Blindsided at Work

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Blindsided at Work

- Disengagement
- Low Morale
- Erosion of Trust
- Communication Breakdown
- Organizational Trauma

Case Study 1 – Public Library

- **Community Engagement Librarian**
- Successfully presented at a Mayor community event
- Mayor loved the talk and invited her to the Mayor's Community Honors Event
- Library Director wanted to take over
- The Mayor insisted the librarian present and the library director attend as his guest
- Librarian was brought into the library director's office 3 weeks later, written up and reassigned to the technical services department

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Public Library (Thoughts, Discussion, What Happened?)

No responses received yet. They will appear here...

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Case Study 2: Library Director

- **BIPOC Library Director** was promoted after former director was fired for racial discrimination

- Was told by Provost to let go of a few problem people and develop and implement an "aggressive" DEI plan

- Library director followed instructions to the letter.

- The Provost gave her a glowing 6-month performance review

- A few library employees did not like the changes and wrote letters to the provost citing "no confidence"

- The Provost gave the new BIPOC director a terminal contact citing "toxic and hostile work environment"

Moderate

Visual settings

Edit

Library Director (Thoughts, Discussion, What Happened?)

No responses received yet. They will appear here...

Case Study 3: Instruction Librarian

- New librarian hired as the "Student Success Librarian" (new position)
- The Head of Instruction had a "script" on how traditional classes should be taught
- The librarian used the script as a framework with her added touches which included more interactivity
- In 3 months, the new librarian had the top evaluation scores and most student referrals (6-person team).
- Six months in the Head of Instruction surprised her by giving her a work performance plan for falling "below expectations".
- If the instruction librarian did not comply, this would be grounds for dismissal

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Instruction Librarian (Thoughts, Discussion, What Happened?)

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Blindsided at Work

- Need to Be Right
- Conflict Avoidant
- Culture and Assimilation
- Personality Tension (Flexibility)
- Penalty Culture (Guilty Until Proven Innocent)
- Policies over People (Loss of Humanity)

- Checking Assumptions!

Working Through Conflict

- Question to always ask: What is the end goal and what ultimately needs to be accomplished?

- Golden Rule – Would you want to be treated this way?

Managing Conflict: Final Study

- Major Project -- Employee Missed Crucial Deadline
- Crucial Deadline??
- Employee: Usually turns in projects on time (policy: written memo)
- What is the expectation beyond the deadline
- Met Employee in their office – questions
- Negotiated new timeline and outcomes
- Reinforced positive behavior
- Employee turned in the final project outcomes before due date and felt appreciated for the positive effort

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What Went Right?

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Managing Through Conflict

Check assumptions always

Avoid the statement …well if it was me…

What is the ultimate goal? What is the outcome?

Talk through mutual solutions

People over policy

Positive reinforcement moving forward

Punishment/penalty sparingly

Resource List

- Managing conflict at work : understanding and resolving conflict for productive working relationships (2010)

- No hard feelings : the secret power of embracing emotions at work (2019)

- Conversations worth having : using appreciative inquiry to fuel productive and meaningful engagement (2018)

- Connect first : 52 simple ways to ignite success, meaning, and joy at work (2020)

QUESTIONS??

American Library Association

[The Six-Step Guide to Library Worker Engagement | ALA Store](#)

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