

Dealing with Negativity

Presented By:
Leah Graves

edamerica

Objectives

- ★ Cures when you can control or influence the negativity
- ★ What to do when you're not in control of the situations
- ★ Tips for minimizing workplace negativity
- ★ How to recognize your role in the negativity cycle

edamerica

Causes of Workplace Negativity

- ★ An excessive workload
- ★ Concerns about management's ability to lead the organization forward successfully
- ★ Anxiety about the future, particular longer-term job, income and retirement security
- ★ Lack of challenge in their work, with boredom intensifying existing frustration about workload
- ★ Insufficient recognition and concerns that pay isn't commensurate with performance

edamerica

When You Can Control the Negativity

- ★ You receive feedback about negative rumors and you know that the underlying cause is based on faulty information, incorrect assumptions or deliberate misinformation.

edamerica

Examples

- A new policy or procedure is not understood correctly
- People are misinterpreting a system-wide e-mail
- An industry newsletter might have referenced a problem your organization does not share
- You may have fired an individual who is circulating false information about the organization

edamerica

When You Can Control the Negativity (cont'd)

- ★ Use a systematic problem-solving process with the affected employees to improve the identified areas of negativity.
- ★ Do this quickly!

edamerica

Problem-Solving Process

- ★ Include employees who are closest to the negative situation
- ★ Conduct a cause analysis
- ★ Solicit widespread input
- ★ Involve as many people as you can in development and implementation
- ★ Implement the chosen solutions quickly
- ★ Periodically assess that the plan is working

edamerica

When You're Not In Control

- ★ Negativity often occurs when people are impacted by decisions and issues that are out of their control. Examples:
 - Downsizing
 - Understaffing
 - Budget reductions
 - Upper-management decisions that adversely impact members of your staff

edamerica

What You Can Do

- ★ Identify any aspects of the situation that you can impact
- ★ Listen, listen, listen
- ★ Challenge pessimistic thinking
- ★ Ask open-ended questions
- ★ Recognize that, sometimes, a negative outlook may be appropriate

edamerica

Dealing With Occasional Negativity

- ★ Listen to the complaints
- ★ Are there legitimate reasons for the negativity
- ★ Ask if they'd like your help to solve the problem
- ★ Offer short term advice
- ★ Sometimes, they just want a friendly, listening ear
- ★ If you decide the concerns are not legitimate, practice personal courage and tell them what you think
- ★ Back gracefully out of additional conversations

edamerica

Dealing With a "Negative Nancy"

- ★ Avoid spending time with a negative coworker
- ★ If you must work with a negative person, set limits
- ★ Suggest the negative person seek assistance from human resources or their supervisor
- ★ If all else fails, talk to your own supervisor or human resources staff about the challenges you are experiencing in dealing with the negative person
- ★ If negativity among employees is persistent, if the issues are left unaddressed, and the negativity affects your ability to professionally perform your work, you may want to consider moving on

edamerica

Dealing With a "Negative Nancy" (cont'd)

- ★ Inform the employee about their negative impact on co-workers and the department
- ★ Avoid becoming defensive
- ★ Focus on creating solutions
- ★ Focus on the positive aspects and contributions the individual brings to the work setting
- ★ Compliment the individual any time you hear a positive statement or contribution
- ★ If all else fails, deal with the negativity as you would any other performance issue

edamerica

Recognize that the only thing you are truly in charge of is how you choose to react to and in any situation.

edamerica

Recognizing Your Role

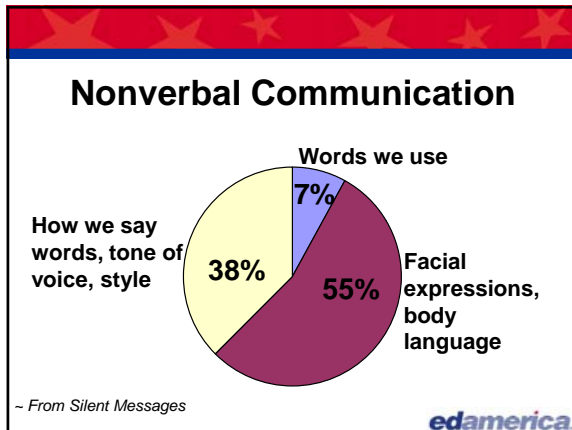
- ★ Recognize that you may experience situations in which you must uphold decisions you don't entirely support
- ★ Know yourself well enough to recognize internally when you are becoming negative
- ★ Become aware of work situations in which you typically find yourself becoming defensive or negative
- ★ Take a time-out or walk away by yourself
- ★ Spend some time alone thinking about the positive aspects of your work and life
- ★ Treat yourself with care

edamerica

“The most important thing in communication is to hear what isn't being said.”

~Peter Drucker


edamerica




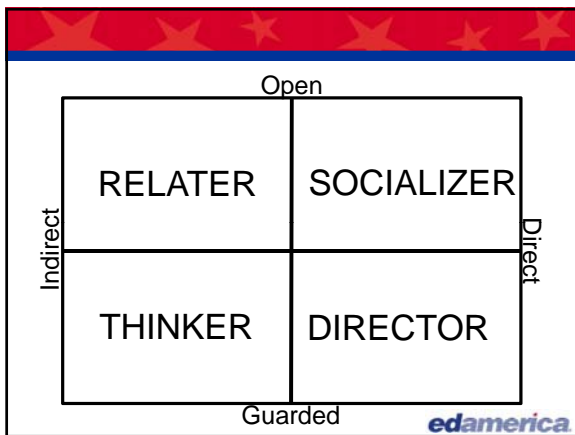
- ### Nonverbal Communication
- Smile
 - Silent nod
 - Eye contact
 - Body position
 - Gestures
- edamerica

- ### Vocal Delivery
- Volume
 - Rate
 - Pitch
 - Inflection
 - Vocal variety
- edamerica

Are You An Effective Communicator?




Behavioral Styles Inventory

Director

- ★ Driven by two governing needs: the need to control and the need to achieve
- ★ Goal-oriented go-getters who are most comfortable when they are in charge of people and situations
- ★ Want to accomplish many things now, so they focus on no-nonsense approaches to bottom-line results
- ★ Seek expedience and are not afraid to bend the rules
- ★ Fast-paced, task-oriented and work quickly and impressively by themselves; become annoyed with delays
- ★ Accept challenges, take authority and plunge headfirst into solving problems




Socializer

- ★ Friendly, enthusiastic "party-animals" who like to be where the action is
- ★ Thrive on admiration, acknowledgment and compliments
- ★ More relationship-oriented than task-oriented
- ★ Strengths are enthusiasm, charm, persuasiveness and warmth
- ★ Gifted in people skills and communication skills with individuals as well as groups
- ★ Idea-people and dreamers who excel at getting others excited about their vision; great influencers



Relater

- ★ Warm, supportive and nurturing individuals
- ★ The most people-oriented of the four styles
- ★ Excellent listeners, devoted friends and loyal employees
- ★ Relaxed disposition makes them approachable and warm
- ★ Excellent team players
- ★ In the office, they are courteous, friendly and willing to share responsibilities
- ★ Good planners, persistent workers and good with follow-through



Thinker

- ★ Analytical, persistent, systematic people who enjoy problem solving
- ★ Strengths include an eye for detail and accuracy, dependability, independence, persistence, follow-through and organization
- ★ Task-oriented
- ★ Almost always in control of their emotions; may become uncomfortable around people who are very out-going
- ★ They are good listeners and ask a lot of questions
- ★ Have high expectations of themselves and others, which can make them over-critical
- ★ Slow and deliberate decision-makers

edamerica

To Increase Directness

- Speak and move at a faster pace
- Initiate conversation and decisions
- Give recommendations
- Use direct statements rather than roundabout questions
- Use a strong, confident voice
- Challenge and tactfully disagree, when appropriate
- Face conflict openly, but don't conflict with the person
- Increase your eye contact

edamerica

To Decrease Directness

- Talk, walk and decide more slowly
- Seek and acknowledge others' opinions
- Share decision-making and leadership
- Lessen your energy level; be more mellow
- Do not interrupt
- When talking, provide pauses to give others a chance to speak
- Refrain from criticizing, challenging or acting pushy
- When disagreeing, choose words carefully

edamerica

To Increase Openness

- Share feelings; show more emotion
- Respond to the expression of others' feelings
- Pay personal compliments
- Take time to develop the relationship
- Use friendly language
- Communicate more; loosen up and stand closer
- Be willing to digress from the agenda

edamerica

To Decrease Openness

- Get right to the task – the bottom line
- Maintain more of a logical, factual orientation
- Keep to the agenda
- Do not waste the other person's time
- Do not initiate physical contact
- Downplay your enthusiasm and body movement
- Use businesslike language

edamerica

Summary

- ★ What to do when you can control or influence the negativity and what to do when you're not in control of the situations
- ★ Tips for minimizing workplace negativity
- ★ How to recognize your role in the negativity cycle
- ★ Importance of communication and communication styles

edamerica

Sources

- ★ Heathfield, S.M. (2009). Cures for Negativity When You Are Not in Control of the Negativity. *About.com: Human Resources*. Retrieved April 10, 2009, from http://humanresources.about.com/cs/conflictres/a/negativitycures_2.htm
- ★ Heathfield, S.M. (2009). How to Deal With a Negative Coworker: Negativity Matters. *About.com: Human Resources*. Retrieved April 10, 2009, from http://humanresources.about.com/od/conflictresolution/a/negative_work_er.htm
- ★ Heathfield, S.M. (2009). The Five Causes of Employee Negativity. *About.com: Human Resources*. Retrieved April 10, 2009, from <http://humanresources.about.com/od/workrelationships/a/negativitycauses.htm>

edamerica