

The Attitude Virus : Curing Negativity at the Workplace

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Abstract

Negativity spreads like wildfire, and before anyone realizes what has happened, the entire workplace can be affected. This is not a physical illness, but it is the attitude that causes negativity in all it touches. It can affect the weak or powerful, the home or workplace, the worker or employer. Worst of all, if not discovered and eliminated quickly, the virus can spread to epidemic proportions, leading to loss of confidence, enthusiasm, creativity, productivity, and it is quite expensive for organizations too as it leads to absenteeism, increased turnover, decreased productivity, and lost revenues from customers taking their business elsewhere. This paper focuses on what is negativity, incivility, and finding preventive actions- "cures" for managing the negativity virus at organizations to remain competitive.

Keywords: negativity, cures, workplace, attitude, incivility

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Negativity is the eventual outcome of unchecked pessimism. It is pattern of pessimistic thinking that persists overtime. Individuals, teams, departments, or entire organizations can be pessimistic. Negativity is spreading unchecked like a virus through many companies; it is causing productivity and morale problems. Negativity is expensive. It costs companies millions of dollars each year. It is especially hard to remain competitive if the staff's work attitude is influencing productivity and morale. A negative attitude should be addressed, because it can often lead to some very hard to manage situations at the workplace. When employees develop a negative attitude, it manifests in key areas such as work performance. The attitude virus is everywhere. It is contagious, and it can spread in minutes. It contaminates and kills the motivation of workers. The employees who do not perform carry this virus, and it contaminates the employees of good organizations, which eventually threatens the bottom line and the very existence of the organization itself. One bad attitude, like one bad apple, can infect the entire organization (Pearson & Porath, 2009 ; Topchik, 2008).

The Attitude Virus

The attitude virus is not just a modern affliction, but one that has been a concern for centuries. It can affect the weak or powerful, the home or workplace, the worker or employer. Worst of all, if not discovered and eliminated quickly, the virus can spread to epidemic proportions, leading to loss of confidence, enthusiasm, creativity, and productivity, and result in rudeness, poor service, lack of motivation, and increased stress. Negativity at the workplace can be termed as "*Incivility*". The workplace doesn't exist within a vacuum; it is both - a product and a cause of attitudes and behavior in the larger culture. The disrespect and disregard toward others that saturate the larger culture also carry over to the workplace. Today's workplace incivility derives from certain social and economic developments that have fundamentally changed the nature of work (Causes of Attitude Problems (n.d.); Pearson & Porath, 2009).

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✍ **What is the Attitude Virus?** : Everyone has reason to become negative about his or her work or his or her organization from time to time. But when negativity becomes a routine posture for employees, managers, and the entire company, then it can begin to eat away at performance (Topchik,2008). According to Pearson & Porath (2009, p. 1), the following problems are signs of negativity infecting the environment of an organization :

- ✍ Taking credit for others' efforts, passing blame for one's own mistakes,
- ✍ Checking e-mail or texting messages during a meeting,
- ✍ Sending bad news through e-mail so that people in the organization cannot face the recipient,
- ✍ Talking down to others,
- ✍ Not listening, spreading rumors about colleagues,
- ✍ Setting others up for failure,
- ✍ Not saying “please” or “thank you”,
- ✍ Showing up late or leaving a meeting early with no explanation,
- ✍ Belittling other's efforts, leaving snippy voice mail messages,
- ✍ Forwarding other's emails to make them look bad,
- ✍ Making demeaning or derogatory remarks to someone,
- ✍ Withholding information,
- ✍ Failing to return phone calls or respond to e-mails,
- ✍ Leaving a mess for others to clean up,
- ✍ Consistently grabbing easy tasks while leaving difficult ones for others,
- ✍ Shutting someone out of a network or team,
- ✍ Paying little attention or showing little interest in others' opinions,
- ✍ Acting irritated when someone asks for a favor,
- ✍ Avoiding someone,
- ✍ Taking resources that someone else needs,
- ✍ Throwing temper tantrums.

Negativity shows itself when certain thoughts, moods, behaviors, or actions of an individual are communicated in the workplace. When too many of these behaviors are noticed by the negative individual's colleagues, or when their frequency is excessive, they can easily spread (Topchik, 2008). Negativity is contagious. It can spread in a matter of minutes, and before anyone realizes what has happened, the entire workplace can be affected. Workplace negativity is like a virus that spreads rapidly from one person to another. An individual either brings the virus to the workplace or catches it there from other individuals or from the organization itself. Sometimes, someone has a double dose of the virus-he or she is negative to start out with - and then gets another dose of it at work (Topchik, 2008).

✍ **Why Should One Just Not Ignore Negativity?** : “Negative employees affect everyone around them with their 'downer' attitudes. Their behavior poisons the work environment” (Pincus, 2004, p. 3). If for no other reason, negative attitudes should be dealt with because they cost money! Organizations cannot afford to remain idle as negative attitudes lead to costly negative behaviors. Negativity results in increased absenteeism, increased turnover, decreased productivity, and lost revenues from customers taking their business elsewhere (Pincus, 2004). Attitudes that result in bad behavior should be dealt with early on because attitudes are contagious; thus, they have the potential to duplicate themselves more rapidly, so it is important that we make sure that an environment is as free of negativity as possible and that we all exhibit an attitude worthy of catching (Pincus, 2004). Addressing negativity prevents workplace violence, promotes workplace safety, and creates positive employee morale.

↳ **From Where Do Attitude Problems Come From? :** According to Randolph Harrison, workplace negativity is caused by uncertainty. “People do not have a negative reaction to change; they have a negative reaction to the punishing effects of change, which is uncertainty.” Frequently, change and restructuring bring about layoffs, which lower employee morale. The thought of uncertainty about keeping your job after restructuring breeds bad feelings (Causes of Attitude Problems (n.d.)). Negativity often occurs when people are impacted by decisions and issues that are out of their control. Examples of these include: Corporate downsizing, understaffing that requires people to work mandatory overtime, budget reductions, and upper management decisions that adversely impact the staff members of the organization (Heathfield, n.d.).

Even today's stressful nature of life also plays a huge role. According to a recent poll by the watchdog agency, Public Agenda, nearly half the people surveyed believed that “life is so hectic and people are so busy and pressed for time that they forget to be nice”. Psychiatrist Edward Hallowell may have come close to the answer in his Harvard Business Review article "Overloaded Circuits: Why Smart People Underperform". With so many demands on our time and attention, Hallowell argues, the excess data and information that we all must contend with gradually causes brain to lose its capacity to be fully attentive or thoughtful about anything (Pearson & Porath, 2009 p. 43).

Changes in the economy are also conspiring to make incivility much, much worse. In a globalized, right sized, outsourced world, businesses everywhere are forced to do more with less in order to compete. Extraordinary customer demands and top-notch global innovation have led to increasingly complex products and services. Some workers are being stretched like bungee cords to accommodate the improvements (Pearson & Porath, 2009, p. 44).

New employment norms have created fertile conditions for incivility. Relationships between employees and companies used to be based upon loyalty. Many people worked for the same employers throughout their careers, and their loyalty was rewarded with job security. Those days are gone. In the 1980s, the conference board asked managers if “employees who are loyal to the company and further its business goals deserve an assurance of continued agreement”. At that time, more than half agreed. When the conference board posed the same question to managers in the late 1990s, agreement dropped to 6%. According to a 2005 survey by the Center for Effective Organizations, 49% of the Fortune 1000 companies have formally severed the loyalty tie in their employment contracts. Employees are responsible for making themselves employable; their jobs will survive only so long as an employee's skills match the firm's needs (Pearson & Porath, 2009, p.45).

Cures for Organizational Negativity

Finding “cures” for the negativity virus will directly affect the success of today's organizations. Though firms differ in how they structure anti-civility policies, the present study lists nine actions that all firms should take to encourage (civil) positive behavior and ensure a productive and positive culture, irrespective of size or industry.

1) Set Zero-Tolerance Expectations : When expectations flow from the top, they have the power to shape behavior and set the general tenor of a firm's culture. Executives should commit to politeness (civility) standards and then articulate them frequently, both in person and in writing. Promulgating an organization-wide expectation of civil interactions defines the norm for everyone, regardless of stature. Setting expectations also establishes a baseline against which organizations can measure and correct behavior (Pearson & Porath, 2009, p.139).

Many firms have mission statements, declarations of values, or credos. The following corporate examples clearly emphasize civility (Pearson & Porath, 2009, p.139) :

↳ “Treat each other with respect” (from Boeing's integrity statement).

↳ “Above all, employees will be provided the same concern, respect, and caring attitude within the organization that they are expected to share externally with every Southwest Customer” (from South-West Airlines's mission Statement).

- ↳ “We are responsible to our employees... We must respect their dignity” (from the Johnson & Johnson Credo).
- ↳ “FedEx, from its inception, has put its people first both because it is right to do so, and because it is good business as well” (from the opening pages of FedEx's training guide).
- ↳ “Nike was founded on a handshake. Implicit in that act was the determination that we would build our business based on trust, teamwork, honesty and mutual respect”(from Nike's Responsibility Governance Statement, which is reviewed and endorsed by signature annually by every Nike employee. It also applied explicitly to suppliers and contractors who manufacture Nike-branded merchandise).

2) Look in the Mirror : Once norms have been set, managers and executives must strive to live by them. Remember that as individuals ascend in an organization, they hear less and less negative information, including information about their own. But then begin by straight-up-feedback. Feedback, when given appropriately, can be an incredible tool to help a person acknowledge their strengths and weaknesses. In the position of management, it is essential to understand how to give and receive feedback.

In "Mastering the Art of Feedback," Infoline No. 250308, authors Holly Deforest, Pamela Largent, and Mary Steinberg stressed that feedback “should not be offered to judge, to belittle, or to control; instead it should help recipients see themselves as others see them and present them with an opportunity to learn” (Estep 2004, p. 72). Feedback is traditionally classified as either positive or negative. The positive form is usually referring to statements that encourage a particular behavior. The negative form of feedback is referring to statements that point out the faults or shortcomings in a given scenario. This traditional classification can present barriers and or hesitancy when presented with feedback. Instead of referring to feedback as positive or negative, let us refer to it as either corrective or reinforcing (Estep, 2004). These categories, in essence, are similar to their traditional counterparts, but have more of a constructive feel.

Reinforcing feedback is very important, and should be given whenever opportunities present themselves. It is always nice to receive a compliment, and therefore, never hesitate to tell someone when they are doing a good job. Reinforcing favorable behavior can also be viewed as a way to prevent negativity in the work environment. It is said that “the best defense is a good offense,” so defend against issues and negativity by flooding the work environment with reinforcing feedback. Corrective feedback, like its name implies, is designed help the recipient correct something that the issuer views as a problem. This problem can be something very minute, like a letterhead format, or something very large like a conduct issue. People tend to have a hard time receiving feedback, and this is largely due to the fact that giving and receiving feedback is a skill that needs to be learned and practiced. There are five main components to consider when forming and giving constructive feedback (Estep, 2004). The five main components are :

- i) Consideration :** The first component of giving feedback is showing consideration. Know how to address an issue that could possibly hurt the feelings of the recipient (Estep 2004, p.72).
- ii) Timing :** There is a lot of truth in the old adage of “There is a time and a place for everything.” If the issue is private, do not address it in a public setting. Additionally, it is better to give feedback as close to the time of occurrence of the issue. This prevents the issue from having an opportunity to grow, and the specifics of the issue are still fresh in the minds of the parties involved (“Causes of Attitude Problems”, n.d.).
- iii) Obligation :** Another important component in giving effective feedback is recognizing that the receiver is not obligated to change in response to the feedback. Know that you can only influence a person, not force them to do something. When dealing with an employee, make sure that they know the consequences of not correcting the behavior (“Causes of Attitude Problems”, n.d.).
- iv) Readiness :** Make sure that the recipient is in as close to an ideal emotional state as possible when giving feedback. But the circumstances for giving feedback are rarely ideal. Sometimes, the giver must give feedback whether or not the receiver wants to hear it. The person issuing feedback needs to have a clear head - the feedback

should not be given when one is angry or agitated (“Causes of Attitude Problems”, n.d.).

v) Clarity : This means making sure that the message conveyed is the one received. It is good to ask questions, or have the person restate what has been said (“Causes of Attitude Problems”, n.d.). The example of feedback and personal improvement shared by consulting guru Marshall Goldsmith in his book *What Got You Here Won't Get You There*. Goldsmith learned from his own 360- degree evaluation that he had a habit of making destructive comments about his employees behind their backs. He felt terrible, so he vowed to his staff that he was going to change. As motivation, he promised ten dollars to anyone who caught him bad-mouthing the staff. He thought he would have to plead with employees to get their help, but he soon found that they were happy to oblige. Some even goaded Goldsmith into making such comments. By noon, the first day, he was down fifty dollars, so he locked himself in his office to spare his wallet. The method worked very quickly. Each day, his behavior improved. He spent only thirty dollars the next day, then the day after that. Before long, he had broken his uncivil habit (Pearson & Porath, 2009).

3) Weed Out Trouble Before it Enters Your Organization : The easiest way to foster civility is not to let uncivil people in the door. Not vendors, not contractors, not customers, not employees. When it comes to weeding out unfit employees, Jim Collins uses an apt metaphor in his business bestseller *Good to Great*. Get the right people on the bus, he urges, and the wrong people off it, and only then figure out where to drive it. Savvy sports coaches select players in or out of their teams for civility and respect. Legendary UCLA basketball coach John Wooden honed a knack for weeding out trouble before it could contaminate his Bruins. For Wooden, holding members to high ideals and maintaining exceptional standards of selection were the leader's responsibility. Using his analogy, it meant keeping a rotting apple out of a barrel of good ones. Even before signing a recruit, Wooden relied on his own set of references, not only the recruit's high school coach and teammates but his pastor, the administrators, and teachers at his high school, and coaches of opposing teams. Wooden even gathered opinions from some of the opposing teams' players. This effort to weed out uncivil players worked especially well for Wooden because he held himself to no lesser standards. “A Coach,” he said, “is someone who can give correction without causing resentment” (Pearson & Porath, 2009, p.142).

Do thorough reference checks to weed out problem individuals. Here's another convincing statistic: More than one-third of all job seekers put false information on their resumes and applications. Incivility leaves trails. Uncivil people build bad reputations that extend well beyond their own departments. Sometimes, their nasty style is known throughout their industry. Here's another statistic: Despite the availability of information, one-third of the organizations do not perform background checks of any kind. Even in medicine, where hiring errors can be life-threatening, due diligence may be lacking. At the extreme, consider the incredible story of Michael Swango. His ability to prey on people's trust garnered him admission to medical schools, numerous medical residencies, and a variety of paramedic positions, despite a trail of incarcerations for poisoning people. In his book *Blind Eye*, Pulitzer Prize-Winning journalist James B. Stewart tracks the egregious errors made by institutions that hired Swango without careful background checks. At least thirty five people across the United States and in Africa were murdered by Swango, paying the highest price because organizations they affiliated with had not wedded out trouble before it entered (Pearson & Porath, 2009, p.142).

4) Teach Civility : Lots of training programs are information-based, so employees have gotten used to learning through lectures or by studying notebooks. Yet, civility is best learned experientially. Civil demeanor is enhanced by building competencies in such skills as listening, conflict resolution, negotiation, dealing with difficult people, and stress management. Role-playing works well, and it is often enhanced by candid discussion and videotaping (Pearson & Porath, 2009, p.144). Training in coaching can boost employees' abilities to help one another when incivility occurs. Knowing how to observe others' behavior, how to listen for signals that help is needed, how to give and receive feedback, and how to recognize the impact of one's own behavior can be invaluable. If the organization already trains managers in coaching, include practice scenarios that focus on employees who have experienced or witnessed incivility. As with any training efforts, getting people to learn and practice civility

requires that companies put in place a formal structure. Civil behavior should be evaluated in performance reviews and tied to career advancement (Porath 2009 p.144).

In a simple experiment conducted by Professor John Bargh and colleagues at New York University, participants were asked to unscramble words. Without their knowledge, their subsequent behaviors were evaluated. In a group, the scrambled words related to politeness; in the other, the words related to rudeness. Researchers found that the participant's behavior following the completion of the word test was predictably polite or rude depending on the priming that they had experienced by completing the word tests. People who unscrambled "polite" words were polite; people who unscrambled "rude" words were rude. Priming employees to behave civilly can make a difference. Explaining the distinctions between civil and uncivil behavior is the first step; putting employees through experiential activities to practice civility in action solidifies the change (Pearson & Porath, 2009, p.144).

5) Train Employees and Managers How to Recognize and Respond to Signals : Cunning offenders tend to elude detection, at least for a while. They are often savvy about when, where, and in front of whom they are uncivil, and by targeting less powerful people, they count on their bad behavior going unreported. For all these reasons, employees and managers need to learn how to spot incivility and how to respond, whether the incivility has been reported or not (Pearson & Porath, 2009, p.145).

6) Put Your Ear to the Ground and Listen Carefully : Act, and don't react, when you deal with a difficult person at the workplace. Next, understand and communicate well with them (Goldsmith, 2007). Often people just need a sounding board. Be visible and available to staff. Proactively schedule group discussion sessions, town meetings, "lunches with the manager," or one-on-one blocks of time. (Heathfield, n.d.).

We all encounter difficult people every day. Sometimes, all we have to do to see one is to look in the mirror. Is there a person in one's life, or business, who is demanding and intimidating? What about the person who never follows through, or is never happy? If someone is aggressive or intimidating in their manner, there are a couple of tactics that work well. First, listen to what it is they have to say, but don't engage in an argument. Being polite, succinct, and precise in language will give them less room to engage in this negative behaviour. When dealing with a person who is cold and closed off, a person needs to consider that they may have a hidden agenda. Ask open-ended questions and be patient, it may take a little while, but they will open up when they feel safe (Goldsmith, 2004, p.70).

Three-hundred and sixty-degree feedback can be a powerful tool for curtailing incivility. When feedback is gathered anonymously about an uncivil employee's behavior from subordinates, peers, and superiors, a multidimensional image of the individual develops. Objective organizational data sharpens the picture. Relevant data might include absentee and turnover rates among subordinates or across divisions. These numbers must be interpreted carefully, factoring in such contextual information as current trends among job incumbents, geographic regions of operation, and industry standards, as well as the reasons for absenteeism and turnover. The combination of a 360-degree feedback and organizational data is extremely helpful in uncovering weaknesses and strengths. One thing which should be remembered while implementing 360-degree feedback is that respondents must believe that their answers will remain anonymous and that improvements will come as a result of their honesty. By using 360 degree performance feedback and organizational data, trust and confidence among employees will enhance (Pearson & Porath, 2009, p.146).

7) When Incivility Occurs, Hammer It : Ignoring incivility festers it. If offenders get away with it, the behavior is reinforced and repeated, may be towards their original targets, may be towards others, may be towards anyone. It is also essential to curtail incivility at the level where many organizations have primary contact with their customers. At Disney, disrespectful employees are dismissed quickly. A former Disneyland food cart vendor described the rare occasion when a "cast member" (employee) had upset a "guest" (customer): "No excuses. No second chances. It gives the signals to other employees that they (the management) are not kidding with their strict guidelines about how employees are supposed to talk and act with guests (Pearson & Porath, 2009, p.147).

8) Take Complaints Seriously : When exemplary leaders hear about incivility among employees, they gather data quickly, sort out the facts, and take action swiftly, as warranted (Pearson & Porath, 2009, p.48).

9) Invest in Post Departure Interviews : One way to track the incivility's impact is to conduct post departure interviews. There is rich potential in talking with former employees after they have distanced themselves from the organization and settled into their new work environments. Top HR executives have remarked that if they suspect incivility as a cause of departure, they wait about six months after the employee has left and then follow up to gather more information. Sometimes, employees who were unwilling to talk about how they were being treated, open up. What the HR personnel hear is often quite different from what they were told when the employee left (Pearson & Porath, 2009, p.151).

Case Studies

✦ **Cisco Systems :** In 2008, Cisco was recognized by Fortune as the 18th among the Top 20 Most Admired Companies in the United States. In the categories of people management and quality, it came in at the number one position. However, those were not Cisco's only accolades from Fortune. It was also ranked 6th among the 2008 list of 100 Best companies to work for. Cisco has a voluntary turnover rate of only 4%. Nearly half a million people try annually for an opportunity to become a member of the Cisco Systems organization (Pearson & Porath, 2009, p.123).

The company attributes its success to a positive work environment that enables employees to perform at their best. Cisco is the first corporation ever to institute a formal program focused on civility. The stated goal of its global civility program is “to help employees recognize and report incidents that may cause disruption or threaten safety, and managers to identify, address, and resolve circumstances that fall within the broad spectrum of workplace civility.” The program utilizes specific levers to foster civility and curtail the occurrence or escalation of rudeness (Pearson & Porath, 2009, p.124).

First, detailed guidelines help managers and human resources experts recognize and respond to signs of escalating incivility. Managers are instructed on how to ask appropriately probing questions (e.g., “What did you mean when you said...?”) when confronted with direct or veiled threats, blaming, anger, or intimidation. To reinforce civility and reduce any escalating incivility, Cisco trains managers and human resources experts through case studies, experiential activities, group discussions, coaching, and video presentations. There is also a self-study playbook or road map that provides detailed information on civility, incivility, and the escalation of incivility, as well as processes for resolution. A web-based resource center provides detailed processes, worksheets, preparatory guides, and checklists of references (e.g., legal services and employee assistance programs). Finally, Cisco has developed a team approach to reduce overreactions, under reactions, and unnecessary workplace disruptions. As part of this approach, experts come together to assess the situation whenever incivility escalates (Pearson & Porath, 2009, p.124).

The civility program aligns with a strong culture of mutual respect. Cisco built that culture by consistently recruiting the right employees, setting clear expectations, training employees in civility, and role modeling appropriate, civil behavior. Cisco's management believes that violations of its code of conduct, with or without apparent malicious intent, can interfere with its productive work environment. When any transgressions occur, the civility program gives managers what they need to assess the situation, confer with experts, and provide timely decisions and guidance to contain and curtail incivility. Hence, it is clear that at Cisco, an unflinching focus on civility has paid off (Pearson & Porath, 2009, p.125).

✦ **Starbucks :** Few organizations have experienced the kind of change that Starbucks has. In 2006, Starbucks added an average of five new stores and a hundred employees per day, seven days per week, as it expanded in thirty-six countries. Understandably, one of Starbucks' thorniest challenges is maintaining a consistent level of product and service delivery. As David Pace, Vice President of Partner Resources explained, “The challenge for us is to build and sustain the culture...we have to take a somewhat similar approach [across all stores] where we

tell the people that are here what we expect. We try to help them understand and relate to the kind of culture that we're trying to create" (Pearson & Porath, 2009, p.125).

Civility comes in everywhere. Starbucks spreads the word about desired values with its mission statement, six guiding principles speak to the essence of achieving civility: "Provide a great work environment and treat each other with respect and dignity." But words are never enough. As Pace explains, "I don't think you can just come along for a ride on this one at the senior level. You have to believe it. Your CEO and Chairman and other senior leaders within the organization have to live it." Starbucks's clear mission evolved very early because founder Howard Schultz understood the worth of written values. Today, even Schultz acknowledges that the words may not be unique, but he and his top executives see as different the level of attention that Starbucks gives to those values. "We use it as a living document," Pace adds. "It is clearly... Our Constitution, our Bill of Rights" (Pearson & Porath, 2009, p. 125).

Like any value statement, the guiding principles would be useless if employees throughout the company did not understand and adhere to them. So every day, as many new "partners" (Starbucks's term for employees at all levels, anywhere in the organization) join the organization, the company makes sure that each of them is briefed on the principles and how they are put into action. Since store managers serve as the primary role models in the stores, they receive behavioral skills training on how to deliver partner-centric, customer-centric behavior. In addition to day-to-day conduct, Starbucks reinforces partner - centric values through affordable health care, stock options, and tuition reimbursement. What makes these perks unusual at Starbucks is that the leaders view them as investments rather than cost. "Many organizations talk about (investing in employees)," Pace says. "We actually, truly live that relationship" (Pearson & Porath, 2009, p.126).

To assure that store managers are respectful and civil, Starbucks sends them to an annual leadership conference at which the guiding principles are reviewed and discussed. The conference does not just focus on how to treat customers, as we find in many service organizations. It helps store managers learn and practice the best ways of treating their employees and one another. Mission Review is another tool that keeps employees' eyes on civility. Through Mission Review, the company encourages its partners (employees) to freely share their perspectives anonymously. More than typical employee suggestion boxes, Mission Review is a conduit for ongoing 360-degree feedback to assure civility at Starbucks (Pearson & Porath, 2009, p.126).

If rankings and other data are any indication, Starbucks's efforts to deliver on its core value of civility are paying off. In 2007, it was placed second in Fortune's list of America's Most Admired Companies and first in the food service industry. It was first among the "Quality of Management." In 2008, Businessweek named Starbucks number 16 among The Best 50 Performers, despite a nosedive in share value in the previous twelve months, adding that no way it signaled any decline in popularity of the firm among job applicants. That perspective is borne out in Starbucks's Number 7 ranking among the Best Companies to work for in 2008, and in the statistic that voluntary turnover among Starbucks's nearly two hundred thousand employees is below 15%. Finally, it was noted that in 2008, the company received an incredible 700, 000 applicants for 2500 new jobs (Pearson & Porath, 2009, p.127).

Conclusion

Trying to eliminate negativity is an exercise in futility. Negativity can never totally be eliminated. There will always be incidents to cause people, work groups, departments, or entire organizations to become negative. The job of the organization is to teach its staff and leaders how to manage negativity. If any organization wants to reap the payoffs of positive behavior, it should start by setting expectations and making sure that one's own behavior lines up well. Be sure everyone in the organization knows what is expected of him or her. Keep on the lookout for uncivil word and deeds, and listen when people complain about them. Once they are spotted, do something to correct and curtail them. The other strategies for managing negativity include :

- 1) The learning environment requires the people to trust and become loyal to their company; meeting the motivational needs allows people to ensure a positive approach to work, and hiring a jollyologist (or using your

own employee volunteers) guarantees a fun, upbeat environment,

- 2) Provide an attitude check up;
- 3) Keep thoughts in present;
- 4) Have a favorite saying;
- 5) Set a time limit for negativity;
- 6) Use the 2M approach - some people need a lot of direction or support; they need Micromanaging or others need little direction or support ; they are Macromanaging);
- 7) Collect funny objects,
- 8) Use flipside thinking or stop the thought,
- 9) Resolve conflicts,
- 10) Surround yourself with optimistic people;
- 11) Be your own best friend;
- 12) Provide yourself with a new opportunity or skill,
- 13) Do something to help others,
- 14) Use the AAA approach (Alter, Avoid and Accept),
- 15) Reward yourself for being positive.

Managerial Implications of Curing Negativity at the Workplace

It is the duty of the manager to keep operations running smoothly throughout the workday in an organization. This task is obviously not one that is simple, nor is there one sure method to implement to ensure fluidity. The duties of the management have not changed nearly as drastically as the style in which a manager must perform these duties. Probably, one of the most important aspects of this task is having a harmonious relationship with the employees. Studies in this area reveal that there are strategies for curing negativity at the workplace, which includes developing a learning environment, meeting the staff's motivational needs, encouraging creativity, and hiring a "jollyologist" (a therapeutic humorist). It is the manager who has to keep a constant eye and watch that employees should be positive at their workplace and who follow the above mentioned strategies to remain positive.

Initiating people with positive power enables them to enjoy life and like what they are doing. Positive people communicate positive attitude to all those around them. Often, their attitude is contagious. They find positive things to say about their jobs, the people with whom they work, the services or products the organization provides, the customers, the boss, and so on. They try to make work fun, they laugh a lot, smile, joke around somewhat, and are playful in a positive way. They also make those around them feel motivated, important, and productive.

Scope for Future Research

People are exposed to negativity on a daily basis at their workplace. The saying - "Trying to eliminate negativity is an exercise in futility" - is true. Negativity can never totally be eliminated, but one has to manage negativity by using different strategies. Future research for curing negativity at the workplace can focus on the following aspects:

- (i) Creating a learning environment for communicating positivity.
- (ii) Meeting the staff's motivational needs so that they remain positive in the organization.
- (iii) Creating and encouraging creativity for positive culture in the organization.
- (iv) Evaluate ways by which a Jollyologist can intervene and create a positive culture in the organization.

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