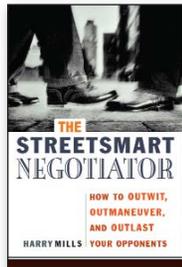


The Credibility Formula

Executives and managers must be credible to successfully lead a team, especially in tough times. As Harry Mills, author of *The Streetsmart Negotiator*, observed in his book, credibility is the sum of trust and expertise.



Mills offers these tips to build the credibility of team members and those whose support the team needs:

- Don't oversell your position with exaggerated claims. Exaggerations weaken the rest of your case.

- Never claim more than you think they'll believe. Your product or service idea may be the best, but if you can't convince, you're better off moderating your claim.

- Point out the disadvantages of your idea. It lends credibility to everything else you say.

- Build up a portfolio of reputable third-party endorsements and testimonials. This is probably the best proof you can offer.

- Use precise numbers. People are convinced more by precise numbers than rounded numbers.

- Use the power of print. Printed publications such as books and magazines can support your case.

Excerpted, with permission of the publisher, from *The Streetsmart Negotiator: How to Outwit, Outmaneuver, and Outlast Your Opponents* by Harry Mills. Copyright 2008, Harry Mills. Published by AMACOM, a division of American Management Association. For more information about this book and others, visit www.amanet.org/books

SHINE During Times of Change

BY LISA DAVIS

During times of change brought on by industry shifts and economic troubles, your staff needs you to SHINE. That is, you need to be supportive, honest, informative, no-nonsense, and enthusiastic.

S The S stands for supportive. You can support your staff by demonstrating, by what you do and say, that you recognize their concerns and that you will do everything within your power to make

sure they have the training, resources, and time to come to terms with the upcoming change. Acknowledge people's existing skills and show them how these skills will be used after the planned change. Make people feel valued, and show them that their views, opinions, and contribution to the team are important.

H The H refers to honest. No matter how appealing it may be from your point of view, resist the urge to sugarcoat the situation. Be honest about the bad news as well as the good news. If your employees discover that, at any stage during the change process, you have been less than totally honest, they will lose heart. They will assume the worst and find it hard to believe anything else you have to say.

I The I refers to informative. People need to know what is going on. Even bad news is better than no news at all. When people aren't kept informed, then rumor, gossip, and wild imaginings can

take hold and spread like wildfire. Arrange weekly, or even daily, team briefings. Keep the meetings short and to the point. Give any new information and answer questions openly and honestly. If

there are rumors circulating, bring them out into the open and put them to rest.

N The N refers to no-nonsense. As a leader, you have to get used to the idea that it's a lonely job

and tough at the top. You may not, for whatever reason, be wholeheartedly committed to the upcoming change. Even so, you have to remain calm, steady, firm, and consistent. The team takes its lead from you. Sometimes, stress causes people to behave in flighty ways or to have unrealistic expectations. Keep both feet on the ground and don't be diverted from your plan. Stick to your guns, keep your promises, and don't change your mind from moment to moment.

E The E stands for enthusiastic. You have to show your enthusiasm if you want to carry the team with you. Don't let the "It isn't going to work" brigade get to you. Whatever doubts you may have, keep them private. When you are with the team, be relentless in showing your commitment and enthusiasm.

Excerpted, with permission of the publisher, from *Shortcuts for Smart Managers* by Lisa Davis. Published by AMACOM, a division of American Management Association. For more information on this book and others, visit www.amanet.org/books



Inclusion Drives Business: Connections@CDW

BY MELISSA DONALDSON

Despite the tremendous economic pressure on companies today, organizations need to be as alert to future issues as they are to these. For one, there is the matter of talent management. A key concern is today's diversity and inclusion practices. These need to be reviewed to ensure that they can handle today's demands and also will set the stage for the longer term.

According to U.S. Census data, 70 percent of new entrants to the U.S. workforce were women and minorities in 2008. Further, a Census report released in August 2008 found that by 2042 roughly 55 percent of the working population will be made up of minorities—up 34 percent from 2008.

Let's look at CDW's approach. CDW Corporation is a leading provider of technology solutions for business, government, and education and is ranked No. 39 on *Forbes'* list of America's largest private companies. CDW considers success in diversity and inclusion "winning together." In this vein, our workforce is not referred to as "employees" but rather "coworkers" in order to foster a community environment in which everyone is encouraged to excel and take ownership for the success of the company.

Executive Engagement

For any diversity and inclusion practice, executive support is paramount to the success of the programming. Executive participation illustrates to coworkers that the C-suite considers the effort relevant and useful. As a start, in 2002 CDW CEO and Chairman John A. Edwardson, to strengthen CDW's diversity initiatives, worked with the executive committee to create an Inclusion Task Force solely responsible for conducting benchmarking and research internally and externally to determine best practices for diversity management. In addition, the task force looked at internal support mechanisms that were currently in place and also assessed potential obstacles to success.

A key to implementation was to assign a single point of ownership to oversee the initiative. With engagement and support from



the C-suite, CDW's new diversity programming was born and can still be seen today.

Programs in Play

In the past year, CDW launched a new diversity program as part of a continuous effort to prepare our workforce for future growth opportunities, and strengthen our ability to forge new markets. The very name of CDW's diversity and inclusion practice—Connections@CDW—suggests that it is all about making solid and dependable connections in the workplace and marketplace in order to excel.

An extension of the Connections@CDW program includes "Connections Nodes." Connections Nodes are formal, supported, and funded coworker network groups that provide the company additional avenues to truly leverage diverse perspectives at the grassroots level for a competitive advantage. Executive sponsors provide oversight, guidance, and counsel to ensure the networks have the resources and support to achieve their goals.

Currently, active networks include the African Heritage Network, the Hispanic Heritage Network, the Women in Sales Network, and the Women's Leadership Network. Our networks are open to all coworkers—regardless of function, personal background, or location—and free to join. These Nodes are designed not only to connect coworkers with like interests, challenges, and perspectives, but also establish a greater connection between coworkers and the business overall.

One example of using the Connections Nodes in meeting real business challenges

is multigenerational inclusion. Unlike many companies that are planning for the Baby Boomer exodus, our organization is heavily populated with sharp and talented Generation Xers and Ys who value relationships and contribution. We offer the Connections Nodes as a resource to assist them with building a support network, professional development, expanding contribution to the success of the business, and a means to give back to causes greater than themselves. In addition, experienced coworkers have the opportunity to serve as mentors or become mentees for continued career growth.

Results

Our success is truly defined by coworkers winning together. As a result of the Connections@CDW programming, we have experienced a gradual increase in diversity hiring throughout our offices. In 2007, 35 percent of our new hires were people of color. Females make up 31 percent of our leadership team, with 32 percent holding executive roles. Through our varied initiatives designed to meet the needs of all of our coworkers, we have a deeper understanding as to what drives them to stay engaged and be successful.

For companies looking to advance their own diversity and inclusion practices, just remember that if you get the feel of the organization right, the look will follow. However, it takes executive engagement and the commitment and accountability from all to drive results. Therefore, while we most certainly invest in and track the demographic makeup of the organization at all levels, we also focus on fostering an inclusive environment where all coworkers can excel. To that end, we monitor the impact of career mobility systems, such as mentoring, performance management, and promotions.

Melissa Donaldson is senior manager for inclusion practices at CDW Corporation and the very first head of diversity and inclusion for the company. Donaldson is responsible for developing strategic plans for diverse recruiting, driving diversity and inclusion training, education and communication initiatives, overseeing the development and operation of inclusion councils and affinity groups, and forging partnerships with external networks and organizations.

Five Actions to Engage Your Employees

During economic downturns, it is critical that your employees are engaged in the work and enthusiastic about the challenges before them. In their recent book *Closing the Engagement Gap*, authors Julie Gebauer and Don Lowman, with Joanne Gordon, identified five inter-related courses of action that will increase engagement and, ultimately, performance and also competitive advantage.

Let's look at these five actions.

1. Know them. "Organizations need to put their workforce under the same microscope that they apply to their customers," say the authors. They point out how employees make choices every day about which tasks they will undertake and with what level of focus they will attack these. Taking time to know what's important to each individual, as well as to the staff as a whole, is the first step toward changing the way employees view their work.

2. Grow them. To effectively grow employees, as well as the organization, top management must foster a culture of ongoing learning. A learning culture



Most people want to have an emotional connection to their work as well as to the organization...

ensures that employees have the right skills and knowledge to further the business objectives that drive financial growth, while simultaneously furthering their own careers.

3. Inspire them. Most people want to have an emotional connection to their work as well as to the organization for which they work. True, few employees actually describe what they're looking for as an "emotional connection," but

employees are more inclined to meet and exceed expectations if they have a sense of pride in their work and a sincere interest in the well-being of their enterprise.

4. Involve them. Employees give more of themselves when they feel they are active participants in their employer's mission, not passive players just following orders. Critical to this is creating collaborative opportunities with colleagues and, even more important, giving people freedom to act in ways that improve operations, reduce costs, and assist customers.

5. Reward them. The rewards include the obvious and immediate forms of monetary compensation like salary, health care benefits, and the like. But rewards also include non-financial elements, like appreciation and recognition. It's this last type of reward that has the greatest potential to boost engagement.

Excerpted, with permission of the publisher, from *Closing the Engagement Gap* by Julie Gebauer and Don Lowman, with Joanne Gordon. Copyright 2008, Towers and Perrin, Inc. Published by Portfolio, a Penguin Group Imprint.

Learn to Say No If You Want Yes to Mean Something

In today's 24/7/365 world of can-do and must-do, say Marvin Weisbord and Sandra Janoff, it's easy to believe that one's only reply to a request is yes. But there is a cost to saying yes when the request is higher than reality will bear. The two highly respected facilitators of meetings for corporate transformations warn that "many conscientious souls are addicted to saying yes when every synapse in their bodies scream 'no way!'"

In the book by Weisbord and Janoff entitled *Don't Just Do Something, Stand There*, they observe how "faster/shorter/cheaper may be the 21st century's corporate mantra but too often faster and shorter ends up meaning more frequent, less conclusive meetings with costly unintended long-term consequences. On a personal basis, it can mean lost integrity



or a lost reputation for good judgment."

According to Weisbord and Janoff, there is cause for a no reply under the right circumstances, like the following:

Logistical. The deadline is too tight and the resources can't be found in the time allotted.

Existential. The request exceeds the limits of human capability.

Pragmatic. It's not realistic. For

instance, you believe that high participation leads to successful implementation and are asked to get hundreds or thousands of others to commit to plans that they had no hand in shaping.

Self-protective. Saying yes would endanger the respect others have in you. For instance you have been charged with merging two departments, neither of which reports to you. You could do this if you had the clout. You don't.

Value-laden. The objective violates a deeply held value of yours.

Realistic. You suspect that the person making the request has imposed conditions almost sure to set up a failure.

Just plain wrong. You believe that the request would make you an accessory to acts you consider immoral, unethical, or illegal.



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

HR/TRAINING

Partying During the Downturn. To party or not to party? For many corporate leaders, that is indeed the question as 2008 limps to a close. One thing is sure: nobody's partying like it's 1999.

SALES & MARKETING

A Socratic Approach to Successful Selling. The Socratic method is just as relevant today as it was in ancient Greece. A salesperson can create a meaningful "Socratic" dialogue with a prospect through a series of simple, open-ended questions.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Six Benefits of a Bottom-Rung Job. Everybody's got to start somewhere. The author of *Everything I Know About Business I Learned at McDonald's* explains what Jay Leno, Sharon Stone, and Jeff Bezos already know: a low-level job can teach you a lot.

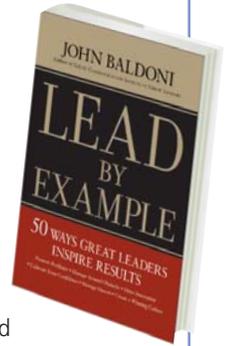
LEADERSHIP

Leadership vs. Power. Does power corrupt, or are corrupt people drawn to power? True leaders, explains Robert Wilson, are motivated by the achievement of goals for the common good, not by personal gain.

Book of the Month

Lead By Example: 50 Ways Great Leaders Inspire Results, by John Baldoni (AMACOM, 2008). How do leaders inspire others to follow them? Baldoni explains: By setting the right example, acting the part, and learning to deal with the tough stuff.

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



AMA Conferences/Special Events Calendar

DECEMBER 10, WEBCAST • The Levity Effect: Boosting Employee Engagement and Productivity. Being less serious at work is something you should take seriously. Research shows that leaders who are light-hearted earn more money and trust. In addition, employees who are considered humorous are vastly more likely to get promoted. Join us as we examine the remarkable power of fun and humor in building a more productive, engaged, and loyal staff.

JANUARY 14, WEBCAST • Leveraging Social Networks in a Downturn: Better, Cheaper, Faster Ways to Drive Business Results. Corporate Social Networking holds great promise for boosting business performance in a world of fragmented workforces. Increasing the connectivity of your organiza-

tion can increase employee engagement and the speed at which critical knowledge is shared. This Webcast explores how this enhanced connectivity helps companies compete by directly linking employees with each other as well as customers and partners.

JANUARY 21, WEBCAST • Preventing and Resolving Conflict in Cyberspace: How to Build Sustainable Collaboration in Virtual Teams. Globalization of business, distributed teams, and the increasing number of people working from home are facts of today's organizational life. Without the availability of face-to-face communication, the way people interact, collaborate, and resolve conflicts has dramatically changed. Join us as we examine best practices for communicating and collaborating in a virtual workplace.

MARCH 4, WEBCAST • Leading Business Teams Through Turbulent Times. Rapid change and uncertainty can hinder and even crush team performance. Join Howard Guttman, author of *Great Business Teams*, as he offers keen insights on motivating and guiding your team to respond to any business challenge.

MARCH 18, WEBCAST • Network Your Way to Success: Tips & Techniques. The challenge to cultivate strong networks confronts nearly everyone in business today, whether it's the public or private sector and regardless of industry. Effective investments in your networks can make you smarter, more knowledgeable, and better grounded, as well as a more agile learner and collaborator.

117447

December 2008 Issue
Executive Matters
 Member Newsletter

1601 Broadway
 New York, NY 10019-7420

AMA
 American Management
 Association International®

Nonprofit
 U.S. Postage
 PAID
 American Management
 Association International