



Bridges A monthly eZine from Meridian Consulting, Inc.,
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Building Bridges to Success – September 2004

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Thought for the Month:

*"You have very little chance of getting at the truth,
if you know what the truth ought to be."*

~ Robert B. Parker ~

Coaches Corner: *Sharing the Wealth*

We all need to feel appreciated, it is a human need. It gives us a sense of acceptance and security.

Whether at home or at work, there is always the opportunity to truly appreciate those around you. However, when you are feeling the lack yourself, it can be difficult to give it to others. Practice appreciating yourself first, so that you are brimming over with a sense of well-being that can be shared with others.

As the author, Victoria Moran says in her book, *Creating a Charmed Life*, "make sure you get ample shine time." If you are not getting enough *appreciation* then it's difficult to give others what they want and need. Appreciation can come from others or it can come from inside. If you are able to appreciate yourself, it will be easier for you to appreciate others. So learn to "shine" for yourself first, then spread the wealth around. Here are several ways you can do that.

Fill yourself up first, so you have enough to share:

- Practice what you do well and take pleasure in it. If you are a great cook, photographer or problem solver, do it more.

- Spend time with people who show you that they care about you, and are not shy in doing so.
- Celebrate your successes, large and small.
- Do not be shy about your successes. Let people know that it was a tough assignment, but you worked hard to deliver.
- Notice yourself, when the world ignores you. Indulge yourself don't wait for others to do it.
- Practice appreciating.

Share the wealth:

- When you are in the limelight, share it with others. Success does not happen in a vacuum.
- Role model the behavior you want to see in others. Show by example how to appreciate people, by remembering things that are important to them.
- If you're the manager, your staff needs to know that you noticed. Why?
 - They know they are meeting your expectations.
 - They are assured that you will remember at appraisal time.
 - They never get tired of being appreciated or valued for what they do.
 - Caution: *Insincere appreciation defeats the purpose.*

When you "freely appreciate" you are reinforcing the behavior and the results you want to see—in yourself and others. If you find it easy to appreciate others, but find it hard to do for yourself, remember that appreciation is like jam, it's difficult to spread without getting any on yourself. What a gift.

Coaching Services

Building Success Strategies for Working With Others

Meridian works collaboratively with business people to develop coaching programs that focus on targeted action and tangible results.

- Gain clarity and objectivity in dealing with problems
- Get focused and stay on-track
- Manage yourself for the best results
- Increase flexibility in working with others and new situations
- Build and sustain life balance
- Explore purpose and legacy
- Build influence without authority

If you or your organization is looking for *objective, confidential, and knowledgeable* coaching support, please call us for a complimentary coaching session.

Contact us today to discuss your leadership development needs

Tel: (925) 258-0304

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Spotlight on Conflict: *Managing Conflict Proactively*

Recently, Chechnyan terrorists occupied a school in Russia. Men, women, and children were held captive. The terrorists were so focused upon their grievance, they were willing to sacrifice their lives and the lives of their captives to draw attention to their cause.

The press showed up in droves and sent the news out to the world. Riot police and dozens of special force personnel at the school were prepared to do whatever was necessary to minimize the extent of the catastrophe.

This is a drama on the big stage. The consequences and the repercussions are enormous both in terms of containing the current situation and the implications for the future. But on a smaller and more personal scale, do we as individuals or business organizations handle conflict any differently?

As reported last month in our August edition of *Bridges*, the American Society of Safety Engineers (ASSE) estimates that there are 30,000 assaults per week in the workplace. Only a small percentage are life-threatening, but to the participants, the drama is no less stressful, dangerous or upsetting than what they see happening to others on their television screen a half of a world away.

Any conflict situation that gets out of control will demand attention because of the outrageousness of the act. Our organizational systems are designed to *control* the damage and *manage* the aftermath, but this all comes after-the-fact.

Isn't there more you could be doing to prevent the escalation in the first place? Of course there is. Your business can make *conflict management* a core competency for all managers and supervisors. You can create an environment where disagreement is resolved early and often. You can provide resources to prevent and minimize the eruption, rather than focusing your resources on the aftermath and minimizing the damage.

If you had the opportunity to prevent just one of those 30,000 assaults, wouldn't you do it? Of course you would, and you can.

Proactively engaging your organization in managing conflict is not just a good business decision, it is the right thing to do. One of the alternatives to traditional *progressive disciplinary* action is the use of *Mediation*. In order to determine whether *Mediation* is an appropriate action, answer the following questions with a conflict situation (dispute) in mind:

- Apart from this dispute, is the actual or potential work relationship important to the organization?
- Is it important for the parties to have an effective work relationship?
- Are the parties involved, motivated to create solutions?

- Do the parties want to retain control over the outcome of this dispute?
- Is it important to have a speedy resolution of the current problem or issue?
- Would the parties involved like to avoid delay in resolving their dispute?

If you answered yes to at least 5 of the 6 questions above, *Mediation* is the most appropriate venue for resolving the conflict and the differences between these parties. An important question to ask yourself: "*Do you have a system to help manage and resolve disputes or do you have a system designed to control the damage*"?

Conflict Services

Unresolved conflict in the workplace is costly. When issues and differences are not appropriately addressed, they will escalate, and so will the associated costs.

Everyday, at every level of the organization, unresolved conflict increases the cost of doing business, reduces productivity, and places enormous stress on important business relationships. In fact, experts estimate that at least 33% of a typical managers time is spent coping with conflict situations.

Meridian's conflict resolution approach delivers results by building internal capability and by minimizing the harmful effects of on-going or potential conflict situations.

- Minimize stress, anger, and frustration in the workplace.
- Reduce the cost of lost work time, turnover, and burnout, while increasing productivity and motivation.
- Prevent litigation and its associated costs.
- Improve collaboration, cooperation and communication among individuals, teams, business units, vendors, and customers.

Meridian consultants have the skills, tools, and experience to help your business apply appropriate *intervention*, and develop *prevention* programs that are tailored to your specific needs.

Contact us today for a free consultation to discuss your needs

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Performance Consulting Services

Competition ensures that only the best will survive for the long-term. *Improving, Expanding, and Innovating* your business saves time, reduces costs, and increases the quality of goods and services.

Meridian can assist your organization in analyzing how work is currently *performed, coordinated, supported, and executed* to increase your organization's collaboration in delivering superior products and services.

Contact us today for a free consultation to discuss your organizational needs

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Upcoming Training:

Call to find out how these workshops can brought to your business location.

- Presidents & CEOs Seminar, sponsored by the American Management Association, San Francisco, California, Oct. 4-8, 2004.
- Partnering With Your Boss, sponsored by University of the Pacific, Stockton, California, Oct. 26 & 28, 2004.
- Getting Results Without Authority, sponsored by the American Management Association, Newport Beach, California, Nov. 10-12, 2004.
- Business Ethics, sponsored by University of the Pacific, Stockton, California, Nov. 11, 2004.
- Role of the Supervisor, sponsored by University of the Pacific, Stockton, California, Nov. 13, 2004.
- Managing Technical Professionals, sponsored by the American Management Association, San Francisco, California, Nov. 17-19, 2004.
- Management Skills for New Supervisors, sponsored by the American Management Association, San Francisco, California, Dec. 13-15, 2004.

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Featured Training of the Month

Building Influence *Without Authority*

In today's fast-paced and challenging business environment, getting the work done through others, even when you do not have direct authority, is essential for career

success. To secure the business results that you want, requires that you build and sustain effective business relationships that are based on trust and cooperation.

In this dynamic workshop, you will acquire skills, tools, and techniques that help you *Build Influence* in getting work done through and with others. The workshop instructors focus on helping you improve your ability to communicate, collaborate, and negotiate across the organization in getting people working with you, not against you. Through the use of lecture, dialogue, role-playing and team exercises, the instructors will work with you on:

- The basics for building strong business relationships.
- Enhancing your own ability to collaborate more effectively with others.
- Building trust and agreement with others around you.
- Identifying your communication and decision-making style.
- Understanding the work styles of others.
- Being an active listener and learning to ask questions.
- Developing strategies for proactively managing stress.
- Using logic and emotion in ethical ways to persuade others.

Building personal influence in the workplace helps you develop strong alliances and collaboration to achieve the required results.

Meridian Consulting, Inc. can help your company realize a gain in productivity and increase the effectiveness of management personnel through training programs that are tailored to your needs.

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Book Review

"Creating a Charmed Life"

by Victoria Moran

We all know people who appear to live "charmed" lives. However, a charmed life isn't just for the few who seem to have been born that way: it's for you to create yourself. Moran unveils sensible and spiritual ideas for valuing yourself, savoring everyday experiences, meeting challenges, and finding time for what's really important. Her insight, humor, and unassailable wisdom shine through each page to illuminate the enchantment in all our lives.

Praise for *Creating a Charmed Life*

"In this book you'll be rewarded with dozens of powerful and practical strategies that will help you bring out the 'charmed' in your own life. I hope you savor this

book over and over again. It contains simple wisdom, put forth in a beautiful series of essays."

-- Richard Carlson, Ph.D., author of "Don't Sweat the Small Stuff" and "It's All Small Stuff"

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