

Unwanted ‘Attitude Brands’ at Work – Part I

By Jude Bijou

When someone brings up a topic at work, such as a new task, proposal, or solution, different workers respond according to their predominant attitude. If you work in an office, everyone already knows what to expect from you, for better or for worse.

The good news is that unwanted attitude brands are easy to change – once you as an EA professional understand where they’re coming from. The following are four common attitude brands and how to transform them. The remaining tips will be presented in part two of this two-part article.

“The Slacker” This person wants to do the minimum to get by – and everyone knows it.

Solution: People who are lazy are often secretly afraid of failing, and they struggle with finding direction. Ask slackers to set aside time to get a clearer picture of their long-range objectives, and consider how their behavior today and tomorrow contributes to achieving those goals. When they have the urge to be lazy, they should say, *“I’m doing this for me.”*

“The Passive-Aggressive person” This person appears to comply with the team’s request, then turns around and sabotages others’ efforts.

Solution: Often, passive-aggressive people experienced injustices and violations in their past, and have pent-up anger and a desire to hurt others as a result. To change this, in a private place like their car, they should express your anger in a constructive way. For example, they can shake your steering wheel and yell *“I feel so mad!”* Getting that trapped anger out of their body will help them be part of the team and feel more connected to co-workers. Passive-aggressive people should practice acting in compassionate ways toward others, and apologize for unkind words and actions.

“The Gossiper” This is a person no one trusts because they will smile one minute and in the next talk about others behind their back.

Solution: *Gossip* is really just a nice word for condemnation, envy, and accusation. In other words, it’s not an innocent pastime. The price a gossip pays for disloyalty and finding fault with others is feeling alienated and separate from peers. The good news is that the gossip brought this on him or herself, and it can be reversed. When gossipers feel the urge to put someone down, they should stop before they speak and ask themselves who it is they’re talking about. If they’re talking negatively about others, they are out of their territory.

“The “No” person” This is the person who instantly challenges or finds fault with any new idea.

Solution: Chronic negativity comes from an aversion to change, a dislike of being told what to do, or a desire to stay in control. These types of employees need to practice nodding, staying quiet, and letting someone else respond before they do. They must recognize their impulse to jump in and say *no*. Instead, they need to listen carefully and then express at least a willingness to consider whatever it is that’s being presented. ■

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