



Alli Blotter

Do you ever feel like work is a circus and you're the juggler? Do you have to juggle multiple tasks in order to give your best performance? Has multi-tasking become a habit? If so, you might want to reconsider your tight-rope walk.

In part one of our series, we explored [The Benefits of Multi-Tasking](#). We learned that the brain actually isn't capable of giving attention to more than one stimuli at once. The process should technically be called "task-switching." While task-switching has its advantages, there are serious consequences to frequent task-switching. If you want a long, healthy career, learn to navigate this balancing act.

Task-Switching is Addictive

Do you often find yourself in a constant rhythm of multi-tasking and can't stop? You're actually developing a negative mental habit. [Research studies](#) show that rapidly switching between short tasks is neurologically addictive. When switching between non-intensive stimuli, the brain releases the chemical dopamine which causes cravings. Your brain starts to crave the feeling of instant gratification and you eventually wind up searching for tiny tasks to complete. Small victories basically become your drug.

This cycle might create a smokescreen of productivity, but in reality, it prevents you from focusing on priorities. If you have a big, mentally taxing project to tackle, you wind up procrastinating by focusing on more gratifying short tasks. Your brain is essentially rewarding you for getting distracted. Even if the smaller tasks feel good, they might not actually matter in the grand scheme of responsibilities.

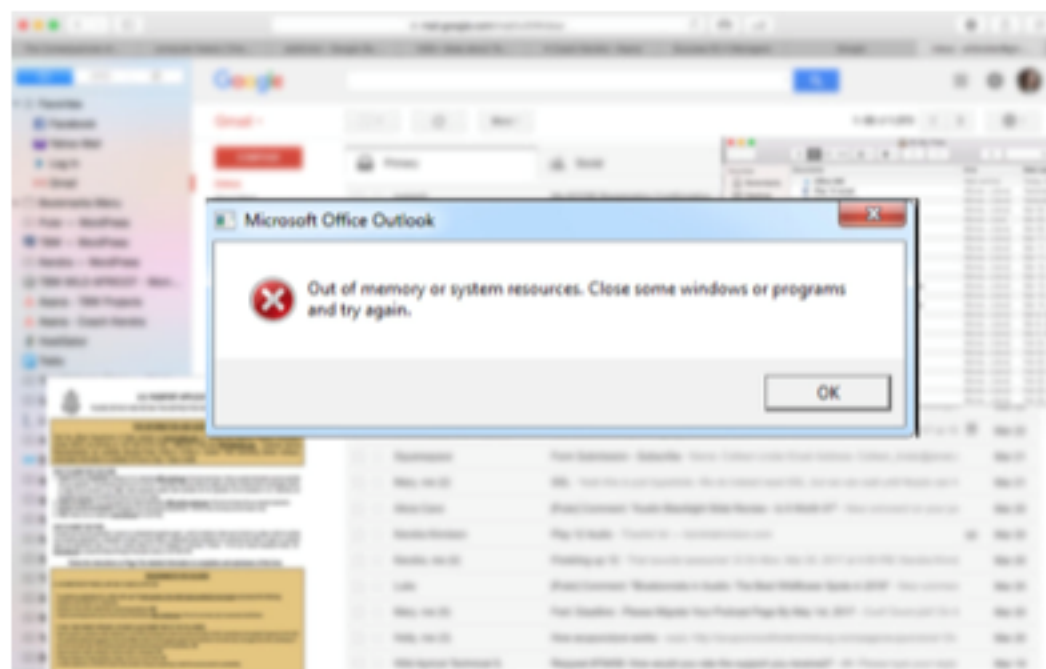
The key is to find healthier ways to feel satisfied and rewarded. [Studies suggest](#) that exercise helps balance dopamine levels and absorb serotonin. If you're craving accomplishment, try jumping up and down or doing a couple jumping jacks. Brief physical activity will help balance your neurotransmitter levels so you can focus on what matters.



Task-Switching Impairs Memory

Task-switching not only disrupts your neurotransmitter levels, it also puts unnecessary stress on your body. [Research](#) shows that rapidly switching focus increases your cortisol levels. When your cortisol levels go up, your [memory recall ability](#) goes down.

Your brain is similar to a computer. When you have multiple windows open and several applications running, response time starts to slow down. When you try to switch between programs, it requires more CPU/memory. Performance starts to decrease, because the system is overloaded. And what happens when a computer freezes up? Data gets lost!



When quickly jumping back and forth between tasks, your brain can't keep up with processing all of the data. The stress on resources causes your brain to freeze up. It can't retain all of the information that quickly. Multi-tasking increases your probability of mistakes and therefore requires more time and energy to correct mistakes. In the long-run, you aren't really saving any time at all.

Instead, take the time to complete one task and then move onto the next one. Give your brain time to sort all of the information in a clear, concise fashion.

Task-Switching Destroys Trust

One of the most common reasons for task-switching is answering phone calls, texts and emails. That little notification on your phone can be the biggest distraction of the day. Even if you're in the middle of an intense work-flow, you stop to answer the phone for fear of consequences. But what's the worst that could happen?

The majority of calls, texts and emails do not need to be responded to immediately. If you browse through your email, you might find a pattern that your superior asks you respond to by the end of the day. Or if you scroll through your texts, you'll notice very few messages were life-or-death emergencies. Waiting an hour or two, normally won't affect productivity at all.

There are very few times when it is absolutely necessary to drop everything you're doing and respond to a message. If your superior contacts you multiple times throughout the day and expects you to answer instantly, then there is a deeper problem to address. Does your superior doubt your capabilities? Does he or she have problems with organization? Responding to messages immediately indicates a fear from one or both parties. You should both trust that the other can manage responsibilities in a timely matter.

If someone demands instant responses, schedule a one-on-one chat. Have an honest discussion and dig down deep to find the root cause of his or her fear. Use your [Emotional Intelligence](#) to consider the other person's perspective. Then, explain how his or her interruptions interfere with productivity. Use data to support your case. Find a solution where each party feels respected.



Master Compartmentalization

The secret to mastering the fine line of task-switching is to reduce the probability of it altogether. Learn to compartmentalize your tasks and plan ahead. Avoid situations that would tempt you to multi-task.

Stay Organized: Practice [Balancing Accessibility and Productivity](#). Before you start work, make a list of your responsibilities for the day. Make note of the most mentally taxing projects that require intense focus. Make a habit of writing down notes and setting up reminders.

Use Project Management Tools: Platforms like [Asana](#), [Trello](#) and [BaseCamp](#), provide dashboards for managers to keep track of projects. You can create projects, assign tasks and establish deadlines. Keep all correspondence streamlined in one location where everyone can provide updates.

Schedule Tasks in Blocks: Assign a certain length of time dedicated to each task. For instance, allot one hour for [Managing Email](#), one hour for a staff meeting, two hours to create a presentation, etc. Make sure to keep a strict schedule. Embrace that "done" is better than "perfect."

Establish a Communication

System: Define boundaries for phone calls, texts and emails. Explain to your superior when he or she should expect to receive updates from you. Let your staff know what times you're available and what times you need to focus on your own duties.

Refuel Mental Energy: Don't forget to include time for food and stretch breaks! Dedicate time to refresh time will actually improve your focus and increase your stamina. You'll actually make fewer mistakes if you commit to refreshing your energy every two or three hours.



While task-switching may seem like a productive approach to work, sometimes it can do more harm than good. Now that you know the pros and cons of task-switching, you can use them to your advantage. Use your best judgement to determine when it's worth the risk and when it's not. If you master balance, you'll be the star of the show!

Need help getting organized and finding balance? Get one-on-one professional coaching with the [SK4M Connect](#) program.



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Value.

What do you think of when you hear the word 'value.' Does it remind you of a discount or a cheap purchase? Do you think of key principles or a code of conduct? What about significance or worth? Or the verb form, to appreciate or respect?

Most women today struggle with determining their value at work. How often do you think about how significant your contribution is to the company? How useful are your combination of skills and talents? You might feel that you carry a huge portion of the workload, but often go unnoticed. You put in the work, but aren't fairly compensated. But what can you do about it?

Learn the Facts

The 2017 AAUW analysis of the US Census Bureau report, shows that on average, men are paid 20% more than women. This 20% margin is called the 'Gender Pay Gap.' It's calculated by dividing the median earnings of full-time, year-round, working women by the median earnings of full-time, year-round, working men. There is debate as to whether the gap exists independently of skills or qualifications. However, the pattern indicates that even if a man and a woman have the exact same skill level, the man is be paid more for the exact same job. The gap exists across nearly all industries at varying rates.



The analysis shows an even larger gap for African American women who only earn about 60% compared of what white men earn. Hispanic and Latina women only earn about half as much as white men. The gap also increases with age. As women get older, they only earn 75% of the income of men their age.

There are many factors that contribute to the gap including occupational differences and family caregiving. However, the Center For American progress suggests that biggest contributing factor is the structural barrier and enduring social attitude about a women's place. That bears repeating; the biggest factor is the social attitude about a "woman's place."

Know Your Value

Society has an unwritten rule about the value or importance of women. Traditional gender roles dictate men as bread-winners and women as caregivers. However, not all men feel fulfilled solely working and not all women feel fulfilled solely mothering. On top of it all, Americans tend to value working more than caregiving. So society perceives a woman who tries to both work and raise a family, as someone with less value. Less value means less significance. Less significance means less money.



Find Your Power

While you can't change societal norms all at once, you can start by changing your own. The first step toward ending the wage gap is for every woman to understand her own worth. Every woman has a purpose. If you don't know how you contribute to society, then society will dictate that role for you.

Your value could simply come from making people smile. Or your ability to organize. Or crunch numbers. Or public speaking. etc. If you're not sure, these questions might help.

- What are you passionate about?
- What are you good at?
- When people ask you for help, what do they ask for?
- If money didn't matter, what would you do?

You find aspects of your current job that correlate with these answers. If aren't able to, you might consider a career change. Don't be intimidated if your ideal job is male-dominated. Trust in your abilities and do whatever it takes to defend your value!

Do Your Research

Once you know what makes you significant, find out how your skills and talents benefit the company. Learn how to measure your value with data. Review budget reports and performance evaluations. Determine your exact worth based on the time you dedicate to the job vs. how much you're compensated.

- How has your team improved from your leadership?
- Which projects yielded the highest results?
- In which situations have you saved/made the company more money/resources?
- What skills do you have that no one else has?

If you aren't able to answer these questions, start tracking your progress at work. Write down your achievements and make sure to include the data you used to measure success.

Ask For What You Want

If you know your role and how it impacts the business at large, you can use your knowledge to your advantage. If you need more resources, show your superior how it's cost-effective. If you've gone several years without raise, explain to your superior why you deserve. Use data to back your claims.

Over 30% of women are uncomfortable negotiating salary. However, being uncomfortable should never stop you from defending your value. If you're afraid of being pushy, remember **Being Respected is More Important Than Being Liked**. If you're afraid to fail, use **Emotional Intelligence** to find the core reason. Isn't that 20% for ALL women worth it?

Lead By Example

There are additional steps you can take to solidify your true value. Instead of being perceived as simply a supporter, take charge and make decisions on your own. You can't attain power if you don't feel powerful. Stand tall and be proud!

Stop Apologizing

Have you counted how many times you say "sorry" per day? It might be more than you expect. Women often apologize for situations when it's not even their fault. "Sorry" has become a replacement for "Excuse Me." When explaining a counter-argument, many women often lead with, "I'm sorry, but I feel differently..."



Many females make a habit of correlating interference with mistakes. This is detrimental to society, because it calls into question female value. How can women defend their value if they constantly belittle their own opinion? How can society find women significant if women constantly feel like they're making mistakes?

Studies show that men have a higher threshold for apology-worthy behavior than women do. Men voice their concerns with little no regard at how they are perceived. They don't feel that disagreement equates to being "difficult." So why can't women feel the same way?

If you can learn to defend your voice and own your presence, you'll get more respect. More respect means greater value. Greater value means more money.

Keep Learning

Society assumes that women are gifted with the nurturing talents. While this perception may not be wrong, it's not necessarily inclusive. Females have a wide range of talents that are often overshadowed by the priority of take care of family.

Women can find themselves coasting while their children grow up. Then soon after, they have to take care of aging parents or other family members. Women sacrifice work for caregiving and there's little time left for mastery.

If you can find time to grow your skill set, you'll open yourself up to many more opportunities. Even if it's just an hour a week to read a book, or listen to a podcast during the commute, expanding your knowledge has incredible benefits. The more you know, the more you know your value.

Seek Leadership Roles

Being a achievement is a great achievement so congratulations! But don't let your career trajectory stop there. Only about 4% of America's top 500 companies are run by women. Again family commitments often prevent women from dedicating the extra time required for executive positions. The gap will never end if women don't have a seat at the table.



Therefore, don't get comfortable in your current role. Don't agree to take notes at meeting. Ask to LEAD the meeting. Don't clean up after everyone else, because you think you're the only one who will get it done. Delegate the task to someone else. Always strive for more, not only because you deserve it, but for the benefit of the company. Female executives perform **three-times better** than their male counterparts. A well-balanced board can benefit from additional insight. When you win, the collective wins.

Empower Other Women

The final step to end the wage gap is to support other women. Society tends to pit women against each other. Remember, a movement is only as strong as its unity. If you encourage other women to understand and defend their value, the ripple effect will extend far and wide.

Encourage Your Team

Start small with your own staff. Encourage your female employees to speak up if they have an idea. Frequently acknowledge their contributions and celebrate their wins. Also, don't forget to congratulate male staff members if they support female employees. Create a culture of empowerment and reward. If you can motivate them to promote value, their behavior will improve.

Echo Female Voices

How many times have you said something in a meeting and then been ignored? Then a few minutes later, a male co-worker repeated the exact same sentiment, but was rewarded with praise. Don't allow these situations to continue.



If a female co-worker has a great idea, repeat it! Mention how you feel about it and support her. If she raises legitimate concerns in a meeting, thank her for her honesty and insight. It's harder to ignore a group of united voices. If more women speak up, they'll have more impact in decision making.

Lift Other Women Up

Again many think that if one woman advances, the other woman loses. That's unhealthy competition. If you and another woman have the same goal in mind, you need to work together, not against each other. If a well-deserving, talented woman advances more than you do, don't be jealous or destructive. Celebrate the fact that she is taking steps toward equality.

Help women in leadership roles by offering support. Being surrounded by men isn't easy and your consideration can help her to keep moving forward. The pay gap can only end when women hold an equal portion of power. So celebrate their power for the greater good.

You Can Make a Difference!

At the rate of change between 1960 and 2015, women aren't expected to reach pay equity until 2059. You deserve equality now! Don't let society dictate your value. Stand up for your worth and help other women do the same. Change happens one woman at a time, so every step you take actually does have an impact. Let's make that 20%, history!

Are you afraid to stand up for yourself? Not sure how to find your value? Still don't have the confidence just yet? That's ok. We can help.

Our SK4M Connect program includes a Mastering Confidence course that will help you find your inner power. You'll get one-on-one personalized coaching to help you conquer your fear!

TO MICRO-MANAGE OR NOT TO MICRO-MANAGE? THAT IS THE QUESTION

Alli Blotter

One of the cardinal rules of management is to avoid micro-managing. Employees tend to resent an over-attentive, helicopter boss who constantly slows down productivity. Supervisors tend to take on an overwhelming workload for fear of lazy employees slacking off. So the bigger issue is, how do you define micro-managing? When does being passionate and detail-oriented become being obsessive and distrusting? Let's take a look at how to balance on the tight-rope walk.

Fear is The Problem

Many new managers, especially females, start their new role from a defensive viewpoint. Inexperienced supervisors walk into an office thinking that they have to prove themselves. They tend to be super flexible and accommodating so that employees like them. OR they might be over-confident and want to make drastic changes to the group dynamic. This defense mechanism stems from a basic level of fear.



Fear or Fact

The key to identifying the difference between micro-management and being detail-oriented, is to ask yourself, "Am I doing this as a result of fear or fact?" Ask yourself these questions if you find yourself becoming obsessive.

1. Your employee tells you that she feels pressured when you keep breathing down her throat to meet a deadline. She feels overwhelmed when you check on her every hour and remind her how much time she has left.

Why do you feel the need to check up on her so often?

FEAR: Is she inexperienced? Does she do things differently than you do? Is your superior pressuring you for results?

FACT: Does she have a history of failure? Is she not following your instructions? Do you have proof that she procrastinates?

If she legitimately can't get the job done, try to find a solution that motivates her without making her feel inadequate.

2. Your superior assigned you a major project. You want to ensure that his expectations are met so you take on most of the responsibilities. You're already at full-capacity right now, but you'll find the time.

Why don't you delegate some of the work?

FEAR: Do you want to impress your boss? Do you think the stakes are too high to let anyone else help? Are you afraid to ask for help? Do you doubt your team can handle it?

FACT: Do your employees already have too many responsibilities as it is? Does the project require skills that your employees don't have? Is this a secret project above their pay-grade?

If the project is really that significant, then communicate your team's limitations to your boss. Have him evaluate priorities. Find a compromise that meets his needs, but doesn't overload your team.

3. You created a step-by-step instruction manual on how to complete a task. Your employee asks if he can try a different method he believes will be more efficient. You tell him he must follow your instructions no matter what.

Why didn't you give him a chance to deviate from the plan?

FEAR: Are you afraid that it would make you look bad if he has a better solution? Do you feel threatened by him questioning your methods? Are you afraid other employees will start doing things their way and you'll lose control?

FACT: Is he fresh out of college and hasn't had any real industry experience? Does he have a consistent record of poor performance? Is there a tight budget with no room for experimentation?

If he is truthfully not equipped to perform the task outside of your instructions, take the time to explain why. Educate him on why your method works and use data to support your argument.

Trust is the Solution

Establishing a sense of trust is the best way to overcome the fear that leads to micro-management. Fear is the enemy of faith and if trust isn't at the center of every decision, then all sides lose. Stay confident, give your staff the credit they deserve, and learn to lead by example.



Trust Yourself

Your superior put you in your position for a reason. He or she trusts your judgement and believes you are capable of being a good leader. Have faith in your own talents and use your instincts. Don't worry about being a certain kind of boss or be afraid about rubbing people the wrong way. As long as you respect everyone and do your job to the best of your ability, you will succeed.

Trust Your Team

In [4 Keys To Effective Delegating](#), we learned that being a good manager means you are an excellent match-maker. You should have a strong understanding of your team member's talents and pair tasks accordingly. Encourage your staff and empower them to keep growing. If some employees consistently disappoint, either educate them or replace them. You should be able to rely on your team to be supportive and collaborative.

Your Team Trusts You

In [5 Tips for Respectful Relationships](#), we learned that honest communication is a necessity when it comes to connecting with your team. Make a habit of being available to hear their feedback and concerns. Your staff members should be able to come to you for support and encouragement. They should also expect you to challenge them and make tough calls in times of crisis. As a leader, you should practice what you preach and lead by example.

Micro-management is a delicate line. Learn to find the right balance by keeping the right perspective, evaluating situations rationally and building a strong sense of trust. If you'd like to learn more about the balancing act that is management, sign-up for daily tips on how to be a better leader.

HOW MANAGERS CAN MAKE A GOOD IMPRESSION DURING BUSINESS TRAVEL

Alli Blotter

While you feel comfortable in your normal work environment, there are times when you're required to hit the road. Whether it's for training, a conference, or meeting clients, stepping into unknown territory can be intimidating.

Managing schedules, logistics and expenses can be even more challenging when you have to work with strangers. Not only do you have to deal with traffic, delays and jet lag, but you also have to be on your best behavior. However, there's no need to fear business travel if you have proper etiquette and a friendly attitude. If you're concerned about making a good impression, follow these best practices for domestic business travel.

Planning: What to Expect

Take care of the majority of the logistics ahead of time. The less stressed you are, the more confident and approachable you are.

Booking: Discuss your travel plans with your superior in advance. Schedule a time to sit down and plan everything out. Learn your company expense policy. Consider every aspect of travel including airfare, car rental, taxi, lodging, food and other expenses. Determine a budget and tasks for travel arrangements.

Presentations: If you are traveling with others, make sure everyone knows the demands of the trip. If your team is giving a presentation, plan who will bring certain materials. Decide finite times and locations to meet up and get ready. Allow time for delays and emergencies, because someone usually forgets something!

Scheduling: If you're attending a conference, review your programming options ahead of time. Choose which events you'd like to go to and have backups. Create your own unique schedule and make sure to coordinate with others so everyone is on the same page.

Don't forget to schedule time for meals, breaks and sleeping. Try not to overwork or overwhelm yourself. It's all about pacing.

Locals: If you need to meet with locals from your company, make sure to know their names and where to find them ahead of time. Try to ask around and see if you can get any information about their personalities. Some parts of the country may have certain views of outsiders. Make sure you know what you're getting into.

Packing: What to Bring

When packing, it's important to find a balance between looking professional and being comfortable.

Essentials: As with any trip, pack basic hygiene products and whatever items you need to make yourself comfortable. If you're sharing a room with another person, think about how to compromise with space availability. When you're on vacation, you might enjoy hogging all the bathroom space or wearing unmentionables as pajamas. You might not get that luxury during business travel!



Attire: Generally, business casual attire is expected. Opt for wrinkle-free fabrics to mix and match. Don't bring clothes that you've never worn. There's nothing worse than feeling uncomfortable in a foreign environment.

Review your schedule and check if you need comfortable walking shoes or dressier shoes for cocktails in the evening. Keep in mind you're representing your local branch or company so you should appear poised and professional at all times.

Weather: Check the weather before you leave. You may need to dress in layers if you'll be going in and out of buildings. Bring a few extra pieces just in case of emergencies or spontaneous outings.

Transportation: How to Act

If you're traveling with employees or superiors, sometimes the transportation portion of the trip can be awkward. Be prepared to both work and relax.



Match Your Superior: If your boss or client wants to talk business, treat travel time as work time. Bring the necessary materials to conduct business as usual. If the other person wants to nap, don't disturb him or her. Note of body cues and follow the leader.

Keep Calm: Bring a book, tablet or headphones to keep yourself busy. If delays occur, stay calm and don't panic.

Contact your company travel agent or assistant to make adjustments as needed.

Driving: If you're driving with others, normally the person who is most familiar with the area should drive. If you wind up driving, make sure to get directions ahead of time. Don't check your phone and or get side-tracked by distractions.

Rest Breaks: If you need to stop during travel, be respectful of everyone else's time. Try not to break from the group and use a democratic system to make decisions.

Lodging: How to Compromise

If you have to share a room, there's an extra layer of challenges. Break through the awkwardness with honesty.

Space: As mentioned before, you won't get to hog all of the counter or drawer space. If you arrive first, designate an equal amount of space for your roommate. If you have more items, ask before using her space.

Timing: Respect each other's privacy and change in the bathroom. Make sure to communicate how much time it takes you to get ready in the morning. If you have a routine, schedule and coordinate so everyone has bathroom time.

Sleeping: If you're prone to snoring or getting up a lot in the middle of the night, let your roommate know. If you have certain preferences about lights, noises etc, communicate them. Find a compromise so everyone can be comfortable as possible.



Cleaning: If you're first in the bathroom, make sure you wipe down the counters and the shower after use. Give yourself plenty of time in the morning to stash your toiletries back in their drawers or shelves. If you order room service, make sure to clean up after yourself.

Respect: If your roommate wants to crash at night, respect her time and let her rest. If she wants to talk and you want to sleep, politely communicate your exhaustion. Respect each other's needs for relaxation.

Also avoid gossip. You might be tempted to talk about your frustrations throughout the day, but don't say anything that you would regret.

Dining: How to Pace Yourself

Make time to refuel and practice good etiquette at dinner. Make healthy choices and remember, you're not on vacation.

Bring Snacks: Being in a new environment can make eating healthy a challenge. If you aren't familiar with the territory, don't settle for fast food at the last minute. Avoid sugar and simple carbs that can make you crash later. Bring some healthy snacks like fruit or protein bars for emergency hunger. Also, don't forget to drink water. You'll have more energy if you stay hydrated!

Think Ahead: If you have any dietary restrictions, let your local contact know ahead of time. Ask the locals for the best places that fit your preferences. Don't eat something that you know will make you feel bad.



Limit Alcohol: Don't order alcoholic drinks unless your superior or client does first. Match your intake to those around you. However, if your companions are drinking excessively, don't feel pressured to overdo it. You know your limits. Don't put yourself in a position where you may regret your behavior.

Dinner Discussion: The conversation may become more casual after work, but you should focus on making a good impression at all times. Avoid highly controversial topics like politics or religion. If someone asks for your opinion on a topic you're uncomfortable with, it's ok to be honest. Simply say you'd rather discuss the matter at different time or in a different environment.

Payment: Come prepared to pay for your meal, but don't argue if the host offers to take care of the bill. Simply thank him or her for the hospitality. If the group actually does split the bill, make sure to have cash on hand to pay for your portion and/or leave a tip.

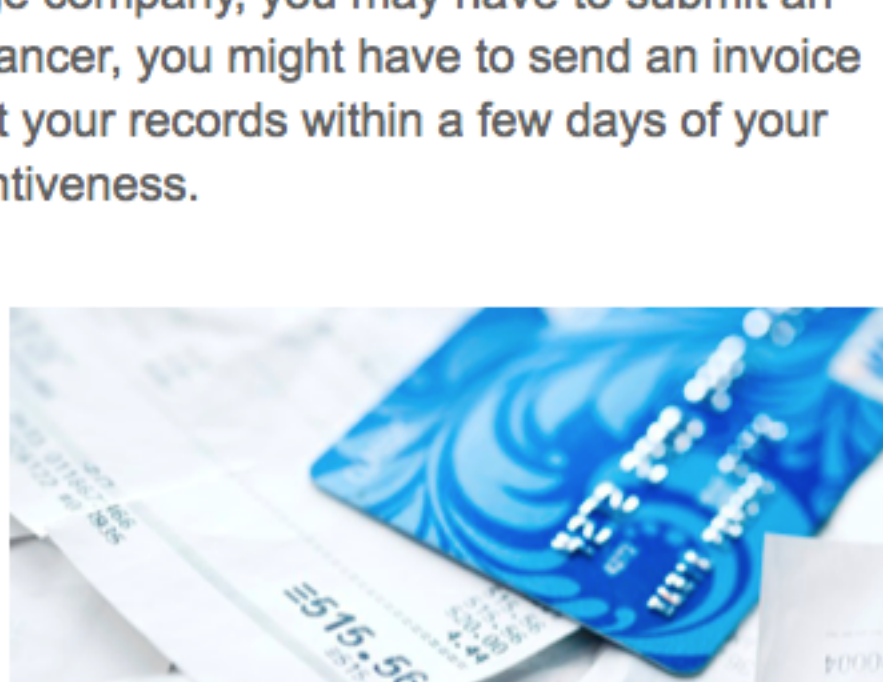
Participation: If you're traveling for an extended period of time, late-night festivities can become exhausting. Don't feel obligated to join each and every social event or happy hour. Pace yourself and gauge when it's necessary to make an appearance. If you need to refuel, it's acceptable to politely decline and get some rest.

Expenses: How to Keep Records

If your company doesn't cover travel expenses up front, you'll need to understand the reimbursement process.

Policy: When you met with your superior to discuss booking responsibilities, you should have agreed on an expenses budget. You may have a limited allowance for meals, gas, alcohol, tips etc. If you're at a large company, you may have to submit an expense report to accounting. If you're a freelancer, you might have to send an invoice to your client. Either way, make sure to submit your records within a few days of your return. Your superior will appreciate your attentiveness.

Receipts: Regardless of if your employer requires proof or not, it's best to keep your receipts. If you don't want to mess with paper, (and fading ink) simply take a photo of your receipt with your phone. If you travel frequently, you can use an app like [Evernote](#) or [Receipts](#) to stay organized.



Don't mix personal and business purchases, especially if you're using a company card. For instance, if you stop at a store to make copies for your presentation, but also need to stock up on aspirin, pay for the two items separately. Your receipt should only include business-related items.

Mileage: If you're driving, write down or take a photo of your mileage when you start the trip. Keep track of any personal visits to the pharmacy or grocery store during your travel. Then record your mileage once the trip is over. Subtract any miles driven for personal matters.

Tax Deductions: If your company doesn't reimburse you for business travel, you can deduct your expenses on your annual tax return. Remember to keep very meticulous records; IRS rules can be tricky. You have to prove that each purchase was necessary in order to make money off the trip. Make sure to be familiar with [business expense tax law](#), before your trip.

While there are a lot of circumstances to consider, just remember that you're always representing your company or local branch. If you approach business travel as work, not play, you'll definitely make a good impression.

Now if only there was a cure for jet lag.....

Looking for more business lessons, but don't have the time to study? We've got you covered!

The Management Fast-Track will help you develop the skills you need for effective leadership.... in just 10 minutes per day!

HOW MANAGERS CAN USE EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE TO CREATE BALANCE IN THE WORKPLACE

Alli Blotter

One of the keys to effective leadership is having high Emotional Intelligence. Emotional Intelligence is the ability to effectively identify your own emotions as well as other's. The theory was developed by psychologist and science journalist, Daniel Goleman.

Managers need to not only be able to control their own emotions, but respond appropriately when employees act out emotionally. In order to be productive, the workplace needs to be an emotionally balanced zone. Notice that I didn't use the word "happy," but instead "balanced." All emotions can provide value as long as we manage them properly.

When emotions aren't properly managed, the office winds up being a volatile combination of personalities and emotional clashing. However, if you can learn to properly identify the full range of emotions in yourself and your employees, you can use Emotional Intelligence to maintain balance.

The four basic categories of emotions are Fear, Anger, Joy and Sadness. Well-adjusted, successfully people experience each emotion, but equally and in moderation. Let's explore how to identify these emotions and how to respond to them appropriately.

FEAR

Fear is the broadest category of emotion and includes anxiety, shame and guilt. All forms of fear originate from a lack of trust or lack of self-confidence. We fear things that we don't fully understand or don't feel totally equipped to handle.

CONS: The negative effects of fear include overthinking, failed communication, perfectionism, inauthenticity and procrastination.

PROS: Fear can be beneficial in that it's our natural protection against harm. Small doses of fear can help evaluate risk levels, avoid stress and encourage preparation.

SOLUTION: As we learned in [Micro-Managing](#), the solution to overcome fear is to establish a sense of trust. As a manager, you can use Emotional Intelligence to identify times when you're feeling afraid. Dig down deep and find the source of your distrust.

Example

Say for instance, you're afraid of coming across as too demanding. You want your team to like you, so you let deadlines slide and don't enforce office policies. You start to feel taken advantage of and realize that you've become a push-over. As we learned in [Healthy Relationships](#), being nice isn't always the best way to get things done. The key to creating balance is develop respect with honest communication.

Use your Emotional Intelligence to find out why you equate being "assertive" with "demanding." Do you feel that your employees don't respect your authority? Does the previous manager have a history of being unreasonable? Identify the source of doubt in your team and then work to build a better level of trust.



Anger is one of the most difficult emotions to overcome, because it derives from loss of control. Powerless people tend to feel jealous or mistreated because they think there is no other option. Anger derives from an exhaustion of efforts and lack of fairness.

CONS: The negative effects of anger include rebelliousness, resentment, ineffective communication and impatience.

PROS: Anger can be beneficial in that it can motivate us to fight injustice. Small doses of anger can inspire us to find creative solutions and stand-up for those without power.

SOLUTION: The solution to overcome anger is creativity. Angry people haven't taken the time to find a new perspective of the situation.

Example

For instance, your employee is outraged that you ask him to work the day before Thanksgiving. Despite your explanation that everyone has to make sacrifices, he just refuses to comply. He feels that he always has to clean up everyone's mess and doesn't deserve this treatment. He thinks he's entitled to the time off.

Use your Emotional Intelligence to understand why he feels so powerless. What specifically in the past has made him feel like he does more work than everyone else? Has he actually been taking on more work because someone else is slacking? Try to come up with a creative solution that makes him feel valued.

JOY

Happiness comes from a state of contentment and/or growth. We feel happy when we are satisfied with our current state or have reached an achievement. Love, empathy, acceptance and humor nurture us and give us a sense of purpose. Particularly in our society, joy can diminish quickly so it's a huge commodity.



CONS: Too much happiness, doesn't always encourage growth. The negative effects of excessive joy can be complacency, delusion and ignorance.

PROS: Joy is obviously beneficial in creating a welcoming, compassionate and fun environment.

SOLUTION: The solution to staying appropriately happy is to be content, but not complacent. Enjoy the small victories,

but continually strive to keep growing.

Example

For instance, one of your employees has an incredibly positive attitude. She's always encouraging and is basically the team cheerleader. She's always willing to help out and often cracks jokes to keep the rest of team uplifted. However when it comes to her performance, it's subpar. She hasn't made an effort to learn any new skills in several years.

Use your Emotional Intelligence to understand her work ethic. Where is the source of joy in her life? What's her philosophy when it comes to workload? Does she have any ambitions for her career or is she just floating along with no direction? Communicate to her that you value her positivity, but expect to see her continually improve.

SADNESS

Sadness is a lingering emotion that results from hopelessness. Sadness can be complex and more difficult to pinpoint than the other emotions. It usually involves a time-element such as reverence of the past or hopelessness for the future. Sadness can also be empathy for injustice or suffering.

CONS: The negative effects of sadness can be self-loathing and lack of motivation.

PROS: Sadness can be beneficial in certain circumstances. Sadness puts value on things, such as a feeling of nostalgia. Like anger, it can also be a motivator to fight injustice.

SOLUTION: The general solution for sadness is to instill a sense of hope. Increase the likelihood that circumstances will improve. However, because sadness is so complex, sometimes the only solution is to allow the process to complete.

Example

For instance, your grandmother just passed away and you're having a hard time going back to work. You miss her very much and would rather spend your time consoling your family. Your supervisor gave you a reasonable amount of time to grieve, but you feel it wasn't enough. Your team is having trouble keeping up with projects without your guidance.

Use your Emotional Intelligence to search for some motivation. What are your priorities? What is your purpose in life? How will not going back/going back to work affect your future? Can you ask your team for support? Can you explain to your supervisor your situation? Be aware of the big picture of your life. Try to find a balance between your head and your heart.

AWARENESS

In summary, the key to high Emotional Intelligence is awareness. Be able to identify the source of your emotions and work to empathize with your team. Be aware of their motivations and what sends them over the edge. Make adjustments so that each person has the opportunity to express emotion in a healthy, balanced way.

Want to learn other leadership tactics? [Sign-up](#) to receive weekday management tips!



MANAGERS CAN LEARN TO ADAPT AND INFLUENCE COMPANY CULTURE

Alli Blotter

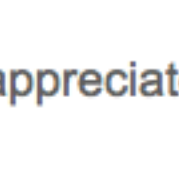
When you first accepted your job, you may have been enticed by the free perks and benefits: catered lunch on Fridays, open workspaces, monthly game night, etc. The so-called company culture was relaxed and friendly. However, bean bag chairs and free snacks don't truly exemplify ideal culture.

While the term "company culture" is not always easy to understand or define, most can agree it is the sum of an organization's mission, beliefs, values, structure, systems and behaviors. The culture is reflected by how the staff treats its customers, how employees treat each other and how upper management approaches the future.

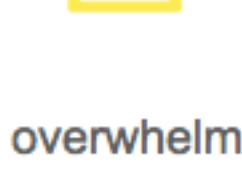
You may be just one piece of the culture puzzle, but as a manager, your role can have a significant impact. It's up to you to decide whether to conform and promote the culture or inform and improve it.

Understand the Culture

The first step to understanding company culture is to learn the most common categorizations. The types can be based on many factors, but we'll explore them based on business philosophy and priorities.



Traditional: Many large corporations are profit-centric and enforce a chain of command. The board members and executives at the top make decisions based on the bottom-line. Middle-management relays decisions to employees. While the structure is organized and standardized, some employees might feel restricted or under-appreciated in a corporate environment.



Innovative: Technology companies and start-ups tend to prioritize innovation above everything else. Owners recruit highly-skilled talent and expect unwavering allegiance from employees. Innovative companies may have large budgets for research and development, but may cut costs in other important areas. Employees may feel overwhelmed or doubt their job security.



Team-Oriented: Small businesses and employee-owned operations focus on a welcoming, flexible work environment. While each employee has a specific purpose, everyone pitches in and helps one another regardless of their status. Upper management is more likely to encourage and interact directly with employees. In this collaborative environment, employees may be happy, but the profit-margin is smaller.



Customer-Oriented: Many non-profits and philanthropic organizations uphold values above everything else. Employees are willing to sacrifice certain perks in order to help the greater good. These businesses usually prioritize quality over quantity and welcome innovation. The profit margin may be small, there is a strong sense of loyalty.

Adapt to the Culture

If you're not sure which category your business falls under, consider evaluating your role in the company. If you understand your purpose and how your role affects others, you'll learn how to excel within the system. Answer the following questions to determine where your company falls along the culture spectrum.

Traditional

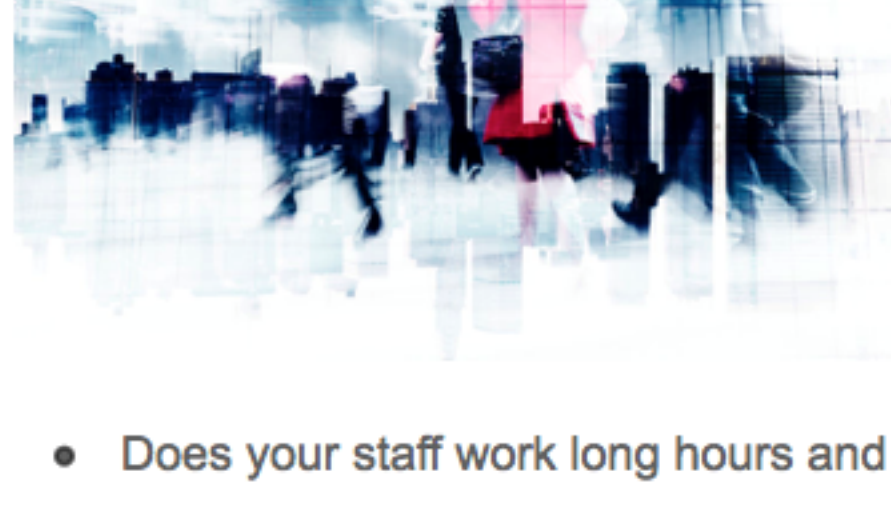


- Were you given an employee handbook of policies and procedures when you started?
- Does your superior give you specific instructions each day and expect you to regulate your staff?
- Do you have to go through HR if you want to hire someone new?
- Do you need supervisor approval in order to make adjustments to the budget?
- Have you met the CEO of the company?

If you answered yes, then you probably work at a traditional company. Your purpose is to ensure your staff members are performing efficiently and meeting standards. Your value is measured by how much revenue you can generate or how much you can cut costs.

You'll need to show your superior you understand the numbers. You'll also need to make an extra effort to care for your staff members. Frequently communicate with them in person and acknowledge a job well done. Try to help them feel like they are more than just a cog in the machine. Social functions and group exercises can help break up the monotony.

Innovative



- Are you in charge of guiding your team to complete unique challenging projects?
- Is there always a sense of extreme urgency in the office?
- Have you been asked not to disclose company secrets?
- Has your supervisor ever told you, "Do whatever it takes to get this done. Spare no expense!"

- Does your staff work long hours and check emails at all times of the day or night?

If you answered yes, then you probably work at an innovative company. Your purpose is to guide your team to victory. Your value is measured by your results.

You'll need to show your superior that you are passionate and ambitious. Be willing to take risks and own up to your mistakes. You'll also need to encourage work/life balance among your staff members. Ensure that everyone is doing their fair share of the work. Communicate that you appreciate competitive spirit, but still value everyone's contribution whether it's big or small. Don't let anyone feel overshadowed.

Team-Oriented



- Do you find yourself covering for one of your employees when they're out sick?
- Does your staff spend a great deal of time socializing with each other?
- Do you feel that your superior appreciates your input?
- Are you responsible for keeping up morale in the office?
- Do you frequently interact with owners and stake-holders?

If you answered yes, then you probably work at a team-oriented company. Your purpose is to ensure that your team has all of the resources they need to complete assignments. Your value is measured by how well you get along with your employees.

You'll need to show your superior that you're committed to the company. While you may not feel inclined to attend every social event or happy hour, you will need to illustrate that you are dedicated to the group. Communicate to everyone to focus on deadlines and stay on track.

Customer-Oriented



- Does your company invest in customer-service?
- Does your team make decisions based on customer reviews or surveys?
- Do your team members ever question if they are truly making an impact?
- Do you frequently involve the community in your projects?

If you answered yes, then you probably work at customer-oriented company. Your purpose is to ensure that your team focuses on giving customers what they need. Your value is measured by customer-satisfaction levels.

You'll need to show your superior that you believe in the company mission. Be willing to put in the extra effort. Make sure to consistently encourage your staff and acknowledge their hard work. Even when budgets are tight, sometimes a little treat goes a long way.

Influence the Culture

If your personal values match company culture, then you will enjoy a fruitful career. If your values contradict your company culture, then you'll need to pick your battles wisely. The key to effective influence is to use company priorities to your advantage. If you speak the cultural language, your staff and superiors will be more inclined to listen.

You Feel Restricted in a Traditional Environment



You may discover that you aren't able to voice your concerns in a rigid corporate environment. Your boss may say that he "sent it up the chain," but you never see any results. The key to making changes in a traditional culture is to make the numbers work for you. If profits are a priority, then start crunching numbers. Explain to your superior that the changes you want to make will be cost-effective.

You Feel Under-appreciated in an Innovative Environment



If your team is always coming in second and you feel your accomplishments aren't valued, then you should start playing to your strengths. Explain to your superior how your results had a significant impact. Perhaps your boss uses a different system to measure results. It's important that you both are on the same page. You can also ask yourself, "Where can my expertise be used to the best advantage?" You may just need to work on a different type of project or need additional resources.

You Feel Disorganized in a Team-Oriented Environment



If you are concerned that your time isn't being used efficiently, make sure to communicate this to your superior. Communication should always be priority and he or she should respect your honesty. Explain exactly how much time you spend in meetings and how much time is wasted. Explain how you are struggling to manage your responsibilities and suggest setting up a few boundaries. Encourage your team to stick to a schedule and save socializing for break time or designated intervals. It's all about compromise.

You Feel Jaded in a Customer-Oriented Environment



Sometimes you need to help yourself in order to help others. Serving the greater good is rewarding, but it doesn't matter if you run out of steam (and rent money). If you're unsure you're actually making a difference, you might just have hit a plateau. Discuss your concerns with your superior. Explain how your fiery passion just isn't there anymore. You may need to transfer to a different department or take on different projects. A new perspective might make it all worth it again.

Always remember that you provide value and your company should value your contribution. There's nothing worse than a toxic work environment and it's up to you to gauge the pros and cons of your surroundings. Your company culture should empower you to perform at your best and constantly challenge you to keep growing.

Are you looking for a safe environment where your voice will be heard? Join our private Facebook Group. Share your stories and receive support from professional women with similar experiences. Our community is here to help you.

AUGUST 29, 2016

MANAGEMENT COMMUNICATION STYLES PART 1: HOW TO GIVE CLEAR INSTRUCTIONS

Alli Blotter

Do you ever feel like no one understands you? Does it seem like you can't get your message across? Everyone struggles with effective communication, especially new managers. In this two-part series, you'll learn how to avoid getting lost in translation.

WHAT IS YOUR COMMUNICATION STYLE?

In order for your team to understand you, you'll need to understand yourself first. Take a second to think about how you approach work. What are your values? What motivates you? How do you make decisions? Compare your answers to the characteristics in the following chart.