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|  | CASWELL CORPORATE O COACHING COMPANY   *Making good companies even better – worldwide*  **August 2020 Newsletter #192**  2 | |  |
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|  | **WILLIAM E. CASWELL** | Don’t Piss off your Employees ***During the Covid-19 period, I wrote my 28th book titled “Discovering the Awful Truth” which summarized my 20-year frustration with business leaders who, while paying me great sums of money to nod their heads in agreement, would not take the step to nurture their employees one by one to success1. What it took me 65 pages to state emphatically, came smoothly out of the mouth of a highly successful Ottawa company leader (his company now exceeding $1 billion in sales). His closing, single piece of advice during a public presentation was: “Don’t piss off your employees!”***  His point was that your goodemployees, if pissed off, will become your competitors. You do not need another skillful competitor. Or your pissed-off employee will sulk and if not that, will certainly not be performing at his best level. My international intervention experience and 20 busy years devoted to helping companies, agrees completely with this assessment.  Presumably, you are reading this newsletter to pick up management tips. My own view is that this is one tip that managers and leaders like to hear but do not like to practice. ‘Why not’ deserves a deep psychological paper, not a 2-page newsletter. But the ‘why, what and how’, of not unnecessarily irritating your employees, can be readily explained.  **WHY employees become pissed off**  Humans are very delicate creatures, far more delicate than she shows outwardly. The brave act takes place because all employees and all supervisors are attempting to present a strong image in our reward-centric work environment. Alone with a confident, such as a co-worker, or spouse, the businessperson is willing to share her doubts. Or perhaps she would express her tender spots in her personal journal (as discovered from diaries of historical individuals such as Queen Victoria and Winston Churchill).  Secondly, a leader has a far more threat possibility to dole out than she can imagine. An angry word from a leader weighs far more heavily on the employee than the same word from a co-worker.  A third point is that our brains are wired to be sensitive to danger and threats. While we may get a single positive hit of dopamine for the praise received the day that a job had been well done, if that same day we endured a negative experience (such as an accusation – even if it’s valid), we would get 3 or 4 negative chemical hits to our brain’s punishment-and-reward centre. We get that negative hit so that we, rats in the maze, will not take that false and useless path again or we humans will avoid having a second bad experience. In the workplace, avoiding that experience means less interaction with the boss – even when, logically speaking, increased interaction with the boss would benefit both. But logic is no longer speaking, emotions are – and we all know that emotions trump logic every time.  **WHAT actions piss off an employee**   * Pointing a finger at a person * Not meeting commitments made * Resisting pay increases when due * Threats, implied by anger or strong words  1. *The 9th Volume of The Respect Revolution, titled “Feeding or Starving the Organization”, (2004) by W. Caswell, attempts to make the case of the need for ‘feeding’ your employees.*   **CCCC Events**  **20 July 2020**  *Launch of online courses:*  *-PAVF*  *-OAK*  *-Painless meeting*  *-BKMS English*  *-BKMS Spanish*  **Summer 2020**  *Planning, Cornwall Ontario, Canada*  **Summer 2020**  *Practical MBA, Ottawa Canada*  **Summer 2020**  *Best Kept Mangmnt*  *Secrets (Spanish)*  *Fiesta Americana*  *Puerto Sao Paulo*  *Guadalajara Mexico*  **Summer 2020**  *Planning*  *Holiday Inn, Estampida*  *Guadalajara Mexico*  **Summer 2020**  *Planning*  *Alamo Industrial P.*  *Guadalajara Mexico*  **20 October 2020**  *Best Kept Mangmnt*  *Secrets*  *Grand Hotel*  *Toronto Canada*  **18 November 2020**  *Best Kept Mangmnt*  *Secrets*  *Best Western O’Connor*  *Ottawa Canada*  **25 November 2020**  *Best Kept Mangmnt*  *Secrets*  *Hotel A. Kensington*  *Calgary Canada*   * Accusations or blame – even using the word “you”   All CCCC public events are suspended until such time as clarity exists about safety of public gatherings.   * Canceling meetings or changing meeting dates with him * Lack of clarity about job expectations or lines of reporting * Most rewards systems (because they are often viewed as unfair) * Not including the employee in decisions or actions that affect him * Favoring one person over another – especially if it involves favoring yourself * Being abusive: shouting, swearing at a person, or heaven forbid, sexual or racial slurs * Not supplying the employee with the equipment or training that he requested (i.e. needs) * Suggestive body language: rolling of eyes, deep sighs, heavy stares, slamming fists or doors * Showing insensitivity to the employee’s own concerns – no matter how trivial they may seem   **HOW – practical ways that you can do something about it**  First, accept that your employees are very, very, very delicate – no matter the macho or heroic image she may be trying to project. Yet, you have to make sure that the job will get done2.  Learn to avoid the dozen WHAT actions listed above. Keep working to master them all.  Listen, listen and listen. Listening comes in many forms including:   * Having an open office door * Appointing an ombudsperson * Establishing a suggestion-box system * Group meetings in many different formats (weekly meetings, planning sessions, strategizing)   Be willing to take blame even when you know you are not guilty. This is a real shift from our natural response habit. “Perhaps I did not understand” when internally, you feel that you did understand. What this action does is to lift the guilt and bad feeling from the employee to you. Or in other words, it lifts the implied threat that has the employee’s brain waging a chemical war because of you. That is, act as if you have broad shoulders.  Do not accuse the employee, even when she is guilty. Instead state a fact or ask a question. “You are late”: while it may be a true statement, is accusatory and triggers, and associates, the 3 or 4 negative brain hits with you. Instead, the fact may be stated: “This job starts at 9 am.” Or “Is there some obstacle preventing a 9 am start? I’d like to know so that we can do something about it.”  Hold one-on-one weekly meetings with each employee in order that you can listen and so that she senses that you really care about her well-being. If you feel you can’t meet every week, do it at least every second week – and make sure to develop a shared schedule for these meetings.  Last, and probably the most difficult action you can take, is to instruct yourself: “Satan, get thee behind me” at the point when the Devil comes out to ‘protect your interests’. That is, at the time when you yourself are so pissed off with the employee you want to scream, you fully restrain yourself. You must acknowledge that your emotions are dominating when, in fact, they should not. Take that messy S.O.B., who just screwed up another assignment, with you onto the higher plane. Put into action all the rules you have agreed to apply to your staff (after having mastered these instructions).  **Benefits of Nurturing**  A healthily nurtured employee will cooperate more readily with his boss. You may feel that you are wasting time with meetings, but our own studies have shown that a 10% across-the-board increase in cooperation leads to a 30% increase in productivity. That is because less mistakes are being made and more things are working as they should.  **Measure of Success**  You will know that you have been successful when a number of indicators fall into place, such as:   * You become in awe of what the employee can do * You personally enjoy your exchanges with that employee * Productivity ‘mysteriously’ increases by a noticeable amount.   **Conclusion**  Being a leader is very difficult because it entails a simple truth: you gain productivity by nurturing each person below you to her own level of excellence. Great leaders achieve impressive results because of the teamwork they build around them. |  |
| *Bill Caswell* is an experienced coach of CEOs and executives around the globe.He is the author of 28 books, written, by a CEO for CEOs. |

*2 The job gets done better and faster if the employee feels that he is not under undue pressure or threat.*