What Are Your 'Pet Peeves'?
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We recently surveyed CMOs and Marketing/BD Directors, asking them, "What do your team members do that drives you crazy?" The story behind this exercise is a personal one. Over the past 17 years, Wisnik Career Enterprises has employed more than two dozen interns. Some work for a semester, while others have stayed on as permanent employees for years. What I realized in having new interns start almost every semester, is that although we put them through an orientation process and give them a handbook outlining office procedures and technical details, these interns did not pick up on the "unwritten rules" the way I would have hoped. I finally realized this was my shortcoming in assuming they would automatically know what I did and did not like. So I started writing down what I called "Eva's Pet Peeves" and sharing the list with new employees on their first day. The result was that they got the information from the start, and my frustration level decreased significantly. When I mentioned this exercise to CMOs and Directors, who often-times have many people reporting to them, the idea of identifying and communicating their own "likes" and "dislikes" really resonated.

Compiling the List

My goal in surveying heads of Marketing/BD at major law firms was to compile a comprehensive list that could be used to identify each manager's specific "dislikes" and "likes." The manager could then share this valuable information with each new team member. When we all are overwhelmed with projects, it is easy to forget to communicate what we value most when working with others. This lack of communication often results in missteps on the part of the new employees, and loss of trust and confidence on the part of the manager. Instead of "hoping" others will learn through osmosis what we like and dislike, why not articulate it from the start? Shared below are what CMOs and Directors said drove them crazy and also what they love to see their employees do.

Pet Peeves

Here are the top 10 most frequently mentioned "Pet Peeves":

1. **Not being responsive:** Not acknowledging a request and waiting until the product was complete or they were contacted about it again
2. **Lack of true collaboration:** Complaining about team members without trying to resolve issues directly with the other person, or taking credit for others' work
3. **Not being proactive:** Knowing what needs to be done, to do things the right way, but doing the minimal amount required
4. **Poor judgment:** Not adjusting written or oral tone to the person you are communicating with; i.e. answering the phone with a highly familiar, "Hey"
5. **Focusing on the task and not "owning" the project:** Not proofreading a document before handing it to Director/CMO/Partner
6. **Lack of detail orientation:** Forgetting to attach documents mentioned in email and/or not changing an email subject line to reflect a new topic
7. **Over communicating:** CC'ing people who do not need to be included in email exchange or replying to all when it is not necessary

8. **Poor relationship management:** Being rude to colleagues in other departments and/or not being thoughtful of what other people might have on their plate, before bombarding them with your "emergency"
9. **Not taking responsibility:** Blaming others when things go wrong
10. **Over- promising and under-delivering:** Making promises they have no control over delivering and/or missing deadlines

'Likes'

Here are the top 10 most frequently mentioned "Likes" managers wish all team members did:

1. **Anticipating needs:** Coming prepared with all necessary background information to meetings
2. **Proactively presenting ideas:** Bringing new, well thought-out ideas to the table and also coming up with more efficient ways to carry out existing processes
3. **Acting as a problem solver:** Spotting an issue and bringing it up - along with possible solutions
4. **Staying current in new developments:** Self-motivated to read and learn about new legal and marketing trends
5. **Providing status updates:** Keeping those you are working with in the loop without being asked
6. **Adapting their style:** Communicating and providing information in a client-focused way
7. **Being grateful:** Showing appreciation for mentoring, raises, promotions, etc.
8. **Having self-awareness:** Knows what they don't know and when to ask for help
9. **Asking for feedback:** Committed to learning and growing, and listens to and applies feedback
10. **Volunteering for something:** Acting in the best interest of the Firm and the team by taking on a responsibility that is not necessarily "their job," and doing so with a "can do" positive attitude

Why Make These Lists?

You already have a great deal on your plate, so what is the value of engaging in this type of exercise? For one, you will gain clarity as to what your employees do that you appreciate and what they do not do that could be improved. This will help you give better feedback and direction to your most important resource, your talent. Building self-awareness of what is important to you, as a manager, can also prove helpful when you are looking to add new talent to your department. Many of the CMOs I have discussed this "pet peeves exercise" with admitted that they knew they felt irritated by certain employees' behaviors, but did not always know exactly why until they took time to think about which actions they valued and which ones they did not. The clearer *you* are about what you value and how you want your team members to perform, the easier it will be to communicate these unwritten rules to them. As simple as it seems, those of us who manage and motivate staff members know that this is often the most challenging part of our day.

What are your top 5 pet peeves and your top 5 likes? Do your team members know these or are you still hoping they can read your mind? Maybe it's time to compile a list and share it with your team. Hopefully, the lists above will provide you with a starting place for you create your own customized lists.