

JCU' s SIMPLE SABOTAGE LEADERSHIP SERIES

DO'S & DON'TS: DECISION MAKING PT. 1



DON'TS (from Field Manual):

- Insist on doing everything through “channels.” Never permit short-cuts to be taken in order to expedite decisions.
- Advocate “caution.” Be “reasonable” and urge your fellow-conferees to be “reasonable” and avoid haste which might result in embarrassments or difficulties later on.

DO'S (from Jack Cooper):

- Not every decision has to go through multiple channels. Discuss with your teams which decisions can be made expeditiously by which team members and empower your team to make decisions appropriate to their position.
- When weightier decisions do require approval from persons higher in the organization, make sure that one person from your team champions a well-presented proposal that enables the higher-up decision makers to make an informed decision.
- Make sure that champion has a timeline and moves the decision-making process along. It is not sufficient to send one request in writing with no follow-up.
- Encourage your team to balance prudence with decisiveness. You cannot throw caution to the wind and be reckless when making decisions. But you also cannot be so cautious as to stagnate your work. Find the balance.

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LEADERSHIP SERIES

DO'S & DON'TS: DECISION MAKING PT. 2



DON'TS (from Field Manual):

- Be worried about the propriety of any decision- raise the question of whether such action as is contemplated lies within the jurisdiction of the group or whether it might conflict with the policy of some higher echelon.
- Refer back to matters decided upon at the last meeting and attempt to reopen the question of the advisability of that decision.
- When possible, refer all matters to committees for “further study and consideration.” Attempt to make the committees as large as possible – never less than five.

DO'S (from Jack Cooper):

- First, make sure that once a matter is decided, you take action on the decision. There is usually no need to revisit the decision unless you have results that indicate a need for adjustment. Iterating is a good practice, but waffling and reopening matters for discussion is not.
- Next, use committees sparingly. Cross-functional task forces can be a powerful tool, but not every decision needs a full committee of decision makers. That can slow your organization down to the point of being stagnate.
- The more people on the committee, the slower the decision-making process will be. For major decisions, that may not be a problem. But for every-day decisions, it can be sabotage. Once again, you will need to find the appropriate balance.

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DO' S & DON' TS: TRAINING



DON'TS (from Field Manual):

- Managers: When training new workers, give incomplete or misleading instructions.
- Employees: Never pass on your skill and experience to a new or less skillful worker.

DO'S (from Jack Cooper):

- Companies built on the strength of a handful of individuals who fail to pass down their skills and knowledge are likely to be ineffective and short-lived. However, the best organizations are ones that manage successfully to train employees at all levels of the organization. Training should cover the knowledge and skills necessary to perform the job well. Training should also cover what is known as “soft-skills,” or, in other words, broader concepts such as leadership and customer service.
- Not only should training be top-notch, but it should be bolstered by a system of mentorship that allows new employees to continue to ask questions as they develop their craft at the organization.
- New employees are not the only team members who need training. Make sure that you and other members of your team always keep an eye out for other team members who may benefit from mentorship or additional training.
- Look for opportunities yourself to learn from employees with more experience, or who demonstrate work habits you admire. Successful organizations are made up of individuals who desire to grow and desire to help others grow as well.

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DO' S & DON' TS: TIME-MANAGEMENT



DON'TS (from Field Manual):

- Work slowly. Think out ways to increase the number of movements necessary on your job; use a light hammer instead of a heavy one, try to make a small wrench do when a big one is necessary, use little force where considerable force is needed, and so on.
- Contrive as many interruptions to your work as you can: when changing the material on which you are working, as you would on a lathe or punch, take needless time to do it. If you are cutting, shaping, or doing other measured work, measure dimensions twice as often as you need to. When you go to the lavatory, spend a longer time there than necessary. Forget tools so that you will have to go back after them.

DO'S (from Jack Cooper):

- Our instinct is often to start with the most important work first. Or, worse, to just start with whatever happens to be in front of us at the moment. But try this tactic. The night before you leave work, make a written list of all the things you need to do the next day. Reserve a spot at the top of the list for 2-3 quick tasks that you can “knock out” of the way first thing when you arrive to work. You will have the satisfaction of quickly being able to cross-out multiple items on your to-do list. Then you can dive in on the most important projects, especially if they are projects that will take a little extra time, without out the weight of a full to-do list bearing down on you all day.

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DO' S & DON' TS: TIME-MANAGEMENT



DO's (from Jack Cooper) Continued:

- It's a good habit to always look at your next day's calendar the night before. That way you wake up ready for your day. And if you have any appointments early in the morning, you have time to wake up a little early.
- Streamline your work. Don't waste time and energy on projects that don't have to be perfect or that are relatively unimportant.
- Work smarter AND harder. Focus on efficiency, not so you can kick your feet up, but so that your hard work is more productive.
- Block out time for uninterrupted work. More involved projects may require you to block time on your calendar so that you are not repeatedly interrupted. Each time you stop and start, you may lose time and momentum.

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DO'S & DON'TS: PRIORITIZATION



DON'TS (from Field Manual):

- In making work assignments, always sign out the unimportant jobs first. See that the important jobs are assigned to inefficient workers of poor machines.
- Hold conferences when there is more important work to be done.

DO'S (from Jack Cooper):

- Try to assign the most essential tasks to the employee with the best skillset for the job. If the right person for the job is already at capacity with another project of less importance, reassign, or if necessary, pause the work on the lower priority project. It is better to complete the higher priority project with the right person for the task rather than assign a top priority project to an employee who is available but has the wrong skillset.
- Use caution when asking for volunteers for high priority projects. While it is great to have people excited for the work, you want to make sure that you are able to assign the person with the strongest skillset, not the first to volunteer. On lower priority projects, it is fine to allow people to volunteer and build a new skillset.
- As we have previously discussed, training is essential to a healthy organization. However, non-essential, lengthy trainings or “conferences” should be avoided when they detract from completion of important work. Leadership needs wisdom on when more lengthy conferences are appropriate, and when they are an unnecessary detraction from essential work. This also includes external conferences. These can be expensive, and an inefficient use of resources, particularly if the employee will be multi-talking through the entire conferences because of obligations at work.

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DO' S & DON' TS: PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY



DON'TS (from Field Manual):

- Do your work poorly and blame it on bad tools, machinery, or equipment. Complain that these things are preventing you from doing your job right.

DO'S (from Jack Cooper):

- When something goes wrong at work, it is almost instinctual to blame something or someone else. It is very difficult to own up to our mistakes. However, if we only blame external factors beyond our control, we leave little margin for improvement. Only by owning up to and analyzing thoroughly our mistakes can we grow. Further, strong leaders aren't looking for excuses of why mistakes were made. They are looking for employees who have put together a comprehensive plan to learn and grow from mistakes, not pass the blame.
- Beyond relying on excuses when explaining our mistakes to others, we also have to be careful that we do not let excuses or obstacles stop us in our tracks. Obstacles will always come our way. That's life. Good employees don't stop their work because of an obstacle, they plan how to keep going and do their best work despite any obstacles in the way. While our circumstances may not always be within our control, our reaction to circumstances is 100% within our control. Make the most with what you've got, and don't let excuses or obstacles stop you from doing your best work.

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DO' S & DON' TS: PERFECTIONISM



DON'TS (from Field Manual):

- Insist on perfect work in relatively unimportant products; send back for refinishing those which have the least flaw. Approve other defective parts whose flaws are not visible to the naked eye.
- Haggle over precise wording of communications, minutes, resolutions.
- Apply all regulations to the last letter.

DO'S (from Jack Cooper):

- Don't waste time trying to make your written communications perfect unless they absolutely need to be perfect. For communications that are important, set a system in place where one person drafts, one or more person edits, and one person has final approval. But don't let perfectionism get in the way of timely communication, and don't let it be an unnecessary drain on your time.
- Discuss quality expectations in advance with your team or your supervisor. Allocate your time and effort in favor of projects with higher levels of importance. Do not allow projects of minimal importance to take significant or detrimental time away from more important tasks. Have open lines of communication with your team and with your leaders to determine where efforts are best spent and the level of quality expected for each project.

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DO' S & DON' TS: EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION



DON'TS (from Field Manual):

- Make “speeches.” Talk as frequently as possible and at great length. Illustrate your “points by long anecdotes and accounts of personal experiences. Never hesitate to make a few appropriate “patriotic” comments.
- Bring up irrelevant issues as frequently as possible

DO'S (from Jack Cooper):

- Avoid constantly dominating meetings and conversations. Ensure you are leaving space for others to contribute, particularly when they have different skillsets and experiences to bring to the table.
- Be prepared in advance of the meeting wherever possible. This may mean sharing materials in advance, so people have time to formulate ideas before they are discussed. Lack of preparation, or being “caught off guard,” can contribute to longer, less productive conversations. Without advance preparation, our minds are being taxed to absorb, interpret, and speak about a new topic all at the same time, making it more likely some of our responses will be less concise and coherent than if we had had more time to review the issue in advance.
- Be intentional when addressing others, particularly in a group setting. Be direct, to the point, and only use examples where it helps illustrate your point directly. Be weary of using the same examples or points repeatedly.

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DO' S & DON' TS: MORALE



DON'TS (from Field Manual):

- To lower morale and with it, production, be pleasant to inefficient workers; give them undeserved promotions. Discriminate against efficient workers; complaint unjustly about their work.

DO'S (from Jack Cooper):

- Ensure that you always praise and celebrate good work. Doing so one-on-one is good, but whenever possible, do so in front of a group as well. People want to be recognized for a job well done. Failure to be recognized can be demoralizing. Recognition cannot always come in the form of monetary rewards or promotions, often a simple hand-written note or praise in front of the team will suffice.
- When opportunities arise for promotions, ensure there is a clear, objective standard upon which you base your decisions. If the person you select may not be the obvious choice to other members of your team, make sure to explain why you selected the individual.
- Do not gloss over poor performance. Give the individual the opportunity to improve by clearly identifying the deficiencies and suggesting steps for improvement. Negative feedback should most often be given privately. However, if an employee displays a negative attitude, fails to complete a reasonable assignment, turns in unreasonably poor work product, or makes an inappropriate comment in front of an entire group, it may be appropriate to publicly address the employee so that others know the issue has not gone unnoticed and is being properly addressed. Even if the public statement is something like, "that was not appropriate, see me in my office later and we will address," it is better than silence. Not addressing poor work can be equally damaging to a team as not recognizing good work.

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DO' S & DON' TS: COMPLAINTS



DON'TS (from Field Manual):

- If possible, join or help organize a group for presenting employee problems to the management. See that the procedures adopted are as inconvenient as possible for the management, involving the presence of a large number of employees at each presentation, entailing more than one meeting for each grievance, bringing up problems which are largely imaginary, and so on.

DO'S (from Jack Cooper):

- Good communication is essential to a healthy organization. That includes communication about the negative as well as the positive at times. But there are ways to make the most out of giving negative feedback.
- First, try not to just point out problems. Instead, give thoughtful consideration to at least one, but ideally two or more possible solutions prior to speaking to someone about an issue. As my boss likes to say, be a problem solver, not just a problem pointer outer!
- Be mindful of complaining to coworkers who are not willing or able to be part of a solution. Complaining just to vent can create a negative, unhealthy environment. Make sure when you discuss negative situations with your peers, you speak in terms of ways to make it better, and then either act on those proposed improvements, or bring the suggestions to the attention of someone who can act on them.
- When you have negative feedback, make sure you have looked at the issue from multiple perspectives. Try to be as objective as possible about the issue from multiple points of view.
- Don't forget to give others positive feedback from time to time. Sometimes we do not think to give feedback unless it is negative. Encourage one another by sharing the good from time to time, not always the negative.

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DO' S & DON' TS: EFFICIENCY



DON'TS (from Field Manual):

- Multiply paperwork in plausible ways. Start duplicate files.
- Multiply the procedures and clearances involved in issuing instructions, pay checks, and so on. See that three people have to approve everything where one would do.

DO'S (from Jack Cooper):

- To the best of your ability, streamline processes so that they are helpful to your work, not an obstacle to it.
- Take time on a regular basis to evaluate your processes and procedures. Ensure they are effective, efficient, and optimized.
- Never get stuck doing things “the way they’ve always been done.” Just because a process is how you HAVE been doing something, doesn’t mean it is how you SHOULD be doing it.
- Encourage creativity and solution making from your entire team by giving them space to think critically and offer proposed changes freely.
- When iterating and reviewing processes as a group, always ensure the team has given careful thought in advance of the meeting. Don’t wait until group meeting starts to think through proposed process changes. The more prepared each member of the group is, the more productive the solution generation will be.