



# The Staff Scoop

April 2013

Next Meeting: April 5<sup>th</sup> at 10:00am (Community Room)

Editor: Judy Ford

## TAKE CHARGE OF YOUR TIME



Time is money, or so the saying goes. People who manage their time effectively get more done and go further in their careers. Make the most of every minute with these useful ideas:

- **Act on email promptly.** Don't leave emails in your inbox, whether you've read them or not. Spend a few minutes on a regular schedule responding, saving, or deleting messages so important emails don't get lost in the electronic clutter.
- **Do your most important tasks first.** Identify your priorities (and those of your boss) so you know what's critical and what's trivial. Then take care of your top priorities first thing in the morning instead of putting them off or waiting until you're "ready." The rest of your day will flow more easily once you've got the important stuff under control.
- **Identify quick tasks.** Make a list of everyday jobs you can do in five minutes or less. Tackle these when you've got a little spare time—between meetings, or waiting for the printer. That way they won't distract you when you need to concentrate, or waste your time when you should be working on more important things.
- **Take good notes.** Don't try to remember everything. When you've got an idea, or realize you need to do something later, write it down. Review your notes regularly so nothing slips away.
- **Just say no.** Avoid tasks and projects that don't directly contribute to your primary objectives. Use your list of priorities to identify work that you need to do. Turn down (politely) requests to take on irrelevant work, or negotiate for a deadline that allows you to focus on your key tasks.

## NEW WORDS FOR A NEW ERA?

The English language is always growing and changing. These new words may not appear in any dictionary, but they're sure to add some sparkle to your everyday conversations:



**Beardspiration.** A beard so awesome that it inspires other people to grow their own beards. "Abraham Lincoln is truly a beardspiration to me."

**Corporatistical.** Adjective relating to oversized executive egos. "Telling me to remove all the semicolons from that report was really corporatistical of him."

**Deskoration.** Knickknacks for the workplace cubicle (or office), intended to make the resident look cool. "That miniature fountain would make a great deskoration for the office."

**Inboxapocalypse.** An overstuffed email inbox. "I've got 1,256 emails! It's an inboxapocalypse!"

**Stresscalation.** When one person passes his or her stress on to a co-worker. "Pam's meetings always produce a significant stresscalation to her assistant."

If a train station is where the train stops, what's a work station?

~Unknown

## APRIL BIRTHDAYS

- 1 Terry Robinson
- 4 Wendy Wareham
- 6 Star Johnson
- 7 Bob Ladd
- 15 Mary Jo Foster
- 22 Linda Melody-Cottongim



# Are Etiquette and Civility Still Important in the Workplace?



Etiquette, common sense, kindness, civility. What do these have to do with business today? A lot. Although, it seems, we would rather not think about it when we are at work. But work is where we need to think about it. These four behaviors govern how we act, communicate and interact with others every day. It's how good business is done.

I am always asked what these words mean and if they are really different. I think P.M. Forni sums it up best in his definition of awareness: "Courtesy, politeness, manners and civility are all in essence, forms of awareness. Being civil means being constantly aware of others..."

Let me define these terms further. Etiquette is the way in which we conduct ourselves – the expected way to introduce someone, the accepted level of eye contact, the proper way in which to dine with others, etc. Kindness is a good or benevolent disposition, while civility is politeness. Common sense is how we weave etiquette, kindness and civility into our daily behavior. The problem is, each of us has a different idea of what etiquette, kindness, and civility should look like. Depending on our generation, upbringing, education and other factors that shape us, we have our own ideas of acceptable behavior. With up to four generations in the work place today, it's easy to see where conflict and misunderstandings begin.

The whole idea of etiquette, common sense, kindness and civility is to make people feel comfortable and respected. In order to do that, you need to understand how each generation achieves that. Even if you don't understand a different generation, start by being aware that there are differences and don't jump to conclusions about another's behavior. A great example is language. Each generation has its own lexicon and slang. When we use it, it's easy to leave someone out of the conversation. Worst yet, not understanding the words can lead to hurt feelings or being offended. What should you do? Ask the person to explain what they meant before you make a judgment. This opens both of you to understanding one another and allows for sharing experiences. So, respect each generation and find common ground in order to learn from each other.

Small courtesies go a long way. Acknowledge co-workers; a simple "good morning" or "good night" lets the person know you are aware of them – and we all like to be recognized! Try adding the words "please" and "thank-you" to your requests to others. Use the person's name. It makes them feel like they matter. I bet you could list 10 more things you could do to be more civil at work.

Before getting offended or being indignant about a person's behavior or communication style, give the person the benefit of doubt. Many times a person is not even aware they are doing "something wrong" in the eyes of others. Based on where they stand, their behavior probably makes perfect sense. In my generation, all managers were called Mr. or Ms. until we were given permission to address them by their first name. The youngest generation working today just assumes first name basis is acceptable. Is it wrong? It depends on the company culture. What they need is someone to teach them what is acceptable and not acceptable at work and why.

Keep in mind that we all can make changes in our behavior to get along better with others. But change isn't always easy. As you go about changing your awareness and your behavior to create a more productive and harmonious work environment, remember it takes time. Here are some times to remember:

It takes 21 days to start a new behavior – you must practice the new behavior for 21 days to begin a new pattern.

It takes 100 days for the pattern to become automatic – continue to practice the new behavior to really make it stick.

Always be kind. Always be respectful. Always be polite. Make a point to understand the different generations in your workplace. Use your etiquette, common sense, kindness and civility to develop better working relationships and to conduct a more profitable business.