

Wolf in Sheeps Clothing - part two (getting the right level of response to the right level of blocking)

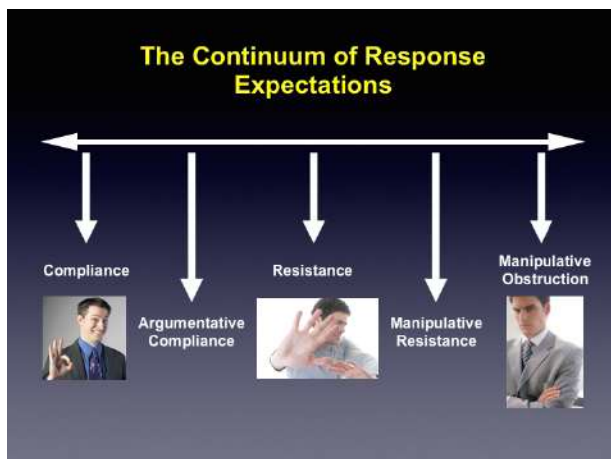
Following on from the first article Martin Smith, specialist training consultant and lead expert in dealing with extreme and persistent and difficult behaviour in the workplace, continues to look at this most difficult of personality types in the workplace. This is the individual who simply blocks any efforts you take to resolve issues and continually sees themselves as either always right or as the victim of harassment, bullying and victimisation by their manager or various elements of the organisation, be it subordinates, peers, senior managers or HR professionals.



Over the past decade Martin has developed and delivered a unique programme which looks at identifying, understanding and managing this type of person. This is the person that you do not have difficult conversations with, you have impossible conversations with. The course has been, excuse the pun, extremely popular. Why is this? Many reasons but one that continually stands out is the way these people are managed - or not, as is often the case. Organisations have tried everything and Martin will often hear the words “nothing is working”.

Part of the problem is what Martin would term “being stuck in default position” In the first part of this article we spoke about the levels of response the EDB (a simple abbreviation of the term we use in the programme to define extreme difficult behaviour) would employ when challenged or just simply asked to do their job.

This response continuum as shown in the slide below needs to be matched with a continuum of different management style / response. This is where managers and organisations often get stuck in default position. This is the position / style they most often use with staff and the style most often trained in management and HR programmes. This type of response is mostly on the left hand side of the continuum - there is absolutely nothing wrong with adopting the more collaborative / facilitative style of management. In fact most members of staff both easily respond and appreciate this type of approach.



The problem is that the EDB too often gives a style of response towards the right side of the response expectation continuum (also detailed in the slide below). In order to effectively respond to levels of manipulative resistance and obstruction it is essential that both the manager and the organisation are able to move along the management style continuum.

Many will say, and have said, in the EDB programme that this will make things worse. Martin will agree with this statement, in the first stage, but by taking a stronger stance it is possible to manage this type of behaviour. One thing Martin consistently tells delegates is that the approach may cause issues but no action or staying at normal default position will simply allow things to get worse.



Taking more direct action has its risks and needs careful management at all levels of the organisation and so within the EDB programme we look at strategies to manage this in particular the use of Martin's "Action Matrix" which we will look at in some detail in a future article on this subject.

For more information contact Martin via his website www.taking-control.co.uk or through his LinkedIn or Facebook page #itcconsultingltd.