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Hot Spots: Igniting Employee Creativity and Innovation

Every organization is filled with brilliant ideas and superb problem-solving skills, although it may seem difficult to unleash the creativity that exists within your workforce. However, Lynda Gratton, author of the recently published *Hot Spots: Why Some Teams, Workplaces and Organizations Buzz with Energy—and Others Don't*, explains that there are three main elements that can help to cultivate the right environment to produce hotspots of innovation.

In a nutshell, those elements are a collaborative culture, “boundary spanning” tools, and “ignition.” When all three of these elements exist in an organization, hot spots of creativity will occur, explains Dr. Gratton, professor of organizational behavior at the London Business School.

But what’s a hot spot? “It’s a time, a place, or an occasion where you get high bursts of energy. People are very excited; they get very involved and feel they’re innovative. Sometimes it’s people getting together to say ‘we really care about this issue and we want to do something about it.’”

The first necessary element is a collaborative culture in which people feel that they can trust one another and share ideas, says Dr. Gratton. “The most important predictor of whether there is a collaborative culture is whether the senior executive team can behave collaboratively themselves. If employees see leaders collaborating, they are more likely to work collaboratively themselves. If they see executives competing, they’re more likely to compete with

(continued on page 2)

Three Actions with Greatest Impact On Employee Ethics and Compliance

Many organizations erroneously think that establishing an ethics code will create an ethical culture. However, “that in and of itself is not going to create the ethical culture that you’re looking for,” says David Gebler, president and founder of Working Values, Ltd.

Working Values (www.ethics.com), a developer of values-based corporate responsibility and ethics awareness and compliance learning programs, and the Ethics Resource Center (www.ethics.org), a nonprofit research organization, recently discussed the findings of their research project in a webinar titled, “Ethical Actions that Matter: Critical Elements of an Ethical Culture.”

The Top Three Actions

Building on the ERC’s 2005 National Business Ethics Survey[®], the research identified the following three ethics-related actions that have the greatest impact on employee ethics and compliance:

1. Setting a good example
2. Keeping promises and commitments
3. Supporting others in adhering to ethics standards

“Ethics and compliance programs can be more effective when employees throughout an organization act to promote, rather than just talk about,

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Hot Spots (continued from page 1)

each other. If people aren't prepared to work together, it's very hard to get anything off the ground," she asserts

You must be careful, however, not to create a country club atmosphere in which everyone knows one another and works well together, but nothing new happens, she notes. "You need to create and value people moving from one function to another—where people really get to know strangers, where you meet someone you haven't known before who is interesting to you and whose ideas are interesting to you."

That's the second element—"boundary spanning." Dr. Gratton explains that "boundary spanners are people who are really good at linking teams [and people from different areas in an organization] together.

You have to find a way to rotate people around an organization."

Dr. Gratton used Nokia, the corporation that makes communication devices such as mobile phones, as an example. "Nokia has a wonderful way of moving people around [to different physical locations] so they meet and talk with other people they don't already know well." Other organizations effect similar results by having employees work in teams on specific projects and then disbanding the teams to create new ones for future projects.

The third element is "ignition." Dr. Gratton says, "An organization contains latent energy; the energy is there, but nothing has happened to it yet. There has to be a point of ignition where people say, 'I really want to be a part of this.' It might be an interesting question that is asked or a problem that is interesting.

"Lord John Browne, group CEO at BP [formerly British Petroleum], asked a group of employees, 'How can we become a force of good?' People around the company thought about it, and some hot spots of teamwork developed that created a sense of social responsibility in BP staff and encouraged community work."

It's never enough to have just one of the three elements described by Dr. Gratton to create a hot spot—all three are needed.

For more information about hot spots and Lynda Gratton, visit www.lindagrattton.com. To access a Podcast of Dr. Gratton discussing "Hotspots—Why some companies buzz with energy," visit www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/audio/video/podcasts/mba.

Ethics (continued from page 1)

ethics. Or, in other words, actions do speak louder than words," says Laurie Choi, an ERC research analyst who participated in the webinar.

"Employees know what is expected of them," Gebler says. What they need are "real-world examples" of how to act ethically in the workplace.

He says two fundamental aspects of human nature are important when it comes to keeping promises and commitments. First, "Everybody really does want to do the right thing. Virtually everyone wants to be part of an organization where it's comfortable to do the right thing."

Second, employees want to be treated fairly, and they want to see that people who break the rules are held accountable, he says.

"People want to know that people are being held accountable, and they expect promises and commitments to be met."

Working in an environment that supports adherence to ethical standards also impacts employee behavior. For example, Gebler has worked with an auto manufacturer that empowered its employees to stop the production line if they saw a defect. However, defects were getting through, and no one was stopping the line. Why not? "Bass fishing. The issue was bass fishing." Stopping the line resulted in mandatory overtime on Saturdays, which cut into the time that many workers typically spent bass fishing. "You couldn't imagine the pressure" on workers not to stop the production line.

What to Do

Gebler says organizations that want to create an ethical culture should provide two types of training.

First, employees need traditional ethics compliance training. "They need to know what the rules are," he says.

In addition, leaders need to be trained on effective communication, active listening, and other leadership skills that will help create an environment that allows employees to do the right thing, he explains. "This is as important, if not more important, than traditional ethics compliance training."

In a separate statement about the research findings, Gebler says, "The findings demonstrate that companies should seriously consider dedicating more resources to encourage leadership to set a good example, establish organizational trustworthiness, and help employees to make ethical decisions, rather than directing all their efforts to communicate about the specifics of a formal program."

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Why Employees Love to Work, Stay At Award-Winning Comporium Group

An employer of choice in South Carolina, Comporium Group, a family-owned telecommunications company since 1894, has such a stable workforce that employees celebrated two 60-year and two 50-year anniversaries in 2006, according to Patricia Woods, manager of human resources development.

Winner of a 2006 Psychologically Healthy Workplace Award from the American Psychological Association, this 1,000-employee company provides services to customers in two South Carolina counties. "We have a very loyal employee base with virtually no turnover. Employees come here right out of high school and college, and most tend to stay for their entire career," Woods comments.

The voluntary employee turnover rate is less than 3 percent, says Andrea Cooper, manager of compensation and benefits. "The company is known for taking very good care of employees with good compensation and benefits and having a significant sense of social responsibility within the community. Comporium Group is a company that people gravitate to—they *want* to work here."

Employee work-life balance, wellness, and community responsibility are three important principles that guide the Comporium daily operations and blend to make life richer and better for employees and the community.

Community Involvement

The owners and the employees participate in many local events. For example, one Saturday a year, the city of Rock Hill sponsors "Rolling in Rock Hill," when people in the community volunteer to paint, make minor repairs, and garden for elderly people or people with low incomes who need assistance with maintaining their homes and property, according to Cooper. "Comporium supports this annual event financially and with employee volunteers."

Another employee-driven community group is the local chapter of the

Pioneers, a national independent telephone association started by telephone company retirees years ago. Comporium's Pioneers coordinated a holiday dinner donation for 70 families during this past year. Both employees' donations and company donations of food provide meals for those in need, explains Woods.

Community spirit even permeates the Comporium Group's employee wellness initiative, with more than 100 employees participating in the York County Shrink-Down, organized by the local YWCA, Piedmont Medical Center, and Winthrop University. Six weeks into this program, which includes weekly weigh-ins and informational materials on nutrition, exercise, and wellness, Comporium employees had lost well over 300 pounds, says Cooper.

Wellness Works

The entire wellness initiative, started many years ago with employee health fairs and annual flu shots, took on the "Wellness Works" name 3 years ago when a voluntary annual health risk profile and one-to-one sessions with a nurse were made available to staff, Woods explains. With an aging workforce and increases in health insurance costs like other employers, Comporium decided to do more than hold annual health fairs.

The health risk profile covers family history, lifestyle, body mass index, and emotional wellness as well as physical wellness, and a series of blood work, a blood pressure reading, a fitness test, and other screening tools provide information as well, says Woods. When the results are tallied, the nurse meets with each employee to set individualized wellness goals. For example, one employee might have a goal of exercising more; another employee might have a goal of carving out time for doing something that he or she enjoys for stress relief, explains Cooper.

The nurse conducts a follow-up appointment with the employee after 4 months, setting additional goals.

Who: Comporium Group, a telecommunications company in Rock Hill, South Carolina (www.comporium.com)

What: Reports an employee turnover rate of less than 3 percent and is recognized as an employer of choice in South Carolina

Results: Received a 2006 Psychologically Healthy Workplace Award from the American Psychological Association

At this point, the employee moves into the second phase of Wellness Works and is rewarded with a premium reduction in his or her health insurance costs.

During the first 3 years of Wellness Works, employee health insurance premiums have increased 14 percent for Comporium, while nationally, employers have experienced an average increase of about 36 percent. Cooper comments that most wellness initiatives do not show results for at least 5 years.

Work-Life Support

Wellness carries over into work-life balance and emotional health with Comporium's employee assistance program (EAP) providing support, counseling, and help with life's difficulties, such as finding eldercare and daycare.

The paid time off (PTO) program also helps with work-life balance, putting vacation and sick time into one bank of hours. Employees are allowed to take time in 15-minute increments so that it may be used for appointments, sick-child care, vacation, or whatever an employee needs or wants. Time may be saved up as well, and employees never lose it. Anything over 480 hours saved is paid out to employees once a year.

Cooper and Woods suggest that Comporium's designation as a Psychologically Healthy Workplace stems from executive-level support. Both agree that corporate leadership support is critical when you develop your own initiatives to make work and life healthier and better for your staff and their families.



From the Courthouse

Former Employees Charged with Misappropriation of Trade Secrets

A confidentiality agreement can't guarantee that employees won't compromise trade secrets, but it can serve as a deterrent and help a company recover losses in the event of a breach.

What happened. In 2000, Charles Richard Hurst, Jr., and Michael McGowan were hired by Synergetics, Inc., which designs, manufactures, and sells ophthalmic equipment used in eye surgeries. In their high-level sales positions, Hurst and McGowan were privy to confidential sales, marketing, research, and development information.

They each signed a confidentiality agreement and promised not to "disclose or use in any manner whatsoever, any of the confidential information" they acquired while working for Synergetics. In addition, they agreed to return all company materials upon termination.

Despite having signed the agreements, Hurst and McGowan decided that they would form a competing company. They hired Christopher Lumpkin, a former Synergetics engineer who still worked as a consultant for the company, to build an adapter/connector system that would compete directly with a Synergetics product invented by Michael Auld, the head of research and development. The invention allowed Synergetics' laser probes to be connected to lasers created by other companies.

While still Synergetics employees, Hurst and McGowan entered into a confidentiality agreement with one of the company's manufacturers to discuss production of competitive products. They also notified existing Synergetics customers—but not their employer—about the new company.

Hurst resigned in July 2002, and McGowan was terminated in September 2002—both because of poor job performance. They incorporated their new company, Innovatech Surgical, Inc., 2 weeks after McGowan was terminated.

Lumpkin, who had used spare parts from Synergetics to build a competing adapter/connector system in only 6 hours, asked Auld to create design

drawings for the new company. Auld, who was still employed by Synergetics, created the drawings, in large part by copying Synergetics' drawings.

After Synergetics filed suit against Hurst and McGowan, a jury awarded the company a total of \$1,759,164 in actual damages and said Hurst and McGowan each owed \$293,194.16 in punitive damages. The jury found that they had misappropriated Synergetics' trade secrets and that the company had suffered harm as a result. It also found that Hurst and McGowan intentionally interfered with Synergetics' existing business relationships, breached a fiduciary duty of loyalty while employed by the company, and violated the Synergetics confidentiality agreement.

A district court agreed with the jury's findings and enjoined Hurst and McGowan from using or disclosing Synergetics' trade secrets for 2 years. The former employees filed an appeal with the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 8th Circuit, which covers North Dakota, South Dakota, Minnesota, Nebraska, Iowa, Missouri, and Arkansas.

What the court said. The appeals court affirmed the district court's decision, noting that Hurst and McGowan "used confidential trade secret information to begin the design of competitive products, used pricing and product information to target Synergetics' customers, and began solicitation of Synergetics customers prior to the termination of their employment."

THE LAW

An employment contract is a written and binding agreement entered into by an employer and a prospective or current employee. As one of the few notable exceptions to the employment-at-will standard, the goal of an employment contract is to clearly set forth those terms and conditions governing the inception, continuation, and termination of the employment relationship.

An employment contract is a highly effective means of protecting a company's financial and intellectual resources. As a result, most employers require an employment contract as a condition of employment when the position in question is either highly influential, involves sensitive trade secrets or client list information, or requires a significant amount of "front-end" or investment costs.

After termination, Hurst and McGowan used the confidential information to create a competing product and failed to return confidential sales files, according to the court.

The court also noted that they continued to obtain—and benefit from—Synergetics' trade secrets. That is, Auld used Synergetics' engineering drawings to make the requested designs for Lumpkin, and McGowan acknowledged knowing that Auld was working on the drawings while he was still a Synergetics employee (*Synergetics, Inc. v. Hurst, et al.*, No. 06-1146, U.S. Court of Appeals, 8th Cir., 2/5/07).

WHAT TO REMEMBER

- **Put your policy in writing.** The best defense against disclosure of trade secrets and other proprietary information is a clear statement of policy explaining exactly what is subject to protection and that unauthorized disclosures can result in discharge.
- **Use confidentiality agreements.** Employees who are privy to confidential company information should

be required to sign a confidentiality agreement. In this case, Synergetics was able to show that the terminated employees had breached the provisions of the agreements they had signed.

- **Establish reporting procedures.** Employees should be made aware of their responsibility to report conflicts of interest and possible ethical breaches.

The HR Professional

Anonymous Reporting Systems Encourage Employee Ethics

Many companies have instituted some type of reporting system for employees that allows them to identify themselves or remain anonymous when they share information, such as witnessing behavior that they think might be illegal, unethical, or something that just doesn't meet guidelines, policies, or procedures set by the organization. The anonymous reporting systems assure these employers that their employees will feel comfortable reporting any unusual incidents that they witness.

In late 2006, The Network, Inc., a national provider of ethics and compliance hotline programs, released the *2006 Corporate Governance and Compliance Hotline Benchmarking Report*. The report is significant because of both the findings and the size of the study. Data included in 182,000 reports from 550 different organizations represent actual hotline incident reports received by The Network through phone, e-mail, fax, Web form, mail, or in person. The findings demonstrate that anonymous reporting systems help to ferret out problems in many organizations.

Some of the findings include:

- 65 percent of the reports were serious enough to warrant an investigation.
- 46 percent of the reports resulted in investigation, with corrective action being taken.

- 71 percent of the participants did not tell anyone in management about their concerns before making a report.
- 54 percent of the reports to the hotline were made anonymously.

The eight categories of incidents and frequency of reports include

- Personnel management (51.1 percent),
- Company/professional code violation (15.9 percent),
- Employment law violation (11 percent),
- Corruption and fraud (10.4 percent),
- Environment, health and safety (4.6 percent),
- Customer/competitor interaction (2 percent),
- Misuse of assets/information (1.3 percent), and
- Other/unresolved (3.7 percent).

With more than half of the incident reports, personnel management proved to be the most problematic category. This category is described in the *Benchmarking Report* as "any act or omission that is perceived to be detrimental to an employee's well-being. It includes concerns over wages, hours, benefits, promotions, etc. Examples include wage and hour issues and employee relations."

This significant finding should be important to HR professionals. It may signal the need for more and better communication with employees on a one-to-one basis and through surveys and focus groups to determine what employees are thinking. In addition, a review of leadership training programs may be warranted to make certain that supervisors, managers, and executive staff are fully aware of HR policies and procedures and how to administer them appropriately with their employees.

Several industry categories were developed for the report, and some data were sorted by industry. For example, the highest reported percentage of company/professional code incidents was 22.6 percent and occurred in the retail trade industries. The highest percentage of environmental, health, and safety incidents was 18.8 percent and occurred in the agriculture, forestry, and fishing industries. And the highest reported percentage of corruption and fraud incidents was 18.5 percent and occurred in the finance, insurance, and real estate industry category.

The report suggests that as the incident reporting information is compiled and reviewed, each individual organization's management should also consider factors that are unique to that specific organization's industry. If your organization tracks its own employee reporting system statistics, you can compare your results with the national study and your appropriate industry category. To access the entire report available in a PDF format, send your e-mail request to benchmarking@reportline.net.

Certification Now Available In Compliance and Ethics

If compliance and ethics have become a major focus for you in your work, The Society of Corporate Compliance and Ethics offers a process so that you may apply for certification to become a Certified Compliance and Ethics Professional (CCEP). A CCEP is described by the Society as "a professional with knowledge of relevant regulations and expertise in compliance processes sufficient to assist corporate industries to understand and address legal obligations, and promote organizational integrity through the operation of effective compliance programs."

There are specific eligibility requirements, such as professional experience and education. Also, during the 12 months before the date of application for the certification, you must obtain 20 continuing education credits in 5 of 10 specific subject areas, including application of management practices for the compliance professional, application of personal and business ethics in compliance, written compliance policies and procedures, designation of compliance officers and committees, compliance training and education, communication and

reporting mechanisms in compliance, enforcement of compliance standards and discipline, auditing and monitoring for compliance, response to compliance violations and corrective actions, and complying with government regulations.

You must also successfully complete a CCEP examination. For the complete details regarding certification and testing and to download the *CCEP Candidate Handbook*, visit www.corporatecompliance.org/CCEP/about.htm.

Tips & Tactics

Employees Seek Interactive Communication from Company Leadership

Why is it that many companies miss the mark when it comes to communicating with their own employees about company products, services, wins, losses, and challenges? Even organizations that do a great job when it comes to keeping investors and the public apprised of company news through a variety of media often forget their most important audience—the employees.

A global study released by Jack Morton Worldwide in Fall 2006 created from an online survey of 1,625 respondents in four countries, including the United States, United Kingdom, Australia, and China reports that 31 percent of employees say their employers do not communicate enough in general, 36 percent would like more engaging and interactive communication, and 67 percent are dissatisfied with how their employers currently engage them. Only 33 percent of employees are satisfied with the current type of communication and amount of communication that they receive from their employers.

“The best way to build a business is from the inside out,” says Josh

McCall, CEO of Jack Morton Worldwide. “Companies spend a tremendous amount of money communicating externally about their business and their brand. However, they are missing a critically important audience when they don’t invest resources and creativity in communicating to their employees, who have the potential to be hugely influential ambassadors for their businesses.”

Here are some additional statistics to persuade you: Ninety-two percent of respondents want insights that they can put to use to improve job performance. Eighty-three percent want to be engaged on a personal level, and 76 percent want to be related to by having their personal interests and concerns addressed by company leaders. Eighty-two percent agree that communication to them should explain the company’s vision, and 87 percent want to be shown how they fit into the company’s vision.

More than three-quarters of the employees surveyed feel that live experiences are most interesting and provide more information to them than other forms of information. Live expe-

riences include events such as organizationwide meetings that allow the CEO and other senior leadership to address all employees about topics such as the company vision and what it means to their work and provide updates regarding financial wins and losses, new strategic plans, and so on.

These experiences should take place in person whenever possible, but the Internet also provides the backdrop for interactive online sessions through Web cameras so that two-way communication can occur. Telephone conferences between leadership and staff at different locations are a bit less interactive since you cannot see the people with whom you are meeting, but also quite effective.

Face-to-face experiences can also include videotaped presentations when time zone differences and costs prohibit live exchanges. In this case, some follow-up mechanism for employee feedback and questions should be added.

The study results state, “Different messages require different communications strategies. For example, direct communication from a top leader is most effective when it comes to explaining the company’s vision. Direct communication from a manager in tandem with live experiences is the most effective vehicle for providing insights to improve effectiveness.”

If you would like to access the entire report, it is available at www.jackmorton.com/pdf/InternalBrandingWP_US.pdf.

Incentives, Employee Motivation Subject of Upcoming Webinars

What’s a snowfly? It’s a trout fly that attracts fish that have become unresponsive to traditional flies. Snowfly Performance Solutions is a Wyoming company that creates innovative incentive programs that motivate even unresponsive employees. The company is offering two free webinars on motivation in the near future.

On Tuesday, June 12, 2007, at 11:30 a.m. Eastern Time, Dr. John C. Beck, professor of global management and

director of research at Thunderbird Graduate School and president of AttentionCompany, Inc., will present “The Kids are Alright: How the Gamer Generation is Changing the Workplace.”

Dr. Beck has authored books, articles, and reports on business and strategic management and is an expert on motivating Generation Y and Generation X staff to excel at work through games and other forms of incentives.

On Tuesday, July 10, 2007, at 11:30 a.m. Eastern Time, Dr. Brooks Mitchell, professor of management at the University of Wyoming and CEO of Snowfly, will discuss “A Case Study: Tying it All Together in the Workplace.” He will provide evidence of how an actual company improved its productivity by incorporating gaming, incentives, and performance management in its work environment.

For additional information and to register for these two or other webinars, visit http://snowfly.com/events_wow.html.

Job Satisfaction Hits High Note Through Empowerment, Collaboration—and Music

In 2003, a variety of factors had combined to create a challenging work environment at Sennheiser Electronic Corporation (SEC). Yearly double-digit growth in U.S. operations since the early 1990s prompted the company to hire additional staff members, implement a new computer system, and adopt new policies—signs of a growing business that posed challenges from an HR perspective.

“If a company grows so rapidly, at some point, you hit that revenue mark when many things have to change or otherwise you’re not going to continue to grow,” says John Falcone, CEO and president of SEC.

With U.S. headquarters in Old Lyme, Connecticut, SEC is a wholly owned subsidiary of Sennheiser, a leader in microphone technology, RF-wireless and infrared sound transmission, headphone transducer technology, and the development of active noise-cancellation.

In 2003, an increasingly challenging work environment led to low employee morale and low job satisfaction at SEC. The company knew it had to change its tune, so it undertook several initiatives to empower employees and foster collaboration among them. Four years later, the company’s double-digit growth has continued, and employee morale and satisfaction have improved. In fact, job satisfaction jumped 45.3 percent from 2004 to 2006, and HR Solutions, Inc., recognized SEC with a 2006 award for “Most Improved Overall Job Satisfaction.”

Creating Harmony

Falcone attributes the increase in satisfaction to three factors:

1. Greater collaboration throughout the organization
2. Training and empowerment for department managers
3. Creation of a sense of “passion” for work

“We started by bringing employees more into decision-making,” Falcone says. In 2005, the company formed seven committees, enabling employees

to work together to implement changes or initiatives with little or no input from management. Thirty percent of SEC’s 130 employees participate in the committees, which typically meet once or twice per month.

The committees tackle small and large issues addressing company policies, customer service initiatives, and improvements related to the work environment, says Falcone.

Initiatives include the following:

- The Building Improvement Team decided that the off-white office walls should be painted in more refreshing colors and decorated with “a more inspiring mix” of artwork to increase morale and spirit, says Stefanie Reichert, vice president of Strategic Marketing.
- The Process Improvement Team supported the implementation of a series of logistics processes (i.e., they suggested changing the process of inventory allocation to customer orders, which increased SEC’s level of customer service instantly), says Chief Financial Officer Markus Warlitz.
- The HR Policy Team helped create a new employee manual, according to HR Director Debbie Tolla.
- Other committees meet to discuss safety, process improvement, employee recognition, and company-paid employee activities.

Another initiative that helped improve satisfaction was a “Discover Your Strength” training program for department managers, which taught them to identify and leverage employees’ strengths. Not only did the training help department managers focus on strengths, it also gave them opportunities to get to know one another better. That led to increased cohesion and teamwork among middle managers, says Warlitz, noting that the company’s senior staff completed a similar training program with similar results.

Employee passion for work also contributes to job satisfaction, says

Who: Sennheiser Electronic Corporation
(www.sennheiserusa.com)

What: Implemented programs to empower employees and foster collaboration

Results: Overall employee job satisfaction increased more than 45 percent.

Reichert. Creating that passion at SEC was relatively easy because many employees share a common interest—music.

For example, when the company rented out a nearby studio to demonstrate its products during an annual “summit” for its outside sales professionals, many of them started performing. “It really was meant to be a demonstration,” says Warlitz. “It turned into a huge jam session.”

The company now sponsors a periodic “Band Night” for employees, providing refreshments and an open stage on which employees can perform, says Reichert. These events bring employees together, enhance communication among them, and foster passion for their work.

‘Note’-worthy Advice

You can’t empower employees or increase job satisfaction by implementing one program. “There’s not just one program that will fix it,” says Falcone. Instead, he recommends using a multifaceted approach aimed at enhancing collaboration and creating passion among employees.

Here is some additional advice to consider:

Make your case. Don’t expect people to collaborate just because you tell them it’s a good idea. “If they don’t see the benefits, it won’t happen,” says Warlitz.

Truly empower employees. Don’t tell employees that you’re giving them opportunities to make decisions and then require multiple layers of approval from management, Tolla says.

Learn from mistakes. Falcone says it’s important to acknowledge that empowered employees will make mistakes. Learn from those mistakes and move on.

HR Tool Box

The Alchemy of Theater— Tips on Workplace Collaboration from Broadway

“Theater has been called the most collaborative art form,” says Robert Viagas, editor of the book *The Alchemy of Theater: The Divine Science—Essays on Theater and the Art of Collaboration* (www.applausepub.com), a fascinating collection of essays by Broadway greats from different aspects of the theater, including playwrights (Wendy Wasserstein and Edward Albee), directors (Harold Prince and Susan Stroman), performers (Chita Rivera), producers, casting directors, choreographers, conductors, and technical directors. Here is a list of “precepts” or themes on successful collaboration, culled by Viagas from essays in the book, which can be adapted to *your* workplace.

- ★ Extend your personal ego into an ego for the project as a whole.
- ★ Find your personal glory as part of the team.
- ★ Respect your co-workers, or turning the notion around, refrain from treating them patronizingly or with unprofessional ignorance of what they do.
- ★ Seek out ways to combine your talent with someone else’s.
- ★ Keep an open mind and allow yourself to be surprised by your collaborator.
- ★ Let others have their “turn” winning an argument—unless it’s a make-or-break for you.
- ★ Pick your fights, but stand up for your integrity if pushed too far.
- ★ Cultivate the ability to do well even when someone else’s opinion has prevailed.
- ★ Operate happily within one’s position in the hierarchy.
- ★ Allow all to have their moments.
- ★ Understand how to show one kind of respect for those up the ladder, another kind to one’s equals, and yet another kind to one’s inferiors.
- ★ Be truly interested in other people. Find other people interesting and want to mix your creations with theirs.



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