

# Counteroffer Acceptance- The Road to Career Ruin



The following article was written by Paul Hawkinson back in the mid 1990's and is still very relevant today. Paul was an HR Executive and Executive Recruiter for many years. His experience of being on both sides of the fence gave him a perspective of what happens when counteroffers are extended and accepted. I hope you find it helpful.

- Jeff King

## Counteroffer Acceptance: Road to Career Ruin

**By: Paul Hawkinson**

Mathew Henry, the 17th-century writer said, "Many a dangerous temptation comes to us in fine gay colors that are but skin deep." The same can be said for counteroffers, those magnetic enticements designed to lure you back into the nest after you've decided it's time to fly away. The litany of horror stories I have come across in my years as an executive recruiter, consultant and publisher, provides a litmus test that clearly indicates counteroffers should never be accepted. EVER!

I define a counter offer simply as an inducement from your current employer to get you to stay after you've announced your intention to take another job. We're not talking about those instances when you receive and offer but don't tell your boss. Nor are we discussing offers that you never intended to take, yet tell your employer about anyway as a "they-want-me-but- I'm-staying-with you" ploy.

These are merely astute positioning tactics you may choose to use to reinforce

your worth by letting your boss know you have other options. Mention of a true counteroffer, however, carries an actual threat to quit.

Interviews with employers who make counteroffers, and employees who accept them, have shown that as tempting as they may be, acceptance may cause career suicide. During the past 20 years, I have seen only isolated incidents in which an accepted counteroffer has benefited the employee. Consider the problem in its proper perspective.

### **What really goes through a boss's mind when someone quits:**

"This couldn't be happening at a worse time."

"This is one of my best people. If I let him quit now, it'll wreak havoc on the morale of the department."

"I've already got one opening in my department. I don't need another right now."

"This will probably screw up the entire vacation schedule."

"I'm working as hard as I can, and I don't need to do his work, too."

"If I lose another good employee, the company might decide to "lose" me too."

"My review is coming up and this will make me look bad."

"Maybe I can keep on until I find a suitable replacement."

### **What will the boss say to keep you in the nest?**

Some of these are common:

"I'm really shocked. I thought you were as happy with us as we were with you. Let's discuss it before you make your final decision."

"Aw gee, I've been meaning to tell you about the great plans we have for you, but it's been confidential until now."

"The VP has you in mind for some exciting and expanding responsibilities."

"Your raise was scheduled to go into effect next quarter, but we'll make it effective immediately."

"You're going to work for who?"

Let's face it. When someone quits, it's a direct reflection on the boss. Unless you're really incompetent or a destructive thorn in his side, the boss might look bad by "allowing" you to go. His gut reaction is to do what has to be done to keep you from leaving until he's ready. That's human nature.

Unfortunately, it's also human nature to want to stay unless your work life is

abject misery. Career change like all ventures into the unknown, is tough. That's why bosses know they can usually keep you around by pressing the right buttons.

**Before you succumb to a tempting counteroffer, consider these universal truths:**

1. Any situation in which an employee is forced to get an outside offer before the present employer will suggest a raise, promotion or better working conditions, is suspect.
2. No matter what the company says when making its counteroffer, you will always be considered a fidelity risk. Having once demonstrated your lack of loyalty (for whatever reason), you will lose your status as a "team player" and your place in the inner circle.
3. Counteroffers are usually nothing more than stall devices to give your employer time to replace you.
4. Your reasons for wanting to leave still exist. Conditions are just made a bit more tolerable short term because of the raise, promotion or promises made to keep you.
5. Counteroffers are only made in response to a threat to quit. Will you have to solicit an offer and threaten to quit every time you deserve better working conditions?
6. Decent and well-managed companies don't make counteroffers. EVER! Their policies are fair and equitable. They will not be subjected to "counteroffer coercion" or what they perceive as blackmail.
7. If the urge to accept a counteroffer hits you, keep on cleaning out your desk as you count your blessings.

## **Ten Reasons for NOT Accepting a Counter Offer**

Where is the money for the Counter Offer coming from? Is it your next raise, early? All companies have strict wage and salary guidelines that must be followed.

You have now made your employer aware that you are unhappy. From this day on, your loyalty will always be in question.

When promotion time comes around, your employer will remember who was loyal

and who wasn't.

Once the word gets out, the relationship that you now enjoy with your coworkers will never be the same. You will lose the personal satisfaction of peer-group acceptance.

What type of company do you work for if you have to threaten to resign before they give you what you are worth?

1. Your company will immediately start looking for a new person at a lower starting salary.
2. When times get tough, your employer will begin the cutback with you.
3. Accepting a Counter Offer is an insult to your intelligence and a blow to your personal pride; knowing that you were bought.

The same circumstances that now cause you to consider a change will repeat themselves in the future; even if you accept a Counter Offer.

4. Statistics show that if you accept a Counter Offer, the probability of your voluntarily leaving in six months or being let go within one year is extremely high.

**Special Note:** When you do resign from your present employer, be sure to do so in writing, retaining a copy for yourself. This procedure is to protect you in the future because future reference checks could record the separation as mutually beneficial. Include any constructive criticism, if any, in order to solidify your position for leaving.

## “Beware of the Counter Offer”

(Your whole career is at stake)

If you have accepted an offer from a new employer and on giving your notice to your present company a Counter Offer is made, you should consider the following:

Ask yourself if you were worth “X” dollars yesterday. Why are they suddenly willing to now pay you “Y” dollars today when you were not anticipating a raise for some time. (Consider the fact that your present employer could be merely “buying time” with this raise until he can locate a suitable replacement).

Suppose you were given an annual raise of \$3,000.00 as a counter offer. When they find a replacement for you in say 60 days, then the actual cost to them is only

\$500.00.

Is just more money going to change everything in your present job? Consider the new opportunity you will be giving up that looked so favorable when you accepted it.

The company will probably feel as though they have been “blackmailed” into giving you a raise when you announced your decision to leave.

Realize that you are now a marked man. The possibility of promotion is extremely limited for someone who has “given notice”. The company is vulnerable; they know it and will not risk giving more responsibility to someone who was previously committed to leave.

When economic slow-downs occur, you could be one of the first to go. You indicated your intention to go once before, so it is only natural that your position would be eliminated in a slack period.

You should know that statistics compiled by the National Employment Association confirm the fact that over 80% of those people who elected to accept a Counter Offer and stayed are no longer with their company six months later.

Carefully review in your mind all the reasons you wanted to make a change in the first place. Does the Counter Offer really offset these reasons?

If you intent to seriously consider a Counter Offer, be sure you ask your present employer to confirm all the details of said offer in writing.

**WE STRONGLY URGE YOU TO CAREFULLY THINK ABOUT ALL OF THESE FACTS BEFORE MAKING A FINAL DECISION. IT IS YOUR CAREER, YOUR LIVELIHOOD. ONE IMPRUDENT MISTAKE AT ANY TIME COULD BE VERY COSTLY IN TERMS OF YOUR PROFESSIONAL GROWTH.**

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# Thank You Note Templates for After an Interview



So your first interview went really well and you decided you really want this job. Does the company know your level of excitement? Are you sure? Here's a way to make sure - send a Thank You note to the people you interviewed with within 24 - 48 hours after the interview.

Most job candidates don't take the time to send a Thank You note as a follow up to an interview, and that is a big mistake. This is your chance to reinforce your interest in the company, job, and working for the hiring manager. It also gives you an additional communication with the company so they remember you as they evaluate other possible job candidates.

Whether you choose to mail a hand written letter or send an email isn't as important as the fact that you DO send one. A hand written letter shows more of a personal touch, but it can take longer to get to the intended person, and by that time a decision may have already been made. An email allows you to ask the interviewer a question either about the interview or any other topic that might not have been completely clear, and helps establish a dialogue with them to keep you foremost in their mind while making a final decision.

The letter doesn't have to be long and, in fact, it's better if it's not. Just a couple of short paragraphs thanking them for their time, re-stating your interest, and relaying to them what you can contribute to the company if hired is really all that is needed.

Here is a template you can use as a guide to create your own letter:

## **If mailing a letter:**

Date

Interviewer's Name

Title

Company Name

Address

## **If emailing a letter:**

Subject Line of Message: Thank You for Your Time

Dear Mr./Ms. Last Name:

Thank you for taking time out of your busy schedule to talk with me about the (title of the position you are interviewing for) position. I appreciate the information you shared with me during the interview, and feel very strongly that I could perform very well in this role.

After meeting with you and the rest of the group, I feel my background is a perfect match for this opportunity. I know I would be able to (describe one or two key things you can do from the first day on the job to help them meet their goals. Remember, this position is open because they have a problem they need to address, and they are looking for a solution to that problem. You are the solution). During the interview you seemed most interested in (choose a topic from the interview). Can I provide you with more information about that part of my background?

Please let me state again my interest in being considered for this position. I look forward to hearing from you regarding your decision on my candidacy, and would be happy to provide any further information you need from me.

Thank you again for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

## **If mailing:**

Your Signature

Your Printed/Typed Name

Your Address

Your Phone Number

Your email address

## **If emailing:**

Your Name

Your Address

Your Phone Number

Your Email Address

As stated earlier, most job candidates skip this step in the process. In fact, less than 30% of job candidates send a Thank You note after the interview, so you can see how doing so will help you stand out above your competition. Let me know if you have any questions.

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## **How to Resign**



Resigning is never easy, especially when you've worked at a position for several years, and have made many connections. Some employers and co-workers take it very personally and may accuse you of abandoning ship. However, handling your resignation as professionally and thoughtfully as you handle your search for a new job can help make your resignation relatively smooth and amicable. This is where an experienced recruiter can really help make the process a lot easier for you.

## **MAKE UP YOUR MIND:**

Before you submit your resignation, you must be clearly committed to leaving, and have a written offer in hand from your new employer. Have you already pursued all avenues for advancement within your firm? If so and you didn't get the response you hoped for, it's time to leave. If you need some help with this step, I can help you with how to approach your manager. Since you may be immediately walked out of the building upon giving notice, make sure you have cleared all personal files from your computer and desk.

## **KEEP RESIGNATIONS SHORT, SIMPLE AND POSITIVE:**

Leave your employer on a positive note. Moving on does not have to have negative consequences. After all, you have an opportunity to advance in your career for which you owe your employer sincere thanks. Thank your colleagues for their help in preparing you to move onward and upward. When you resign, keep your conversations simple and concise. Avoid lengthy discussions about your new opportunity. Do not justify your personal goals or your decision to leave. If you feel you may be faced with a hostile environment, resign at the end of the day.

## **THE ORAL RESIGNATION:**

Resigning orally may place you in the compromising position of having to explain your decision on the spot. Words are very powerful. Choose your words with care. Your boss may want to probe for factors which led to your decision. You may be asked for specifics as to whom or what your reason for leaving is, or you may be invited to offer suggestions to help make the organization more effective, and told to "answer candidly". Do not fall for this trap! Remember, your interrogator is still your boss. Whatever you say will be viewed as biased - and may eventually be used against you. Offer sincere praise for the firm and those with whom you worked. Prepare yourself beforehand by focusing on several positive aspects of your workplace, and mention them liberally when the opportunity arises.

**Example:** "I need to discuss something with you if you have a moment. I've been

made an exceptional offer by another firm, and I've decided to accept it. My family and I have given this opportunity a lot of thought. As much as I'd like to advance with this company, we feel the new opportunity is in our best long-term interest.

We deeply appreciate all you and the firm have done for us here. I don't think I would have been presented this exceptional opportunity if not for your support and leadership. I want to thank you. I hope I can leave with your good wishes. You've been a friend as well as a boss."

If probed for more information, you may want to claim that there is nothing else to say right now, or that the new company has asked you to keep this confidential for the time being.

## **THE WRITTEN RESIGNATION:**

A written resignation gives you the time to effectively prepare what you wish to communicate, and gives you greater control over the delivery of your message. A written resignation also reinforces the fact that you are really leaving and are not simply threatening in order to re-negotiate your position or salary.

**Example:** "I want to thank you for all you have done for me here at (company). It's been a pleasure working with you, and representing the company as your (job title).

I have accepted an offer with another firm and have decided to tender my resignation as of today, with my last day being (date). This decision has nothing to do with the exceptional opportunity you have provided for me here. You and the company have been more than fair with me, and I genuinely appreciate all of your support.

I wish (company) continued success, and I want to thank you for allowing me to be a part of your team. I hope you will respect my decision. Please feel free to let me know how I can help to make this a smooth transition."

## **THE COUNTEROFFER:**

Be prepared, you may receive a counteroffer. Do not be disappointed if you do not. In fact, it makes the resignation process easier if you do not. I am happy to help you with this stage of the process as well and can help you plan a strategy on

how to deal with it.

## **LEAVE ON THE RIGHT NOTE:**

Before leaving the firm, take time to speak with each of your support staff, peers, executive personnel, and others with whom you have worked. To the extent possible, clear up any unfinished business. Be sensitive to others' reactions and keep your conversations positive and constructive. Some people may naturally express their own discontentment, and may egg you on to agree with them. Don't!! Instead, express your appreciation and tell your colleagues you'll miss them. Also keep in mind that it is professional courtesy to give your employer ample notice to help them prepare for your departure - typically 2 weeks. However, you should try to get out as soon as possible avoiding recurring invitations to tell your story, and having to deal with the frustrations and pressures of the job as the firm adjusts to your leaving.

## **IF THE SITUATION TURNS SOUR:**

In some cases staying the full 2 weeks can become very difficult and hard to tolerate. If you feel you are continually being pressured about details of your new job, or to accept their counter offer, keep in mind that a 2 week notice is a courtesy YOU are extending to them, not a rule! Just as the company has the right to walk you to the door as soon as you resign, or fire you with no notice, you have the right to end your time if the situation becomes intolerable.

This is another emotionally difficult part of the job change process, but it's a very important part to get right both for yourself, and for the people you leave behind and may work with again during your career. It's good to have someone on your side that has helped numerous people through this process, and can be a sounding board for you to express your concerns or ask questions. Let me know if I can be that resource for you.

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# How Do I Discuss the Subject of Money?



During the employment interview, there's a good chance you'll be asked about your current and expected level of compensation. Here's the way to handle the following questions:

**Question:** What are you currently earning?

**Answer:** "My compensation, including bonus, is in the \$110k - \$115k range. I'm expecting my annual review next month, and that should put me in the \$115k - \$120k range."

**Question:** What sort of money would you need to come to work here?

**Answer:** "I feel that the opportunity is the most important issue, not salary. If we decide to work together, I'm sure you'll make me a fair offer."

In the answer to the first question, notice the way a range was given, not a specific dollar figure. However, in a situation in which the interviewer presses for an exact answer, than by all means, be precise in terms of salary, bonus, benefits, expected increase, and so forth.

With respect to the second question, if the interviewer tries to zero in on your expected compensation, you should also suggest a range, as in, "I would need something in the \$115k - \$120k range." Getting locked in to an exact figure may work against you later, in one of two ways: either the number you give is lower than you really want to accept; or the number appears too high or too low to the employer, and an offer never comes. By using a range, you can keep your options open.

## **Don't Come On Too Strong**

Unless you're pinned down in the early stages of the interview, the best time to talk about money is after you've established mutual interest. If you initiate a discussion about salary and benefits, you run the risk of giving the employer the impression that money is the most important reason for your job search.

From a tactical standpoint, it makes the most sense to build your value and exercise restraint before the subject ever comes up. The greater your asset value is in the eyes of the employer, the stronger your offer will be. The principal objective during the first and second interview is to explore the opportunity and your potential contribution relative to the goals of the department or organization. Focusing on the money only sidetracks the greater issue of whether you and the employer can be productive and happy working together.

Once you know the job fits—and the employer sees your value—you'll usually be able to agree on a fair price for your services. And if you are working with a Recruiter, they should already know the salary range for the position and your desired salary range, and can do the negotiating for you. In fact, some people will request all salary negotiations go through their recruiter to eliminate any fear of hurt or uncomfortable feelings, or the negotiation process turning sour.

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## **6 Reasons Why You Should Use a Recruiter**



Some people (recruiters especially) would tell you that you should use a recruiter first thing. I would say try to tap into your own network first for people you know would be good possible job candidates for the job. If you don't have success with that then you should use a recruiter. I'm not talking about your company's internal recruiter either. They are good at the more general positions, but unless they have experience specifically finding, attracting, and hiring Regulatory, Clinical and Quality professionals, their success is usually pretty limited.

When we are told we can only talk to HR about helping in a search, they almost always tell us they are finding some good job candidates on their own and don't need my help, but when we talk to the actual hiring manager they tell us a very different story. They are either seeing a lot of resumes - most of which are pretty lousy, or they are getting very few resumes and they are still not very good. Let's face it, good Regulatory, Clinical, and Quality people are hard to find no matter what the employment market is like and rarely have the time to go scouring the internet to find your opportunity.

## **WHY SHOULD YOU USE A RECRUITER?**

There are 6 reasons you may want to consider using a recruiter to fill a critical position on your team:

**Reason 1:** A good recruiter will take the time to get to know what problems you are trying to solve by filling an open position. In order for them to do their job and find the right person for you, they have to focus on the true needs you have and the requirements the successful job candidate **MUST** have to do the job. This makes the company really focus and helps them make better hiring decisions. Some of the multi-page job descriptions that contain things like "Must be able to sit at a computer for extended periods of time and occasionally lift up to 25

pounds” are pretty worthless and do not help you find or identify the right person for the job.

**Reason 2:** A good recruiter (especially if they specialize) can access a broader range of qualified and interested job candidates than you can. Only 30% of the qualified talent pool is either actively or semi-actively in job changing mode. These are the ones that respond to ads. The other 70% are busy working and not looking. But a specialized recruiter can access that other 70% to find the person you need.

**Reason 3:** A good recruiter can drastically reduce the chance of a job candidate withdrawing from contention before an offer is made. Since we establish a rapport with the job candidates we submit, we can tell you of other companies they are talking to, or offers they may be getting. We can keep in touch with the job candidates when the interviewing process breaks down so they are not left wondering what’s going on, and moving on to other opportunities.

**Reason 4:** A good recruiter can greatly increase the likelihood that your offer gets accepted, and the job candidate shows up on the first day. Since we don’t work directly for our client companies, job candidates are more willing to talk freely about what they are looking for in a job, and what concerns them about a possible opportunity. With that knowledge, and by constantly re-affirming their interest in a possible offer from you, and re-qualifying them on why this opportunity is a good fit for them, we get the people you want over 90% of the time (that’s our success rate, not for recruiters in general).

**Reason 5:** A good recruiter can greatly reduce the chance of a job candidate accepting a counter offer from their current employer - leaving you without a new hire and having to start the whole process over again. By constructing a good transition strategy including helping the job candidate navigate the resignation and exit process from their current employer, and arming them with how to handle a counter offer situation, you won’t be left with any unwelcomed surprises at the end of the process. This alone will save you a tremendous amount of time, money and frustration; because if a counter offer is accepted you not only lose that job candidate, but most likely lose any runner-up job candidates as well.

**Reason 6:** Establishing a good relationship with a recruiter offers you a few other benefits that most people don’t think about. For one, you no longer have to settle

for mediocre performance from your staff. If someone is underperforming, you can discreetly contact your recruiter and have them find a few alternative job candidates for you to replace the underperformer. The recruiter can also quickly find the right people for you when you need to add to your team because they already know your company, your team, and you. And another benefit is that you can have the right of first refusal on some of the best talent out there. Since we are talking to top performers all the time, when one decides they are ready to look for a new opportunity you can be informed of their availability before anyone else knows about them.

Our client companies are friends and partners in solving critical staffing problems. We like to know what they do, how the team works, what the company is like to work for, and how we can help them achieve their goals. We want them to know how we work, what to expect, and have confidence that we can do what we say. It's not a transactional type of relationship, but more of a partnership, and both sides benefit from it.

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## **How to Prepare for a New Hire**



The time between accepting an offer and the end of the first week on the new job can be an emotional time for a new hire. During this period your new employee will feel disconnected from the job they had, and uncertain about what lies ahead. This makes them extremely vulnerable to a counter offer. There are a few steps that you can take to make them feel welcome and confirm to them they have made the right decision.

Once your offer letter has been signed and returned to you, you need to start

preparing to bring your new employee on board. These are small actions on your part, but have a huge, positive impact on a new hire. The suggested steps are:

1. **Send a Welcome Package** - This would include any company promotional material, an employee handbook, benefits package, etc.
2. **Notify Payroll** of the new employee so there is no delay in them getting paid.
3. **Notify Security** (if applicable) to get the process of providing them with a security/I.D. badge underway.
4. **Create an Email and Voicemail account** for them along with instructions on how to change their password.
5. **Office Announcements** - Let the rest of the team know about the new employee and include their new phone number and email address. A nice touch would be to have the team send them a welcome email or voice mail.
6. **Introductory Lunch** - Within the first few days on the job, arrange for a lunch with the new employee and the rest of the department or key people they will interact with. This too helps them settle in quickly and start feeling like part of the team.
7. **Industry Announcement** (if applicable)
8. **Start the enrollment process** for health and other benefit programs.
9. **Allocate a Work Space.** Make sure they have a desk (cleaned out) and computer (preferably loaded and configured) on the day they start. There is nothing worse than showing up to your new job excited about getting going only to find that you had been forgotten about, and not planned for. Having a place ready for them lets them know you are happy they have joined your team, and allows them to get settled in and become productive much faster.
10. **Order Business Cards and Office Name Plates.** Again, a simple touch, but it tells the new employee you're glad they have joined your team.

Once your new employee knows you have gone to the trouble to make them feel welcome, they are much more confident they have made the right choice and feel ready to start this next step in their career. It also makes your job easier because you know you are ready for your new team member to begin without having to do

a last minute dash. I hope this list is helpful and makes this process as smooth as possible for you.

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# Interview Preparation: Don't Talk Yourself Out of a Job



It can be difficult in an interview to determine how much information the interviewer is looking for when they ask a question. If you talk too much, that can work against you. If you talk too little, they feel they really have to pry information out of you, and that reflects badly on you as well.

There are two ways to answer interview questions: the short version and the long version. When a question is open-ended, I always suggest to job candidates that they say, “Let me give you the short version. If we need to explore some aspect of the answer more fully, I’d be happy to go into greater depth, and give you the long version.”

The reason you should respond this way is because it’s often difficult to know what type of answer each question will need. A question like, “What was your most difficult assignment?” might take anywhere from thirty seconds to thirty minutes to answer, depending on the detail you choose to give.

Therefore, you must always remember that the interviewer is the one who asked the question. So you should tailor your answer to what he or she needs to know, without a lot of extraneous rambling or superfluous explanation. Why waste time

and create a negative impression by giving a sermon when a short prayer would do just fine?

Let's suppose you were interviewing for a regulatory management position, and the interviewer asked you, "What sort of regulatory experience have you had in the past?"

Well, that's exactly the sort of question that can get you into trouble if you don't use the short version/long version method. Most people would just start rattling off everything in their memory that relates to their regulatory experience. Though the information might be useful to the interviewer, your answer could get pretty complicated and long-winded unless it's neatly packaged.

One way to answer the question might be, "I've held regulatory positions with three different medical device companies over a nine-year period. Where would you like me to start?"

Or, you might simply say, "Let me give you the short version first, and you can tell me where you want to go into more depth. I've had nine years experience in regulatory affairs with three different companies that had three very different types of medical devices, and held the titles of Specialist, Senior Specialist, and Manager. What aspect of my background would you like to concentrate on?"

By using this method, you convey to the interviewer that your thoughts are well organized, and that you want to understand the intent of the question before you travel too far in a direction neither of you wants to go. After you get the green light, you can spend your interviewing time discussing in detail the things that are important, not whatever happens to pop into your mind.

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## **7 Steps to Resolving Conflict**



Whether in your professional life or your personal life, you are going to run into someone that is causing problems either for you directly, or for your group. Most people prefer to avoid conflict and end up harboring resentment, and get stressed out because the situation doesn't change. Here are a few simple steps to help you approach the person causing the conflict and resolving the situation or at least bring the problem to their attention.

1. Set up a private meeting with the person. If you call the person out in front of others it will only embarrass them. This will only cause them to become defensive and make a positive outcome very unlikely.
2. There are basically two types of mindsets people have; they are either LEARNERS or JUDGERS. Most of us go through life judging ourselves or others, but when you come to this meeting, come with the attitude of LEARNING and not JUDGING. If you go in with a judgmental attitude towards the person this too will get their defenses up very quickly. Instead, go in with the attitude that you want to learn what is going on with the person that is causing the disruptive behavior. You never know what might be going on in their life that may be causing the behavior.
3. Start by telling the other person how important they are to you and the team so they know they are valued.
4. Focus on the behavior that is causing the problem and not the person. Don't make general statements like "you are ALWAYS late", or "you NEVER follow through". Again, this comes across as very judgmental and sets the wrong tone for the meeting. Instead, simply state your observation such as "I've noticed that for the past 4 meetings you have been coming in late".
5. Let them know SPECIFICALLY how this behavior is causing problems for you or the team. Such as, "by coming in late it holds us all up from being able to finish the meeting on time so we can get back to work and it's

really not fair to the other team members” or “we end up having to go back over material that you missed and some of the other team members have complained that this is wasting their time”. Try to keep your comments to actual problems and keep emotions out of it.

6. Ask them if there is something going on with them that is causing the behavior and really listen to them. By giving them a chance to explain what is going on and offering to help if you can changes the tone of what could be a tense and unpleasant conversation into one that shows you are concerned about them and want to help.
7. If there is something you can do to help the situation, let them know what you are willing to do to help them resolve the problem. For example, if they are having a hard time getting to your meetings on time, consider changing the time of the meeting to better accommodate their schedule if the other team members agree. Ask them what they think they can do to improve things as well.
8. Do a quick summary of what both of you are willing to do and get a commitment to make the changes by a certain date. Also have them agree to meet with you again in a week or two to go over the progress on resolving the issue or see if there are other things that need to be done.

This same approach works if you are the one being confronted by someone that is irate or being judgmental. If you are the one being confronted:

1. Try to move the conversation to a more private location.
2. STAY IN A LEARNER MODE.
3. Tell them how much you value their contributions and that you want to understand their issue and resolve it.
4. Ask them for specific examples of the behavior that is troubling them.
5. Ask them what the impact of the behavior is and how it makes them feel.
6. Ask for their suggestions on what behavior they think would help.
7. Work with them to find a solution that works for both of you.

I hope these steps help in making your work environment more collaborative and efficient. I would love to hear back on your experience in using this technique.

Good luck!

Jeff King