



Caswell **CORPORATE COACHING** Company

Making companies better places to work - worldwide

NEWSLETTER
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Bill Caswell is an experienced coach of CEOs and senior executives around the globe. The author of 14 books, Bill has penned the 12-book series *The Respect Revolution* written, by a CEO for CEOs, as a guide to getting your company to *Excellence*.

An 'MBA' for you?

Earn your *Practical MBA* in a 13-session, face-to-face seminar over 3 months on Thursdays (and some Fridays).

When:

9 August, 2013 to
2 November, 2013

Where: Ottawa area

Price: \$10,000

Limit: 10 persons only

Ask for more details.

To Wall or not to Wall

Or, how to arrange your office

When we enter office climates, we are usually confronted with a maze of worker cubicles, this being the current wisdom for office organization. Cubicles are used because they are deemed to be more efficient – or perhaps, make these companies more efficient. More than anything else cubicles find their way into office environments because they are cheaper to build and they fall into step with 'everybody else is doing it'.

I am here to say this is a ridiculous situation for all companies and if you have the desire to be a winning company, you will consider replacing cubicles with walls.

What do people in cubicled-environments say?

- I have trouble concentrating sometimes here because of the conversations all around me – noisy and disconcerting.
- Although I don't have personal matters every days, on those I do, I have to speak almost in a whisper.
- If the personal matter is serious, I have to leave my office and find a private place to have the conversation.
- If I have a delicate business call, when my voice might raise, I can't handle it as well as I might if I was in a private space.
- To talk with a co-worker or a person who reports to me about disciplinary or confidential matters, our conversation is muted and not nearly as effective as it should be, or
- I seek a new place to meet the co-worker, finding a private space somewhere and it is not easy to find. Besides, other co-workers' casual upward glances have a questioning look of: 'What's going on?', which doesn't help any of us.
- For me the worst part of cubicle living is having people drop in on me any time to discuss matters quite unrelated to office work.

Not really measurable is the degree of prestige conferred onto each employee who has a private office vs. those who don't.

At CCCC we have an adage "Let the numbers do the talking." So, shall we look at some numbers?

Although we have put in some figures, (in the following table on the next page) it makes more sense for you to put in your own numbers to see what happens for your situation.

Discovery 2013

Where:

On a 35-acre Ottawa River site with home-style cooking and hospitality

Who:

You and companies just like yours – practitioners of some of the concepts of CCCC

When:

25 Sept Evening
26 Sept all day
27 Sept all day, 2013

What:

Exchange ideas and pick up the very latest management tools

Price:

\$499, \$399, \$199

Ask for more details.

Bill Caswell is always available for comments or questions at:

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Loss calculations for cubicle office spaces:

| Problem | Loss in minutes due to lack of privacy | Number of such events per day | Total number of lost minutes per day | Comments |
|---|--|-------------------------------|--------------------------------------|---|
| I have trouble concentrating | 1 | 5 | 5 | |
| Speaking on personal matters | 1 | 1 | 1 | |
| To and fro walking to leave the office for personal matters | 4 | 1 per week | 4/5 = .80 | |
| Delicate business call | 1 | 1 | 1 | |
| Talking to a co-worker on delicate matters | 1 | 2 per week | 2/5 = .40 | Time is lost by lengthening out the conversation to make sure the point is made without the usual voice inflections |
| To and fro walking to leave the office for employee matters | 4 | 2 per week | 8/5 = 1.6 | |
| Drop in visitors (non-business issues) | 5 | 1 | 5 | |
| Loss of drop-in visitors' own time (non-business issues) | 5 | 1 | 5 | |
| Loss of prestige | | | 0.2 | We feel prestige is not measurable but it does have some effect on the person and the business. We use it here as a number that rounds off the total. |
| Total | | | 20 minutes | |

20 minutes per day of loss at an average salary of \$25 per hour over an average year of 233 work days = $20/60 \times \$25 \times 233 = \$1,942$ loss per year.

(What we don't show is the cost of replacing the loss of an employee "who can't stand working in cubicles" and departs the company. Assume one such person leaves every five years. A replacement cost of \$20,000 spread over 5 years = \$4,000/year doubling our calculations above.)

Cost of alternatives:

| Item | \$ | Comments |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------|---|
| Cost of a 10' x 10' cubicle | \$2,500 | |
| Cost of 3 walls and a door + painting | \$5,000 | |
| Difference | \$2,500 | |
| Annual cost of walls difference | $\$2,500 \times .3 = \750 | Capital costs are amortized at 30% p.a. |
| Time to return investment | $\$750/\$1942 = .3$ years | Or 4 months!!!! |

That is, after 4 months the renovation will pay for itself, and if you do not renovate, you will continue to lose \$1,942 each year per employee. Now the question is, where does the cubicle rationale lie as you attempt to move your company forward?

Bill