

Diversity Management News

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Five Tips for Respectful Interaction in the Workplace

by Melanie Sklarz

*This article was taken from www.respectfulworkplace.com with the author's permission

There are tons of rules in society, some written and some implicit—a red light means stop and most people obey. In the workplace, there are established rules of respect as well. For example, if you physically assault someone, steal, or don't show up for work, it's likely you will experience an adverse employment action. For the most part, most employees have grasped those written rules, but it tends to be the unspoken, often unwritten rules of behavior that cause the most problems in the workplace.

Sklarz has provided the following five tips for creating a respectful interaction in the workplace:

- 1. Take the point of view of others.** Science has shown us that mirror neurons work to create empathy among individuals. By taking the point of view of the people we work with we can better understand their motivations.
- 2. Value the many sources of knowledge that exist.** Sometimes we tend to think that our view is the correct one, because it's all we know. But there are many sources of knowledge that exist within the workplace and all we have to do is take the time to explore them. Learn about that new co-worker or have lunch with someone in another department.
- 3. Look for places to agree, connect or support.** When we interact with others in the workplace, it's easier to conquer our differences by finding ways to connect first. Does that co-worker with the different political beliefs also value family as much as you? This allows you to create a connection with the person based on commonality.
- 4. Acknowledge that I don't have to be right all the time.** Often when we assume we are right, we reduce the amount of new information that we take in, because obviously we know it all already! A better approach would be to accept that you may not be right all the time and allow yourself to learn from your co-workers' differences.
- 5. Act in ways that edify the self-esteem of others.** Discussions of difference or diversity in the workplace can sometimes get ugly with people hurling personal insults at one another. Instead, try to boost the self-esteem of others when discussing such hotly contested topics. Building self-esteem is a major step toward creating a respectful workplace.

By practicing these simple tips on a regular basis, you can ensure that respect is not just another corporate buzzword in the workplace, but an action that all employees partake in. And hopefully, before long, these rules will become ones that we all follow without giving them much thought.

How to Make Employee Performance Appraisals More Respectful

by Sean Conrad

Ideally, the goal of employee performance appraisals is to give employees feedback, direction and development so they can be their best. But in many cases, performance appraisals demoralize and discourage employees rather than engage and inspire them. Often, this is because the process fails to respect the individuals involved. Instead, the focus is put on filling out forms, and rating and ranking employees as "resources" rather than as individuals. Here are some practical ways every manager can make their employee performance appraisals more respectful:

Seek your employee's point of view

Before you make any decisions or judgments about performance, seek your employee's perspective. Ask them how they perceive their performance, their strengths, their weaknesses, the challenges facing their role, etc. You can do this formally using a self-appraisal, but you can use things like periodic one-on-one meetings, staff meetings, progress reports, performance journals, etc. to get your employee's perspective and allow them to provide details and context you might be missing.

Make it a two-way dialogue

The performance appraisal meeting should be a conversation about the employee's performance, development, expectations, needs, etc. Don't just tell employees what you believe their ratings are and assign them goals. Ask employees what you could do to better support their performance. Share your ideas, insights and observations. Solicit employees' input on goals. Ask what kind of learning activities best suit their learning style. Discuss your ratings and explain why and how you arrived at them. Ask for their perspective and discuss all this in a respectful way that accommodates differences in communication style.

Value the employee for who they are

Sometimes as managers, we measure employees against some fictional image of an ideal employee. The truth is, none of us is perfect. We all have our strengths and weaknesses, our good and bad days. No amount of training or coaching will ever make any of us perfect. So be realistic about your employee's skills, experience, abilities and weaknesses. Value and respect...

Mission Statement

The Diversity Office supports the Laboratory's mission to do world-class science by implementing programs to provide a pipeline of qualified, diverse candidates; promoting an inclusive work environment; and recommending to the Laboratory Director policies and procedures that ensure (1) equitable treatment and opportunities for all employees; (2) an environment free from harassment; and (3) encourage respect for individual differences.

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...employees for who they are, not for an idealistic image. Find ways to maximize their strengths, and minimize their weaknesses. And if they truly aren't a good fit for their current role, work with employees in a respectful way to find meaningful work they are suited for.

Focus on the positive

In performance appraisals, it's easy to fall into the trap of focusing on the negatives. We think our work as managers is to identify and correct poor performance. But focusing on our employee's good performance is a more respectful and ultimately productive way to approach the task. Work with your employees to identify the

If you have any questions on BNL's performance management process, please contact your Directorate Human Resources Manager or any member of the Learning & Development Team (Maggie Sullivan, Maureen Canter or Starr Munson).

things that make them successful. What kinds of people do they work best with? What work ignites their passion? What conditions help them be creative or excel? By identifying the factors that support great performance, and working to recreate them with and for employees, we help them be their best.

Be constructive

If you have negative feedback to deliver, do it in a constructive way. Tell your employee what they need to do to improve, and provide them with coaching, feedback and development to help them improve. Then make sure you follow up with regular performance reviews, and recognize and reward progress.

Respectful Workplace FAQs

1. What is a respectful workplace?

- A respectful workplace is a place that:
- Does not tolerate harassment or bullying
 - Encourages and allows for diversity
 - Benefits from different viewpoints
 - Establishes standards and practices to encourage civility
 - Expects respectful interactions
 - Values, develops and rewards its employees
 - Handles inappropriate behavior in a timely manner

2. What are some examples of respectful workplace behaviors?

- Respectful workplace behaviors include:
- Displaying personal integrity and professionalism
 - Practicing fairness and understanding
 - Exhibiting respect for individual rights and differences
 - Being accountable for one's actions
 - Emphasizing communication and collaboration in resolving problems and conflict
 - Developing and maintaining confidentiality and trust
 - Achieving accountability at all levels
 - Demonstrating organizational values

3. What is the cost of disrespectful behavior?

- Lost work time and productivity
- Lost employees / high turnover
- Decrease in teamwork
- Employee disengagement and work avoidance
- Lowered job motivation
- Health costs due to stress
- Legal costs due to litigation

4. What types of behaviors are considered disrespectful?

- Behaviors that can be considered disrespectful include:
- Yelling
 - Cursing

- Talking over each other (not listening)
- Offensive emails
- Threatening behaviors
- Frequently swearing, complaining, berating or belittling others
- Showing less respect for those of "lower status"
- Ridiculing an employee because of differences (i.e. disability, sexual orientation, etc)
- Intimidation

5. Where do disrespectful behaviors stem from?

- Disrespectful behaviors stem from:
- Narrow Focus/Limited Experience: The person using the disrespectful language honestly is not aware the language is offensive.
 - Stereotypes: The person using the disrespectful language is stereotyping people by groups and applying to individuals.
 - Personal Lives: People who use disrespectful language in their personal lives are more likely to do so in their professional lives than those who always practice respectful language choices.
 - Workplace Culture: In a culture where disrespectful language is tolerated – or even encouraged – people are more likely to use it (and sometimes even feel "peer pressure" to do so).

6. What can managers do to promote a respectful workplace?

- Managers can:
- Model respectful behaviors/Lead by example
 - Set and enforce high standards
 - Coach performance or performance improvement plan (discussed in private)
 - Enforce Respectful Workplace Policy
 - Take disciplinary action

7. What should I do if I'm faced with elements of disrespect in my work environment?

You should talk to your manager, Directorate Human Resources Manager (HRM) or Diversity Office. BNL does not tolerate disrespect in the workplace and will take action to investigate your concerns.

Total BNL Workforce by Gender – July 2013								
Gender	EEO Job Group							Grand Total
	Managers	Scientific Staff	Professionals	Technicians	Administrative/ Clerical	Skilled Workers/Laborers/ Operative/Service Workers	Trainees	
Male	4.2%	21.7%	31.2%	4.7%	0.5%	10.8%	0.8%	73.8%
Female	1.7%	3.8%	9.5%	0.4%	8.6%	1.8%	0.4%	26.2%
Total	5.9%	25.5%	40.8%	5.1%	9.0%	12.6%	1.2%	100.0%

Lactation Support Program

Lactation Support Program Launched for Nursing Mothers

by Shirley Kendall

The Work-Life Balance Committee is pleased to announce the opening of Brookhaven National Laboratory's first lactation room to provide a safe, private area for nursing mothers to express milk during work hours. A newly designed website titled "Working Mothers Lactation Program," dedicated to the lactation support program is available at <http://www.bnl.gov/lactationroom/>.

The room is located in the Occupational Medicine Clinic (OMC) (Bldg. 490, Room 8-11A/B) and was officially opened on January 28, 2013. Our long-term goal is to have more than one lactation room.

The lactation support program is part of the Lab's benefit program and is a result of planning, benchmarking of similar facilities at other U.S. Department of Energy Laboratories and companies, and employee suggestions. The Work-Life Balance Committee, with input from the OMC, ITD, Modernization Project Office and other F&O Departments was instrumental in implementing this program.

Breastfeeding is recommended by major medical organizations as the optimal way to provide nutrition for infants because of its significant health advantages. Breastfeeding has significant health benefits for mothers, as it lowers the risk of breast cancer and speeds recovery from pregnancy. There is also a business case for supporting a breast-feeding program, as breastfeeding employees miss less work and display greater loyalty to their employers. Breastfeeding programs help lower healthcare costs for employers. (You can read more about these and other benefits at WomensHealth.gov.)

Currently, the lactation room is used by two moms who recently returned to work. Feedback from these moms is that they are very pleased with the space, the room is "quiet, private, clean and comfortable."

— Shirley Kendall
Manager, Diversity Office
kendall@bnl.gov

News from Employee Resource Groups (Affinity Groups)

Asian Pacific American Association (APAA)

Asian Pacific American Association Celebrates 10th Anniversary

Recently, the BERA Asian Pacific American Association (APAA) celebrated its 10th year. During these 10 years, the APAA has offered educational, cultural, and social programs throughout the year and especially in May during the annual celebration of Asian Pacific American Heritage Month. The APAA has awarded eight scholarships of \$1,000 each to exceptional students of Asian heritage matriculating toward a doctorate degree in memory of Dr. Mow Shiah Lin for his distinguished research, achievements, and inventions as a BNL scientist. Also, during the annual BNL United Way drive, the APAA has contributed to the fundraising effort, and over the years, has co-sponsored many events with other BERA organizations.

May was Asian Pacific American Heritage Month

The 5th annual Asian Pacific Heritage month celebration was hosted by the Suffolk County Asian American Advisory Board and co-sponsored by BNL. At this event, held at Stony Brook's Charles B. Wang Center, BNL scientist Qun Shen of the Photon Sciences Directorate was honored with a proclamation from the Suffolk County Executive Steven Bellone. Shen was also awarded a Certificate of Recognition from New York State, presented by Daphne Kwok, chair of the President's Asian American and Pacific Islanders Advisory Commission on behalf of Governor Andrew Cuomo. The full-day cultural celebration of informative displays and workshops concluded with performances from 10 Asian countries followed by a dinner program of music, presentation of awards, and Asian cuisine.

To learn more about the APAA, view photos from past events, or to subscribe to the mailing list, visit the APAA web site at: <http://www.bnl.gov/bera/activities/APAA/default.asp>



Pictured right: Satoshi Ozaki, APAA advisor, with the APAA Board and APAA members.



Elaine Lowenstein, Derek Lowenstein, Qun Shen, Jun Wang, Susan Wong, Hue-Anh Pham



Qun Shen & Daphne Kwok

African-American Affinity Group (AAAG)

The BNL African American Affinity Group Scholarship Reception

Submitted by Patrice Greenwood and Terrence Buck, Scholarship Committee Co-chairpersons

The African American Affinity Group (AAAG) exists to provide a forum where employees and guests can promote awareness of the Black, African, African-American and Caribbean cultures, share professional insights, acquire information and provide leadership on their careers and work environment within BNL. In 2012, several members of the African American community at BNL formed this organization using the former Afro-American Culture Club from years past as a model and solicited guidance from the former leadership for direction.

Throughout the year, AAAG hosted several cultural events and fundraisers to establish a scholarship program for students pursuing science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) careers. As a result of their relentless effort and dedication to this cause, four local outstanding high school students were honored during the Inaugural AAAG Scholarship Awards Reception held at the Brookhaven Center on the evening of May 3, 2013. Patrice Greenwood and Terrence Buck served as co-chairpersons of the Scholarship Committee and Patrice Greenwood served as...

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... Mistress of Ceremonies. Two students were awarded the AAAG STEM Scholarship in the amount of \$1000 each, and two additional students were awarded the AAAG Academic Excellence Achievement Award in the amount of \$250 each. The reception was organized to serve as both a ceremony of congratulations and motivation for the scholars. Guests included the students, their families and members of the AAAG. Throughout the program, the students were given words of encouragement from Janine Truitt, AAAG current president; Noel Blackburn, inaugural president of AAAG, representing the Office of Educational Programs; Terrence Buck, Scholarship co-chairperson; and Patrice Greenwood, AAAG recording secretary and Scholarship co-chairperson. Patrick Bynum, AAAG vice-president, presented highlights of the organization's activities in his message, "Our Year in Review." While all of these messages were well received and undoubtedly inspiring, the most motivating message of all came from our very special guest speaker, Doon Gibbs, director of BNL. Gibbs shared personal information about his journey to this juncture in his life and provided insight about the optimistic outlook and extraordinary opportunities for those preparing for STEM careers.

Our 2013 BNL AAAG STEM Scholars were as follows:

Christina Bouche

a Longwood High School student pursuing a career in nursing

Matthew Evans

a Commack High School student pursuing a career in mathematics and spanish

Lavanesha Goode

a Longwood High School student pursuing a career in nursing

Robert Whitehorn, III

an Elwood-John Glenn High School student pursuing a career in mechanical engineering

For over 50 years, African Americans in the United States have made significant advancements in a few areas of the workforce. However, they still tend to be

drastically underrepresented in the fields of science, technology, engineering and math. For this reason, AAAG is working hard to identify and recruit such talent to the Lab. BNL offers a summer internship program called Youth on Campus. This is a paid 10-week program for high school students who are at least 16 years old. The student is matched with a mentor in the area of science, technology or support (clerical). The purpose of this program is for the students to be able to gain some real work experience and also learn about some of the major projects that are being performed at BNL.

Terrence Buck, AAAG Scholarship co-chair, is dedicated to recruiting students interested in STEM careers for this internship program to help with the shortage of underrepresented candidates in this area. With this focus in mind, Buck was successful in placing Matthew Evans and Robert Whitehorn, III, in the Youth on Campus Program for the summer of 2013. The hope is that these young men will excel and return to BNL throughout their college careers and have an opportunity after graduation to obtain employment at BNL in pursuit of their careers.



Left to right: Janine Truitt (AAAG President) Patrice Greenwood (AAAG Recording Secretary & Scholarship Committee co-chair) Robert Whitehorn, III, Lavanesha Goode, Doon Gibbs (Lab Director), Christina Bouche, Matthew Evans and Terrence Buck (Scholarship Committee co-chair)

Gay, Lesbian or Bisexual Employees Club (GLOBE)

by Deborah Bauer

Anyone paying any attention to the news recently is at least somewhat aware of the ruling of the Supreme Court on June 26th that found parts of the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA) unconstitutional. However, many probably don't truly understand the impact of this decision on gay and lesbian people.

The Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA) was originally signed into law by President Clinton on September 21, 1996. DOMA defined marriage as between one man and one woman, and by doing so, extended the reach of federal law into an area where the government had not gone before. Marriage law has historically been decided by the states. Each state in our union has somewhat differing laws governing marriage, such as establishing a legal age, defining the ability of blood relatives to marry, and so on. However, when it became apparent in the '90s that States were going to start considering same-sex marriage, DOMA was passed to prevent the federal government from recognizing those marriages, and by extension preventing the government from granting over 1,000 federal taxes and benefits to legally married same-sex couples.

The restriction on federal benefits impacted legally married (as recognized by their state) gay and lesbian people in very negative ways. If a Brookhaven employee was married and had their spouse on the Lab's healthcare program, DOMA prevented the federal government from extending the same tax exempt status to the same-sex spouse as was extended to an opposite sex spouse. The result was hundreds of dollars additional taxes paid per month by same-sex couples than were paid by opposite-sex couples.

Exemptions for estate taxes didn't apply to same-sex spouses; neither could they receive social security or veterans benefits after a spouse's death. DOMA also affected immigration status and allowed the government to deport same-sex spouses. However, all these benefits have not become immediately available now that DOMA has been overturned. Everyone is still trying to understand how to interpret the decision, so many benefit restrictions are still in place. Some large businesses, like Google, are begging the federal government for guidance because implementing different benefit scenarios for legally married people takes up time and costs them money.

Some impacts take effect immediately, and they don't always lean in favor of same-sex married couples. Under DOMA, married same-sex couples filed separately as "single" for federal tax purposes. Overturning DOMA means these couples now have to file jointly as married. If both spouses work, the overall tax burden will be higher than if they both filed separately as single. Another negative is that the decision only impacts couples in states that allow couples to marry legally. Couples in other states do not benefit from the decision.

Aside from the legalities and numbers, the most important part of the decision was the recognition on the federal level that gay and lesbian people have the right to marry whom they choose. The decision reaffirms our relationships and brings great joy to our community. The next step is to expand this recognition to all states and create true equality for all.