

Case Studies

Name:

Michele Matt

Title:

Build Better Working Relationships and Gain Job Satisfaction

The Client:

I did a number of management and staff development sessions with a local jeweler, who has three stores and a total of 100 employees. The stores commonly scheduled training between their two busiest seasons — the winter holidays and Valentine’s Day — to boost morale. The company’s motto is PRIDE, which stands for “People Resolving to Improve themselves by Developing Empowerment.” To demonstrate that motto, the company is committed to providing professional development opportunities to employees and managers through internal training. The company has served Central Iowa for over 100 years. Because of increased competition for both customers and employees, management realizes the importance of taking care of their PEOPLE.

The Business Need:

The company’s workforce is diverse in age — from the teenagers who work after school to the retirees who work part-time for spending money. The company wanted to build relationships among the staff, particularly because the stores have a sense of rivalry. They wanted to establish a sense of teamwork among all their employees.

The Solutions:

I suggested a relationship-building program using the DiSC® *Relationship Profile*. First, the employees needed to understand themselves, and then we could move on to understanding others. The DiSC *Relationship Profile* has unique features for managing conflict; for example, if you are a high D, it tells you what to expect in interactions with the other styles. I wanted the participants to learn the DiSC language for meetings and other less formal interactions to help them use acceptable terminology when they discuss differences in style and behavior.

We recommended the DiSC *Relationship Profile* to help each person not only understand his or her own behavior, but also to begin appreciating and understanding the different behaviors of others, both co-workers and customers. It was common to unfairly label an older or younger co-worker as ‘rigid’ or ‘lazy’ without completely understanding their natural style of behavior. In addition, the DiSC *Relationship Profile* has a section dedicated to adjusting your behavioral style when dealing with someone who is similar or different from you.

The Delivery:

First, I conducted a session with the managers. Usually we do the managers first so they have a chance to experience what their employees will go through and to discuss anything that will be relevant for follow-up. Training is like a relay race — I’ll hand over the baton with information and knowledge, but the managers need to keep the baton moving. We need their buy-in and support to have a successful experience with their employees. After the managers’ session, each employee went through a half-day session. They were split into two groups to provide store coverage during the training.

In each session, I began with the DiSC® *Alive!* video. The first segment of the video shows four people, and I ask participants how they personally reacted to each of the four characters — if they had positive or negative feelings or if they were neutral. Even though they have little information about those people, they still react to aspects of the characters’ personalities. The



Case Studies

participants become conscious that they present themselves in a certain way, and they begin to understand why people react to them the way they do.

Next, we completed the profile. We used several activities to help employees identify the characteristics of the four dimensions. Each employee wrote his or her name in the DiSC quadrant of a wall chart, which illustrated the composition of the entire team. For each quadrant, I explained the style's greatest strength, shortcoming, fear, motivational factor, and desired environment and explained what a person with that style needs from others. To help the group translate that general description to their specific situation, we discussed how a person in each style would handle some of their responsibilities, such as handling paperwork or communicating with customers. For instance, a high D will be fast-paced and focused on results, while a high I focuses on the relationship and may have a cluttered workspace. A high S will be accommodating but possessive of their workspace and a high C will be very organized and attend to every detail.

Then I showed the second segment of the DiSC *Alive!* video. The participants again identified the styles of the four people in the video. I followed up with a discussion of the best way to interact with the four styles.

In the session with store managers, we discussed the managers' role in following up with the training during their weekly team meetings. Each store manager was asked to profile their team's composition and, as a team, brainstorm specific strategies to enhance relationships and improve teamwork at their store. We wanted the employees to continue using the DiSC language when they return to work, focusing on improving their interactions with customers and each other.

The Results:

The staff has learned to understand and recognize people's behavior. They have become more accepting of each other's differences and learned how to communicate with customers and coworkers to be more effective and to resolve conflict.