



Excel Leader Advisory Letter

ISSUED BY THE EXCEL LEADERSHIP GROUP

April 2011

Excel's Mission Statement

Help business leaders exceed their goals by creating a culture that unleashes the talents and creativity of all associates.

Thought for April

"Take away my people, but leave my factories, and soon grass will grow on the factory floors. Take away my factories, but leave my people, and soon we will have a new and better factory."

-Andrew Carnegie



A broad diversity of viewpoints is certainly an important asset in any organization. Diversity can not only produce superior solutions to a company's challenges, but also help leaders avoid the trap of "group think", where everyone is of a single mindset that can lead to the wrong conclusion.

On the other hand, diversity of viewpoints can often lead to conflict. The effective management of this conflict often separates successful leaders from those who fail to achieve their objectives. Conflict management can be thought of as effectively negotiating and resolving disagreements.

Since effective conflict management is such an important skill, here are a few coaching tips to help you improve in this key area:

1. Don't avoid conflict. Conflict will often linger, and even fester, if not dealt with. Face conflict up front ... sooner rather than later. Facilitate a resolution that everyone can support. One beneficial by-product of this process is fewer hard feelings among team members.

2. Find common ground. Begin your conflict resolution discussions by asking team members what elements can be agreed on. By taking this approach, you will set a tone that fosters a productive conversation regarding the topic at issue.

3. Be flexible. As a leader, be willing to alter your perspective and consider a wide range of alternatives and options. Resist digging in your heels or putting up barriers.

4. Be creative. Building on point #2, use brainstorming to help your team invent options for resolving issues. Create a win-win environment where there is mutual gain.

5. Be emotionally aware. Be self-aware of your emotions and focus on the issues rather than personal matters ... separate people from the problem at hand. Also, be aware of the emotions of others. Members of your team may be afraid of change or angry when they perceive their position is not heard or considered. Be responsive to their needs and demonstrate empathy for their feelings in that situation. This will help you get your points across to a more receptive audience.

6. Be objective. Insist on using data or some other objective criteria to resolve an issue. Avoid reaching conclusions based strictly on emotions.

7. Use effective listening skills. Actively listen to others' viewpoints. Paraphrase what you heard to enhance understanding. This also clearly demonstrates that, as a leader, you genuinely

care about others and what they have to offer.

A very good resource for further reading on this topic is: [Getting to Yes: Negotiating Agreement Without Giving In](#), by Roger Fisher and William Ury.

As always, I encourage you to contact me anytime at mike@excelleadership.net with your comments and questions. Also, if I can be of assistance with your coaching needs, please contact me. We'll talk to you again in May. Be well, have a great month and best regards.



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on your company's leadership team.*