

# Marilyn Manning and The Consulting Team's Leadership Tips



## NOTE FROM THE CONSULTING TEAM

It's the end of the year, the season of peace. At this time The Consulting Team and many of our clients review their accomplishments and plan for a positive tomorrow. The Team also extends our thanks to all of you for trusting us with your confidence and business.

We've helped many of you create your organization's vision, and we would like to remind you of ours: "Our work contributes toward individual and organizational effectiveness and world peace." We may not reach world peace next year, since we believe that such a change takes place one person at a time. Every conflict we can help to avoid or resolve is a step toward our vision.

In this issue of Leadership Tips we share strategies and tools we use to minimize organizational conflict. These tips also clarify direction, build better teams, develop leadership, and improve results. We wish you the peace, joy, and light of this holiday season.

Our warm regards,  
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## Peace in the Workplace Strategies for Minimizing Conflict

*"To your enemy give forgiveness. To an opponent, tolerance. To a friend, your heart. To a customer, service. To all, charity."*  
**Oren Arnold**

Experience tells us conflict may often be a product of human interaction. However, there are many ways leaders can minimize conflict. The Consulting Team members work with many organizations to create amicable and productive work conditions. Consider some of these techniques we use to develop positive business environments.



**Strategic Thinking** establishes clear directions and roles in advance for organizations, projects, and teams. In collaboration with their workgroups, leaders can develop business priorities and shared values. They can also create clear boundaries and responsibilities. Plans can thus avoid possible misunderstandings. Strategic goals and measurements help employees find ways to move in the right direction.

***Our team-building workshop was a great success thanks to the work of The Consulting Team. We accomplished all our goals, built upon our teamwork and unity as a group and completed the strategic plan framework.***

*~ James Leal, Chief of Police, Newark Police Department*

**Values** are principles on which people act and from which decisions are made. Workgroups that discuss what they value about their work and use consensus to choose which values will guide them, become more

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unified. The process of determining their values gives them a better understanding of their peers and the importance of their work. Teams that adhere to mutual values develop positive attitudes and actions to guide their work.

**Agreements** document a code of conduct that keeps people true to their values. They are pragmatic applications derived from shared values. It is easier for managers to coach personnel in effective practices when they operate from agreement-based expectations. Workgroups will understand best what is expected of them if they also participate in creating agreements. The activity itself can provide them a powerful model for collaboration and conflict reduction.

**Building effective teams** includes teaching members how to deal with diverse ideas and still reach mutual goals. It includes learning “hard” skills, which help teams work effectively to meet their objectives. Teams also need to practice “soft” skills, such as how to listen to other perspectives. Most conflicts are the result of poor communications. Team members can avoid many conflicts by developing the ability to listen without judgment or resistance. This will allow teams to make good decisions faster, which spurs improvement and innovation. (See *Tools of the Trade: Empathic Listening* for this practice.)

*“The Consulting Team gave us valuable insight and reminded us communication is critical to successful business relationships and employee morale. They provided a forum for meaningful discussions and opportunities for our management team to openly share thoughts and honest, interactive communication.”*

*~Richard Lange, Acting IT Director,  
Monterey County*

**Team leader development** is also important. Team leaders need to understand and manage team dynamics to be successful. Useful methods, like analysis tools and decision frameworks, will help leaders work with their teams. These methods can improve customer and stakeholder relations, develop consistent processes, manage change, and improve communications.

Leaders are more successful when they communicate consistent, focused messages, especially

## Tools of the Trade: Empathic Listening

- Look others in the eye
- Don't interrupt
- Put yourself in others' shoes
- Monitor your “hot buttons”
- Focus your listening – encourage others by saying:
  - ▶ *Do you have an example?*
  - ▶ *Can you explain more?*
  - ▶ *What else would you add?*
  - ▶ Silence

when implementing major change. It is important for them to learn different ways to broadcast essential information, including social media. Listening skills will serve leaders here, to understand the causes of team members' resistance to change. This resistance is a major cause of conflict in organizations.

All of these strategies can minimize conflict, saving time and energy and improving results. Sometimes, however, individuals or groups may come to loggerheads. They may also let underlying disagreements and anger smolder under thin layers of professional courtesy. When the organization reaches these impasses, the situation may call for a respected neutral, outside facilitator. She or he can gain the trust and confidence of the involved parties and resolve the conflicts. The Consulting Team has mediated such situations and helped untangle issues and restore the peace necessary for workgroups to succeed.

*“Your team's ability to help people recognize a problem, even if they are a part of it, and then come to a mutually agreed upon resolution is a reflection of your of professionalism, skill, and empathy.”*

*~ William Normark, Regional Geologist,  
U.S. Department of the Interior*

# The Consulting Team's Planning Resources

**The Consulting Team provides mediation services to resolve difficult conflicts. We also offer these workshops to minimize workplace conflict:**

**Strategic Planning:** Strategic thinking and planning can align your organization or team for purposeful and effective change. Clear direction, roles, responsibilities, and values resolve conflicting priorities and ineffectual initiatives. Developed with your organization's input and collaboration, strategic planning creates greater teamwork, focus, and productivity. The process includes assessment, facilitation, and documentation. It is customized to meet your organization's needs.

**Building Better Teams:** Do you have a diverse group that needs to work together to achieve common goals? Do you have challenges building trust and keeping members motivated? The training is designed to help you build better teams using practical tools, communication tips, and a restructuring model. It encourages diverse individuals to work cohesively and productively.

**Leading Positive Change:** How do you deal with the pressure of constant change? Do you create change, or do you react to problems? Designed to help you achieve realistic objectives, this course creates strategies to overcome resistance and implement change successfully. Learn how to gain buy-in and motivate others to change, identify stressors, modify negative patterns, and manage conflicts and challenging situations.

**Communicating Strategic Change:** Are your organization leaders communicating and implementing your strategic plan? A strategic plan is only successful if it is used. A primary component of success is continuous communication of objectives, status, and results. During the training session participants draft a communications plan, learn about change dynamics, and craft messages that turn strategic plans into reality.

**Conflict Mediation:** Unresolved conflicts and grievances, blame, and miscommunications waste enormous amounts of time and energy. With our conflict mediation services, you can begin the process of resolving differences that may be keeping you and your organization from thriving. We use easy-to-follow principles that help resolve conflicts and can manage sources of future contention.

## About Leadership Tips:

**Leadership Tips** is a periodic newsletter to help deal with the difficult issues in today's busy and hectic work environment. To see past **Leadership Tips** go to [www.theconsultingteam.com](http://www.theconsultingteam.com) and select Newsletters

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## *The Consulting Team Recommends...*

We have enjoyed applying ideas and findings from the recent book, *Switch: How to Change Things When Change is Hard*, by **Chip Heath and Dan Heath**. We recommend it to our clients for implementing changes in your organizations. The authors provide common sense ways for leaders to help their teams stay the course in making changes, using astonishing research studies and down-to-earth descriptions of human behavior.

The authors borrowed their central metaphor for depicting the change process from psychologist Jonathan Haidt. He likens the emotional, pleasure-seeking, and pain-avoiding part of the human mind to a huge Elephant. He depicts the rational human guidance system as a relatively small Rider on the back of this behemoth. Using the image of how the Rider must manage the Elephant to reach planned destinations provides an easy, understandable way to demonstrate effective change techniques. The Heaths point out, “Anytime the Elephant [Emotion] and Rider [Rational Thinking] disagree about which direction to go, the Rider is going to lose. He’s completely overmatched.” We also need the Elephant’s passion and energy to counter the Rider’s habit of overanalyzing and hesitating to make decisions.

The Rider must supervise changing old, automatic behaviors to the required new ones. The bigger the change, the more self-control energy will be burned. So change is hard work, and what may look like laziness or resistance to change can be pure exhaustion. *Switch* helps readers harness the limited resource of self-control, by learning how to direct the Rider, motivate the Elephant, shape the Path, and make the Switch in this entertaining and informative book.



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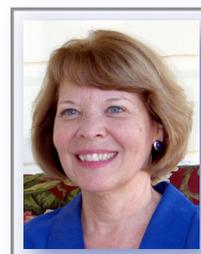
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