



Constructing Efficient Systems - Communicating with Staff and Contracted Workers

By Dr. Linda Hancock

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dr. Hancock has written a regular weekly column entitled "All Psyched Up" for newspapers in two Canadian provinces for more than a dozen years. Over the years, her readers and clients have said that they have benefited from her common-sense solutions, wisdom, and sense of humour. Dr. Linda Hancock, the author of "Life is An Adventure...every step of the way" and "Open for Business Success" is a Registered Psychologist who has a private practice in Medicine Hat. She can be reached at 403-529-6877 or through email office@drhindahancock.com

Published

August 2nd, 2009

If you are going to be working with someone, it is important that you have clear communication, common goals, and deadlines for completing tasks and a relationship that promotes harmony. Without these, you will find that resentment builds, and the work doesn't get done on time or in an appropriate manner!

There are a number of things you can do to ensure that you and your staff or contracted workers have the best possible working relationship:

1. **DON'T ASSUME ANYTHING.** People cannot read your mind and not everyone thinks the same so assuming that they know what you want will just result in problems. I remember when I first started hiring people, I assumed that they had the skills and passion to do the job the way I wanted things to be done. I was wrong - repeatedly! Make sure that you not only know exactly what you want done and how you want it done, but also clearly communicate this to the person who will be doing the work.

2. **KNOW EXACTLY WHAT YOU WANT THE OTHER PERSON TO DO.** Before you hire someone, know exactly what you want them to do for you. Make a list of all the tasks you want them to complete and the timeframes for each. Consider whether you will be paying the person by the hour or with a contracted rate for each project. Ensure that you can provide a clear description both verbally and in writing for the staff member so that s/he will know exactly what they are to do.

3. **BE PREPARED TO MONITOR AND EVALUATE.** Plan regular times to review the progress of tasks and projects. Asking "How are things going?" is not necessarily going to give you the information that you need (or want). Set a regular time each day or week to talk about the things that have been assigned. Ask good questions and take the time to make sure that progress is being made as agreed upon.

4. **REMEMBER THAT THE BUCK STOPS WITH YOU.** Even though it is important to encourage the staff and provide a spirit of forgiveness for errors, those who cannot or do not meet the standards or deadlines laid out, will jeopardize your reputation and financial situation. It is up to you to protect yourself. If someone cannot do the job, don't repeatedly ignore the mistakes, or put up with shoddy work. Find someone who can do the work and hire them!

Running a business is about building profit and security by offering excellent services. This will occur only when you and your staff or contracted workers are able to communicate effectively.

Be honest with the other person. If you don't like what is happening, discuss this openly and develop ways of improving the situation.