

Today's Key Points



Key Point 1

Workplace success requires not only strong vocational skills, but mastery of a range of interpersonal skills (SOFT SKILLS) as well.



Key Point 2

Most employers have unspoken expectations which they seldom explain directly to new employees. These often conflict with the beliefs inexperienced workers use in their personal social lives.



Key Point 3

New workers have a tendency to use personal beliefs when judging workplace behavior. We must help them develop first AWARENESS, then new SKILLS.

More about "Workin' It Out"

The "Workin' It Out" training program helps workers develop the self-awareness and skills to successfully meet the interpersonal demands of the workplace. The program is available to instructors who complete a 2.5 day trainer certification.

For more information about training in this program:

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Unspoken Rules of Work



What
Employers
REALLY
Want!

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Country Talkin' Vocabulary Test

1. A "calvinator" is:
(a) a kind of astronaut
(b) a refrigerator
(c) a person who works with calculators
2. A "slop jar" is:
(a) a jar that holds leftover food for pigs
(b) a pot people use as a toilet
(c) a jar so big you can mix food in it
3. A "pole cat" is a:
(a) skunk
(b) wildcat
(c) farm cat
4. "Step-ins" are:
(a) ladies panties
(b) puddles you accidentally step in
(c) door mats
5. "Haints" are:
(a) paintings
(b) ghosts
(c) clothes hangers
6. "Blue-in" is:
(a) blue-colored bleach added to laundry
(b) water added to dilute homemade whiskey
(c) water so cold it turns you blue



WHAT'S THE POINT?

The culture of the workplace can often seem like a foreign land to those with little experience with it ways, or exposure to its unspoken rules. Lacking an intuitive understanding of employer expectations, many new workers react personally rather than professionally to issues with coworkers and supervisors.

Successful Interventions

When new workers are behaving unprofessionally at work because of strong underlying personal beliefs, consequences alone (i.e., getting in trouble) are often not enough. A combination cognitive coaching and direct instruction in social cognitive skills is often a more effective strategy.

"Seek first to understand, then to be understood."

Stephen Covey
Seven Habits of Highly Effective People

Strategy 1. COACHING

Indirectly teach workplace attitudes and skills by coaching customers through problems.

When processing workplace problems, help customers to first identify their own beliefs. Then help them recognize the opposing perspective their employers may hold.

Strategy 2. TEACHING

Directly teach workplace attitudes and skills by providing classroom-based instruction.

Many customers benefit from direct instruction in the skills and perspectives needed to code-switch from the culture of their home lives to the culture of the workplace.

Teach skills such as :

Personal Beliefs Survey

Answer this survey about your beliefs in your *PERSONAL* life. Rate your belief in each item on the following scale:

- 1: Not at all 3: Somewhat 4: A lot
2: A little 5: Very Strongly

- [1] [2] [3] [4] [5] 1. Life should be fun.
- [1] [2] [3] [4] [5] 2. Family should come first.
- [1] [2] [3] [4] [5] 3. You should give yourself a break when you work hard.
- [1] [2] [3] [4] [5] 4. Friends should help each other out with problems.
- [1] [2] [3] [4] [5] 5. If you make a mistake, you should keep it to yourself.
- [1] [2] [3] [4] [5] 6. Personal appearance should be a personal decision.
- [1] [2] [3] [4] [5] 7. You should decide for yourself what you will and won't do.
- [1] [2] [3] [4] [5] 8. You should be open and honest about your feelings.



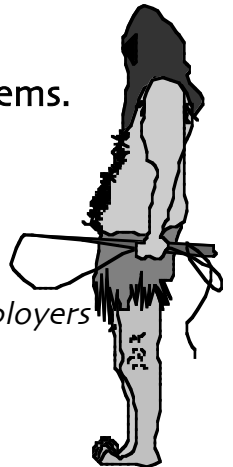
Unspoken Rules of the Workplace

Every workplace has its *WRITTEN* policies and procedures. But there are also a number of *UNSPOKEN RULES* which employers believe they shouldn't have to explain.

Some of the common ones are:

- A. Deal with your personal feelings on your own time.
- B. Work comes first. Don't let home and family issues get in the way.
- C. Do what you are asked or told to do, even when you don't want to.
- D. Always stay busy, or at least *LOOK* busy.
- E. Work is work. Don't expect it to always be fun.
- F. If you mess up or don't know something, ask for help.
- G. Do your best to fit in. Don't act or dress too different.
- H. Stay out of other people's problems.

Based on a survey of Denver, CO employers



Home vs Work Conflicts

WORKPLACE CONFLICT #1



Brittany's friends come in while she's working. One of them has had a nasty fight with her boyfriend, and needs Brittany's advice right away. Her supervisor confronts her on it, but Brittany honestly doesn't understand.

Brittany: "What's the big deal? She needed my help! If Mrs. Jackson HAD any friends herself, maybe she'd understand."

Which Personal Belief justifies this? _____

Mrs. Jackson: "I'm glad that she's such a good friend, but now is NOT the time or the place. I don't pay her to counsel her pals on their relationship problems. I pay her to work."

Which Work Rule justifies this? _____

WORKPLACE CONFLICT #2

After her husband leaves her with a stack of bills, Alice takes a second job as a waitress at an all-night diner. Her 22-year-old supervisor asks her to clean up a mess at table 6 while she rings up some customers.



Alice: "That was Jennie's table, not mine. Let her do it when she gets back from break. And I'm sorry, but at my age, I don't have to do what a 22-year-old GIRL tells me to do!"

Which Personal Belief justifies this? _____

Supervisor: "She said what?? I'm sorry, but if something needs to get done, I'm going to ask her to do it. If she thinks I don't have the authority to tell her what to do just because she's twice my age..."

Which Work Rule justifies this? _____

What are "Soft Skills?"

Soft Skills: "Personal and interpersonal skills necessary to successfully adjust to the social environment of the workplace."



Soft skills needed to succeed in today's world of work.

Our List

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

Employers' List

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

Q: Why are so many new workers lacking important soft skills?

A: 1. S _____ D _____
 2. M _____ D _____
 3. C _____ I _____