

Career Rx

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Speaking, Communicating and Making a Difference

In today's economy, many of us are holding on to the jobs we have. Some of us are not truly present in our jobs. Rather, we are going through the motions without gaining satisfaction or a sense of accomplishment at the end of the day or week. Life is not always utopia, but there should be some aspects of our lives that give us a sense of fulfillment or satisfaction. What motivates us to perform each day? Is it the paycheck, an extrinsic reward, or the work itself, an intrinsic reward? As we develop professionally, we choose the cultures we work in. Some cultures allow open dialogue or discussion, others do not. In many cultures, there are unwritten rules of what is and what is not acceptable. Knowing the culture you work in and understanding the organization's unwritten cultural norms are critical for success.

It is never a good idea to speak without calculating what you want to communicate and what the implications are. How effective are you when you speak? When you are emotional, speaking up is typically not the best option. Usually when emotions are high, you are inclined to say more than you intend to or say things you would not have said when calm. Being quiet may be a better option if there's nothing to be gained by speaking up. Remember to know your audience to understand which approach is best.

In general, more errors result from a lack of communication than too much of it. Each situation needs to be judged on its own merit, the players involved and when to speak, how to speak and when to reserve your comments. Sometimes as the new one on a team, the best way to learn the unwritten rules is by observing and listening in order to understand the environment.

"Courage is what it takes to stand up and speak; courage is also what it takes to sit down and listen."

Winston Churchill

There will be times in our careers that we will do busy work and there are times when we will do career building work. It is all a balance of understanding when we may need to tread water and when we can swim to a new destination. When you are treading water, think about the attitude you bring to the job, your day, and those around you. What can you do to make the day a good one for yourself and others? Do you smile and provide energy, or do you drag yourself and those around you down?

"A pessimist sees the difficulty in every opportunity; an optimist sees the opportunity in every difficulty."

Winston Churchill

Do you wonder why or how you can do something differently or make a difference? Think how powerful your day would be if your frame of mind enabled you to see how you can make a difference, even in the smallest sense. When was the last time you held the door for someone? Allowed another driver to pass into your lane safely? How often do you extend yourself? Do you see yourself as part of a community or just in your own world?

Think of your career reputation. Are you invaluable to your organization? Your manager? Your clients? What do they know about you? How do you conduct yourself at work? Are you a different person at work than at home? How do you communicate your values? Your actions dictate who you are. Over time, people get to know you based on your pattern of behavior. Today's marketplace is demanding constant change. It can be challenging to keep pace if you only see what is right in front of you versus seeing the possibilities. Creativity and alternative solutions are in high demand as many businesses are facing issues that they have not dealt with in the past. Attitude has a lot to do with one's success.

Think about how to be a valued employee to your organization and your manager, but best of all, be the person that is intrinsically motivated to be the best you can be in the work you perform.

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Lisa's extensive human resources and coaching experience with Fortune 500 companies, small enterprises, medium-sized firms, and non-profit organizations gives her the unique ability to bring together wide-ranging perspectives on career transitions, executive and leadership development. She has consulted with a wide variety of sectors — consumer goods, financial services, healthcare, media and entertainment, pharmaceutical and life sciences, publishing, professional services, technology, and non-profit. Lisa has a passion for motivational speaking, conducts career forums, and provides executive and career coaching.

Lisa's greatest strength is that she enables individuals and organizations to see themselves in new ways, freeing them to achieve their goals. Lisa can be reached at Lisa@ChenofskySinger.com.