



WE CUT THE COSTS OF CONFLICT

ProActive ReSolutions Inc. NEWSLETTER

In the Media

Workplaces are hotbeds of complex relationship issues. Whenever groups of people have to interact with each other, there is the potential for distressing emotions and harmful behavior. Alarming, such behavior may include stalking and criminal harassment. Women working in the media and service sectors, including retail, banking, hospital-ity, schools and universities are potential targets for obsessive individuals.

In the February 2005 issue of BC Business, ProActive ReSolutions' directors, Richard and Stephen Hart spoke with Vicki O'Brien about these behaviors, "Today the internet offers offenders a whole new avenue for harassment. It's really easy to connect with people any time, anywhere by phone, pager, cell/mobile phone or e-mail and anyone can get hold of professional surveillance equipment. It's a good idea to be prepared before disaster strikes."

About ProActive ReSolutions

ProActive ReSolutions Inc. specializes in helping organizations prevent and manage discord between people at work.

As experts in identifying and managing conflict, we conduct detailed assessments of how exposed your business is to conflict.

The conflict may involve the Board or governance level, management, employees and your customers. The direct costs of conflict amount to at least 5% of your organization's annual salaries and wages bill. We can help you identify where you are wasting your money and help you minimize the loss.

Intervention

- When serious conflict affects a system of relationships
- When organizational culture is impeding constructive change

Education programs and resource materials:

Emotions at Work – Helping people to understand and manage their own emotions and respond constructively to those of others

Dialogue for Solutions – Helping work groups to resolve poor communication and decision-making processes

Respectful Workplace – Helping participants to create and maintain a respectful workplace

Workplace Violence – Helping participants to identify and respond to incidents of workplace violence

Specialized services –

- Ensuring your organization's policies and procedures are compliant with statutory and regulatory requirements
- Helping your organization assess, evaluate and respond to violence risk
- Assisting counsel dealing with legal problems relating to conflict and violence

In this issue...

Welcome to the Autumn/Fall/Spring issue of our newsletter!

In addition to covering the two hemispheres, we are now covering two product companies in the one newsletter. ProActive ReSolutions Inc. helps you prevent and respond to conflict between people at work and BodyLogic Health Management provides on-site injury prevention services.

Latest research on the link between conflict in the workplace and physical injury at work has led us to bring to you, in the one newsletter, issues that address whole employee health. In this issue, we illustrate the relationship between conflict and injuries and draw on the December 2004 issue of BodyLogic.

As MD, Judy Brooks explains: "A toxic combination of workplace factors for employees is conflict and injury - jobs with a high emotional demand also have an increased physical injury risk. Physical injuries and emotional stress at work do not spontaneously resolve themselves – the problems tend to worsen without management intervention. Now you can call us for management solutions to preventing the poisonous workplace cocktail of emotional stress and physical injury – companion solutions for toxic combinations of workplace problems."

Our first newsletter for 2005 brings together features on conflict and injury prevention and management on three critical topics for the workplace;

- conflict and its effect on us if we continue to avoid it
- latest research on building an engaged workplace
- our behavior at work.

We are expanding. We are pleased to introduce ergonomist Peter Marshall and conflict management specialists Amira Mehri and Kelly Watt.

Judy Brooks, Managing Director

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Quarterly Quote

"Between stimulus and response, there is a space. In that space lays our freedom and power to choose our response. In our response lies our growth and freedom."

Victor Frankl

Simply the best – workplaces in Australia

Do not expect to find alumni of the Fair-Weather Graduate School of Management (FWGSM) in Australia's best workplaces. They are not welcome.

In the best Australian workplaces, "leaders of all kinds and at all levels were aware of the impact their behavior has on the way people feel about the workplace and their job. They also know their behavior is critical in setting an example...the expectations were that the leaders would choose their approach to suit the different needs of their staff, helping out when there was a crisis and allowing trial and learning when there was not."

Simply the best Workplaces in Australia identifies the differences between simply good workplaces and the excellent Australian workplaces.

The research located 15 factors, which are significant in discriminating excellent workplaces from the generally good ones. What are the 15 differentiators? Clearly leadership is one of them, but what else separates the excellent from the generally good?

First, let's have a look at the factors that do not make a difference.

This is the list of factors that were not common to either good or excellent workplaces, **the points of indifference:**

- Individual or collective contracts of employment
- Unionized or non-unionized workplaces
- Hours of and kind of work (casual or permanent) arrangements
- Technology
- Geography
- Workplace size, company of origin of parent company, public or private
- Workforce composition – age, ethnicity or gender

The 15 key points of difference are:

- the quality of working relationships
- workplace leadership
- having a say
- clear values
- being safe
- the built environment
- recruitment
- pay and conditions
- getting feedback
- autonomy and uniqueness
- sense of ownership and identity
- learning
- passion
- having fun
- community connections

How does your organization rate against the 15 factors?

Focus on Respectful Workplace

Have your attempts to introduce a Code of Conduct, policies about workplace behavior or improve work relationships been met with objections like?

"You're not going to tell me that I have to be nice to everyone!"

"I hate all this touchy-feely stuff."

"This is political correctness gone mad."

"Everyone else is fine with me and the way I behave – why should I have to change?"

Contrast these or similar comments about attempts to introduce some consideration of others at work with the experience of Bankstown City Council below:

"I enjoyed the training and believe it is worthwhile. The ProActive ReSolutions

trainer was informative, encouraged participation, and maintained a relaxed atmosphere. The session allowed attendees plenty of opportunity for discussion and thought about their behavior and how they feel they are perceived; it encouraged thinking about themselves and their actions quite deeply. I believe the topic made them think about how they are treated as well. ProActive ReSolutions delivers it in such a way as to promote participation without losing track of the subject – attendees felt comfortable speaking out and did so often; I was impressed with the way they participated." – **Vicki Braine, Human Resources Coordinator with Bankstown City Council**

This was Vicki's experience after sitting in on sessions of the ProActive ReSolutions' education workshop "Respectful Workplace."

The program is about how to build a work environment that allows its employees to feel good about being there. The two-hour workshop emphasizes that we derive our sense of self-respect, dignity, safety and security from our own experiences and our knowledge, awareness and our observations of the experiences of others. The focus of Respectful Workplace is on the effect, not the intention, of our behavior on others. It's about taking personal accountability for the consequences of our actions.

Do you believe that a productive workplace needs all staff to behave respectfully and fairly to one another?

Do you need some help to accomplish this goal?

Then find out more about Respectful Workplace and our other education programs and contact us at info@proactive-resolutions.com or visit our website www.proactive-resolutions.com.

We have continued to work with clients who have been with us for some years. We welcome you back and extend our appreciation and thanks to those with whom we have worked for the first time.

City of Prince George – BC, Canada
BD Bio Sciences – San Jose, California, USA
Bellevue Fire Department – Bellevue, Washington, USA
Dangerous and Severe Personality Disorders Unit – London, England
State of Iowa – Des Moines, Iowa, USA
University of Illinois – Urbana, Illinois, USA
United States Customs – International Falls, Minnesota, USA
ACT Corrective Services – Canberra, ACT, Australia
Australian Tax Office – Canberra, ACT, Australia
Capital Finance – Parramatta, NSW, Australia
Catholic Commission for Employment Relations – Sydney, NSW, Australia
Newcastle City Council – Newcastle, NSW, Australia
Qantas Flight Catering Limited – Mascot, NSW, Australia

Western QBE – Brisbane, QLD, Australia
BC Institute Against Family Violence – Vancouver, B C, Canada
Office of Dispute Management – Ottawa, Ontario, Canada
Canfor – Fort Nelson, B C, Canada
CTV – Vancouver, B C, Canada
Eurocan Pulp & Paper – Kitimat, B C, Canada
The Integrity Group – Vancouver, B C, Canada
City of Prince George – Prince George, B C, Canada
Social Development Canada – Victoria, B C, Canada
Vancouver Police Department – Vancouver, B C, Canada

BackLogic and ErgoLogic Facilitators:

Brenda Hofherr Carla Bentley
Chris Haack Stacy Stanton
Stephanie Vegh – **BD Bioscience**

Conflict – the gift that keeps on giving

The story

The partners of a medical practice were unsure how to deal with a situation that initially came to their attention in the form of infrequent but recurring incidents of theft. A general suspicion fell upon the receptionist as being the person who was stealing from the practice, employees and some patients, yet no one felt they had sufficient evidence to confront the suspect. Staff frustration with the situation reached the point that whenever anything went missing, staff complained about them having been “stolen,” even though items often simply turned out to have been misplaced.

The partners’ concerns over potential liability and loss of reputation for the practice grew. However, at the same time, a number of other issues were also calling for attention, including poor work attendance by staff, poor methods of accounting for money and a real lack of communication between people on important matters.

The partners simply did not know what to do about the reports of theft or any of the other issues. They ended up ignoring the situation, became more upset with each other, and started to make more and more authoritarian decisions that affected staff, like imposing last minute changes to work shifts. Staff, in turn, became more resentful at the lack of action on the part of the managers in addressing concerns.

As a culture of negative gossip developed at work, many staff members began to carry their work-related unhappiness into their personal lives.

Conflict!

What is conflict?

In its simplest terms, conflict is a state of negative feelings between people, which is often accompanied by specific, conflict-associated behaviors. You can see it in the story above; ill feeling (suspicion, mistrust) and bad behaviors (negative gossip, poor communication, and the inaction of the partners in the face of employee distress).

The problem apparently began with the partner’s failure to deal meaningfully with the theft. The situation escalated quickly to mistrust amongst staff, damage to the practice’s reputation, and significant mistrust.

The gift of conflict

Conflict is the gift that keeps on giving. Start out with some missing money and property...and the situation pays back many fold.

As people started feeling ill towards each other, they began to show suspicion and mistrust, all in the absence of straight conversations about what was going on.

Conflict simply keeps on giving you more conflict – until you decide to do something about it.

Next

We will finish the story next issue of our bulletin. If you have this, or a similar problem at your office or factory, and cannot wait until the next issue please contact us info@proactive-resolutions.com.

Is This You?

Are you having trouble preventing minor disagreements from escalating into greater conflict and violence?

- **Have you experienced trouble intervening or responding to incidents of serious conflict and violence? If not, the chances of further risk increase and your people may not be working cooperatively.**
- **Do you have poor performance and/or poor behavior from employees and managers who focus on their intention for good results rather than the outcome of their behavior?**
- **Do you have a problem repairing the harm done to workplace relations because of serious conflict? Are good work practices and appropriate behavior the norm in your business?**
- **If this is you then contact us because proven, cost-effective solutions are available.**

Proactive ReSolutions has an international track record in delivering specific, measurable results that will reduce the financial and human costs of conflict.

If you want to discuss how we can help your organization prevent and manage discord at work please contact us at info@proactive-resolutions.com or visit our website www.proactive-resolutions.com.



FACES OF PROACTIVE RESOLUTIONS INC.

Michele Thompson
– formerly Michele Tilander

Michele manages our U.S. office and is our financial administrator for both ProActive ReSolutions and BodyLogic Health Management.

Many of you may know her as Michele Tilander. She was recently married in Las Vegas, Nevada in February 2005. Now her name is Michele Thompson. Congratulations Michele!

Michele has a Bachelor of Science Degree in Accounting and Business from the University of Phoenix in the United States. She is currently working towards earning her MBA in Accounting. After that, she plans to sit for the Certified Public Accountant exam to earn a designation of a CPA.

Best Decision: To further my education.

What do you spend most of time doing? When I am not working on schoolwork, I enjoy snowmobiling, four-wheeling, fishing, camping and skiing.

What kind of leader of you? One that continues to enhance the necessary management skills needed through education and hands-on experience. I believe we are in this together, and together we are going to make this happen.

What phrases do you most often? “Whatever”

What drives you? To gain knowledge to become a better person both personally and professionally.

What inspires you? To work hard and play hard.

PROACTIVE RESOLUTIONS INC.

WE CUT THE COSTS OF CONFLICT

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A HEALTH AND WELLNESS NEWSLETTER

Macro-ergonomics: broadening the ergonomic definition

A new movement is afoot in the field of ergonomics. This movement, known as "macro-ergonomics" is promising significant enhancements to the health, safety, and well-being of workers – as well as to their performance.

Ergonomics is the study of people's efficiency in their work environment.

Traditionally, ergonomists have sought to ensure an appropriate match between job tasks, workers, and associated equipment and processes, so that people can perform their job tasks efficiently and with minimal risk of injury.

The focus of the ergonomist's work has therefore been on issues such as chair design, the availability of anti-fatigue mats, the height of desks, the processes used on assembly lines and the likelihood of musculoskeletal disorders developing from the performance of specific tasks in specific work environments.

Developments in ergonomics have led some ergonomists to adopt a wider approach to efficiency analysis, the macro-ergonomics approach. The wider lens of macro-ergonomics allows an ergonomist to take into account factors such as the level of worker job satisfaction, the success of an employer's efforts in promoting healthy lifestyles among workers, and the quality of workplace relationships.

This broader approach to ergonomics was reflected to some extent in the question posed by Richard Bunch, PhD., P.T. during the 2004 at the American Society of Safety Engineers Professional Development Conference in Las Vegas, as reported by, Occupational Hazards (6/15/2004).

"Traditional ergonomic risk factors such as excessive force, repetition, awkward posture and vibration should be eliminated wherever possible, but can you really engineer out all these things? I do not think you can. So we also have to acknowledge behavior as a key risk factor."

Bunch urged intervening to 'reduce the occurrences of MSDs associated with poor work design and hazardous environmental conditions, and also those related to risky work and lifestyle behaviors.'

Bunch said a majority of cancers and cardiovascular diseases are related to poor diet, lack of exercise and stress. These factors also put employees at increased

risk of suffering ergonomic-related injuries. He noted that there was only a three percent difference between the incidence of back and musculoskeletal problems in office and field workers. The difference is that office workers suffered from inactivity, whereas construction workers suffer from overexertion.

The ergonomic process does not yield maximum results or a high return-on-investment overnight. There are no "quick fixes" to complex problems. For an ergonomic analysis to be effective, it must consider all aspects of the scenario in question, not only the process and the worker.

An effective ergonomics plan will

- Identify the existing risks of injury associated with specific job tasks
- Identify all significant causal factors through, among other things, an ergonomic assessment by a qualified professional
- Specify a strategy for eliminating or managing identified risks of injury, including employee education and re-education
- Set clear targets for reductions in injury rates
- Incorporate processes for tracking changes in risk-related behaviors and injury rates
- Incorporate processes for regular re-evaluation and modification of the plan

BodyLogic works with clients in all aspects of developing and implementing a comprehensive ergonomics plan.

BodyLogic is also an international leader in employee education relating to injury prevention. Our BackLogic and ErgoLogic programs provide information and promote behavior changes that result in improved biomechanics, self-care, self-responsibility and overall health.

By helping employees to actively recognize "risky" situations and implement changes both at work and at home, BodyLogic contributes to the development of better "industrial athletes."

In addition, when injury-related behaviors are related to dysfunctional work relationships, ProActive ReSolutions is available to deliver services such as Emotions at Work, an educational

program that helps participants understand how feelings influence behavior in the workplace.

Ergonomics may never be the same again.

