



Nancy Proffitt

Proffitt Management
Solutions
326 Maddock St.
West Palm Beach, FL
www.ProffittManagement.com

561-582-6060
info@proffittmanagement.com

STRENGTHEN YOUR WORKPLACE TEAMS

As a leader, what is your strategy to strengthen your workplace teams?

The way we live and work has changed tremendously over the past nine months. In many organizations, this shift occurred in a matter of weeks, if not days. As leaders offered greater flexibility, employees quickly adapted to new demands and learned and improved their skills.

Organizations that have proven to be most resilient moved to or expanded their online capacities and reconfigured their supply chain and delivery options. Simultaneously, they improved their diversity, equity, and inclusion outcomes. Their ability to respond quickly has ensured continuity, and in some cases, increased productivity.

But we're not out of the woods. All leaders and employees will need to continue to strengthen their organization. As McKinsey & Company reported in October 2020, "corporate stress is now at the same point as it was in the 2009 trough, arriving in only months versus two years."

Employees will look to their leaders to help them adapt, and while some are well-prepared with knowledge, experience, and a leadership style that inspires others to achieve real solutions, many lack what it takes to overcome the challenges ahead. Why?

SUSTAINABILITY IN TIMES OF CRISIS

Traditionally, in times of crisis organizations have relied on a conservative, by-the-book leadership style, and as McKinsey writes, through three specific attributes of resilience: margin improvement, revenue growth, and optionality (retained additional optional investment opportunities).

But the divisions and polarization that exist today require a vision, strategy, and the social/emotional intelligence to engage all employees and improve workers' job satisfaction.

According to a September 2020 report by McKinsey, "Because of the connection between happiness at work and overall life satisfaction, improving employee happiness could make a material difference to the world's 2.1 billion workers. It could also boost profitability and enhance organizational health."

JOB SATISFACTION TODAY

According to McKinsey, "When it comes to employee happiness, bosses and supervisors play a bigger role than one might guess." The relationship between employee and management is the top factor in the employee's job satisfaction. Furthermore, their research finds that second only to an employee's own mental health, the relationship with their boss is the "the most determinant of employee's overall life satisfaction."

Unfortunately, research also reveals that many people find their boss to be far from ideal. And to be sure, they've got a lot on their plate during this time. But for those who describe a very bad/quite bad relationship with their boss, they also reported substantially lower job satisfaction.

When employees are asked, "What would improve your relationship with your boss?" most want their boss to:

- Listen better
- Communicate clearly and with transparency
- Offer encouragement (rather than doubt)
- Engage with humor
- Show courage/vulnerability
- Demonstrate empathy and compassion
- Be decisive
- Take responsibility
- Act humbly
- Share authority

These are admirable skills, for bosses and employees alike, and when strengthened, relationships and satisfaction improve.

UNITE YOUR TEAM

A manager's first step to unite a team is to assess and arrest dysfunctional behaviors and patterns. Dysfunction can take the form of selfishness, arrogance, bullying, manipulation, callousness and/or control. Savvy managers are careful not to overlook their star player's transgressions.

A message from Nancy...

Let me ask you:

- Are the people on your team engaged and committed or just collecting a pay check?
- Do you have the right people in the right seats on the bus? Are you in the right seat?
- Is the high cost of turnover eating away your organization's bottom-line?
- Are your processes and procedures (or lack thereof) delivering productive and efficient results?
- How comfortable are the members of your senior team managing and leading others?

In today's highly competitive environment, it's no surprise that "what got you here may not get you there."

At Proffitt Management Solutions we are fully committed to providing a unique blend of team and individual development and executive coaching sessions where participants achieve more focus, a sense of purpose, and better results in their leadership roles.

Find out how services such as individual or team coaching and development, motivational and skills workshops, seminars may help you better answer those 5 questions and benefit you...

Sure, they may achieve spectacular results, but when they are disrespectful and harsh with others, they create enemies. Those who bend the rules and push the limits of ethics and relationships actually promote destructiveness. This is a recipe for a toxic team.

TOXIC TEAM PREVENTION

Change is possible, but it requires a shift in assumptions and engagement. To prevent team toxicity, try this treatment:

1. Set an expectation that change is possible; poor behaviors and patterns can be corrected. Set realistic goals.
2. Model personal accountability and abandon blame-shifting, finger-pointing and the use of labels. Encourage all employees to identify their contribution to conflict or problems and participate in finding real solutions.
3. Establish codes of conduct that discourage the use of negative language.
4. Offer training, coaching, and performance reviews weighted for positive leadership and emotional/social intelligence.
5. Recognize small wins to encourage appreciative communication.
6. Establish an early detection and intervention process for dysfunctional patterns of behavior.
7. Set expectations, goals, and rewards for collaborative efforts and results toward vision and mission.

UBUNTU AT WORK

In times of uncertainty, people search for personal and spiritual refuge. At the same time, they search for group identity, driven by the human need to belong. In many cases, our groups allow us to connect and share in a meaningful, positive purpose. Great leaders understand this, and foster the conditions essential for group effectiveness:

- Trust among members
- A sense of group identity
- A sense of group efficacy

Given this time of uncertainty and tension, how do we foster trust, unify our groups, and achieve greater efficacy?

UBUNTU PHILOSOPHY

Bill Taylor, cofounder of Fast Company, once shared a quote in from Archbishop Desmond Tutu in a *Harvard Business Review* article that captures the philosophy of Ubuntu:

“A person with Ubuntu is open and available to others, affirming of others, does not feel threatened that others are able and good, for he or she has a proper self-assurance that comes from knowing that he or she belongs in a greater whole and is diminished when others are humiliated or diminished...”

Ubuntu can be translated as human kindness in attitude and action. At its core, Ubuntu is the acknowledgement of our connection to others, our need for community, and our mutual caring for all.

THE PRINCIPLES OF UBUNTU

Some of our greatest leaders have embraced Ubuntu to foster trust, unify those they lead, and achieve great efficacy. They embody the principles of Ubuntu.

In *The Lessons of Ubuntu*, (Skyhorse, 2018), author and professor Mark Mathabane identifies 10 principles of Ubuntu:

1. **Empathy:** listening instead of labeling
2. **Compromise:** talking to the enemy
3. **Learning:** the power of education
4. **Nonviolence:** the key to social change
5. **Change:** even racists can be transformed
6. **Forgiveness:** the pathway to healing
7. **Restorative justice:** saving the future
8. **Love:** healing through agape
9. **Spirituality:** the instrument of our common humanity
10. **Hope:** rebirth of the American dream

Leaders who practice these principles in attitude and action, and support those they lead to do the same, can foster a strong team and a clear path forward.

THE STRONGEST TEAM PLAYER

Ubuntu is the essence of being human. And it says, a solitary human being is a contradiction in terms. I have to learn from other human beings how to be human. – Doc Rivers, Champion Basketball Coach

As a leader, how do you manage egos on your workplace team? What do you do about the narcissistic employee?

Many leaders and managers today are addressing this question as promotions—and in some cases, positions—are in short supply. To be sure, narcissists often excel at innovating and thinking in original ways, and they achieve spectacular results in their field of expertise. But at what cost?

As many managers can attest, most narcissists are not team players: they fail to play well with others. Add to that the need for social distance, and in many cases, remote/virtual team work, narcissistic tendencies may not be noticed, or even addressed.

NARCISSISM AT WORK

We are all somewhat narcissistic, or self-centered. If we lacked this tendency, we couldn't survive or assert our needs. Some experts call this "productive narcissism."

Productive narcissists are not all bad: they pose critical questions to learn everything that can possibly affect their companies and products. They want to be admired and respected, but not necessarily loved. After all, they are driven to gain power and glory. As such, narcissists aggressively pursue goals and are less concerned with rules and "the way things have always been done."

Of all personality types, narcissists run the greatest risk of isolating themselves, especially during moments of success. Because of their independence and aggressiveness, they are constantly looking out for enemies and sometimes become paranoid when stressed.

As a narcissist becomes increasingly self-assured, they act more spontaneously. They feel free of constraints, and ideas flow. A narcissist believes that they're invincible, which further inspires enthusiasm from their admirer's and feeds into feelings of grandiosity and overconfidence.

But the adoration narcissists crave can have a corrosive effect. As their personalities expand, they tune out cautionary words and advice.

MOTIVATE A CORRECTION

Not all narcissistic employees, however, are so entrapped by their personalities that they can't be open to change and willing to learn. Here are a few tips for leaders and managers.

1. Share the principles of Ubuntu or a similar philosophy with all members of your team. Privately talk to your narcissistic employee about narcissism, and the patterns of behavior you are seeing. Document your discussions, and follow-up as indicated. Hold every member of your team accountable for their actions.
2. Assign a trusted mentor. Many narcissists can develop a close relationship with one person, who can act as an anchor and keep them grounded. But this person must be knowledgeable and sensitive enough to manage the relationship (and not be manipulated.) Narcissistic employees rarely trust other insights and views of reality.
3. Offer counseling or executive coaching. Narcissistic employees who become self-reflective are likely to be more open, likable, and better team players. If they can be persuaded to undergo counseling or coaching, they can work through their rage, alienation, and grandiosity. They can keep their strengths and diminish their weaknesses to overcome vital character flaws.

Organizational resilience requires leaders and managers who know how to motivate talented and ethical people within a socioeconomic system that creates value for customers, employees, and owners. When they are able to

lead their team in healthy ways to sacrifice on behalf of team goals, they can achieve amazing results.