

JUICY WORK NEWS

Updates from The Learning Advantage

July 2018



THE Learning Advantage

Mobley's Musings

Did you ever spend half a day looking for something that you could easily have replaced or recreated in less time or for little cost? Why do we hang on to old articles, presentations, thumb drives? I find that clutter makes it harder to work or find the things I use every day because of saving things I might need someday. Whether you have clutter in your office or on your computer, spending some time cleaning it out makes it easier to find what you really want.

Do you notice how it feels when you clean out a messy area? I feel more energy and motivation to work. Early in my career I noticed that I could not start a difficult project if I had a lot of papers on my desk. I wasn't sure if I was procrastinating or waiting for inspiration. When I can see only wood on my desk I feel ready to tackle something new.

Next time you open a messy drawer or file cabinet; ask yourself, "What do I use in here?" If there are things you don't use and aren't difficult or expensive to replace, put them in a bag to give or throw away. I keep a box under my desk of old files and when there is a recycling event, I get rid of them. I have never gone into the box to find something I missed. There's a message! If you aren't quite ready to let it go, store it in the attic or basement and promise yourself that if you haven't used anything in it in 6 month's time, you'll get rid of it.

Think about how free and productive you will feel without clutter weighing you down.

Sandy



Sandy Mobley

Ask Sandy

I often hear complaints from both clients and friends about how someone disappointed them. "She must have known that would bother me," one client said. "Why didn't he do the work the way I had done it?" said another. Obviously there's a disconnect, but what is the cause? Often it boils down to expectations that were unvoiced by one party or went unrecognized by the other.

The challenge of untangling expectations and reactions reminds me of my aunt, a great Southern cook, who always imbued her dishes with love. She made wonderful homey meals like fried chicken, meat loaf, and lasagna. And she tried recipes that many people wouldn't tackle,

like tamales, escargot, and crabmeat au gratin. To thank her, I'd take her to expensive restaurants where she could experience what the best chefs were making. And yet, no matter the food or the service, she always found something to complain about. She ordered a beer and protested when it wasn't brought in a frosted mug. The lasagna at a famous Italian restaurant was more pasta than meat: what were they thinking?

After a while I realized that my expectations for what would please my aunt were based in what I thought she should enjoy. Pleasing her had nothing to do with good food; it had everything to do with giving her something to complain about. Maybe it made her feel superior and boosted her culinary confidence. Sadly, it took me too many years to realize that my attempts to please her were successful, just not in the way I had expected.

I see managers doing similar things. They make assignments, but aren't clear on what results they are looking for. When the direct report doesn't hit the mark, they are disappointed. But are they? Maybe deep down they are pleased that the direct report couldn't deliver a product as good as they could. When managers do not set clear expectations and then criticize the results, direct reports become demotivated, work products are subpar, and workplace engagement suffers.

Examine your motives and actions if you aren't getting the results you expect. What would it take to be explicit about what you want? Or can you come to appreciate results that are not what you expected? After all, different need not be wrong.

Learning for Leaders – Help direct reports meet your expectations by providing clear guidance and support.

Coaches Corner – Ask clients how they build trust and if they are explicit when sharing what it takes to earn their trust.

If you have questions you'd like Sandy to address in future newsletters, email them to sandy@learningadvantageinc.com



Because Competence Isn't Enough:

Tools for Building Confidence

In many conversations with my clients it becomes clear that their confidence lags behind their competence. What good is being talented if you don't believe in yourself?

People who lack confidence can hinder their own career success by deferring to others, withholding good ideas, and avoiding taking on greater responsibility. They are often racked by the sense that they are imposters—they aren't as smart or creative or accomplished as others think they are—and any day they will be found out.

I find that people who lack confidence tend to focus on the negative—what they don't know or didn't do—and give it more weight than what they have accomplished. And they may compare themselves with others. Comparisons aren't useful: we can always find someone who does things better, and finding someone who doesn't do things as well doesn't make us feel any better.

The Confidence Code

In their book *The Confidence Code*, Katty Kay and Claire Shipman note that people who are confident are seen more positively even when compared to people who are more competent but lack confidence. They argue that women face more hurdles when it comes to projecting confidence compared to men. Women often assume more culpability than men when things go wrong. And when things go right, they tend to credit circumstance or luck rather than their skills or performance.

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