



murray hill institute

women transforming culture

Spring 2010 Newsletter
Vol 7, No. 2

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Friends,

In conversations about Murray Hill Institute, people frequently ask, “When and how did Murray Hill Institute begin?” It is hard to believe that it was 10 years ago when the idea of launching an organization devoted to the study of the distinct contribution that women make to society, especially through professional work, was born. And the rest has been a very exciting history!

In October of 2000 we held our first conference, *Women Transforming Culture*, which confirmed the viability of our mission and encouraged us to offer additional programs aimed at helping women make positive changes in the workplace. Through various conferences and lectures, we have explored a number of relevant topics important to women—*Integrity and Ethics in the Workplace, A Person-Centered Approach to Work-Life Balance, Woman, Beauty & Image, Being a Woman in the Workplace, Work Habits and Time Management, Women and Career Success*. Click [here](#) to see a chronological list of our past events.

These past 10 years have been a continuous confirmation of the creativity, generosity, and determination of women when they believe in something worthwhile and want to share it with others. Murray Hill Institute is about women who know how to lead first with example and then by inspiring others.



And it is this kind of leadership that will be the focus of our upcoming conference on April 24: **Women Leading in the 21st Century**.

Women have qualities that equip them to lead in ways different from men. While both approaches are valuable and necessary, our conference will highlight the leadership qualities that women embody. The conference celebrates accomplished women leaders in both corporate and non-profit environments. You will learn about different leadership styles from women who have been successful by living personal and professional integrity in all they do. Please consider attending this conference and encourage others to attend as well. You will be inspired with new ideas and approaches, and return to your workplace informed and energized. To register, click [here](#).

We look forward to seeing you on April 24.

Kathleen McGarry
President, Murray Hill Institute

FEATURE ARTICLE

How to Manage Your Manager

By Karen Wagner

Karen Wagner is a Vice President at Société Générale. This article is adapted from a talk she gave at an Evening of Conversation for Young Professionals in September 2009 at Murray Hill Institute.

Discussions on interacting with higher management often focus on handling difficult situations and resolving conflicts. But if we are properly managing our managers, conflicts should be minimal. By being pro-active, it is possible to create a positive work environment that will lead to win-win situations where everyone wins, especially **YOU**. If you are effectively managing your manager, you will be satisfied with the recognition that your manager is giving you, which will have ripple effect. As a satisfied worker, you will be more loyal to your work, your manager will be satisfied because he or she is supporting a hard worker, and an environment will be fostered that promotes productivity for the entire team.

We often hear that in order to advance in our careers, we need to “keep our heads down,” work hard, be a team player, demonstrate good merits, and with a bit of luck we will be promoted. All of this is valid. However, pro-actively getting visibility, building trust, and earning the support of your manager are equally important. It has never been as critical as now to be pro-active! Why? With everyone so busy at the office today and with managers trying to meet increasing demands, successfully execute deals and “put out fires,” many good people simply go unnoticed. It’s nothing personal; everyone is just stretched to the limit. Your ability to manage your manager ensures that he or she knows who you are and that you are a key contributor to the team. You simply cannot be a nice person and hope that all good things will come your way naturally. **They won’t**. I have seen it many times—why did someone get a promotion and the one who should have gotten it, has to wait

another year? Perhaps this has to do with their ability to properly manage the manager’s perception of them.

I will share with you five ways for you to better manage your manager. Though I cannot guarantee the promotion or pay raise, it will definitely improve your visibility, and managers are more eager to “stick their necks out” for those who they work well with and who they can trust.

1. **Make sure that you are communicating effectively with your manager.**

Some managers are readers; they prefer to receive information in written form. Others are listeners; they prefer to get their information verbally. Do you know which of the two your manager is? If you are a writer and your manager is a listener, then your communication will not be effective. Effective communication is the basis for being able to succeed in almost every situation. By communicating with your manager the way she or he prefers, your ideas will be better heard and understood and you are increasing the chance of getting what you want.

Communication can also include:

- **Body language:** What are your posture and facial expression communicating when you are interacting with your boss?
- **How do you dress?** Dressing in a professional manner that is consistent with the way managers in your work group dress can promote effective communication.
- **Be aware of over-use of email and instant messaging.** Sometimes it is better to pick up the phone or have a face-to-face discussion, especially if your manager prefers to communicate by telephone.
- **If you are new to a position or if it is not clear how the boss best communicates,** just ask how she or he prefers to receive information. Your boss will appreciate your pro-activity and your interest in aligning your working style with his or her preferences.

2. Understand your manager's work style.

Some people are more analytical and prefer numbers, charts, and graphs, not words. Others prefer verbal explanations and tune out during quantitative discussions. Learn which category your manager falls into. Why? If your manager is a numbers person and you provide a 10-page briefing memo with no charts/graphs, you run the risk of being perceived as “not giving me what I asked for.” If your manager likes to micro-manage all situations, then make sure you go out of your way to keep him or her well informed. By the same token, don't bombard your manager with unnecessary information—especially those who expect their team to work independently.

Determining your manager's preferred way of communication and work style is not difficult.

- Review expectations and preferences. What kinds of emails does he or she want to be copied on? Does she or he prefer work to be delivered via email or in hard copy form? If in doubt, simply ask.
- Study memos and reports your boss had generated to learn about his or her writing style. Do they start with an introduction or summary or launch directly into the data?

3. Establish Goals with Your Manager.

Look on the performance review as a chance to sit down with your manager and discuss your strengths, weaknesses and contributions to the team. It is an opportunity to ensure that your manager is aware of your achievements and to show that your career is serious to you. It is also a chance to hear, firsthand, what your boss thinks of you. You cannot manage your boss' expectations if you do not know what these expectations are.

If your manager appears to know you and everything is going great, then this means that you are communicating well. This is a good moment to focus the conversation on your career advancement: what do you need to be doing to get more visibility at senior management levels?

What are the next steps in your career? Think ahead about what your answer will be if you are asked about your own goals, or how you will bring it up if you feel the time is right.

On the other hand, you may realize during the review that your manager has a less than favorable opinion of your performance. Do not become frustrated or discouraged by this, but make sure you understand what is being said, and be sure you come away with a clear idea of what you need to work on to correct the problem. Your initial reaction may be to disagree, but keep this to yourself until you have had time to reflect on it. As you implement the objectives you established with your manager, make sure she or he is aware of your efforts. Managers appreciate it when their advice is taken seriously and an employee is making a conscious effort to change.

By communicating to your manager what's important to you, you eliminate any possibility for misunderstandings: you will be less likely to find yourself wondering why you weren't assigned the big account or given the promotion. You will never give your manager the opportunity to say “I didn't know it was important to you.”

4. Align your priorities with those of your manager.

Do you know what your boss's priorities are? Are they the same as yours? If not, your success may be overlooked because his or her or definition of success is tied to his or her agenda: For example, if your boss' priority is to increase the team's income by 15% but your priority is getting new clients (Note: it takes time to get new income with prospects). Your misaligned priorities may cause you to fall short when you do not reach the income growth target. If you truly feel that your priority is important to the team, you need to get your manager onboard with this idea and convince him or her that this is also a priority of his or hers. If your goals are aligned, then your success will be aligned as well. At evaluation time, it will be easy to conclude that you had a successful year.

5. Build loyalty and trust.

By taking care to align your goals and priorities with those of your boss, you will help him do a better job and will create opportunities to stand out and demonstrate loyalty and trustworthiness. Most people are dependable, hardworking and have a desire to do a good job, but because of work demands, people tend just to do what they are required to do. Take this one notch higher by developing a stronger relationship—be pro-active and be different from the rest!

For some of you, this may be perceived as being a “teachers pet.” I do not see it as such. Though never stipulated in your job description, one of your responsibilities is to make your manager look good always and this includes managing the opinions/views that others have of her. Managers really appreciate when they sense that their people are out to protect and help them.

To add to this point, please never:

1. Embarrass, surprise or confront your manager in public.
2. Go above your manager’s head or behind his or her back.
3. Talk critically or gossip about your boss

Once your manager loses trust in you, it will be very difficult to gain it back.

The five suggestions above will help you to work with any manager, experienced or new, brilliant or average, easy to get along with or difficult. With luck, some of your managers will also become valued mentors and friends with whom you can share career experiences and consult about career decisions long after your relationship as boss and employee has ended.

WOMEN TRANSFORMING CULTURE

How They Do It:

Leading a Research Team

By Natalia Nieto

When I began my role as the principal investigator of a biomedical research laboratory, I was challenged to manage my team of research fellows in a way that would develop their individual talents while bringing our research goals forward. Thinking like a leader in providing “vision for the mission” instead of thinking like a manager has been instrumental in developing a working strategy that could benefit each individual as well as the team as a whole. In doing so, I have also learned to lead by thinking strategically about how they can build their future careers by working closely with them on a daily basis. In order to bring out the best in each fellow, I try to motivate them to be creative, to take risks while being innovative, and to be authentic leaders of their own research projects. I have encouraged them to develop their own style, to generate passion for science, and to show their identity and their character when taking over scientific projects.

The qualities that I promote in my lab are:

- Reasoning: using data and logic to encourage thinking
- Reciprocity: exchanging tangible resources, data, and ideas
- Retribution: acknowledging efforts and results
- Coalition: getting support from others
- Promotion of loyalty, reciprocity, and trust
- Rewarding: Increasing people’s visibility

- Developing a network of connections to branch out

As the principal investigator of the group I endorse their ideas, and serve as a facilitator to put them into practice. I encourage their intellectual work, challenging them by means of formulating questions to trigger curiosity and thus study so that they can find answers to move forward in our research at a good pace. Although at times it is not easy to create a framework for thinking and performing effectively, through teamwork and constant study and discussion, we have succeeded in aligning people with their projects. Above all, we try to promote a culture where goals are important, but grand vision and clear strategic lines are critical. At the same time, we never lose sight of the idea that individuals are more important than strategic plans.

Natalia Nieto is an Associate Professor at Mount Sinai School of Medicine.

Do you have an experience you would like to share about changing the culture in your workplace? Email us at info@murrayhillinstitute.org

CULTURAL CORNER

Cinema Forum: Critique & Discussion By Martha Swanzey

In Tennessee Williams' play, *The Glass Menagerie*, Amanda Wingfield says to her son, Tom, "You go entirely too much to the movies...why do you go to the movies so much?" He responds, "I like adventure, Mother, something I don't get much of at the Continental Shoe Warehouse." Well, our friends who come to our monthly Cinema Forum: Critique & Discussion (fancy name!) don't necessarily come for adventure, though we might occasionally supply it – like when we run out of Camembert.

They come, we hope, because they are good friends who enjoy and appreciate each others' company, have an informed knowledge of film and are eager and able

to comment intelligently on the content and artistry of the films we show. Our friends who come to our home on these occasions come from a variety of professional backgrounds—medicine, law, education, science, engineering, business, and from a number of countries –Ireland, Austria, Poland, for example. This variety of experience and expertise assures a lively and insightful exchange of viewpoints and always a number of unique and diverse reactions to what we view.

The films are selected by us with a good deal of input from our "regulars." People will suggest classics we all know and love or newer films that will spark discussion and disagreement—the latter always a lot of fun. Well-known movies shown include Alfred Hitchcock's *Shadow of a Doubt* and *Strangers on a Train*, film noir classics like *Double Indemnity* and *Laura*, screwball comedies like *Bringing Up Baby*, British classics like *Brief Encounter* and *Brighton Rock*, and foreign language films like *East/West* and *Umbrellas of Cherbourg*.

Sometimes we have a little fun with the film and our audience. For example, when showing the wonderful Alastair Sim crime thriller, *Green for Danger*, we paused the film and had our friends guess, on the basis of clues strewn throughout, who the killer might be, inviting all to give reasons for their conclusions. When we resumed the film people were able to see whether they were right or wrong. Also, we invite any of our friends to introduce a film they have recommended, to point out any significant features we should note to enhance our appreciation. On other occasions, we have given little quizzes following the films to see if folks noticed key elements. For example, in *Shadow of a Doubt*, Hitchcock, in order to identify his villain (Joseph Cotton) with his heroine (Teresa Wright), presents a number of visual and oral clues involving "two-ness"—two suspects, two cities, double brandies, two months, two people named Charlie, etc. "Hey, audience, did you notice?"

We create a friendly atmosphere and loosen tongues with wine and cheese. We try to recognize the seasons, both by choice of film and décor. So, for March we would have green decorations and perhaps *The Quiet Man* or this year's selection, *My Left Foot*; romance and red in February, *The Ghost and Mrs. Muir*; terror and orange and black in October, *Invasion of The Body Snatchers*; and something inspirational at the appropriate point in the liturgical season. We send out an attractive brochure every three months with the schedule and titles of each one of the three films for those three listed months. Films are garnered chiefly from the Netflix collections.

Our house is not large and we do not employ a big screen (although my husband, Tom, has suggested we do a drive-in movie thing with people parking in our back yard. I hope he's kidding!), yet our friends keep coming and we always have new people. We have found this to be an excellent way to see people we love on a regular basis; and we feel that they appreciate the opportunity to engage in lively and intelligent discussion. We have learned that film criticism hardly qualifies as an exact science. The goal is to include a little bit of everything, but to prevent the resulting chosen films from being just a cinematic smorgasbord—a case of mere variety taking precedence over true value.

Martha Swanzey is on the Board of Directors for Murray Hill Institute. She and her husband, Tom, have held the Cinema Forum: Critique & Discussion in their home on a monthly basis for ten years.

NEWS, RECENT AND UPCOMING EVENTS

COMING IN APRIL: Murray Hill Institute's 10th Anniversary Conference "Women Leading in the 21st Century"

What are my leadership goals? Do I have what it takes? How do I get started? Take a few hours to explore these questions during our 10th Anniversary



Margot Morrell

Conference **Women Leading in the 21st Century**. In the keynote address, Margot Morrell, co-author of the international best-seller *Shackleton's Way: Leadership Lessons from the Great Antarctic*

Explorer, will share what she learned during her extensive research into the life and character of this great leader. Panels of leaders in corporations and non-profit organizations will offer inspiring stories and thought-provoking insights. This day-long conference will mark the 10th anniversary of Murray Hill Institute's inaugural conference, **Women Transforming Culture**, and will celebrate our mission of helping women to be a positive influence in their professional lives and in society.

Save the date: The conference will be held on Saturday, April 24, 2010, 9:15 am to 4:00 pm, at the Princeton Club of New York. Click [here](#) for more information, and to register.

Evenings of Conversation for Young Professional Women

An Evening of Conversation for young professionals was held at Murray Hill Institute on Wednesday, November 18, 2009 at 7:30 p.m. The guest speaker was Lisa M. Gigliotti, Vice President & Chief Trademark Counsel for L'Oreal USA. Drawing from her 13 years of working at the management level with L'Oreal USA, Lisa shared her thoughts and offered practical advice on a variety of career-related questions. She spoke on building a career and keeping up with other aspects of one's life, how to strike the right balance, and what priorities should shape decisions.

The speaker on February 18th, 2010 was Deborah D'Alessandro, Founder of Esprit Seminars—Creative Career Workshops for Women. Deborah highlighted how it was possible to actualize passions and ideas into successful careers. She encouraged

those present to do what they were most passionate about and to confront obstacles with a positive outlook.

Evenings of Conversation for Women in Media

The spring event in the Women in Media series will be an Evening of Conversation with Adriana Hauser, to be held on Wednesday, April 21, at 7:30 pm. Hauser is a correspondent for CNN in Spanish in New York. She joined the award-winning team of CNN journalists after working as a freelance reporter and producer for the BBC of London, Radio France International, Bloomberg, DeutscheWelle, and Venevision. More recently, she worked as senior editor for the news website DailyMe.com. From 2003 to 2007 she was a correspondent, anchor and producer of the NY1 News, covering political campaigns, presidential elections, the capture of Saddam Hussein, the funeral of John Paul II, and the transition to Pope Benedict XVI.

Save the date! Hauser will speak at Murray Hill Institute on Wednesday, April 21, at 7:30 pm. A link for reservations will be posted on our home page shortly.