

The McKenzie Mailer

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WE'RE MOVING AND EXPANDING

Effective June 1, 2005
our new Address will
be

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UPCOMING EVENT

July 14, 2004

Mr. McKenzie will be the
Guest Speaker at the
**Society for Human
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Management**
Luncheon at the Marriott
at Southpoint.

The Topic:

“A High Performance
Workplace, You Can
Feel it In the Air”

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Negating the Nattering Nabobs of Negativism

Spiro Agnew is credited with coining the term, “Nattering Nabobs of Negativism”. He used the term while referring to the media who badgered him continuously through his short stint as Vice President. For those of you born after the baby boomer generation, Spiro Agnew was the Vice President under Richard Nixon from 1968 though October 1974 when he resigned after pleading no contest to charges of tax fraud.

Many who hear “Nattering Nabobs of Negativism” for the first time think of the plethora of people who persist in protesting every decision or action in the workplace. As you read this column, you will undoubtedly think of the people in your organization that fit into this category. Every workplace has at least one nabob of negativism. .

The grapevine is a phenomenon that is common in most, if not all, organizations. It is also the breeding ground for negativity. Getting engrossed in the grapevine, rumor mill or other harmful actions breeds contempt for managers, co-workers and the organization as a whole. Allowed to grow uncontrollably, the gossip mill has been known to ruin careers or bring down an entire company. Negativity is destructive, damaging and downright devastating to an establishment. Negativity is probably the most detrimental obstruction to progress, productivity and profitability than any business practice. It is easy to fall into the negativity trap. Complaining about others seems to be human nature. Once in the trap it is almost impossible to get out of it as it acts like a whirlpool. It pulls people in and it is nearly impossible to get out. As more and more people are sucked in, the pessimistic undercurrent becomes the norm and feeding the destructive frenzy becomes the way to be accepted in the organization. The negativity becomes contagious and grows to out of control proportions. At its worst, negativity can bring legal problems as complaints of harassment and discriminations are more common in negative work environments.

So how do these Nattering Nabobs of Negativism get a stronghold on the organization? The answer is simple - they are allowed to. In many cases, the nabobs are encouraged to continue their griping. This encouragement does not come from management, but from co-workers. It seems to be human nature to question decisions, second guess management and blame others for the things that go awry. Management can do little to stop it. The negativity has truly taken hold when seemingly small and insignificant events get blown out of proportion and become major stumbling blocks. Employees develop an insatiable appetite for the latest and greatest dirt from who will be getting fired to who's sleeping with who. Others spend about half of their time criticizing others instead of doing something positive then complain that they do not have enough time to finish their work.

WELCOME TO

**Peggie Leitereg SPHR,
Senior Consultant.
Peggie comes to
McKenzieHR with over
30 years of human
resources management
experience.**

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Recent studies confirm that nearly half of the American workers have negative or extremely negative feelings about their jobs. Regardless of how negative your work environment is, you should not resign yourself to the fact that it will exist no matter what you do. Most nabobs will continue their whining and complaining as long as there are listeners. Therefore, the best way to stop the nabobs is to stop encouraging them.

There are also major advantages to avoiding the nabobs? Think of it this way, if you were the business owner, who would you promote, the very capable individual who complains about anything and everything or the very capable employee who is very positive about the work and the company? This is not a tough choice.

Think about the new employee who starts a new job in your company and is confronted with co-workers' stories about all the bad stuff going on. If there are people leaving your company after a short time on the job, then you may want to listen in on what the experienced workers are telling the new employee. Then think about how much this is costing you and your company in lost productivity.

One way of diminishing the effect of the nabobs is the counterattack. Some ways of countering negativity include pointing out positive alternatives to their depressing comments or transforming negative comments into positive problem solving events. Try complimenting a colleague when he or she helps out a fellow employee or does someone a favor. Most people work better when someone notices the good things and offer positive comments.

Avoid the Nattering Nabobs of Negativity like the plague. Beware of labeling people or speaking unkindly about others. When conversations turn to grumbling, leave the area or steer the conversation in a more positive direction.

In a positive work environment, employees enjoy their work, experience less job related stress and live healthier lives. Positive work environments are also more creative, progressive, productive and profitable.

So, make a pact to yourself today to avoid negative influences, get pleasure from your job and your work associates. You will find it to be a healthier and happier way to live. Negate those Nattering Nabobs of Negativism now and never notice them again. Good luck and best wishes for success.