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The Daily Exchange

SAVANNAH **now**

Web posted Sunday, February 9, 2003

Etiquette: Losing your cool at work

By Lydia Ramsey
for the Savannah Morning News

Have you ever lost your cool at work? Or anywhere else for that matter? And have you ever wondered what it cost you?

If you haven't thought about the consequences of losing control, you might want to do that now.

Phillip Van Hooser, a national authority on leadership development and author of the Uncommon Common Sense E'zine, tells a story about his personal experience with losing his cool early in his career as a human resource executive.

When an employee came to him with a problem that, in Phillip's opinion, the employee should have resolved, Phillip became angry and told the employee what he thought of him.

The employee returned the favor, and a heated exchange followed.

Evidently, it didn't take long for word to spread because Phillip was summoned to his boss's office for an impromptu meeting within 15 minutes of the episode.

The boss wrote five words on a piece of paper and passed it over to Phillip. The words were "When you lose your temper."

Phillip thought, "What?"

His boss retrieved the paper, crossed out three of the words and passed it back to Phillip.

It read, "you lose."

There was no doubt about the message. "When you lose your temper, you lose."

Phillip didn't lose his job that day, although his boss cited that as an option, but he did lose face. And he learned that when you lose control of your emotions, you also lose respect, credibility and professionalism.



It doesn't matter how trivial the issue or how lowly the employee, there is never a justifiable case for a display of temper.

- The Associated Press

WHAT TO DO?

Have a question about business etiquette? E-mail your questions or comments to columnist Lydia Ramsey at lydia@lydiaramsey.com.

Business Calendar ▼

January & February
Jan. 8, 10

Communication for Success Program
Communication Clubs:
Putting Your Best Foot Forward 6-7:30 p.m.,
10-11:30 a.m....

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Jan. 23

197th Annual Meeting
Savannah Area Chamber of Commerce, 12 p.m. ,
Hilton Savannah DeSoto, \$30/person,
Reservations required..._

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Feb. 3

Small Business Council Meeting: Maximizing Your Web Presence, 11:45 a.m./networking, 12 p.m./luncheon...

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Conventions ▼

January & February

Jan. 11-15

National Business Aviation Association Inc., scheduler and dispatcher conference, Savannah

International Trade & Convention Center, Westin Savannah Harbor Golf Resort & Spa, 1200.

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Jan. 23-26

Happy Wanderers Volkspport Club, event, Best Western Historic District, Comfort Suites Historic District, multiple properties, 1000.

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Jan. 28-01

Georgia Music Educators Association Inc., GMEA inservice, Savannah International Trade & Convention Center, multiple properties, 2000.

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immaculate 5 Br,...

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Memorial Stadium...

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While he was in his office seething, his employee had been out telling everyone else about Phillip's behavior.

Phillip was looking bad, and his employee was practically a hero.

To be successful in the workplace, you can't afford to lose the respect of others. When you do, you sacrifice credibility and professionalism.

It doesn't matter how trivial the issue or how lowly the employee, there is never a justifiable case for a display of temper.

If you find yourself in a situation with the potential for heated emotions, back off.

Postpone addressing the issue or the employee until you have had time to cool down and to reflect on the challenge facing you.

If you take the time to consider your words and your actions, you'll never have to apologize for or explain your lack of courtesy and respect.

You will enhance your career and your relationships in the process.

Lydia Ramsey is a professional speaker and the author of Manners That Sell. You may contact her at www.mannersthat sell.com or 353-5561.

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Questions or Comments - webmaster@savannahnow.com