so, it is crucial to view themselves as internal consultants to the functional areas they support.

For details and to register for any of these events, go to www.amanet.org/events or call 1-800-262-9699.

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