

Encouraging Constructive Dialogue:
Guiding
Methods of Interaction
Toward a
Positive Work Environment

For Dave O'Neil and Marvin Paxman

From

William Warren Munroe

March 8, 2005

The following is a write-up of the discussion with Dave and Marvin regarding behaviour between members of the population section, whether at section meetings or not. The discussion was requested at my behest in order to work towards consistent and positive methods of interaction between members of the population section.

At the meeting, I covered the following:

I would like to focus right away on what I think would be the positive outcome of this discussion by describing a section meeting as an opportunity for people to openly share what they are involved in, in an effort to improve the quality and timeliness of our services. I hope that by encouraging an environment where ideas can be shared, disagreed with, and occasionally agreed with, we will be able to do our jobs even better.

It is therefore important to address the specifics of inappropriate and appropriate behaviour in terms of what can be done in the future. The exercise is, of course, to always turn these negatives into positives.

As mentioned before to both Dave and Marvin, there are just three specifics regarding behaviour that I would like to address. Each specific behaviour is explained first as a general negative followed by specifics then by positive suggestions.

1) To reduce antagonistic behaviour towards section members at meetings – raising ones voice, making accusations, reprimanding - but rather think before speaking. Try asking questions and work towards being able to encourage good work. Positive remarks are welcome.

2) To minimize using meetings as a forum to tell equals what to do or pretend that we are the boss of our equals – pointing, naming the person, stating what should be done whether phrased as a question or not – but rather interact with equals as equal. Try treating all employees as people who are equally interested in providing the best service possible. Treat others as we would have them treat us.

....and lastly

3) Even outside of meetings, try to reduce antagonistic behaviour and minimize telling equals what to do - turning other peoples computer programs off when a shared file is being accessed, raising ones voice, reprimanding. Try explaining the situation and ask for assistance.

It is hoped that by working together we can all contribute to a positive work place. If we can turn the method of interaction from one of antagonism to something constructive then we will all be better served.