

# JUICY WORK NEWS

Updates from The Learning Advantage

May 2018



## THE Learning Advantage



### Mobley's Musings

Three clients recently changed jobs. All were good at their jobs, motivated, and had strong relationships with direct reports, peers and their managers. They had been with their companies for 7-11 years. And all felt taken for granted and underappreciated.

I remember how excited I felt when I started a new job. There seemed to be a honeymoon period where I felt that the organization was really happy to have me. I got a lot of positive feedback, exciting projects and rapid promotions. After a few years, it seemed that the same good work was expected and less appreciated. Sometimes a new person was hired who got the attention and recognition I had gotten before. I became disillusioned and when the head hunters called, I was much more open and took another job.

Is it the case that in any relationship we lose sight of all the good and start to take the other person for granted? Do we as employees stop doing our best work and exert less energy into the relationship? How do we break the cycle or should we expect that's just the way it is?

Sandy



### Ask Sandy

As people move up in their careers, sometimes their voice is heard differently from when they were more junior. In their new role

### Why Happiness Matters

In seeking "juicy" workplaces where my clients would excel, I realize that one size—or juiciness—doesn't fit all. Some companies are known for their creativity and innovation, like Apple and Facebook. Others, like Google and Spotify, describe their workplaces as technology playgrounds. And others simply emphasize having fun, like Zappos. My goal is to match a client's vision of happiness as an employee to a company's commitment and approach to achieving it.

Recently while working with Nannette Bowler, the innovative Director of the Department of Family Services in Fairfax County, VA., I was reminded of the

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they say now, as an informal opinion is perceived as a solid directive. People may not feel any differently than they did when they were at a junior level, but now their voice or their opinions have taken on added significance along with their new title.

I was coaching Ted, an executive vice president (EVP) at a computer firm who had a dramatic experience of this. He and his Chief of Staff were having lunch in the company cafeteria when Ted mentioned that the green walls seemed dull and prison like. They finished lunch and went back to work. A few weeks later, Ted and his Chief of Staff went to lunch and Ted noticed that the walls had been repainted to a sunny yellow. He remarked about the change and his Chief said, "You told us to change it." This was a poignant realization that casual comments could be heard as an order or request.

When I was meeting with a group of military leaders, I heard a junior officer comment that the room was cold. Heads nodded, but nothing changed. Then a senior officer came in and remarked on how cold it was. Three people jumped up to adjust the temperature.

What does this mean for us? For people in senior positions we need to be clear about whether we are voicing an opinion or making a request. Recognizing that people are sensitive to power dynamics, we need to be even more clear about whether we are stating an opinion or making a request.

**Learning for Leaders** – Create an environment where people feel free to ask if you are stating an opinion or making a request.

**Coaches Corner** – Observe your client in meetings. How do others react when she makes a statement?

If you have questions you'd like Sandy to address in future newsletters, email them to [sandy@learningadvantageinc.com](mailto:sandy@learningadvantageinc.com)

healthy workplace. Using as a foundation the book *First, Break All the Rules* from the Gallup organization, she created a leadership academy to develop the next generation of leaders. Each class is divided into learning teams of five to six people that are then tasked with examining one of the department's strategic goals or key initiatives.

- What makes you happy at work?
- Help others to feel good.
- Pay it forward!

**Read more.**



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