THE RESOURCE

Labor & Industrial INSIGHTS® magazine

VOL. VI, ISSUE IV

Winds of Change

INSIDE

THE RESOURCE FULFILLMENT CENTER

It's funny how history repeats itself, and the same challenges & opportunities of the past come back around every 10 or 20 years, at least!

Our company has always had the desire to help the people we employ with training & developing new skills, to better position them for growth and progress in their careers.

For years we've discussed creating a program where we could train candidates with no prior experience to: drive a forklift, develop leadership skills, or simply try out a new job function in a manufacturing or distribution environment, among many other things - thus creating our own pool of qualified employees by giving them the skills to meet the needs of the job market.

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CONTACT US TODAY to learn more about our Fulfillment Center, our full suite of services that may benefit your organization, or to gain access to the talent pool we're currently developing!

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THE RESOURCE

Kenneth Dalton
President

Early in his career, Kenneth worked as an Onsite Manager for The Resource's largest manufacturing client. His 30+ years of experience in the industry, coupled with his values & problem solving expertise make him a powerful resource for maximizing business potential. Kenneth is a member of TempNet, American Staffing Association, and has been certified by the National Safety Council.

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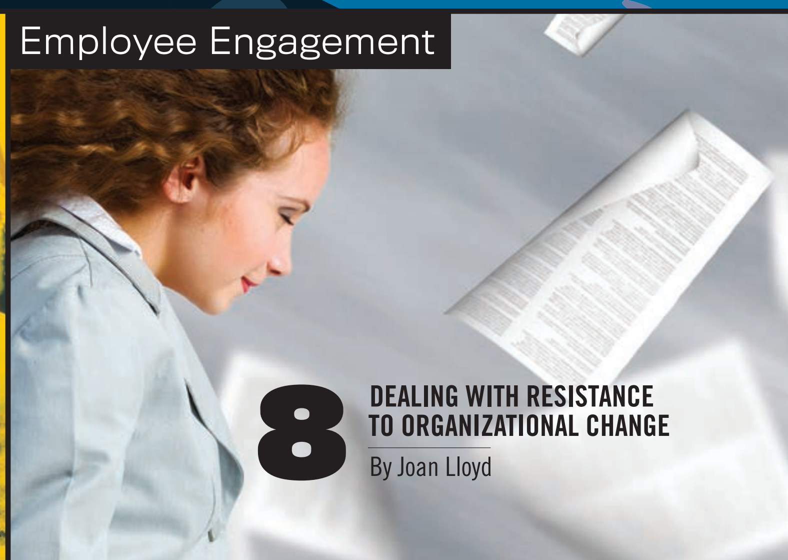
Leadership

Emerging Trends



Employee Engagement

Employee Engagement

Leadership

Workforce Management

Labor & Industrial INSIGHTS®

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Characteristics of

The maintenance manager's job is to prevent problems—a responsibility that runs counter to the usual expectation that managers are supposed to solve existing problems, rather than have the "foresight [that] keeps problems from occurring." Maintenance managers who are adept at preventing problems know how to think ahead, support planning and work scheduling, and have procedures in place for all of the company's maintenance activities (which can run the gamut from the most routine lubrication task all the way to the most complex plant-wide shutdown).

Most importantly, these managers also recognize that tradespeople are the ones who create value from maintenance activities. For that reason, good maintenance managers direct all of their activity toward ensuring that their tradespeople are assigned to the highest-value work and have the best possible skills and resources at their disposal—and that roadblocks are kept out of their way.

Good maintenance managers appreciate and publicly recognize their best "problem avoiders" (supervisors, planners, engineers, inspectors, etc.) and expert tradespeople, and then help their other employees develop and improve their skills in those areas. They also understand that although their organizations don't sell maintenance, their departments must work closely with and support operations that promote the production of revenue-generating goods or services.

In addition, good maintenance managers always look for ways to improve the support that maintenance provides to the organization. They work as partners with their companies' storerooms and purchasing departments, for example, to ensure that the right materials and supplies get to the right people at the right time.

Finally, good maintenance managers leave their egos at home and strive to lead in the sense described by the ancient Chinese philosopher Laozi: "A leader is best when people barely know that he exists." Their job is to avoid excitement and the attention that it attracts.

a Good Maintenance Manager

BY DON ARMSTRONG

Companies should value any good maintenance managers who come their way and cultivate candidates and new hires who have potential in that area. For example, a company should ask a new hire for that position to spend a week as a relief supervisor in each area of the plant, to give that new manager a great opportunity to assess the tradespeople and the systems within which he or she is required to work. (An interesting interview question would be to ask candidates how they feel about doing a rotation like that. Anyone who expresses reluctance is probably not a good fit for the role.)

The value of a good maintenance manager should not be underestimated. The skills needed to fill that position well can be cultivated through experience and institutional support. By taking the time to make sure that the maintenance manager role is filled with the right person, an organization strengthens the foundation it needs to achieve long-term success.

A version of this article was originally published on the Reliable Plant website at www.reliableplant.com/Read/31201/good-maintenance-manager.

Don Armstrong is the president of Veleda Services Ltd., which provides consulting and training services to maintenance departments in industrial plants and institutions. He can be reached at don.armstrong@veleda.ca.

THE ROLE OF PSYCHOLOGY IN WORKPLACE SAFETY

BY LANCASTER SAFETY CONSULTING

Employers that don't put a premium on workplace safety can suffer both financial and reputational losses, thanks to work-related injuries or illness. In 2018 alone, work-related injuries cost companies $170.8 billion, broken down as follows:

- **WAGE AND PRODUCTIVITY LOSSES** OF **$52.4 BILLION**
- **MEDICAL EXPENSES** OF **$35.0 BILLION**
- **ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENSES** OF **$57.6 BILLION**
- **EMPLOYERS' UNINSURED COSTS** OF **$12.8 BILLION**
- **DAMAGE TO MOTOR VEHICLES IN WORK-RELATED INJURIES** OF **$4.9 BILLION**
- **FIRE LOSSES** OF **$8.2 BILLION**[1]

Those figures alone ought to serve as strong enough impetus for any organization to commit to its safety goals. Safety inspections and the subsequent implementation of corrective measures are vital to meeting those objectives. Equally important to that aim—but seemingly understated—is understanding the role that psychology plays in workplace safety.

Companies that want to improve their workplace safety need to develop "a focused organizational mindset on performance excellence . . . [that] drives desired and predictable outcomes in everything they undertake, including delivering on outstanding safety management system performance."[2] In other words, psychology is used to cultivate a culture in which "the way work is performed is just as important as the final work product, its presentation, and delivery to the paying customer."[3] With this approach, valuing safety comes organically, because doing things safely is part of performance excellence. That said, nurturing a culture of excellence does take time, as well as a top-down approach in which management identifies a clear vision and then empowers the workforce to be part of that vision.

Psychology has another significant connection to workplace safety. Psychologists have long championed putting employees' mental and emotional well-being at the center of workforce practices, and today more and more companies are either bringing in experts or introducing psychological initiatives to protect their workers. The goal of these new approaches to promote the mental and emotional health of employees is to make sure that everyone in the workplace feels safe, secured, and comfortable. Employees with this mindset are more likely to maintain performance excellence, which then leads them to make more conscious efforts to do their work correctly and safely.

With such possibilities on the table, small wonder that more companies are now turning to occupational health psychology (OHP), which "concerns the application of psychology to improving the quality of work life, and to protecting and promoting the safety, health, and well-being of workers."[4]

OHP is a relatively new field that can help employers to improve workplace conditions, workforce satisfaction, and workplace safety. In order to maximize the benefits of OHP, however, companies still need assistance from experts in psychology.

Psychology can also play a role in helping management achieve one of its key goals: to improve employment relationships. Employee who have good workplace relationships are healthier and more in tune with how the company operates. They are also better able to perform with excellence, which results in increased safety.

Creating a safe workspace does not entail simply ensuring that workers are physically protected. By also considering the psychology of safety, companies can address their employees' needs in ways that improve their performance—and, consequently, their safety—in the workplace. ■

Lancaster Safety Consulting Inc. is dedicated to helping its clients achieve a safe workplace through a world-class occupational safety and health program with onsite training. Lancaster Safety can be reached at lancastersafety.com/contact/.

1. Injury Facts. Undated. "Work Injury Costs." Injury Facts website, injuryfacts.nsc.org/work/costs/work-injury-costs/.

2. J.A. Rodríguez Jr. 2019. "The Psychology of Safety Excellence." EHS Today website, December 16, www.ehstoday.com/safety/article/21118508/the-psychology-of-safety-excellence.

3. Ibid.

4. National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health. 2013. "Occupational Health Psychology (OHP)." Centers for Disease Control website, www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/ohp/default.html.

> *"The end game of all this is to make sure everyone in the workplace feels safe, secured, and comfortable."*

Dealing with Resistance

LIFE IS FULL OF SITUATIONS in which two people have very different perspectives on the same thing. Many of these disagreements center on fairly trivial topics (e.g., which animals make the best pets, what the greatest movie ever made is), but sometimes they are about subjects with much larger implications. Organizational change is one such topic—and a potentially controversial and polarizing one, too, because often when it comes up some people are simply unable or unwilling to visualize the new possibility. In those cases their resistance can influence whether a proposal moves forward successfully.

to Organizational Change

BY JOAN LLOYD

When people express that sort of resistance and don't readily accept the new way of doing things, others often perceive them as uncooperative obstacles who have their own agendas and who aren't team players. But the truth is that many people who resist organizational change aren't necessarily operating with bad intentions. For instance, they may think the changes will hurt customers or the company in some way. Or perhaps they don't really understand what the changes are supposed to accomplish.

Openly stated opposition isn't the only form that resistance can take:

- ➔ Even without arguments, negativity, or other obvious signs, resistance can still be present. For example, someone might smile and nod when they aren't actually on board with the proposal.
- ➔ Sometimes resistance comes from people (often near the top of the organization) who think that "all those other people" are the ones who need to change.
- ➔ Yet another form of resistance manifests when people relentlessly question something in the spirit of being "helpful."

Managers who must deal with organizational change without guidance frequently make common mistakes. For example:

- ➔ They expect employees to be "good soldiers," so they announce the change and assume that people will automatically jump on board.
- ➔ They side with their own employees against top management and take no steps to own the change themselves.
- ➔ They force the change by drastic reorganizations, chopping off heads, and changing jobs.
- ➔ They do nothing and hope the change goes away on its own.
- ➔ They protect their own hides instead of taking care of their departments' needs.

These are just a few of the responses that can derail change efforts—and cause long-term harm to organizations. Fortunately, many great managers invest the time and effort into helping their employees understand the change and how it affects them. Their effective strategies include the following:

✓ Stop periodically and take a step back to regroup.

Sometimes leaders get so far out in front that they lose their followers, who then express what seems like resistance but it is often simply confusion or a lack of understanding (often signaled by blank stares, off-the-mark input, and questions about the purpose of the changes). Because each person understands—and buys into—proposed changes at different points in the process, repetition of the "why" behind the change is key.

✓ Make sure people understand that they weren't doing it "wrong" under the old system.

When that message isn't clearly communicated, sometimes people think that change is being implemented to correct perceived deficiencies in their own performance. They feel that their credibility is at stake, so their resistance takes the form of a personal battle against the new way.

✓ Show people how the change supports the mission, vision, and strategy of the organization.

If people think the change will do nothing except create more work, they aren't going to get behind it. Too often, senior managers fail to publicly explain the strategic reasons behind changes—and then wonder why there's resistance to them. The best strategy is to communicate the reasons at every opportunity, so that people understand how the changes tie into the big picture. All of the senior and middle managers should participate in one-on-one meetings, small group sessions, roundtable discussions, and company-wide meetings. These sessions should be held often and structured to allow for maximum interaction.

✓ Help each person see how the changes affect them.

Managers needs to answer the "What's in it for me?" questions that employees have whenever new proposals are announced. Providing details and specifics can help people see clearly what the changes mean for them.

Change is never easy, and because of the scale involved organizational change brings its own particular challenges. But through clear and deliberate communication, mangers can help employees understand the purpose of proposed changes. And with a clear understanding in hand, those employees are more likely to drop their resistance to change and embrace it instead. ■

Joan Lloyd is a Milwaukee-based executive coach who specializes in leadership development, organizational change, and team building. In addition to coaching for executives and team leaders, her services includes 360-degree feedback processes, retreat facilitation, presentation skill coaching, and small group labs. She can be reached at (414) 573-1616 or via www.JoanLloyd.com.

How to Increase the Value of Feedback

BY HOLLIE AGHAJANI

Although feedback can play a large role in improving learning and increasing performance, it must be given frequently and effectively for it to hold any power. In many organizations these conversations about improvement happen only annually or quarterly. But they should really be taking place at least weekly. So why aren't they happening more frequently?

Why Traditional Feedback Doesn't Work

The feedback process is often an unpleasant experience that can even take a physical toll on employees. One study found that receiving unsolicited feedback was as stressful as public speaking (enough to cause umping heart rates!). Under those circumstances, feedback can lose much of its effectiveness:

> *Our brains suffer in these moments of duress. Stress causes a decline in cognitive function and a narrowing of the senses, limiting our ability to think critically or learn. To serve their crucial function of helping employees improve and grow, feedback conversations should avoid this threat response.*[1]

For decades, feedback has been led by managers as a means to help employees course-correct and grow. On the surface that probably doesn't sound so bad. However, only " 26 percent of employees strongly agree that the feedback they receive helps them do their work better."[2] Worse, one analysis found that one third of the time, feedback actually led to "reduced performance."[3]

Unfortunately, organizations can never completely eliminate the need for stress-inducing, unsolicited, manager-driven feedback. However, leaders can increase the amount of effective feedback present in their organizations by fostering feedback-seeking environments and providing tools that empower employees to actively seek feedback. When people are empowered to ask for their feedback, they feel trust, which makes them more open to learning.

Better Feedback by Request

Most people want to do better—and they want to start their improvements right away. Real-time feedback (i.e., immediately following an event) has the greatest impact on performance, and engagement peaks when employees receive feedback weekly. Yet less than 20 percent of people report getting weekly feedback, and only 27 percent find that the feedback they're getting is actually useful.[5]

When useful feedback is given on a timely and regular basis, mastering new skills and correcting certain behaviors takes a fraction of the time when compared to traditional feedback loops. This is how organizations can help employee development and engagement soar.

> *Asking for feedback is a surprisingly powerful approach to self-development, especially when it's part of basic performance management. It can even be considered a deliverable—the last step of a project. Regardless, requested feedback allows teams to demonstrate the care that everyone needs to feel engaged.*[4]
>
> *—Chris Musser, team lead at Gallup*

An Effective Tool

Companies can empower their employees to take charge of their own development by giving them a tool (such as an application or platform) they can use to actively seek feedback themselves:

> **Users get a structured environment in which to solicit feedback from their managers and from their peers.** When given the ability to define the type of feedback they are looking for (positive or constructive—or both) and the people from whom they want it, employees can get a more holistic view of their performance and are more likely to make improvements. Organizational psychologist Adam Grant recommends that employees seek feedback from their challenge network, "the group of people that you trust to push you to get better."[6]
>
> **In-application tips can help everyone become masters at providing constructive feedback.** Users should be encouraged to ditch the "sandwich approach," which consists of surrounding constructive feedback with positive feedback. Although that method may feel more comfortable for the giver, it undermines the feedback being offered and is confusing to the receiver. Increasing the amount of solicited feedback in organizations promotes cultures in which teams feel psychologically safe enough to seek feedback from others.

Flipping the script and enabling employees to ask for the feedback they need when they need it—rather than having to wait around for it—puts employees in the driver's seat of their own development. This both improves performance and contributes to building a more collaborative company culture.

Hollie Aghajani is the director of product marketing at 15Five (www.15five.com), which offers continuous performance management software that facilitates weekly check-ins, objectives and key results (OKR) tracking, peer recognition, one-on-ones, and 360° reviews.

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Converting Instructor-Led Training for the Virtual Classroom

BY STEVE DOBBEROWSKY

"Just deliver the training online!"

That's easy to say, but converting in-person instructor-led training (ILT) for use in a virtual classroom setting takes real work—and is now more vital than ever before. In the midst of an unprecedented period of transformation and disruption, the importance of having truly effective training and development can hardly be overstated. Traditional methodologies are going to need a makeover, and developing ways to foster real human connection will be critical. Melissa Chambers, director of online instruction at MSC Consulting, and Chris King, chief technologist at Training Officers Consortium (TOC), recently shared their insights and tips for converting ILT for use in virtual classrooms.

Not a One-for-One Exchange

One common pitfall in translating preexisting in-person training to synchronous online training is believing that the virtual session should be a near-clone of its predecessor. However, "just because it was an eight-hour, full-day course does not mean that it needs to be an eight-hour, full-day course again," Chambers pointed out. Besides, who would want to participate in an eight-hour, full-day course virtually? Moving the training online necessitates rethinking the best way to format the course from many different angles.

Get Regular Feedback

In an in-person instructor-led session, the instructor is usually paying attention to the learners' body language and eye contact as indicators of engagement. Because those signals are less clear online, instructors need to proactively build opportunities for interaction into their virtual classrooms. At the outset of the session, they should set the expectation for participation, then be sure to check in regularly with participants throughout the training ("so they're less tempted to multitask while they're in the virtual classroom," King said). It can be difficult to know whether online participants are truly engaged, but Chambers and King pointed out that instructors don't necessarily know who's engaged in in-person classrooms, either, despite the nonverbal cues available in that setting.

Online Time Is Different from Face-to-Face Time

Some things are faster online, whereas others are much slower. Although it's great to have participants get to know each other, a round-the-horn virtual introduction with webcams can easily eat up a significant chunk of the session time. Think about how to maximize time efficiency (for example, it's much faster to do introductions via chat).

Have a Deliberate Design

Whether an instructor is thoroughly grounded in instructional design or is just winging it, they need to have in place a plan that, according to King, should include "a little bit of project management discipline and . . . a deliberate design." At minimum, the plan should address the following questions:

- **What technology will be used?**
- **How long are the sessions?**
- **Exactly who will be involved?**
- **For successful delivery, does the session need a producer, a moderator, and an instructor?**

Design First, Then Select the Tools

Everyone loves a shiny, new toy, and some platforms are packed with tools that make for fun experimentation and engaging user experiences. It can be tempting to think, "We have these cool widgets, so let's have a breakout room and do some whiteboarding!" But rather than try to incorporate all of those tools at the outset, instructors will have more success if they figure out their designs first and then identify the most appropriate tools for them. They should ask themselves what they want their learners to be able to do at the end of their sessions and which tools are really needed to achieve engagement. Design should aim to reduce the cognitive load of both students and facilitators: people who are worried about how to use a dozen unfamiliar tools won't be absorbing the content or having effective learning experiences. Instructors should choose their tools very carefully—and practice using them, too!

Mitigate Lurkers and Q&A Challenges

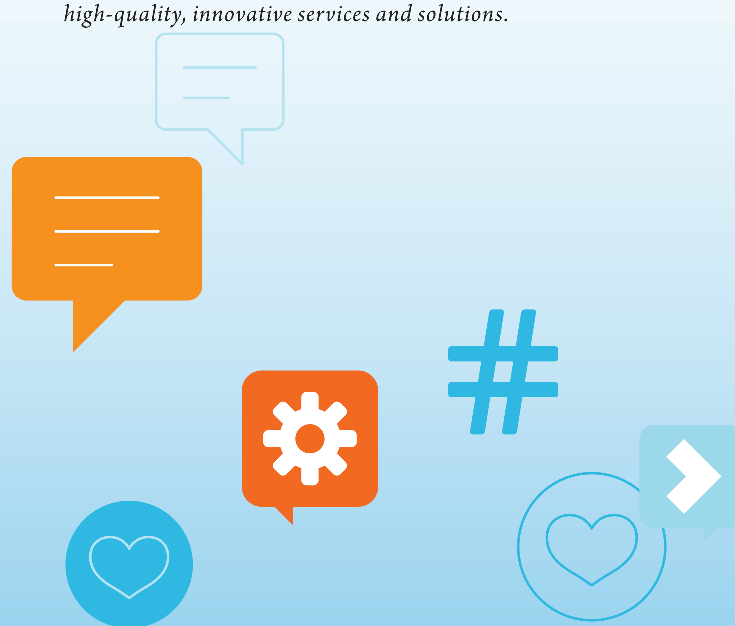
Although a virtual classroom doesn't have a literal back row, instructors may encounter the occasional disengaged learner who is slouching and seems to be tuning out of the training. Just because someone never turns on their camera or talks in chat, that doesn't necessarily mean they aren't engaged, of course. But if interactivity is important, facilitators may need to solicit it.

Chambers described some of the potential problems with questions during virtual training. Foe example, instructors should be wary of asking closed questions that can be easily dispatched with a simple "yes" or "no," and should be prepared for open-ended question (such as "Do you have any questions?") to be met with crickets. (She added that instructions should not be afraid of occasional crickets, especially during online training, because it can take participants a few seconds to gather their thoughts and type their responses or unmute their microphones.) She also suggested using a version of hand-raising that requires everyone to chime in without having to step into the spotlight (such as "If you have any questions, please click the green box; if you don't, please click the red box"), and pointed out that because extroverts often dominate voice-driven Q&A, instructors should try to mix it up between audio and text.

Always (Always!) Have a Plan B

The unexpected can upend even the best-prepared session. (In an updated version of "my dog ate my homework," Chambers once had a puppy eat through a vital computer cable right before an online session!) Sometimes the electricity goes out. Or demo sites refuse to load. Or sessions aren't recorded properly. That's why instructors should always have contingency plans. They also need to make peace with the fact that perfection is rarely attainable (but that doesn't mean that the sessions aren't successful). ■

Steve Dobberowsky is a principal consultant for Cornerstone OnDemand (www.cornerstoneondemand.com). With 11 years of competitive service in the federal government in HR and HR IT leadership roles ensuring effective talent management processes, he is a proven, business-savvy leader with a track record of providing high-quality, innovative services and solutions.



How Nice Leaders Become Angry

BY PATRICK LENCIONI

Anger is a strange and hard-to-understand emotion, especially when otherwise affable or thoughtful people become leaders and start to exhibit it more and more frequently. The people being led then begin to question what they thought they knew about their leaders (e.g., CEOs, department heads, principals, pastors), and the leaders themselves often wonder whether they've suddenly given in to the dark side of power. What's particularly strange and ironic about this scenario is that in many cases unintended anger on the part of leaders actually results in their tendency to want to be *too nice*.

Too many leaders begin their tenures determined to be more likable and beloved than the leaders they've worked for in their own careers—and that is where the problem starts. In their less-than-conscious pursuit of approval, they withhold criticism for a missed deadline here and overlook a poor decision there, all in the name of empathy and reasonableness. Over time, the people who work for the leader naturally start to worry less and less about the consequences of making mistakes. And then one day, a slightly larger mistake occurs—and the leader blows a gasket.

The magnitude of that blown gasket seems way out of proportion to the mistake itself, because people don't realize that it is actually a function of *all* of the mistakes that were overlooked in the past. It's as though the leader is saying, "How could you people not appreciate all those other times that I let you off the hook without saying anything?!"

And then things can go from bad to worse when the kindhearted leader feels an onslaught of guilt, which is especially painful given his or her private commitment to being nicer than other leaders. One might think that this guilt would cause the leader to calm down and back off—and sometimes that happens. But sometimes this guilt exacerbates the problem, like pouring gasoline on a fire, and the leader thinks, "How could you people put me in a position to have to get angry and feel so guilty?"

In most cases, leaders can recover from these painful moments through genuine ownership of and repentance for their behavior. But if they don't understand the underlying reason for their unintended and uncharacteristic outbursts, those outbursts can become a painful pattern.

The solution to all this isn't to tell those leaders "don't get so mad." (Saying this to someone who's angry is as ridiculous as telling someone who's having an anxiety attack to "stop worrying.") Instead, leaders who find themselves getting angrier over time need to understand that their feelings are not actually the problem. In fact, there is nothing wrong with having those feelings, which can often signal that something is wrong and needs to be addressed. What leaders need to change is how they deal with those feelings.

Leaders who are beginning to feel the initial signs of anger or frustration or deep disappointment need to stop and say something subtle to their direct reports like, "Hey, I'm starting to feel angry [or frustrated or deeply disappointed] here." Putting that statement out there and letting people hear it and begin to deal with it is precisely what will prevent a leader from having to display that emotion. And this statement gives people the opportunity to change their behavior or performance rather than be on the receiving end of an irrational tirade.

The only way that leaders can succeed at this is if they realize that wanting to be nice or lenient is actually a selfish impulse. Instead, they should choose to be fair and firm and clear—and self-controlled. People appreciate those qualities a lot more than nice, anyway. ■

Bestselling author, consultant, and keynote speaker Patrick Lencioni pioneered the organizational health movement and is cofounder and president of the Table Group, a firm dedicated to making work more fulfilling by making organizations healthier. His numerous books (which together have sold over six million copies), and he has worked with thousands of senior executives and their teams in organizations that include Fortune 500 companies and nonprofits. He can be reached via www.tablegroup.com.

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