



AN APPLICATIONS GUIDE

for

EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP:

coaching and interpersonal skills for leading and
managing change

NAME: _____

HULL, QUEBEC
1992

© Pamela J. Pritchard

CONTENTS

Introduction to the Effective Leadership Job Applications Guide	3
Reviewing the Techniques: Putting Effective Leadership to Work	4
Leadership	4
Effective Communication and Listening	4
Goal Setting and Performance Objectives	6
Giving Performance Feedback	7
Coaching and Teambuilding	8
Managing Disagreement and Resolving Conflict	11
Recognizing Achievement and Success	14
Fostering Creativity	15
Introduction to Individual Coaching	19
Coaching someone who doesn't meet your expectations	20
When an individual is always negative	22
When someone doesn't listen and tries to dominate	24
When someone resists change	26
When someone questions authority	28
When someone won't accept responsibility	29
When someone seems demotivated	31
When someone is new to your section	32
When someone is a high achiever	34
When someone works autonomously	35
Teambuilding	3 8
Working with someone you don't like	39
When people have different priorities	41
When priorities and deadlines seem overwhelming	42
When someone is an exemplary team player	44
When there is conflict between team members	46
When you're a team member	49
Special Management Situations	51
Coping with different organizational cultures	52
When you feel you are being unfairly treated	54
Managing your boss	56
Changing your own management style	58
Encouraging creativity and risk taking	60

An Introduction to the Effective Leadership Applications Guide

The **Effective Leadership** program introduced you to some essential leadership and communication skills for working effectively with other people. The focus throughout the seminar was on you, and your ability to use those techniques consistently and professionally, particularly in the role of the change agent or coach. As a manager of people, you are in a highly visible and critical position. People look to you for direction and guidance and they expect you to set **an** example for them to emulate. It is not easy and you will make mistakes. A heightened awareness of your strengths and weaknesses as a communicator will help you to overcome your shortcomings, admit to errors, and strive to correct them. Equally, knowing your own communication habits will help you to teach others and guide them when communication breaks down and problems emerge.

The ongoing and radical changes that CIDA is facing present myriad challenges to you as a manager. More and more you will be called upon to mediate and work with Individuals from other organizations as CIDA's mandate evolves. This will demand an awareness of and sensitivity to other cultural realities - both in the literal sense **of** other peoples' cultural backgrounds and other organizational cultures (how they do business). Certainly, being a manager **has** never been more challenging, and never have good communication skills been more needed. This **Effective Leadership Applications Guide** is intended to give you some hints and possible approaches to handling frequently encountered, challenging management situations. There are 21 interpersonal management situations described **in the** guide. The list is not exhaustive, and the situations may not reflect exactly the circumstances you are facing. Still, the guide may give you some new ideas on how to handle the situation.

The guide is divided into four sections: **A Review of the Techniques, Individual Coaching, Teambuilding, and Special Management Situations**. Each section contains a description of the overall intent of the section, **as** well as the communication skills that you will likely have recourse to. Depending upon the situation you are facing, look up the description that best fits your needs and consider the information offered. It will be up to you how you choose to handle the situation and whether or not to use the suggestions from the guide.

Reviewing the Techniques: Putting Effective Leadership to Work

Leadership

The concept of leadership in changing times implies the ability to live with turbulence, to be flexible and open to new ways of working and using that chaos to good effect. The paradox for those in positions of leadership is that of fostering internal stability while encouraging others to take risks and be more innovative. Effective leaders have a consistent vision, live that vision, and are able to bring others along to share that vision. Effective leaders seek others who embody the vision and turn them into organizational heroes who in turn encourage others to embrace the new culture that is emerging. Most importantly, effective leaders lead by constant example. In short, effective leaders:

- . **Develop and live an empowering vision, a core philosophy.**
- . Ensure the **vision is specific** enough to act upon, yet flexible enough to promote and permit the taking of initiatives
- . **Lead by personal example** and understand the power of their smallest actions - in uncertain times people look for signs and symbols to help them cope
- . **Be visible:** train, coach, cajole, and live the vision
- . **Listen:** with respect and full attention to everyone and every detail
- . **Communicate:** tell stories and share knowledge and experience to support the common goals; coach people through changes
- . **Delegate:** based on **high standards, a shared vision**, and mutual respect and trust - be willing to let go and give true responsibility to others so they are free to lead
- . Remove as many bureaucratic **roadblocks** as possible - manage horizontally
- . **Create a sense of urgency**, minimize fearfulness
- . **Embrace change and promote it constantly**

Effective Communication and Listening

Leaders are superlative communicators. The foundation of good communication is efficient listening. If you are not able to **focus** your attention and listen then you are likely to miss critical nuances and information that could have an impact on how well you manage. But listening is much more than paying attention or simply 'hearing' a message. Effective communication is a two way process that uses both emotional and intellectual skills to search for meaning and comprehension. It is an interactive, not a passive process and 100% of your energy and attention is focussed on the speaker and the message. In other words, effective listening is challenging work. It takes practice to develop good listening skills, but the effort is worth it.

When you are coaching, either one-on-one or in a team setting, you must listen carefully. By paying attention to what goes on around you, you demonstrate interest, involvement and commitment. You also show respect for others' thoughts, opinions, and concerns. In short, you are willing to assume that there is value in what is being said, even if you do not necessarily agree or understand.

One of the simplest and most effective methods to ensure that you have understood what you heard is by asking questions. When you are distracted, when a speaker rambles and is unclear, when you disagree with what you are hearing and stop listening to formulate your rejoinder, then ask questions to clarify the message and verify your understanding.

Use open questions to encourage the speaker to elaborate on an idea. Use closed questions to limit the response. Restate your perception of what was said, build bridges by acknowledging and linking ideas that have merit. Again, you are demonstrating interest and involvement in finding solutions. It's a way of Staying on the same wavelength. A summary of the skills for effective listening:

- Replace bad listening habits with good listening techniques
- **Ask questions** to **clarify and confirm** your understanding of what is being said
- **Restate in your own words** to show you understand and **confirm** your understanding with a question
- Build good communication bridges by **recognizing merit** and **demonstrating what you value**
- Link any of your ideas that stem from another person to encourage creativity and an open atmosphere.

Goal Setting and Performance Objectives

Another tool used to great effect by strong leaders is that of setting clear goals for others to follow. The goals should be consistent with the overall vision of the section and reflect the agency's direction. Goals need to be flexible and responsive to changing priorities and new circumstances. Goals are guidelines, not immutable commands that cannot adapt to new challenges. Remember that useful goals are SMART. They are:

S pecific
M easurable or Observable
A chievable
R ealistic and Relevant
T imely

Giving Performance Feedback

The ability of an effective leader to give good performance feedback is an important element of healthy communication. People need constant feedback on their performance, their ideas, their successes and their failures. You have to demonstrate consistency and fairness in your actions. By demonstrating what you value in the thoughts and opinions of those you work with and by encouraging people to seek ways to improve themselves, you in turn foster an atmosphere that is open and healthy. It's easy to remember that effective performance feedback has **HEART**.

Performance Feedback is:

H onest
E xplicit
A ppropriate and Applicable
R elevant and Respectful
T imely

Sometimes you need to modify the actions or thoughts of someone you work with but you want to recognize the value in their intentions or in their ideas. In these situations, after clarifying **and confirming** your comprehension, you would use constructive criticism or balanced feedback. Constructive criticism takes some time and practice. Once mastered, however, it quickly becomes a natural way of expressing your thoughts in a measured, balanced, and thoughtful **way**. Positive is balanced with negative, advantages are compared to disadvantages. Constructive criticism **demonstrates concern and** respect for the other person. It attempts to foster positive change with a minimum of defensiveness. Most important, there is a clear indication that you value the ideas and input of the other person.

Balanced feedback, as the name implies, contains two discrete elements.

Constructive Criticism or Balanced Feedback:

1. Specify what has **value in the idea**, suggestion, or work of the person and why.
2. Specify what you would like to see changed or **modified** and why.

Coaching and Teambuilding

Part of your responsibilities as an effective leader is the **ongoing** coaching and development of both the individuals you work with and the team that is comprised of those individuals. Coaching is probably one of the most gratifying aspects of your work because it focusses on the growth and success of people. It is incredibly satisfying to witness the triumph of someone who has acquired new skills overcome an obstacle, achieved a goal, or assumed new responsibilities, in part because **Of** your ability to coach. Equally, nurturing and building a cohesive, productive team is an exhausting, time consuming, but ultimately gratifying process. Coaching and teambuilding are not natural occurrences. They demand effort, clearly stated objectives, time, and incredible patience on your part.

The following are the most common face-to-face coaching roles used by effective coaches and leaders:

The Instructor In this role managers may explain rules and organizational changes to newcomers, or changes in systems to current employees. Equally, in this role, managers provide on-the-job training to help in the acquisition of new skills and knowledge.

The Mentor As mentor, the manager identifies exceptional skills in individuals and permit those skills speak for themselves. The mentor tries to break down the barriers to performance and allow the individual the scope to demonstrate those abilities. The mentor is willing to delegate and to let go of control and focusses on the long term success and development of the individual, often using personal experience and acquired wisdom to help guide that growth. The orientation is to the future.

The Coach In the role of coach, the manager offers special encouragement. This can occur before, during, or after an activity or a performance. The coach makes corrections, gives advice, fine tunes and hones performance. The intent is to provide specific expertise and focus, and to stimulate achievement.

The Counsellor Sometimes, after teaching and coaching, the manager finds that a performance discrepancy stills remains and decides to adopt the role of the counsellor who tries to get behind the problem and resolve it. A counsellor also responds to the inevitable setbacks that occur in the workplace and helps the individuals involved to cope with the disappointment and learn from the experience.

The Confronter This is probably the least pleasant coaching role that a manager must adopt, yet it remains a valid and sometimes necessary approach to working with people. If persistent performance discrepancies are **not fixed, if someone is not able to** meet expectations, or if there is clearly a failure to perform in the current position, then the manager may choose to confront the situation. Difficult decisions may be required, and the discussions are inevitably stressful. The manager needs **to** make conscious use of effective communication skills to ensure that the confrontation does not degenerate into an angry, counter-productive exchange instead of a frank discussion that leads to an acceptable resolution of the situation.

All five of these roles has a valid place in the process of managing people. Coaching is a never ending process because people, unlike machines, cannot be given a yearly tune up and be expected to perform without feedback and **collegial** interaction.

Of the five roles that comprise face-to-face coaching, you will probably spend most of your time as either the mentor or the coach. In both of these roles, one element is providing ongoing feedback and direction to employees. Employee performance is never constant and even the best performer needs corrective feedback from time to time. Performance occurs along a continuum.

Sometimes corrective feedback isn't enough and a development discussion may be in order. The purpose of a development discussion is to establish, with the individual, a process that will result in the desired change of behaviour in a manner that is acceptable to both of you. The following steps make up a development discussion:

The Development Discussion

1. Open the discussion.
 - . state the purpose
 - . explain the discrepancy between what is expected and what is currently occurring
 - . clarify the problem or need to be addressed
 - . gain agreement on a definition of the problem
 - . determine causes for performance discrepancy
2. Explore solutions **and alternatives.**
 - . ask for ideas from the individual
 - . if appropriate or necessary, offer your ideas
 - . choose the most acceptable solution
3. **Establish responsibilities.**
 - . who **does what**, how, and when
4. **Conclude the discussion.**
 - . **summarize** the discussion and the conclusions
 - . end on a positive note expressing confidence

Managing Disagreements and Resolving Conflict

Sometimes your efforts at constructive criticism, holding development discussions, or teambuilding do not work and you are faced with handling a difference of opinion, priority, or need. A certain amount of disagreement is normal, and can contribute to healthy interaction. When circumstances indicate divisive, even destructive conflict however, you will need to take steps to resolve the situation and find an acceptable outcome. How do you know when there is a difference that must be addressed? Be alert to the following indications:

Indicators of potential conflict:

- You have **tried** to resolve the issue with balanced feedback and the problem persists.
- You find yourself reacting angrily to a suggestion.
- You discount the opinion of the other person.
- You've stopped listening and are waiting for an opportunity to jump in and disagree.
- Your priorities or goals are not the same as another's and you feel yours are more important and should have priority.
- After trying to find common ground, you cannot find a mutually acceptable solution.
- Try as you might, you can find no value in the other's idea and thus you cannot **criticize constructively**.

The key is to remain calm and keep an open mind. Focus on the issue at hand and not personalities. Deal with the situation as quickly as possible. When you suspect that you are dealing with a lack of agreement or that conflict is imminent, take steps to manage the disagreement.

The process of resolving differences has two or three stages depending on the situation. The first stage **is common** to all phases and is intended to ensure a clear picture of exactly what difference exists.

Define the disagreement:

1. **Ask questions** to gain a clear understanding of **what** is important to the other *person* and **why** it is important.
 - use open questions to encourage the person to elaborate on their thoughts and rationale
 - listen attentively to their ideas but remain neutral
 - use closed questions to confirm your understanding of their position
2. **Explain what** your opinion is and why you feel it is important.
 - make sure that the other person clearly understands the rationale of your position even if they don't agree

Next, depending on the situation you have two options to choose from:

1. You can try to **find mutually acceptable solutions** based on shared values and goals by exploring ideas together.

OR

2. You can **terminate the discussion** and make a unilateral decision
 - either because you tried and were unable to resolve the impasse
 - you have no choices or options available to you and discussion would be pointless

If you have some flexibility in how the conflict will be resolved and you want to involve the other person in finding acceptable solutions, then you should spend some time examining alternatives together. When discussing options, remember:

- . try to set aside entrenched positions and identify underlying interests
- . wherever possible, view issues through the eyes of the other person, particularly if you disagree strongly (encourage the other to do the same)
- . whenever possible, ask for the other's ideas first to encourage their commitment to a solution, then give your reaction
- . if an idea gives you another, acknowledge the connection, introduce your thoughts, and ask for a reaction
- . use balanced feedback to alter an idea that has merit yet needs some modification
- . be creative and open-minded - involve the other person
- . brainstorm - get lots of ideas out on the table before making choices
- . when you've found a mutually acceptable solution, clarify and confirm to ensure you both understand it in the same way

If you've tried and failed to find an acceptable solution, or if there are no alternatives to discuss and you must impose a decision, then end the **discussion**.

Ending a discussion:

1. Recognize the other person's point of view and their prerogative to feel that way.
2. Explain your decision and its rationale.
3. Elaborate on any further procedures or follow-up required.

Use the skill of managing a disagreement whenever you sense a conflict looming. By addressing the situation quickly, fairly, and competently, you will go a long way to promoting healthy and productive exchanges.

Recognizing Achievement and Success

It is an unfortunate paradox that, with the pressures to change direction and find new ways to work, you have less and less time to spend with the people you work with - just when they need your attention and guidance most! An area that can help you give attention and provide support, yet not take up huge amounts of your time is by recognizing the successes and **achievements** of those who work with you.

People like to have achievements **recognized**, no matter how small they may be. The judicious use of recognition can be a powerful tool in motivating people whose performance matters to you. Recognition can be verbal or written, lengthy or brief. It is not an idle compliment, rather it provides a specific acknowledgment of what was done well, why it mattered, and what benefit it provided. By stating specifically what you appreciate in the behaviour of an employee, you encourage that individual to continue that good work.

Laud exceptional performance, but don't ignore the steady and reliable performer you can always count upon. Every member of your team has an important function to **fulfill** and should be treated fairly.

There are three **basic** steps to recognizing accomplishment:

1. Specify what performance you appreciated.
2. State what personal and/or professional qualities **in** the performer you noted.
3. Explain the significance of the performance (why it mattered).

Don't hesitate to use positive feedback and recognition. It can have a powerful impact on the performance of both individuals and teams.

Fostering Creativity

Another factor that can encourage healthy change and exchange is making creativity and innovation an integral part of the new **CIDA** culture. More and more, creativity and innovation are vital components of dynamic organizations. The rapidity of change, new agency policies and focus, the constant barrage of new technologies and ideas mean that the need to **anticipate when and** how to adapt to these events is critical.

Creative management taps into the often hidden ideas and inventive abilities of the people who must work with the end results of any new directive. Creative management encourages communication, **problem-**solving, team work, breaking down barriers, taking risks, and constantly striving to find new and better ways to accomplish goals.

Some tips for fostering a creative atmosphere:

- . learn to recognize your own obstacles **to** creativity
- . strive to overcome them or at least put them aside when the need for creativity is apparent
- . draw upon your skills as a good listener and communicator
- . recognize, respect and try to help people overcome their own obstacles to creative thought
- . encourage people to take risks and not be reticent about proffering different, innovative ideas
- . coach people in the creative thinking process
- . hold creative brainstorming sessions
- . get people involved in shaping the direction of their work
- . reward risk taking (even failures if based on sound evaluation and innovative thinking)
- . step aside and let others lead in idea generation

Creativity Tools

Before elaborating on creativity tools it is important to mention that creativity sessions will not work well if certain ground rules are not clearly understood. First, **define a problem that is common to all participants**. Second, do not define the *problem in a way that suggests an already selected, restricted solution*. For instance, instead of asking "How many flowers need to be planted in the front garden?" use a more general question like "What will look best in the garden?" which leaves much more room for creativity,

Guidelines for **conducting a creativity session**:

1. • decide upon problem to be solved, new policy to be determined, systems to be altered etc.
2. • appoint someone to write all ideas generated on flip charts
• post the flip charts as they are filled (there may be lots!)
• have lots of magic markers of different colours on hand
3. • write down **all** suggestions and Ideas
• seek **quantify**, not quality of ideas
• crazy and illogical ideas are encouraged
• **absolutely no criticism is allowed**
• ideas can be built upon or combined **with** others
4. • when all ideas are **out**, begin to critique and eliminate:
 - ideas that are against agency policy
 - there is no money, time, expertise etc. available
 - too risky (negative consequences could be great)
 - use different coloured markers to circle the ideas most likely to work
 - combine ideas that work well together
 - select the best choices (by general agreement)
5. • decide on next steps

Brainstorming

One of the most commonly used, simple, enjoyable ways to get new ideas is **by brainstorming**. Essentially, brainstorming encourages people to set aside their creative blocks and generate ideas. Brainstorming can be done alone (although it's harder to do) or in groups. You can have teams working on the same subject and reconvene as one to evaluate alternatives once the creative juices are exhausted. Brainstorming can take **five** minutes or several hours depending on the circumstances. The length of time is not as important as the need **to withhold all criticism until no more new ideas are forthcoming** - then you begin to **evaluate** and criticise.

Analogy

Analogies seek a connection between dissimilar things. The assumption is that if there are some common elements, there may **well** be others. Analogies encourage people to view familiar items in strange ways, and strange items in familiar ways. There are four ways to use analogy in creative sessions:

Personal analogy: Identify with the object and try to see the situation from that perspective. To use the gardening example, you could imagine “If I were that garden, how would I want to look?”

Direct analogy: Compare events from different areas. For example, “Learning to **cook**” could lead to ideas for colour themes in a garden, or the need for patience and trial and error.

Symbolic analogy: Take the reason or a function of the solution to a problem and imagine how to fill in the analogy - “something that (performs a function) like a (analogy)”. For instance, “Something that (glows with colour) like a (crown of jewels),”

Fantasy analogy: Use your imagination without any link to reality. Imagine that you are an ant wandering lost in the desert, dreaming of home.

Direct Association

Direct or forced association pairs two concepts that apparently have nothing in common to see what ideas emerge - for instance, pairing gardening and space travel might lead to new ideas about longevity of plants, or reconsidering the balance of sun and shade-loving plants.

Meditation **and** Guided Imagery

Meditation is a effective and consistent way to tap creative potential. The intent of meditation is to relax enough to be aware of and listen to the inner voice. That quiet voice is usually linked to intuition. As people become more comfortable with listening to that inner voice, they easily make stronger connections between intuitive responses and their sense of meaning in ‘real’ life. For group problem solving sessions, it may be easier to have someone guide them in a ‘walk through the woods’ and ask them to consult their inner guide for images and ideas that has meaning to them personally. Then, those ideas are applied to the problem at hand. Taking the garden again, the walk in the woods may conjure up images of **coolness**, peace, butterflies, respect of nature, etc. that may help you to decide to use only organic **fertilizers**, or mix ferns and evergreens with flowers that attract hummingbirds, bees, and butterflies.

Guidelines for using imagery:

relax body and mind as much as possible

ask your inner self **clearly** for images that represent **desired** outcomes

accept whatever comes to mind (don't fight!)

look for **strong emotions and reactions**

use your senses - taste, feelings, touch, smell, sounds, sights

if you don't understand the image, **'ask'** your inner self for **deeper meaning or explanations**

don't **mock** any images, **respect them all**

- **look for qualities** represented by the images, don't worry about literal meaning

Using creativity techniques is not only useful in solving problems or uncovering new opportunities and goals. They can **also** help you and your team to face the future, cope with change, and implement **ideas**. When the organizational climate encourages creativity and supports the ideas that are generated, people become ever more willing to put their energies into contributing to the health and growth of the organization.

An Introduction to Individual Coaching

As you learned in the Effective Leadership seminar, being an effective leader and coach is not easy. The demands on your time and patience are **constant**, the people with whom you work **constantly** look to you for advice, impartial intervention in conflictual situations, motivation, and feedback. You must juggle the administrative and operational realities of day to day management with the equally important mandate to develop the individuals on your team to be their very best at their work.

Coaching people has a lot of appeal for many managers, but it is often neglected because of other pressures that inevitably seem more urgent. It's easier to postpone that 'development chat' you've planned to hold for the past two weeks than a request for a report that will go to your boss. The problem always is that the people issues never go away, if anything they become worse with neglect. There is also the effect of your own needs and goals on how competently you can manage both people and processes. You must be able to resolve or put aside your personal issues in order to provide the leadership and consistency of purpose that is required of you in these turbulent times. Equally, you need to know the strengths and weaknesses of the individuals you work with, be they clients, colleagues, or employees. Your ability to assess their skills, understand their needs, and work with them will be invaluable to you as a coach.

This section looks at 10 different individual, face-to-face coaching situations. Each situation suggests possible uses of the Effective Leadership interpersonal management skills that you considered during the seminar. The situations are descriptive and introduce common coaching dilemmas faced by managers. They are intended to help you take an impartial look at possibly stressful situations, evaluate your approach, and take the time needed to plan for a successful outcome. Use them as guides, not iron clad prescriptions. No two situations are identical and you must consider all the elements that colour your particular case.

The skills you will most likely have recourse to in this section are:

- Listening and asking questions
- Giving performance feedback
- The 5 roles of a coach (depending upon the situation)
- The development discussion
- Managing disagreements (as a last resort)
- Providing Recognition
- Using creative thinking

Use this guide whenever you need to take a step back and gain some perspective, or whenever you face a difficult coaching situation.

Coaching someone who doesn't meet your expectations...

It would be wonderful if every member of your team was a superlative performer and your main concern was keeping everyone challenged and busy. Unfortunately, you will inevitably encounter people whose performance does not meet your expectations, yet that performance matters to you and your section. Sometimes it seems easier to let the inadequate performance go and ask someone you can count on to complete the work or take over the responsibility for the job. In the long run, however, you are only prolonging an inevitable backlash.

Allowing inferior performance to continue does three things. First, you are rewarding *inadequate performance* by freeing the employee of responsibility for results. If the individual knows you will assign the work to someone else, there is little incentive to improve performance. Second, *you* are in essence *punishing your good performers* by asking them to take on additional responsibilities, even if they are willing to do so. Third, *you risk problems with other employees* who quickly notice if someone is not pulling their weight and will be resentful if nothing is done about it. The price in low morale, resentment, and complaints could be high.

When you encounter such a situation, deal with it immediately before it becomes a major issue. To begin, ask yourself some questions:

- . Are performance expectations clearly defined?
- . Does the employee understand them?
- . Does the employee know the consequences of failing to do the work?
- . Can the employee do the work? Qualified? Trained? Has needed tools?
- . Is anything interfering with the employee's ability to complete the work?
- . Why might this person fail to complete the work assigned?
- . Have you already given constructive feedback to the person about this performance discrepancy?

The answers to these questions will guide your next steps. For now, assume that the employee does know how to do the work.

Begin by setting the stage for your performance discussion. Clearly outline why you are meeting with the individual (the performance discrepancy), stating what you expect and what is occurring. The employee should have as clear a picture as you do of what the current situation is and why it is unacceptable. Be sure that your tone and approach are non threatening. The intent is to find a mutually acceptable performance outcome, not impose a solution.

Next, ask questions to determine the employee's perception of the situation (you may want to ask some of the above questions). Try to ask open questions to get as much information as possible, Use closed questions to limit responses. Whenever possible, **clarify and** confirm meaning and comprehension. Stay neutral and gather facts. Listen with complete attention.

It may be necessary and appropriate for you to offer constructive **criticism** during this conversation. Remember that the value you see in the ideas or reasoning of the individual should be both sincere and specific, and you should be equally specific in what you want to see changed and why it is necessary.

Encourage the employee to offer ideas and suggestions to resolve the situation. In this way, the Individual is involved and committed to finding a workable solution. Offer your own ideas only if none are forthcoming that you can accept. Whenever possible, associate your ideas with those of the employee, **recognize** any good ideas, and use constructive criticism **to** alter suggestions to make them workable.

Once you have explored possible solutions, **select the best option.** Outline responsibilities, establish checkpoints, **and end the discussion** on a **positive** note. By being firm, fair, honest, and involving the person in finding workable solutions, you are demonstrating a high degree of professional integrity that sends a clear message to the Individual and your team.

When an individual is always negative...

It seems there's one in every crowd. The person who, no matter how exciting, how challenging, how rewarding, how necessary a situation may be, is **consistently** and stubbornly negative. If you work with someone like this, whether as colleague, client, employee or boss, **you** know how frustrating and destructive their attitude can be, even if their work is consistently excellent. Sadly, such people are often their own worst enemies. By their very pessimistic outlook they quickly alienate others and find that no one listens to them. This often reinforces the negativity. As such, a vicious circle is established.

Depending upon the situation you too may **decide** that the simplest and most effective way of dealing with a negative person is to work around them or ignore their comments. While this can be tempting, the unfortunate tendency is to ignore everything the person says or does, running the risk of missing relevant or practical suggestions or opinions.

If you decide to talk to the negative individual, **you** need to **plan carefully**. It will be a delicate discussion to handle. Make sure you have **specific instances** to talk about in order to avoid a general 'attitude' discussion. Also, don't try to play amateur psychologist and delve into deeper, underlying psychological issues; your intent is to deal with a work-related situation. Should you discover problems that are beyond your realm of responsibility, recommend counselling with a professional skilled in that **area**.

Once you have chosen the incidents you wish to discuss, **consider the probable reactions** of the Individual to any attempt to modify behaviour or accept responsibility for their attitude. Chances are they will be defensive, possibly aggressive in tone. Or, you could inadvertently provoke tears, unhappiness, and emotional bitterness. The best defense is good planning. If you anticipate and plan for a variety of reactions, you will have rehearsed the scenarios and will be better able to handle them if they occur.

Use the basic steps of the development **discussion**, being very clear and specific about what your intent is in having the talk. Ask a lot of questions to make sure that you have a good understanding of the other person's reasons for negativity. **Clarify and confirm regularly** - you want absolutely no ambiguity, no openings for future recriminations. Equally, you want the person to understand the consequences of their negative approach to work. Even if their intent is honourable, it must be made clear that the result is less than satisfactory. As such, you will probably have ample opportunity to provide balanced feedback. Remember to be honest in specifying the value in their actions - even if it is only their good intentions.

You may find that constructive criticism does not work and that you are faced with managing conflicting viewpoints. Be **certain that** your position (what **and why**) **is clearly stated and understood by the other person**. Again, use your **skills** of listening, clarifying and confirming. Try to involve the other person in finding practical solutions to gain their commitment to improving the atmosphere at work. In these situations you cannot easily end the discussion by simply ordering a change in attitude. The challenge, then, is to continue striving to find a mutually beneficial solution. It may take more than one meeting. If you find yourself becoming angry and frustrated, or the conversation is going nowhere, take a break. It may even be advisable to adjourn and meet again the next day. After all, the problem has been in the making for some time and it may take several discussions to resolve the situation.

The most important thing **is** to stay calm, neutral, and focussed. Above all don't lose your temper or get sidetracked. It is quite likely that the person will attempt to blame others, the system, the work atmosphere - anything to avoid accepting any **responsibility**. It is easy, even tempting, to begin to defend others or refute the **person's position**. What occurs, however, is loss of control of the discussion. Suddenly the tables have turned and the other person is controlling the direction and focus of the discussion. Don't let it happen! If the person goes off on a tangent, bring them back politely but firmly to the subject at hand. You may sound like a broken record at first, but once the person **realizes** that you are not going to be sidetracked, they usually settle down and follow your lead. As you insist on productive dialogue, you set an example that encourages the negative person to follow suit.

When someone doesn't listen and tries to dominate conversations...

People seldom intend not to listen nor to take over conversations. **It's** usually that their own enthusiasm, ideas, disagreement, or priorities seem so much more important. Perhaps they never learned how to listen efficiently. Whatever the reasons, individuals who chronically fail to pay attention or let others have their say are difficult to work with. As manager you have to deal with the consequences of misunderstandings and poor work that can stem from someone's inability to listen. They can be costly.

Before sitting down to talk to this person, ask yourself some questions:

- . Is this inability to listen a chronic bad habit or a recent development?
- . Why does this person not listen? When is it worse?
- . What are some of the specific consequences of this tendency?
- . Is the person aware of their habit and its outcomes?
- . Is it a cultural or linguistic issue?
- . Have you ever given constructive feedback to the person before about this?
- . Would some training in effective listening habits be helpful?

Your advance preparation to this meeting will determine the path you choose to explore with the individual. For instance, if you feel that there is a clear lack of ability to listen, but that the person is unaware of the deficiency and would be willing to try and correct it, you might decide to recommend some skills training and individual coaching afterward. If you think that the problem stems from arrogance and sheer pigheadedness, you may have to take a blunter approach (even if you still recommend training!).

Recognize that this could well be a difficult discussion to hold. The individual will inevitably try to cut you off, only listen to part of what you have to say before replying, or simply shut down and not listen at all. Be patient, speak clearly **and specifically about your observations**. Ask the person to confirm back to you their understanding of what you are saying • don't let any misunderstandings develop. Insist that the other be equally specific and clear (people who listen poorly often don't articulate their thoughts fully, usually **because** it's crystal clear to them what they mean) about their reactions to your comments. Above all, stay focussed and don't get **angry**. **It's very** frustrating to talk to someone who won't or can't listen and one coaching discussion will not change the bad habits of a lifetime. You may even find that you too stop listening to the other, just from the fatigue of trying to stay neutral and on track. If this happens, stop and take a break to refocus your energy and attention. You may need to meet a few times.

Use your skills to give constructive feedback as often as possible.

Have specific examples to bring up to illustrate the problem (you'll probably have some from that very conversation!) and the results. Chances are that they have no idea of the effect of their poor habits. Involve the other person in finding solutions that they can commit to with enthusiasm.

Remember that listening well is not easy, that it takes practice and dedication to change habits. Offer your support, share some positive and negative personal experiences, and above all set an example for others to follow. That means demonstrating good listening skills consistently. With time, patience, and regular feedback, others will emulate you and productive, healthier communication can only follow.

When someone resists change...

As a general rule, most people do not like change. For many, **change is** threatening and disruptive. While it is easy to sympathize with those who hate change, the reality at **CIDA** is that change is rapidly becoming a way of life. From constantly changing technology to a new shift in focus of the Agency itself, from reduced involvement in the hands-on management of projects to fewer people doing more work, your ability to manage change and its impact on the people you work with is very important.

Among the people with whom you work, probably the majority grumbles about any variation in their working norm, but they **eventually** adapt and get used to the new rules. Although they may hark back to the 'good old days', many will even grudgingly admit that some modifications have been beneficial.

But what about the individual who, actively or passively, resists? Such people, left unchecked, can seriously affect the productivity and ambiance of your section. An adverse reaction to a new situation may be demonstrated by working more slowly, not doing the work at all, avoiding training sessions or meetings, increased absenteeism, chronic complaints to co-workers, or inferior work. These symptoms of a deeper problem should alert you to the fact that you need to address the situation promptly before serious damage results.

When setting the stage for the discussion, consider whether this is a recent or chronic problem. In this type of discussion your listening skills **will be** critical. Essentially, you must uncover the issues and problems that the individual is facing around the acceptance of change. As such, you will ask many questions, frequently clarifying and confirming your understanding of the situation. Use balanced feedback to modify attitudes or ideas. Probe gently but firmly to get as much information as possible. Some people may be reluctant to admit to any problem, others may be shy to tell you their fears for their jobs, or their inability to adapt to a new system, or their dislike for a new manager etc. Make sure that the Individual **is familiar with and** understands the reasons for the change **and its impact on the big picture** as well as their Individual work situation. Too often people are told simply to make the changes without ever receiving an explanation as to why they are occurring. Such a lack of respect only reinforces the resistance.

One tip for ensuring that you get the right information **is by asking** twice if there is anything more that needs to be discussed. In other words, at the end of the discussion about the reasons for the resistance, but before exploring solutions, ask a second time if there is anything else.

For example:

"You've said that you find the new computer system overwhelming and that you're embarrassed to keep asking for help, right?"

Response by Individual.

'Is there anything else bothering you?"

Negative response by individual.

"Are you sure? We should **deal with** everything right now if we can."

By asking twice, you are demonstrating to the individual that you really are listening and willing to discuss any problems openly and honestly. Often there are indeed some other underlying issues that have not yet come to light. Remember that it's not easy to admit to problems adapting to change.

In situations of change you need to be perceived as strong and capable, yet very open, flexible, and accessible to discuss and listen to areas of concern. Your empathy, even while demonstrating commitment to change and growth, will go a long way in defusing these delicate situations.

When someone questions authority...

There are people who seem to resent anyone in a position of authority or leadership. They constantly try to second guess, challenge, or undermine the right to **be** in a position of command. Left unchecked, such individuals can have a very negative influence on the other people who work with the person in charge, not to mention the impact of such an attitude on the manager. It could be that you are the target of such misgivings, or it could be someone that you assign to manage some aspects of a project or dossier. No matter who the target is, you must **recognize** and deal with the situation before it degenerates into bitter recriminations.

First, ask yourself why this person resents authority so. Do they feel that they should be in charge themselves? Do they dislike or disrespect the manager? Were they considered and overlooked for the position? Are they uncomfortable as a team player? Or are there other, personal reasons that are having an impact? Perhaps there is no apparent reason whatsoever. **Little** matter, what is important to you is that your section function smoothly with no disruptions from people with authority problems.

When you conduct this coaching discussion, **you** need to **make** clear **what the line of authority or reporting is**, why it is so, and why it must be respected. Then, you will **explore the reasons for the resistance**. Ask open questions, probe for specific examples of the problem as perceived by the individual. Confirm your understanding of the situation. Do not hesitate to use firm constructive feedback as needed. **Using balanced criticism and discussion skills, try to modify the attitude** of the individual to **focus on the process and not the person** in charge. Make it very clear that personal attacks will not be tolerated, but that you appreciate and welcome constructive suggestions. For instance, while this person may indeed be as qualified as the appointed manager and understandably not **always** agree with the approach used, the fact remains that undermining or questioning the authority is unacceptable. What is acceptable **are** positive, productive suggestions to improve the approach.

Do not allow the other person to sidetrack **you into discussing** personality issues, or defending decisions made. Remain firm in your focus on process, have a mini performance discussion on how to improve the selection chances for managing in the future, offer your assistance and advice as appropriate. Your role here is to draw clear lines of authority that must **be** respected, yet remain open to discuss opportunities where the individual's skills **and knowledge** can be put to use at higher levels.

Please note that this situation deals with someone who resents authority in general. It may be that the person in charge is not doing a good job and there is legitimate reason for resentment. In that case, you must deal with both situations- **the attitude problem and the** shortcomings of the individual in a position of authority.

When someone won't accept responsibility...

Most people **recognize** that to continue developing professionally they need to seek an ever increasing amount of responsibility in their work. That means accepting challenging and new assignments, taking responsibility for ongoing personal and professional development, and accepting responsibility when things go awry in their work.

It would be wonderful if everyone you worked with had such an attitude, but that is seldom the case. There are individuals who have great difficulty accepting responsibility for their performance. Sometimes it shows up in a reluctance to take on extra work, sometimes it is a refusal to make the necessary effort to learn a new skill or subject required for a new task, or sometimes it takes the form of blaming anyone else and anything else for problems or mistakes.

These situations can be difficult to pinpoint and address. There are people who have developed the skill of responsibility evasion into a fine art. Probably you can think of at least one individual you have dealt with during your career who has consistently avoided taking responsibility for their actions, yet managed to advance and prosper professionally. Call it smoke and mirrors or call it manipulation, the adroit deflection of accountability onto others is a common occurrence and can even earn grudging admiration. Be aware though, that someone else eventually ends up taking that responsibility and extra work. This can cause resentment, burn **out**, and unnecessary mistakes. Ultimately, it is you as manager who may bear the brunt of the problem, for the performance of your section is your responsibility.

How could you handle a situation where someone you work with does not take responsibility for their actions? Before talking to the individual, **do** your homework. You should make sure **that you have** clear examples to use during your discussion. Try these information gathering techniques:

1. Watch the person **in action**. How do they **interact** with others? How do others react to working with this person? What indications are there of a refusal to be accountable for actions?
2. **Talk to others** (discreetly!) who work (or have worked) with this individual. Try to get a sense of past problems.
3. **Experiment and document. Test your assumptions** in situations where the outcome isn't critical.

Once you are sure that a problem exists and you have some definite examples of the performance discrepancy, build your case and then convene **a coaching discussion**. **As with all** such discussions, have a clear objective that you want to achieve and inform the poor performer of your intentions. Give one or two concrete examples of recent evasion of responsibility, then try to get the other person to tell you why they do **so**. **Expect lots of evasion**, resistance, and blaming of others.

Remember that this individual **typically** avoids accountability so **it** is only natural to continue to do so in a performance discussion. Don't allow the discussion to get sidetracked onto other issues. Remain focussed on the performance of the individual before you. You may acknowledge other circumstances and situations, but keep returning to your objective and do not engage in discussing other areas. You **will** probably have to give balanced feedback more than once, and you may even have to handle a disagreement **during** the discussion. Continue to ask questions and retain control of the discussion. Present your findings in as neutral and factual a manner as possible. You may well find yourself becoming frustrated and angry, especially if the person continues to be evasive, so take a break to collect your thoughts if need be.

Follow through the remaining steps in the discussion, but ensure that the alternatives and solutions generated are primarily from the other person. Above all, in your desire to find **a workable outcome, don't fall into the trap of taking on work for yourself, even in the guise of coach**. Remember that your intent is to help the individual learn to **accept** responsibility for actions and outcomes. **By** taking responsibility yourself, no matter how easy that would be, you are only compounding the problem and rewarding the other's poor performance.

When someone seems demotivated...

At different points in our working lives, all of us become **demotivated** for a while. Usually this lack of interest is temporary and we regain our enthusiasm for our work until the next dip. This is normal and even to be expected. What is not acceptable, however, is chronic demotivation that leads to non performance. Highly motivated, enthusiastic individuals tend to create a working atmosphere that is energetic and productive. The opposite can apply when your team or some team members lack enthusiasm for an extended period.

While it may not be difficult to discern that someone is demotivated, changing that attitude is not always easy to do. Before you talk to the individual, try and **ascertain when the change in attitude** began. Was it a gradual decline or was there a significant event that triggered it? Has the makeup of your team changed? Are there new **conflicts**? Have you changed your management style? Do you suspect personal problems that may carry over to work? Use the answers from these questions to help you determine the focus of your coaching discussion. Also, consider what you can offer or do to help rekindle the missing enthusiasm.

When you have your discussion, be very specific about what you have noticed and the effect or impact on job performance. Encourage the other person to open up and talk about what is not going well and why lack of motivation has set in. Be very aware of your listening skills to listen through the words and pick up any other messages being sent nonverbally or obliquely. Ask questions, **clarify** and confirm your understanding. Be sympathetic, but neutral. You don't want to encourage the behaviour by appearing to agree with the individual's arguments - the smooth functioning of your section is first priority.

If the cause of the demotivation is work related, explore ways to overcome the barriers. **Be creative and look for novel ways to promote job satisfaction.** If, however, the root of the problem lies in personal issues, don't try and play amateur psychologist. While you may sympathise, refer the individual to a qualified professional for help. It is perfectly acceptable to stress to the individual the results and consequences of a poor work attitude on performance, anything beyond that should be handled by a professional counsellor. Your understanding and support is more than sufficient.

The most important thing to remember about motivation is that it is **primarily intrinsic, not** extrinsic. No matter how much we pride ourselves on being good 'motivators', the best we can do is encourage an atmosphere that is of itself motivational. In other words, pep talks, motivational speakers, gifts and rewards can provide short term results, but it is a consistently open, **creative**, energetic, and challenging work ambience that is more likely to produce highly motivated individuals.

When someone is new to your section...

A new job is always stressful, even if it is an Internal transfer and some aspects of the work are familiar, the people are known, and the job exciting. As a manager your responsibilities to a new arrival in your section are more than a warm welcome and a cursory discussion of the rules, your expectations, and an introduction to the other members of the section. The first few weeks and months on **a new** assignment are critical and it is up to you to ensure that any newcomer to your section be thoroughly familiar and comfortable with both the work and procedures. This does not imply that you have to conduct a familiarization program yourself; that would not necessarily be a wise use of your valuable time.

A new arrival should have a good idea of what is expected, whether through **a** job competition, interviews, or meetings. Still, it **behoooves** you to have a kick off **discussion** that clearly and precisely outlines your expectations, the support you **will** provide, the people who **will** play a key role in familiarizing and training the newcomer, etc. Equally, this meeting is an opportunity for the other person to ask questions, voice concerns and reservations, and get to know you better. Plan **ahead for the** meeting, set aside an hour or more to have a thorough exchange of ideas. Make sure that you are attentive, listen carefully, and ask questions as well **as** give information. The tone of that first meeting will have great impact on future performance.

Over the first two or three months, be alert to **signs of difficulty**, stress, and also success. Without hovering or overcontrolling, it remains important to be aware of how the new employee is settling in. If you have asked someone to act as guide or coach, check back with that individual occasionally for progress **reports**.

Once you have a clear idea of strengths and weaknesses you can begin to **plan a strategy** to minimize weak areas and **capitalize** on strengths. Naturally, you'll want to include the new person in that planning. The following are some possible ways to address the development needs of a new employee:

- . Formal training sessions if the problem is a **skill** deficit
- . On-the-job training to reinforce or hone job skills
- . Coaching sessions on a regular, scheduled basis to discuss and work through difficult areas
- . Assigned reading with follow-up discussions
- . Pairing with someone else who has expertise in an area and good communication skills
- . Special assignments to promote knowledge and skill acquisition

These methods can be combined in many ways, and you may have **others** that work well. What is important is that you demonstrate your awareness of and commitment to the ongoing development on your staff. The fact that you take the time to meet with the individual and discuss progress to date, provide support for growth, **recognize** success, and promote their participation in mapping out their own professional advancement and development is invaluable tool in assuring the integrity of your team.

When someone is a high achiever...

In every group of **people**, one or two usually stand out because of their enthusiasm, their competitiveness, their eagerness to take on new challenges, their willingness to put in the effort and extra hours necessary to finish a job well, and their professional work ethic. While these individuals seem like a dream come true, they can still be a challenge to manage effectively.

The last thing you want to do is stifle that drive to achieve, but it's not always easy to find the right balance to keep such individuals motivated and occupied. In other words, there is always plenty of work to be done, but that does not necessarily translate into the type of work that would be adequately challenging to the achiever.

Managing the high achiever requires similar techniques to managing someone who is demotivated. **First** and foremost you **need to know exactly what motivates the achiever (and why), what has value for them (and why), what career path they seek to pursue (and why).** Equally, you should **know the weak points or the gaps in expertise** that the person needs to address. That critical knowledge will help you devise a strategy with the high **achiever** that meets your needs as manager and the other's needs to excel.

You may not require many formal coaching discussions, but you will probably find yourself engaged in regular, informal 'chats' to ensure that all goes well. Indeed, it is likely that the achiever will seek you out rather than the contrary! Remember that someone who has achievement needs is not perfect. In fact, some achievers may be sorely lacking in many fundamental skills necessary for work execution. You may have to provide balanced feedback and modify some work habits or ideas as well as give credit. Involve them in finding solutions.

These individuals may look for recognition of their success. You should **be aware of the type of acknowledgment that you can provide** - letters of appreciation, public commendation, new responsibilities, time off, a luncheon, a **quiet word in private, monetary** reward, professional development courses, etc. - and what type of recognition has **value** for the other. **Be judicious in recognizing** success; there should be very specific instances that provided value **to you, your section, or CIDA.** Going overboard in giving credit and new assignments could cause problems with other members of your section who are not necessarily shining stars.

In short, managing the high achiever is usually a pleasure. You can function as a mentor, helping to guide their career and shape their professionalism, with their full cooperation **and enthusiasm.** While their energy and drive to succeed may be a challenge, for most **managers, it is the type of challenge that is gratifying to manage.**

When someone works autonomously...

Some **people** like to work independently. They function well with little direction, always get the job done on time without fanfare, and never cause problems. It's easy to take these individuals for granted, to assume that they will be there, working diligently. When you know **you** can count on someone, it's also easy to ask more of them because **you** are assured of performance.

There are still challenges inherent in managing the autonomous worker. Is the individual a loner who does not interact well with co-workers? Does this person share responsibilities and information as needed? Is there a history of personality conflict with others that has forced this individual to prefer to work alone? Are there cultural issues at play? The answers to these questions will shape the manner in which you coach the independent worker.

If there seems to be a problem with sharing responsibilities or hoarding data, or if there is an obvious problem in working with other people, you need to find out why. Even if this person is highly efficient alone, you are not doing anyone any favours by tolerating or even encouraging a 'lone ranger' attitude. **On balance, the success of your team should be more important than the work of one person.** With such a situation, you should interview other people who work or interact regularly with the autonomous worker and get their impressions of the situation. The information you gather will help you to determine the direction of the coaching discussion.

It won't be easy to change self-imposed isolation or subtle ostracism, if such is the case. You may have to work just as much to change attitudes and encourage better communication and understanding with others who don't like the individual as with the loner. Persevere, conduct interviews, observe the interactions of both the group and individuals, ensure you are aware of all the different aspects of the situation, make your priorities and opinions clear. **With time and frequent, honest communication, the alienation should ease.** If there is truly a major conflict and no solutions are forthcoming, you may have to be more directive in order to resolve it using the steps for **managing conflict**.

You may determine that the autonomous worker simply prefers to work alone. For some, it is easier and more efficient to cover the different facets of a project singlehandedly. Certainly there is control, ease of organisation, and acceptance of accountability - no one else is involved. **As a manager**, however, it is up to you to decide whether such autonomy is always in **the** best interest of **the** section. **There are** probably times when it is entirely appropriate to work alone **and you** are thankful to be able to rely on the professionalism of the solo worker. In other instances, when one person essentially monopolizes a series of tasks, no matter how efficiently, there are repercussions for others who may need to learn how to execute new functions and responsibilities and are prevented from doing so. Equally, the

autonomous worker is not learning how to delegate and manage work flow when others are involved. Consider too, **your role in encouraging** such a situation. Do you count on this person too much and overlook the impact on the team as a **whole because it's easier and much less** risky and time consuming? Remember, before convening a coaching meeting, look at all the pieces in the puzzle so that you can discuss the situation clearly and fairly. **Set a clear objective for the discussion.**

In short, the independent worker presents a real challenge to a manager. On one hand you want **to** reward that ability to work well alone, but you don't want to abuse it. On the other hand you need to encourage team work while recognizing the achievements of individuals. Ideally your team will be made up of individuals who work well alone, but are able to come together and work toward a common goal without conflict. Your skills in recognizing strengths and weaknesses, and your ability to balance them through competent interpersonal management techniques will contribute to the development of a strong team overall.

Teambuilding

Besides the one-on-one coaching that is an ongoing responsibility of an effective leader, the careful nurturing and grooming of the **people** you manage into a cohesive, productive team is another of your key responsibilities. Teambuilding is more than coaching on a larger scale, however. While many of the elements are the same, teambuilding has to consider to multiplier effect of the dynamics of disparate individuals working for a common cause, but not always in the same way. For instance, you must consider whether everyone has an identical perception of the goals, whether everyone agrees with those goals, whether team members get along with one another, and whether cultural, gender, or linguistic issues cloud the picture. Also, not everyone works the same way, at the same speed, with the same quality, or with the right intentions.

You have to consider too if a team approach is appropriate for any given situation, what size of team is required, who should be on the team, whether and how to involve people from other areas and other levels, who should lead the team, etc.

This section of the **Effective Leadership Applications Guide** considers six common teambuilding situations that managers face. The situations are descriptive and do not offer black and white solutions. It is up to you to read the situation that is most applicable to you at the time and take out what elements can be of help to you. Adapt the information to your needs, combine ideas, and discuss the possibilities with others. They are intended to help you take an impartial look at possibly stressful situations, evaluate your approach, and take the time needed to plan for a successful outcome. Use them as guides, not iron clad prescriptions. No two situations are identical and you must consider all the elements that colour your particular case.

The skills you will most likely have recourse to in this section are:

- . Listening and asking questions
- . Giving performance feedback
- . Setting goals and performance objectives
- . The 5 roles of a coach (depending upon the situation)
- . The development discussion
- . Managing disagreements (as a last resort)
- Providing Recognition
- Using creative thinking

Use this guide whenever you need to take a step back and gain some perspective, or whenever you face a difficult teambuilding situation.

Working with someone you don't like...

When you manage a group of people, it often happens that there are certain individuals you like more than others, for various reasons. you may have great respect for their professional abilities, enjoy a **strong** personal rapport, have worked together many times in the past, or share common interests and goals.

Sometimes, however, you may find that **you actively** dislike someone yet you have no choice but to work with them. Perhaps you don't like the person's attitude toward work, their voice grates on your nerves, they demonstrate no initiative, **you have had** negative experiences in the past, you've heard bad things about the individual from others, or they do not **share your** priorities. It may be there is no discernable, concrete reason - you simply do not like the **person** even though their work may be exemplary. Whatever the reason, working with someone you dislike can be very stressful and present a real challenge **to** you as a manager. You must be able to rise above your negative visceral response and find ways to work productively, for the good of the whole.

To begin, **examine your feelings with unflinching honesty**. Is your reaction based on **fact** or **emotions**? Did a minor incident colour your feelings too strongly? Are you accepting the opinions of others without verifying how reliable and factual their information is? If someone does not share your values, does that make them bad? Are you projecting your feelings onto the other? If someone does not measure up to your standards, of what benefit is rejection? It is to be hoped that by asking yourself these or similar questions you will begin to see that your negative reaction may be overstated and you can take steps to change your perspective.

Another possibility is to talk to others whose opinion you respect and who have worked with the person you dislike. Get their **viewpoints** and experiences and compare them to your own. If they had similar problems, how did they handle them? If they didn't, why not? Look around you at the people who currently work with this individual. How do they seem to be reacting?

But what can you do if, after thorough analysis, the fact remains that this person is indeed difficult to work with, or you **cannot seem to** change your negative response even though it is purely emotional? One possibility is **to hold a coaching performance discussion with yourself**. **With** self-coaching you can either ask someone you know and whose judgment and discretion you trust to coach you (preferably someone from outside of the office), or you can divide yourself into two people - the neutral 'coach' and yourself with all the concerns and emotions you feel about working with the person you dislike. The coach's role remains the same as for any coaching discussion aimed **at changing** performance: a specific objective, focussing on **performance** not personality, listening with complete attention, giving balanced feedback as **required**, seeking **creative solutions to the** situation using the other's ideas whenever possible. The challenge for

the coach in this situation is to remain absolutely neutral and even play devil's advocate to encourage you to see beyond the immediate problem and find workable alternatives. Self-coaching isn't easy. It **demands honesty and a willingness to change, but** it can be a very effective exercise in **self-management**.

Another option is **to talk to the person** you don't like. While this can be difficult to do, with proper preparation and a willingness to resolve the impasse, you can have a productive and effective meeting. There is nothing wrong with frankly discussing what is Important to you and why, how certain work habits or traits are difficult for you to work with and how that affects your reactions to the individual. Chances are that the other person has noticed or felt that you are more reserved, less patient, or less inclined to ask for their thoughts on a subject. Probably they would be pleased to discuss the situation. Use your judgment. If the other person is volatile and apt to misinterpret your intent, don't try to discuss the issue. You'll have to learn to live with it and be as professional as possible • the overall health of your section depends on it. As manager, the responsibility is yours. Remember too, that if the dilemma is based not on work performance but rather an emotional reaction, the problem is not theirs, but yours.

When people have different priorities...

in an agency as complex as CIDA, with hundreds of external clients and partners, many different divisions and sections, it's natural that there be conflicting priorities. Even with an agency-wide vision and mission statement that is endorsed by senior management, it's not easy to establish uniform directives, policy, and priorities. Add to that the needs and goals of client groups, and it can become very complicated to manage efficiently and coherently.

Probably you often find that your thoughtfully established plans are turned upside down by changing priorities from another area that have a direct impact on your section. Even though you may **recognize** that change is inevitable, that doesn't make it easy to accept all the time. When you manage a group of people who constantly find their work disrupted, discarded, or changed, productivity and morale problems may occur. Equally, within your own team, different individuals may have vastly different priorities from one another. Clients frequently make last minute changes, and international crises can occur at any moment and precipitate radical changes in work flow.

As a manager **you have to orchestrate these diverse needs and priorities in order to minimize disruption and maximize efficiency.** With considerable overlap, you must manage your own section team, serve as liaison and work closely with other sections and groups within the agency, interact with clients, and sit on committees and attend meetings. One critical element in juggling diverse priorities and getting others to work with you rather than against you, is to make absolutely sure that **everyone has a clear, uniform understanding of what needs to be done and why.** This does not imply that everyone agrees with or likes the direction being taken, **it does make it easier for you to ensure that people are working together to contribute to the attainment of goals.**

If two people within your section can't agree on **how** to manage the work involved in a project and you are called in to mediate, try as much as possible to get them to find an acceptable solution on their own. Assume the role of **a neutral guide or facilitator and manage the discussion at arms length if you can.** Before finding solutions, however, ensure that they see and understand the big **picture** and how the scope of their work fits in. Ask specific questions to ensure that both sides understand the other's position and why it is so important. Encourage them to discuss different ways to accommodate their needs by building on ideas and suggestions, **and** using constructive criticism to make changes or adjustments. Have them creatively decide the best way to organize the objectives. **Most people, when they see that you will not take responsibility for their differences, will manage to work out an acceptable settlement as long as you encourage them to do so.** Intervene to offer your ideas or impose your decision only **if no reasonable solution is forthcoming.**

When priorities and deadlines seem overwhelming...

Another problem inherent in managing in these changing times is a reduced workforce that is expected to produce quality work **despite** myriad demands on their time. **People** who are overextended by tight time frames and an increased workload often have great **difficulty** managing priorities and time. Also, because many people like to accommodate others whenever possible, it's tempting to put aside what is being worked on to complete the new, seemingly more urgent task and satisfy someone's need. This means that priorities become muddled and backed up until everything suddenly becomes an emergency. It is at this point that tempers flare, discouragement sets in, and there seems to be no end in sight. At the worst, people begin to call in sick because they don't want to face the chaos waiting for them, even though it only exacerbates the problem.

When everything is a priority and your team is throwing their hands up in despair, what recourse have you? You can do a variety of things depending on the situation. Some suggestions:

- **Convene a meeting** of your section to get a sense of the scope of the situation.
- **Meet with everyone individually** to discuss their specific issues.
- **Make** sure everyone is **clear on the overall objectives** to be achieved.
- Help people **break down seemingly** huge and overwhelming projects into **manageable, achievable tasks** (on a daily, weekly, and monthly basis).
- **Encourage people to devise methods of measuring progress against goals** (this can be done **individually, by project**, by section, or any combination that is viable).
- Encourage people **to plan their day on paper** and build in contingency time in case an emergency arrives. **Time spent planning well is not time wasted!**
- **Set up a tracking system.**
- **Encourage people to analyse their work** and make sure that every task they execute is toward one goal or another (if it's not work required to achieve a goal, consider dropping or postponing the **task** until later).
- **LEARN TO SAY NO** when there's simply too much going on **and a new** request is not truly a top priority. Explain your rationale and that you'll get to it as soon **as** possible (or suggest an alternative).

- . Teach your team to do the same, and to come to you if there are problems.
- . Speak to your colleagues if the pressure is coming from their areas. Explain your perspective and seek their cooperation.
- . If all else fails, analyse the **big** picture and **make decisions** based upon your resources and your perception of the situation. If you've done your homework, your choices will be based on thoughtful appraisal and **not** emotional overreaction. That way you can defend your actions logically.
- . Set up a time management training **session**. Problems with establishing priorities are almost always related to a time management deficit.

With all of these suggestions, your ability to use interpersonal communication skills is very important. Naturally, you need to listen carefully and ask both open and closed questions to truly understand what problems exist. It is likely that you will have to give balanced feedback to some people who simply cannot manage their time and workload, or to other departments that insist on adding pressure and work to your team. You may need to manage conflicts and real disagreements about which priority takes precedence. You must make sure that everyone is capable of setting goals and working toward them.

Establishing priorities will never be a straightforward process. No matter how much you plan, everyone needs to learn and accept that something will usually occur to upset the best laid plans. What is important is to try and maintain a healthy sense of perspective (and **humour!**). There will be days when nothing is accomplished as planned, but there will also be days when work flows smoothly and much progress is made. Good planning skills on the **part** of your section as well **as** yourself will go a long way to mitigate the frustration of plans gone awry.

When someone is an exemplary team player...

Whether it's sports or business, transforming a group of people with disparate experience, skills, and aptitude into a cohesive unit - a team - isn't easy. Ideally, any coach would love to hand pick the members of their team, ensuring that skills and personalities mesh in such a way that the sum is much greater than its parts. The reality of coaching, however, is working with people who are hired, inherited, transferred, seconded, nearing the end of their career, peaking, or just beginning - and the coach has little say in the choices made. Few coaches are blessed with a team of super stars. They must work with the people who make up the team, attempting to balance weakness with strength, matching individuals to maximize efficiency, and constantly encouraging people to do their best and more. They are consistent cheerleaders and defenders **of** their team. Equally, good coaches are alert to signs of burn-out and stress, conflict, declines in performance, and improvements in performance.

If few coaches are blessed with super stars, most have at least one or two solid, dependable performers. These are the individuals who are the unsung heroes. They are competent workers who are always there to be counted on, especially when times are tough. Their confidence in their ability and their calm in crises inspire others who may be less comfortable working under tight deadlines or pressure. Most of all, however, these people provide stability and leadership to your team. Such people are consummate team players, always putting the good of the section or project or team ahead of personal recognition or advancement. Indeed, these individuals may not even be the most productive or the fastest workers - they are simply solid performers. They may have little need **for** reward or recompense. In fact they may not be high achievers at all, content instead with the work they do and not actively seeking promotion or more responsibility. They do, however, possess the ability to see the big picture and know how set priorities. They aren't afraid to make decisions and can live with an element of risk or uncertainty. When they voice an opinion or offer a suggestion, it's always thoughtful. They work well with most people, are willing to share responsibility, and enjoy everyone's respect. They also work well **alone**. **Their work** ethics are impeccable and they set personal and professional standards that others look up to.

So what can be the challenge in managing such a perfect employee? Probably the two greatest **challenges for a manager are not taking the person for granted, and not overloading them with work because they are so reliable.**

Like the high achiever, you need to know what motivates the team player, what rewards are valued **the most**. **Unlike the high achiever however, you may have to dig for the information.** The achiever is looking for ever increasing challenges and responsibilities, often with a career track clearly in mind, and lets you know it.

Someone who is a comfortable 'middle of the road' worker, for instance, may not be so forthcoming about career needs. If they are modest about their accomplishments or strengths, perhaps they will not aspire to any form of recognition, adopting the attitude that they are 'just doing their job'. Still, there are undoubtedly some aspects of their work that they find particularly gratifying • acting as a mentor to new team members, for example • and it is up to you to find out what is most appreciated. One thing is fairly certain, though. Any constructive criticism or advice you might have will be accepted and **utilized** with good grace and professionalism.

The communication skills you will probably use most often are those of providing recognition, listening (particularly for non verbal messages), asking specific questions to get information, using discussion skills, and balanced feedback. **Be** aware of your own attitude toward such team players. Analyse how you treat the person, what your expectations are, what demands you place unthinkingly on their shoulders. If you find that you do tend to **accord too** little attention to them or always give the last minute extra work to them, seek ways to redress the situation. As **the coach of a well-balanced team you cannot afford to overlook your most dependable players.**

A final comment. The categories of the autonomous worker, the high achiever, and the team player are not mutually exclusive. In fact, there is probably considerable overlap. The solo worker can also be an achiever, the achiever can be a good team player and competent alone, the team player can be an achiever and work well alone. What is important is that you **recognize** the dominant characteristics and how they affect your ability to manage effectively.

When there is conflict between team members...

No matter how cohesive your team is, there are bound to be occasional flare-ups and conflicts. Most people feel that a certain amount of conflict is good. Differences of opinion and priority force us to examine our biases, our ways of working, and how we interact with others. They challenge us to change, grow, and try new things - as long as we are open minded enough to accept that there is more than one 'right' answer in most situations.

Sometimes though, a difference escalates beyond an honest exchange of ideas into real disagreement and angry conflict. This is no longer healthy and can quickly lead to disruptive behaviour that can affect your entire team if it is not resolved cleanly. People polarize and begin to take sides, facts are distorted, emotions run high, words can be said that hurt and can never be taken back. Frequently the disagreement changes its focus to personal traits instead of business issues. While it may be normal and acceptable to have varying degrees of like and dislike for the people we work with, those personal issues should be kept **quiet** and not affect professional relationships unduly. Any difference that revolves around attacking someone's person should not be tolerated - it accomplishes nothing but bad feeling.

You may be asked to mediate a conflict between two people, or you may step in to resolve a serious difference that you have noticed brewing. Before **you assume the role of referee, do your homework**. Try to get **as** much information **as** possible from as many sources as possible. Ensure that the information you gather is credible, up-to-date, and that you can verify its accuracy. Hone your listening and questioning skills so that you are getting a complete picture of the situation as perceived by others who are aware **of** what is going on.

Once you possess a good sense of the Issues and the players in the conflict, you should give some thought to how you would like to see the problem resolved. **Ideally they will solve their own dilemma, but if that is not forthcoming, It's a good idea to have your own proposals.** Have **a** worst case and **a** best case decision on hand, just in case. When you are prepared, talk to each person involved one-on-one to get their side of the story. Again, you will have to be extremely attentive. Listen for underlying messages, cultural **and** communication differences, sift through the emotion and rhetoric to find the truth. Use questions to clarify and verify your understanding of their version of events. Make it clear from the outset of the discussions that your intent is to gather information **only - you are not going to render Judgment or take sides**. Remain neutral and insist that the discussion focus on performance, not personality. (If you are reasonably sure that a personality conflict is at the heart of the issue, try to steer the discussion to finding out why the conflict exists and its impact on work. Do not permit emotional personal attacks.)

During these individual meetings, you will probably have **ample** opportunity to give balanced feedback. **Don't hesitate to use** constructive criticism **to make clear what you find acceptable (and why) and what you will not tolerate (and why) In terms of behaviour and attitude among the members of your team.** Not only have you delineated what you consider a healthy difference, but you also give food for reflection to the other person.

Encourage the individual to put aside **grievances** (no matter how legitimate), suspend judgment, and try to think of acceptable alternatives that could resolve the difference or at the very least minimize the tensions. Even if you have your own suggestions, remember to ask the other person first so that they are more committed to finding a solution.

The individual meetings concluded, your approach to resolving the conflict will be situational. You may decide to convene a meeting of all of those involved in the dispute and mediate a resolution. In that case, you would chair the meeting, beginning with an overview of your research, the results of each meeting held, your perception of the situation, and the outcome that you would like to see reached, ie. an end to the conflict. Two critical ingredients in conflict resolution:

- encourage **putting aside entrenched differences** to identify underlying areas of common interests (ie. the success of the team), then seeking a choice among as many solutions as possible to meet those interests
- urge those in conflict **to view issues through the eyes of the person with whom they disagree**, particularly the most contentious issues

When you open the meeting for discussion, **lay the ground rules - no** accusations and recriminations, no personal attacks, no blaming or judging. Instead, encourage them to use balanced feedback with each other, to listen with complete attention, to ask questions if things are unclear, to give credit when merited. Urge them to seek a win-win solution, creatively build on each other's thoughts, rather than tearing them down. They should seek ways to **minimize** impasses and maximize opportunities. Also, ask people to describe their **needs** in terms of 'musts' (have to have) and '**wants**' (would like to have). Challenge each 'must' to be sure that it is not a strong 'want'. The fewer the 'musts', the easier it is to find workable alternatives.

Se prepared for this to be a difficult and lengthy procedure, especially if **they are not** used to such a process or if the dispute is complicated. **You** may find that at some point during the meeting you have to allow everyone to 'let off steam' before you can advance. If that happens, Stay neutral and manage **the** discussion without letting it degenerate into a battle. Equally, you may need to take a break if **progress bogs** down. These situations are always stressful, **and** your role as neutral facilitator is particularly draining. **Be alert to your own stressors** because you of all people must remain focussed, alert, and calm.

If, after trying honestly to resolve the difference, no solution is forthcoming, then you may have to impose a decision. Acknowledge each individual's position and their right to such an opinion, then introduce your decision and its rationale. **Make sure that an action plan is elaborated and that everyone clearly understands what procedures are required.** Plan follow-up meetings to monitor Progress. **You** may not be popular, but no one can say that you didn't seek a different outcome. Sometimes it happens that after a decision has been *imposed*, previously rejected alternatives become suddenly more alluring • **consider remaining open to last minute solutions that meet your objectives.**

A variation of the above process is to insist that the dispute be resolved by the parties concerned. State your position, mediate the meeting, but refuse to offer alternatives. Don't end the meeting until everyone has agreed to a solution that they can live with.

Another possibility, essentially the reverse of the first alternative, is to convene a meeting of everyone, present your research and your perception of the dispute based upon your interviews, then propose your solution. It is up to you whether to use this as a catalyst for discussion or as the final decision.

No matter how often it happens, conflict is never easy to manage. The negative consequences of not managing differences, however, can be enormous. It's tempting to ignore these situations, hoping they will go away. In the early stages be alert to clues that a conflict may be brewing. It may indeed go away alone, but don't count on it! **As soon as it is clear that there exists a disagreement that may require your intervention, deal with it.** Don't wait until the tensions escalate beyond repair to a crisis. People look to you for astute leadership. The ability to manage disputes in a timely fashion, with fairness and diplomacy, is a powerful tool that only enhances your credibility as a coach.

When you're a team member...

As a manager and coach, you are automatically elevated to a position of leadership. Even if you want to be treated just like the other team members, it's difficult **for** them to do when you **are** the boss. Often the best you can do is encourage the others to consider you as part of the team and not a separate entity that directs the team. You can take on work and responsibilities that enable you to work side by side and function within the team. You can assign complete accountability and leadership for specific projects to someone in your section and not intervene. Just be aware that it's often not easy to switch roles either for you or for your team, especially if you have a strong leadership presence. That's not to say that you can't or shouldn't give the reins to someone else, merely that you should be aware of the pluses and minuses. The choices are entirely situational and you need only use your judgment.

Sometimes you may be called upon to function as a team player under different circumstances. Perhaps you are a committee member, or part of a task force, or involved in a project headed by another organization. These are common enough situations for a manager to be involved in, yet not be in charge. Often these temporary groups are made up of people who are your peers and colleagues, some who are usually higher in rank, and perhaps a few who are below you in the hierarchy. There may be individuals from outside of the agency who are completely unknown to you. Perhaps the head of this group is someone you don't respect, perhaps you like that person but others don't, perhaps the team is designed to function without a leader and make decisions by consensus. There are myriad possibilities.

If you and the others involved in such a situation are accustomed to leading, it may be challenging for you to adopt a less take-charge attitude. For instance, if you are a high energy, performance oriented coach and you find yourself part of a task force that has ill-defined objectives and unfocused meetings, you'll probably be very frustrated and tempted to jump in and **organize** things. While it may be true that you could **reorganize** the group and that your ideas are sound, it may not be at all appropriate for you to intervene. Perhaps you prefer an orderly, low key approach to discovering new ideas and the group is loud, opinionated, and no one listens to anyone else. You will likely feel uncomfortable and somewhat overwhelmed.

Learning to function as a member of a group is important. You should be very aware of your own communication and management style and how that affects your ability to work in groups. Note too the styles of group members • it won't take long to see who dominates, who doesn't listen, who's always critical, who's quiet, who's creative, who's thoughtful, who is a risk taker, and who's locked into a set pattern of thinking.

Special management situations

There are certain interpersonal management and leadership situations that do not fit neatly into either coaching or teambuilding. These situations can be problematic for managers and can have an impact on how effective you are as manager and coach.

This section of the Effective Leadership Applications Guide considers five special management situations that many managers face. The situations are descriptive and introduce common coaching **dilemmas** faced by managers. They are intended to help you take an impartial look at possibly stressful situations, **evaluate** your approach, and take the time needed to plan for a successful **outcome**. Use them as guides, not iron clad prescriptions. No two situations are identical and you must consider all the elements that colour your particular case.

The skills you will most likely have recourse to in this section are:

- . Listening and asking questions
- . Giving performance feedback
- . The 5 roles of a coach (depending upon the situation)
- . The development discussion
- . Managing disagreements (as a last resort)
- . Providing Recognition
- . Using creative thinking
- . Considering organizational and personal values

Use this guide whenever you need to take a step back and gain some perspective, or whenever you face a difficult management situation.

Coping with different organizational cultures...

Organizational culture can be described as the values, **assumptions**, and accepted behaviour patterns of the people who make up a particular organization. Every organization, **big** or small, private or public, non-profit or entrepreneurial, has its unique culture. Often there are several cultures within the larger organizational context. For instance, as a government agency **CIDA** may have certain organizational characteristics typical of the public sector. The nature of its business, international development, has been the *raison d'être* for some characteristics that distinguish it from other government agencies and make its organizational culture unique. Your section, because of its mandate, your management style, and the people who work there, also has its own culture. The same would be true for other departments and sections within the agency. Your clients and partners, be they **NGO's**, consulting firms, developing countries, or big business, also have their own cultures within which they do business.

Learning to cope with different organizational cultures, particularly those of your clients, involves the same sensitivity as cross-cultural awareness in a socio-political context. Your interpersonal communication skills can be extremely useful in helping you to understand and work effectively with the organizational culture of other businesses.

In much the same way that it can be frustrating to be a member of a team that does not function in a manner that you find efficient, working with different client groups (internal or external) can be both exhilarating and trying. Traits essential to successfully interacting with diverse organizational cultures are an open mind and flexibility. You **need to be able to adapt your needs and work methods to those of the client just as much as they need to adapt to yours**. And, as master of good interpersonal skills, it is your responsibility to lead by the consistent demonstration of good communication skills.

When you are unfamiliar with another's culture, **acknowledge it and seek information**. Your intention is to understand how they work so that you can work with them more easily.

The best way to find out about an organization and the way it functions is by investigation. Ask questions of people who have worked with the client. Read about them if they are newsmakers. Establish a reliable connection with someone who works there and get as much information **as possible**. When you go to the client's look around you for cultural clues. For instance, how do people dress? How is the phone answered? How do people address one another? Do they seem happy? Is the area cluttered or tidy? What does the atmosphere seem like - frenzied and stressful, or very busy but organized? You can learn invaluable information just by observing the outer office.

How do these different people affect your willingness and ability to participate? First, you will probably gravitate toward and seek rapport with those you judge to be most like you. Second, you may find yourself making (negative) assumptions or value judgments about those that you shy away from. Is this fair or professional? Of course not, but it is what we instinctively do in such situations. We place great weight on our 'gut' reactions and, while intuition is a powerful tool, it should not be the sole criteria for deciding how to judge others. It's impossible to eliminate personal bias and emotional reaction, but an understanding of your own personal and communication biases **will** help you **recognize** your reactions and cope with them so they don't interfere with your ability to participate fully.

When you head a group, you **can train and shape the** communication styles of the members by setting **an example, teaching good skills, and insisting that they be used.** With time, those who work with you will also become strong communicators. But, if you find yourself as part of a group that has problems communicating effectively, you will likely be frustrated because you cannot suddenly begin teaching interpersonal skills.

There are choices to make. You can adopt the group's style and put your hard-earned skills aside for the duration of the meeting. You can sit quietly and not participate, simply putting **in time until the meeting ends.** **Or you can politely begin to ask questions that focus on** clarifying statements or confirming **the meaning behind some** ideas. When someone gives only negative criticism, ask what was positive in the idea. If you want **to give feedback, make sure it's** always balanced. Give credit if an Idea **has** merit. Seek innovative solutions. In other words, use your interpersonal communication skills consciously and consistently¹ **Lead by example. As one who** possesses the skills, the onus **is on you to practise** them. Remain constant and demonstrate calm balance **In your style, and slowly,** slowly others will begin to respond in kind. Don't expect miracles, however, this is a very **slow** process if you **are alone in using the** skills. It is very possible that there are others who know how **to** communicate effectively and have simply forgotten how or don't choose to use the techniques. Chances are though, that they **will** begin **to** change their style and the group will run much **more** smoothly. In essence you are showing fine leadership qualities while functioning a member of **a** team.

If, when working with a client there are still gaps in your familiarity and comfort with their organizational culture that are impeding **progress**, don't hesitate to **stop and admit that you need additional details**. Such self-disclosure is not an admission of **weakness** but rather of professionalism. **Most clients would be happy to explain how and why they do things if it will lead to better communication and working relationships.**

Once you clearly understand their procedures, **consider elaborating on how you typically conduct business** and why. Clients want to understand the rationale behind your systems as much **as you do** theirs. It helps them understand what makes you tick, why delays may occur, what obstacles you face, what is a priority and why, etc. Knowledge of your organizational culture helps others to work with **you** more smoothly.

Once you have a solid understanding of each other it is easy to identify areas of potential conflict, where you agree to disagree, as well **as** where you can expect to work together comfortably. **This is an ideal time to develop and establish a culture unique to your relationship.** By drawing on each other's strengths, devising mechanisms to deal with conflictual situations as soon as they arise, minimizing areas of weakness, and setting mutually acceptable goals and priorities, you are in a marvelous position to achieve great outcomes. The relationship is no longer adversarial. Nor is it client-vendor or **donor-recipient**, but partner-partner. Constructive criticism is not threatening, creative problem solving seems less risky, cultural differences are accepted for what they are and not judged good or bad, each side has an interest in listening to the other, and everyone is working toward a common, accepted goal. Suddenly a **new team has been created**, founded on openness, mutual understanding, **respect**, and a willingness to work together.

A final comment. **Organizational** culture and behaviour is a fascinating, vast, and complex subject. **There are many excellent** publications available that provide a much more in-depth discussion of the topic should you wish to learn more about it. **Remember that there** are multiple cultures within **CIDA** itself and that the **above** description can be adapted to an internal situation.

When you feel you are being unfairly treated...

In your working life there will be times when you are misunderstood, misrepresented, OR held accountable for problems not of your making. Usually you can clear up such situations by discussing the areas causing the mix-up and correcting the mistake. Sometimes, however, it may happen that you are being treated unfairly and you do not understand why. It is distressing to feel the weight of someone's negativity and your work will inevitably suffer. Left unattended, your stress could be communicated to your team • with unfortunate results. The best solution is to **analyse the situation and deal with it**.

To begin, **trace back** in your mind to where you first noticed the negativity. Ask yourself some questions:

- . What could have sparked it?
- Were you involved?
- . Has it been blown out of proportion?
- . Was it ever discussed?
- . Is anyone else involved?

Next, note the incidents that alerted you to the feeling that you are not being treated correctly:

- . Has anyone else been similarly treated?
- . Are you blowing things out of proportion?
- . Have others noticed and commented on it to you?
- . Is there a pattern? Is its slant personal or professional?

Finally, consider who is treating you this way:

- . Who is this person? A superior? A colleague? An employee?
A client?
- . **How Important is(are) this person(s)?**
- **Do you respect their opinions?**
- . How much influence do they have on others around **you**?
- . Do they have a reputation for being **negative** or **causing** trouble?

The intent in asking yourself questions like these is to help you step **back and take some distance** from the situation. Feeling maligned unlocks very unpleasant emotions and it's easy for those emotions to overwhelm your logic and have you imagining slights and insults everywhere. You need to be able to view the situation as dispassionately as possible. **Decide first and foremost** if there is a **problem and it is worth addressing**. Consider who is treating you badly. Your approach will differ depending if it is your boss, a colleague, an employee, or a client. If the person is a known trouble-maker or you don't respect them, you may decide to ignore the whole situation and trust that it **will** run its course without tasting damage. You may feel that you will **make** matters **worse (and** give the person satisfaction) by having a showdown.

Should you decide to confront the situation, **follow the steps of the coaching discussion**. Adjust your approach depending on who **you** will be meeting. Before convening the meeting, think through your arguments, the data you have gathered and the outcome you want to achieve. Consider too what solutions are acceptable to you and what **are not**. **Be particularly aware of your emotions** and have them in check - this will probably be a stressful discussion and you must remain calm. Also, consider possible reactions to your probing. Might the person deny everything, claiming that you are imagining it all? Could this person begin to attack you verbally? What if the individual refuses to respond? Anticipate and have alternate plans in place.

By carefully and consciously using your skills as a good communicator, you should be able to navigate this discussion and have a productive meeting with an agreeable ending. State your position and **your** concerns clearly **and concisely**. **Be** sure that the other person understands the impact of their behaviour on you and why you want to address it. Don't allow the discussion to get sidetracked - stick to your plan as closely **as** possible. Use balanced feedback to modify negative ideas. Differences that are performance or work related can eventually be reduced to facts instead of emotions and then you can seek win-win solutions.

If there are mainly personality issues, however, it may be tougher to resolve the difference. Ensure that you have a clear understanding of their feelings by clarifying and restating your perceptions. Use balanced feedback to approach emotionally driven behaviour. Should there be no way to separate the personality conflict from the perceived performance discrepancy and have a healthy exchange of opinions, you may decide to terminate the discussion. **You have every right to insist that, while the person is entitled to dislike you, you will not tolerate abusive and disruptive behaviour or comments because it is destructive and stressful for everyone**. If you do not **have** direct authority over the person, be ready to refer the matter higher.

Managing your boss...

You may use exemplary interpersonal **communication** techniques, be an outstanding coach with a team of people that any manager would be proud **to** direct, and still have problems when it comes to managing your boss. It is an oft-heard lament that "I try to practise good communication skills all the time. I just wish my boss would, it's almost impossible to have an honest discussion!" Too often, senior managers send their managers for training **because** there is a perceived need for building strong **communicators** in the ranks. This may be true, and the effort and time spent on training is usually appreciated, especially if it can be used. The trouble is that improved communication may hit a ceiling of indifference ("I don't need training in that! I pay my managers top dollar for that kind of thing.") when it comes to top management. The result, after a lengthy and costly organization-wide training implementation to build healthy communication, is that most people have adopted the new ideas, are talking to each other openly, but still feel frustrated and uncomfortable talking to the big bosses, particularly when there is a difference of opinion or a conflict.

There is no question that trying **to** influence your boss is a delicate matter and can be very stressful. Consider **though, the consequences of doing or saying nothing and letting matters continue**. What impact will that have on you, your team, and your boss in the long run? Staying quiet accomplishes little; you do no one any favours. In fact, if the situation is having an adverse effect on you and your team, **you have a responsibility** to speak up. It doesn't mean that your boss will agree with you or rush **to** change, but it could. At the very least you have identified **a** problem, demonstrated leadership and professional integrity by addressing the issues. In the long run, by constructively seeking solutions with honesty and consistency, you will earn both respect and the ear of your boss, and you may subtly influence a positive change in their thinking.

How you approach your boss will depend very much on your relationship. If you have very open, honest, and solid dealings with one another then you may feel quite comfortable discussing any difficulties that may exist and anticipate **a fruitful meeting**. **if** your relationship is more distant and structured, you **may** still decide to initiate a discussion, but the outcome would be less predictable.

In essence **you will be coaching your boss, so plan to use the basic steps for a coaching discussion**. Be sure that you are well **prepared** with clear objectives, and specific data. There are some differences in holding a coaching discussion with your boss however, primarily at the beginning and the end of the discussion.

First, you can't very well tell your boss that their management style is causing friction. **instead** you might couch the intent of the meeting in more oblique terms, intimating that you would like to discuss communication strategies or coaching techniques. From a broad base you would then move toward a more specific role for the boss within that strategy, and then discuss possible problems and pitfalls with that role. At that point you should bring up some concrete examples of conflicting priorities, misunderstandings that **lead** to confusion, inadequate or unclear directives, etc.

Another approach would be to open the discussion with a recent incident that resulted in a breakdown of communication because of the boss's attitude. From that point you would seek to explore ways to minimize that issue in the future.

Still another way to address the situation would be to honestly discuss the problems as you perceive them. Even if you do not enjoy a warm and open relationship, you may decide that the best approach is the direct approach.

Once you have initiated the discussion, you may find that your boss takes over. There's not much that you can do about that, but you can still influence the tone and direction of the meeting. **Rather than asking your boss what can be done, offer your suggestions and wait for feedback.** Don't be afraid to use constructive criticism - **there is absolutely no reason that you cannot modify ideas or disagree** with your **boss's** focus. You are not challenging authority, but trying to resolve some issues that have an impact on you. By all means build on good thoughts, link ideas together, be creative, and try to use the boss's suggestions whenever possible to gain commitment. if something won't work, though, say so and explain your reasoning. It is important that you strive to remain honest and open, providing communication leadership by example.

When you have exhausted all ideas, selected some alternatives, and it is time conclude, let your boss do it. Any decision and action plan should be initiated by your boss. That way their commitment is ensured. **As long as your goal is achieved and you have kept your integrity,** it's not important who ends the discussion. You have demonstrated initiative and professionalism simply by broaching the matter and reinforced that to your manager.

Changing your own management style...

As old ways of doing business become increasingly less **applicable to** current situation, there will be more and more pressure upon individuals in management positions to adapt to new realities. While most people can learn (even if reluctantly!) new processes, new technologies, and new information that relates to a change in focus, little attention is paid to how particular management styles may **also** have to be altered to cope with those realities. It is a still too common occurrence, even a regrettable truth, that most managers are measured and judged only on tangible results, bottom lines, and meeting deadlines. That is not **to** say in any way that these factors are not important, they are indeed essential elements in any successful organization.

There remains another side to success, and that is the healthy **organizational** culture that nurtures those tangible, measurable outcomes. It's just that the individuals who are so expert at fostering that a healthy, productive atmosphere are not typically rewarded for those abilities. It is like a twist on the old joke "Sure she has a great team, but can she balance a budget?" Likely that manager receives promotions and rewards based on the budget, not the good team she has nurtured and developed.

So how does a manager identify and strive to change those habits of a career lifetime that receive so little attention and recognition? Changing personally is not an easy thing to do. It requires honesty, seeking candid feedback, an idea of what the end result should be, and a willingness to put in the effort to achieve that result - **often** a/one.

Changing your personal management style is very likely necessary to adapt to the changes occurring around you. You and your team must absolutely acquire all the new technical skills required to do your jobs efficiently. It is equally important that you hone your interpersonal and leadership skills and serve as a role model to your team. Now more than ever you need to be sensitive to the needs of those who comprise your team. And yet, and yet... you too have difficulty embracing change, thriving on chaos, letting go of comfortable methods of work. You don't always have what it takes to absorb the concerns and needs of your team. But you must • the new reality demands that you do so.

Consider again the qualities of an effective leader:

- possess a clear and consistent vision
- embrace change and promote it constantly
- reward failure and learn from it
- remove barriers, reduce bureaucracy, manage horizontally
- promote every success, no matter how small
- possess superlative listening and communication skills
- lead by example and be visible (manage by walking around)
- delegate without constant checkbacks
- encourage risk taking and innovative solutions

Now, consider how comfortable you are with these qualities, how many you already possess, and how many you need to develop. Look honestly at your management style (directive, hands on, hands off, etc.) and your personal needs (power, affiliation, achievement, security, order, recognition etc.) and their impact on how you manage. Next, decide which qualities are the most critical to your immediate success as a leader and which can wait a while; you can't change everything at once and you still must manage the day to day activities of your team. Then, map out a strategy that is SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and timely) to help you acquire the **qualities** you feel necessary.

If you have a mentor, involve that person (or anyone else whose opinion you respect and who knows what work you do) in helping you devise a plan, their counsel and concern for your success will be **invaluable**. Ask them to conduct a coaching development discussion with you. Sometimes it helps a great deal to abstract yourself and view the situation more dispassionately. You may also want to consider surveying your team members to get their feedback what they would like to see from you as their leader. You'll get a good idea of what is important to them as changes unfold-and affect them.

Consider too the many 'self-help' books available on leadership and change. Some of them give good advice and have interesting tips and techniques for managing personal change. Equally, you might consider enrolling for training and education programs, either through the agency or other **organizations** (both private and public offer many different courses). To get ongoing support at work, set up an informal network of like-minded people to get together and discuss successes, failures, frustrations, and new ideas. There's nothing like the support and comfort derived from commiserating and learning with colleagues, it's another form of teambuilding, and you receive valuable feedback.

Finally, remember these tips when you are working on your own development:

- . Don't be too hard on yourself, it isn't easy to change habits.
- . Change takes time, set realistic time frames **for yourself**.
- . You're *a/ready* a leader, you're just getting better at it.
- . Stick with it and stay open-minded - change is constant!
- . Be prepared for setbacks, failure, and frustration.
- . Seek counsel and support whenever you can. This can be a lonely process.
- . Try out at least two new creative alternatives a week.

Once you have decided upon a course of action and taken the first steps toward changing your management style, the worst is behind you. Continuous improvement, ongoing personal and professional development, should be viewed as tools that can only help you be ever better in your role as leader and coach. By adopting such an attitude you are accepting responsibility for your own growth and will be able to make choices from a position of self knowledge and confidence.

Encouraging creativity and risk taking...

An important element in managing in today's volatile, changing workplace, is the ability of people to think and act creatively, and to take risks in order to achieve **organizational** objectives. Yet, despite their importance and acknowledged benefits, creativity and risk taking remain very threatening concepts to many **organizations** and people. Everybody seems to have at **least** one horror story about creativity run amok, and risk taking that backfired horribly. These tales serve to reinforce the reluctance that many feel about even trying to be more creative, challenging the rules, or rocking the **organizational** boat. Somehow, the successes derived from thinking creatively or changing the system pale in comparison to the failures, even if the successes are greater in impact and number than the failures.

Yet you are faced with the challenge of meeting the call to be more creative, take more risks, and encourage your team to do the same. Even if you personally agree with the need to embrace these concepts, there is a very real possibility that, initially at least, you feel that you are working alone. As Machiavelli said in 1532, people do not easily believe in new things until there is proof that they work, and others resist change because their own comfortable ways are threatened. That perception is just a true today as it was more than 450 years ago... people naturally resist change. it is threatening, frightening, yet it inevitably occurs despite that resistance.

When people look backwards however, the change that has occurred seems straightforward and clear, and no longer menacing. The fear, chaos, and foot dragging appear laughable in retrospect. Problems were solved, changes were implemented (not necessarily without disruption), and a new order evolved. Smiles replace frowns, and people begin to talk about "remember when...", and myths and stories are woven into a new organizational culture. Success is celebrated and becomes a mainstay of the new climate evolving, so subtly and naturally that few even **realize** that what has changed was vehemently resisted a short while before.

While this nostalgia and very valid recognition of success goes on, new changes and problems threaten the current ways of doing business, people resist them, and the cycle continues. Change is constant, change is inevitable, change causes inconvenience. Most importantly, healthy change only occurs when people are willing to change their way of thinking.

The prospect of encouraging creativity and risk taking in a bureaucratic system within a large organization appears daunting. There are however, tools available to help you lead your team into a new way of operating. When you consider these tools remember these critical elements of instituting lasting and healthy change:

Start slowly and involve everyone from the outset. Respect others' fears and reluctance, as well as your own. Keep trying.

Tools for **managing creativity and risk**

- . Give people an opportunity **to air their fears**.
- . **Teach** people **creativity** and **risk analysis techniques**.
- . **Let them lead** creativity and risk analysis sessions.
- . Start at home - look for ways to involve others.
- . **Bridge** the gap between creativity and innovation by **implementing** the ideas generated.
- . Take risks yourself - set an example for others.
- . **Support and respect** any idea that builds on the vision of your section - no matter how farfetched it may seem.
- . **Play games**. Sometimes people need to be children again to put aside ingrained resistance. Games can be extremely enlightening and educational as well as fun. There are many inexpensive and effective games to promote leadership and creativity available.
- . **Visualize**. Imagine how you would like your work world to be, then figure out how to get there (alone or in groups).
- . Think backwards. In pairs, imagine you are at the end of your long and successful career (or something similar) being interviewed by Peter Gzowski on Morningside. Have 'Peter' (partner) interview you about that career - obstacles, setbacks, triumphs, sacrifices, unexpected opportunities, changes and modifications required, emotions etc.. Peter notes qualities and traits that determined the success, highlights how you overcame obstacles etc. Usually people notice that they never lost sight of their goals, that they always found ways around obstacles, that the sacrifices made were worth it in the long run etc. Next, change places for the second interview. Finally, channel that energy and positive focus into current **issues**. **This can be** a very powerful exercise.
- . **Look for success stories** elsewhere in the agency and bring them to the attention of your section. Seek **ways** to build on the success of others, try to combine ideas, start to establish networks with areas that show innovation and share tips.
- . Imagine the worst case **scenario, then begin to look at the** likelihood of that occurring. If it's not very likely, move **to the next worst** case, and so on, until you reach the point where the risk is manageable. Then begin to seek solutions.

More tools for managing creativity and risk

• **Reversal.** When people block and resist new ideas, they often say that something is a good idea but . . . and then find reasons to prove why it can't be done. The focus is always on the negative. Reversal **recognizes** the negative, but focusses on the desired outcome. For instance: 'I want to lose weight, but **I hate to diet.**' becomes "I hate to diet, but I want to lose weight." Reversing the focus makes it easier to find ways to accomplish that goal. Use this simple, effective technique whenever you get bogged down in negative thought traps - it works!

• **Play 'And so...?'** This technique is **used** when you or members of your team get bogged down imagining all the potentially awful things that could happen if some change were to be attempted. This tendency - catastrophizing - is insidious. It can **kill** creative ideas, stifle new systems, and frustrate the most open minded individuals. Obviously, the possible negative consequences of any action must be considered, but they must also be weighed and compared to the potential benefits. *All* decisions, *all* actions, involve some risk. The key is to know how much risk is acceptable, how much you can live with, and whether that risk is worth taking. Unfortunately, people often get lost in the negatives and lose sight of the potential involved. When that happens, play 'and so...?'. The intent of this question is to **move** the catastrophe from the worst case (and most unlikely) scenario into the realm of the likely. You may have to ask the question several times to bring people out of the negative and begin **to** see the situation in a more realistic, workable light. For instance:

"If we try that, we could end up having to give more to the CEAs."

"**And so...?**"

"Well, that could mean less control for us."

"**And so...?**"

"we would have to work out a new agreement with them."

"**And so...?**"

"Our roles would have to change"

"**And so. ...?**"

"we would need to change the way we work."

"**And so...?**"

"It might mean more time forplanning if we gave **CEAs** more of the responsibility for doing the executing."

This works amazingly well in defusing negative group think (you'll probably see a lot of sheepish grins once it becomes **clear** what is happening). It also works alone, as self-talk. Barriers suddenly seem surmountable, risk more manageable.

Try these tools and techniques whenever you need to stimulate creative thinking and encourage risk taking. Combine them, adapt **them**, but above all, keep trying. Be sure you know your own barriers to creativity and risk, you'll be better able to lead others through the **process**.