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Don't Hire Difficult People! EVER!

6:30 PM PDT, October 26, 2007

Many of you ask questions about your work place and difficult people – especially with unemployment rates being low. One reoccurring issue is how do you know who NOT to hire! Here is my take on insuring a toxic free zone.

Difficult and Toxic People don't just make others feel miserable; they create problems for their companies in many ways. They increase turnover, lower morale, and reduce profits.

When hiring employees, look for two characteristics: judgment and attitude. Typically, difficult people do not have either of these attributes. Everything else can be trained.

Second, avoid hiring the people who will never succeed -- those who cannot do what they are told and those who cannot do anything unless they are told.

Ask questions that help get responses to make better hiring decisions.

1. Why did you leave your last position?
2. What are the key factors/skills you bring to building a successful team?
3. How do you stay motivated and focused?
4. What are the two elements of your experience that will help us reach our goals and satisfy our clients/customers?
5. If you had an issue with another employee, whether your subordinate, colleague, or superior, how would you go about resolving it?
6. What are two or three considerations a company has to focus on to build great customer relationships?

Lars Dalgaard is CEO and cofounder of SuccessFactors, one of the world's fastest-growing software companies with revenues over \$30 million created a list of the interesting milestones for the last seven years of his company. Her is my favorite:

- * Employing no jerks

All the employees SuccessFactors hires agree in writing to 14 "rules of engagement." Rule 14 starts out, "I will be a good person to work with—not territorial, not be a jerk." One of Dalgaard's founding principles is that "our organization will consist only of people who absolutely love what we do, with a white-hot passion. We will have utmost respect for the individual in a collaborative, egalitarian, and meritocratic environment—no blind copying, no politics, no parochialism, no silos, no games, —just being good!"

If you need a better understanding of identifying Toxic People, find resources that will give you the skills you need! Whether it is my book, Toxic People: decontaminate difficult people at work without using weapons or duct tape or other resources, do something! They will contaminate any work group or business environment.

Bio



Marsha holds an MBA and received her CSP (Certified Speaking Professional) through the National Speakers Association. As a professional speaker and author, Marsha Petrie Sue is the Muhammed Ali of communications. She can dance, look pretty and she uses the entire ring. Marsha also knows how and when to land a knockout punch. Think of her information as charm school with live ammunition.

She shares proven tactics for managing people, employees and clients that create perplexity, puzzlement and pandemonium at work and at home. "Let's be honest," she says, "some of the situations you encounter are toxic and you need to learn how to handle it or they'll tear you apart." This is where you'll learn how to get the results you deserve, reduce conflict and improve relationships.

[» Marsha Petrie Sue "Marsha"'s profile page](#)

Marsha's book hit #16 out of 50 on the bestseller list from Bookscan!
Toxic People: Decontaminate Difficult People at Work without Using
Weapons or Duct Tape
Available at www.Amazon.com and www.BarnesandNoble.com

Phone: 1.866.661.8756 or 480.661.8756
Booking information: Call Darlene at 1.888.797.6700
Marsha Petrie Sue - The Decontaminator of Toxic People

Visit the website for more information www.MarshaPetrieSue.com

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Initial post: Nov 14, 2007 11:43 AM PST

Robert I. Sutton says:

Marsha

The quote about Lars Dalgaard is taken nearly word for word from an article that I published in the McKinsey Quarterly earlier in the year called "Building the Civilized Workplace." There are some words omitted, but there is no attribution to original source and note below how you have pretty much simply removed some of the words from the opening of the original article. Note that I am a professor at Stanford, and directly taking text from a source with providing any attribution fits our definition of plagiarism. Here is the original source. Note the identical sentences:

Lars Dalgaard is CEO and cofounder of SuccessFactors, one of the world's fastest-growing software companies-and the fastest with revenues over \$30 million. Dalgaard recently listed some milestones that his California-based company passed in its first seven years:

- * the use of its software by more than two million employees at over 1,200 companies around the world
- * the use of its software by employees speaking 18 languages in 156 countries
- * growth three times that of the company's nearest competitor
- * enthusiastic recommendations of the product by nearly all customers
- * dramatically low employee turnover
- * employing no jerks

That's right-no jerks-although the word SuccessFactors really uses (except on its Web site) is a mild obscenity that starts with the letter A and sort of rhymes with "castle." All the employees SuccessFactors hires

agree in writing to 14 "rules of engagement." Rule 14 starts out,
"I will be a good person to work with-not territorial, not be a jerk." One of Dalgaard's founding principles is that "our organization will consist only of people who absolutely love what we do, with a white-hot passion. We will have utmost respect for the individual in a collaborative, egalitarian, and meritocratic environment-no blind copying, no politics, no parochialism, no silos, no games, -just being good!"



Perhaps Amazon blogs don't need to follow the Stanford honor code, but I would never use so much text from another source without attribution, and I think that nearly all other universities -- and authors -- would agree that acknowledgment of the source is appropriate.

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