Web Exercises

# Chapter 8: Establishing a Constructive Climate

## Employee Recognition

An important part of establishing a constructive climate is rewarding group members for achieving results. Ask students to look up several online sites that promote employee recognition through gifts, certificates, using “perfect phrases” and so on. (Example: <http://www.washington.edu/admin/hr/roles/mgr/ee-recognition/award-ideas>.) Have them select examples of a type of recognition they would appreciate receiving and a type of recognition that they would dislike receiving. Have students share their choices in class. Discuss: What do the preferred modes of recognition have in common? What makes the disliked forms of recognition so undesirable to the class? How does rewarding employees affect group cohesion?

## Surveying the Cohesiveness Landscape

Ask students to download the “Group Cohesion Scale” from Nova Southeastern University ( <http://www.nova.edu/gsc/forms/GroupCohesionScale.pdf>). Using the scale, have them evaluate a group they belong to. How accurate a measure of cohesion is the scale? Does the scale overlook any contributing factors to group cohesion? Responses can be written up in a 2 -3 page paper.

## Constructive Feedback for Dummies

Ask students to look up the site <http://www.dummies.com/how-to/content/giving-constructive-feedback.html> and read the description of constructive feedback. Four elements of constructive feedback are explained: Content, manner, timing and frequency.

* Option 1: Have students write a 1 -2 page analysis of a time they received feedback in the workplace or classroom. Based on the four elements of constructive feedback, how positive or negative was their experience? What could have been done better?
* Option 2: Discuss in class – (1) When should negative feedback be given? How often? Should negative feedback always be given face to face or is electronic communication appropriate? (2) Besides avoiding mixed messages and “need to” phrases, what other ways can someone deliver constructive feedback in a sincere but direct fashion? (3) When is the best time to give employees or co-workers feedback? (4) How often do you like to receive feedback on your work? Howoften do you like to give feedback? What constitutes too much feedback? Too little?

## Building Cohesiveness in a Virtual World

Many employers now allow workers to work from home, which creates new challenges for groups. Have students research ways to build cohesiveness in groups where the members are physically separated. What technology solutions would they implement? What other options might they consider?

## Holding People Accountable

One aspect of promoting standards of excellence is to review results. The idea of “holding people accountable” is part of this process. Ask students to visit the website of Roger Connors and Tom Smith (<http://www.ozprinciple.com>) and to examine some of the free resources available. How might these ideas be implemented in various organizational settings?

## Lessons from Rowing

In class, watch the brief (5 minute) PBS video) profile of artist Thomas Eakins and his passion for capturing the quest for perfection among rowers:

<http://www.pbs.org/video/2053497312/>

Though his watercolor, “John Biglin in a Single Scull”, depicts only one rower, his conception of the sport has applications to team work and group climate as well.

Discussion questions:

* What is something new you learned about rowing, or about art, from this video?
* Eakins’ teacher, Gerome, faulted him for not choosing “the right moment” to paint. What does this mean? After viewing the film, do you agree?
* How do rowers develop their reputations?
* What is so compelling about a “mind and body devoted to perfection”?
* What do better racers do to win more races?
* One Olympic rower explained his team was “competing against ourselves”. How does this help a team?

## Current Events

Instructors may wish to require students to follow current events during the term through credible online news sources such as newspapers or radio broadcasts. Some examples:

<http://www.npr.org/sections/news/>

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/>

<http://www.usatoday.com/news/>

<http://www.bbc.com/news/world>

This may be a good time in the semester to ask about professional sports teams and how they are performing. What are students’ favorite teams? Does the team have a clear mission? How does the coach or manager provide structure? If “coach of the year” awards have been presented, discuss what criteria were used to select the current winner. What group norms have helped or hindered the team this season? How cohesive is the team? What performance benchmarks has the team established for itself – to have a better win/loss record? To make it to the playoffs? To have fewer injuries? This can be assigned as homework or be an impromptu class discussion.

## Motivational Slogans

Chapter 8 includes a graphic of an Upjohn slogan to “Keep the Quality Up.” Have students do an online search for contemporary motivational slogans that stress standards of excellence. Have them look for examples that are effective or compelling and examples that are ineffective or dull. Compare the best examples on word choice, tone, and design.