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# COMMENTARY: Anger destroys people, so be sure to keep your cool

## Pointed questions, tension are OK, but personal attacks are not

The best in any position in any company at any level – and I'm talking about the best – are tenaciously focused on hitting goals. This mindset by its very nature can create human combustion that exudes a whole lot of intensity, disagreement, conflict and oftentimes anger.

Intensity is good. Disagreement is good. Conflict is good. While more difficult for some than others, there is no room for anger. It can absolutely shred a team – demoralize, de-motivate, distract and, if practiced on a reoccurring basis, create disdain. Let me demonstrate.

**Example #1** – Company monthly financial statements reveal a bad month. Sales were down and while the margins were good, overall profit took a major hit. The CEO is concerned and calls an early special meeting with his team to review and if necessary reset strategy.

He is very intense, asking very pointed questions and challenging his team to reach deeper than they ever have. He begins the meeting with some very pointed observations, which is not exactly comfortable for the team. Still, the team is communicative and open.

By the end, the team makes some tactical adjustments and all agree to go attack. It was a tough meeting and people were on and off the hot seat. However, the meeting purpose was clear and decisions were made.

**Example #2** – The managing partner in an accounting firm holds a monthly meeting with one topic on the agenda: Review the pipeline of new client opportunities. The firm is not bringing new clients in at a pace that ties to the annual plan.

One of the partners is reviewing his strategy to bring on a large client when another cites his disagreement on the strategy to do so. Their disagreement, encouraged by the CEO, causes the team to get involved in a re-setting strategy on how to bring this client aboard.

Point-counterpoint ensues. Others in the room engage in the discussion. There is more disagreement and more discussion. While everyone on the team doesn't agree, they do agree on the next moves. The partner leaves the meeting with improved clarity on the next steps toward winning the business. Differing opinions and the CEO's style cause the team to engage. Disagreement is good when it leads to improved thinking.

**Example #3** – A top-producing sales rep has an idea that she feels will increase her business dramatically

if implemented.

It requires marketing to spend some money, deviate from their plans, shift some priorities and manage a project that sales feels will really boost sales. The sales and marketing teams get together. In this culture, it can be like brother and sister vying for use of the family car.

The conflict ensues. Marketing scrutinizes sales' claims of increased sales. Sales questions marketing's claim of not having the resources. It gets emotional, as vigorous arguments and discussions are had.

As a result, marketing recommends a strategic adjustment to sales thinking while sales agrees to a scaled-down version of their thinking. A compromise occurs, and the conflict proves to be healthy. It's creative tension at its finest, and in this case conflict is good.

And now a trip to the dark side as we relive all of those examples and insert anger into the equation.

**Example #1** – The CEO lambastes his team for a bad month, personally attacking the VP of sales. The rest of the team comes to sales VP's aid. A deepening of the us vs. them culture occurs. No progress was made. Just more fear in a bad environment. The team has something that unifies them – their disdain for the CEO's behavior.

**Example #2** – The managing partner hands out a list of the clients he has personally brought aboard.

As he reviews it, his emotions get the best of him. His voice rises as he states the obvious to his team for not bringing on new clients at the pace that he is. Nobody in the room goes untouched. He undresses everyone.

Red faced with white caked saliva at the edge of his mouth, the entire meeting lasts ten minutes.

The team looks at each other as he leaves and breaks out in quiet laughter because he always does this. Nothing changes.

**Example #3** – The sales rep opens by questioning marketing's commitment to revenue. Her emotions get the best of her as she questions marketing's commitment to the revenue cause. She loudly demands that marketing support her thinking and interrupts any chance of two-way healthy dialogue. Meeting gone bad and no progress is made.

Give me individuals and organizations that are intense, can disagree, have conflict and work toward resolve, and I'll show you fighting winners.

Insert anger and you run the risk of alienating any real communication, creating unhealthy fear in the work environment and distractions that cloud thinking, deviate from the true goals, burn through good individuals and tear teams wide open.

Stay cool in your quest for more.

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Chuck Mache, president of Chuck Mache Communications, is a speaker, executive coach and consultant. His work is dedicated to helping companies and individuals break through to their next level and he is the bestselling author of the "The Four Kinds of Sales People: How and Why They Excel and How You Can Too." Learn more and sign up for Chuck's complimentary monthly newsletter at [www.chuckmache](http://www.chuckmache.com)

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