

# TOUCHY, FEELY, MY BUTT

I recently attended an out of state meeting with leadership from many Comm Centers. It seemed there were two types of leadership represented.

1) The empowered leadership who make decisions and follow the needs they felt needed attention (spend money as they saw fit) Able to define needs, based on their own expert assessment and generally had the power, authority and respect to get those needs filled when possible.

2) Unsanctioned leadership who recognized the very same needs as those above but had to defer power to another decision maker. At times their expert assessment was not respected or not honored and their needs were not met. Often these leaders felt it was necessary to mutate their message to be palatable to the decision makers (Chiefs, Boards). They felt others were in control and they simply had to do the happy dance, or the deceptive dance to get their needs met.

The subject at hand was training and what type of training was needed and what was available, what was acceptable to the Chiefs of the world and what was not. There was discussion about the power of many decision makers to



simply say no while not understanding the true needs for different types of training. It was all about perception and beliefs about the real needs of the Communications Center.

Here is an example.

- 1) Hostage Negotiations
- 2) Overcoming Negativity

Without any hesitation, the Chief approved the hostage negotiation class for the center and questioned the other as foo foo. In eleven years on 911 I handled ONE hostage negotiation and I had training for this and it was good. I have no idea if the training affected how I talked to this man — I just showed I cared. But the class was very interesting and I appreciated it and getting to go to training.

DAILY I dealt with negativity on the floor. I didn't know what to do about it, I got sucked into negativity and it affected my life stress, my health, my relationships. As a Supervisor I felt powerless and clueless what to do. I had NO tools, insight, ideas, or knowledge about this phoneme and if there had been training I would have benefited greatly from some tools, advice or even to be able to vent my own feelings.

Those who come through the ranks recognize the need for both types of training — the practical skills and the 'other' skills — the ones many people overly masculine in their approach to life and leadership value little. So, the effect is a continued and even downward spiraling of interpersonal relationships, wellness, communications, increase in conflict, sick leave, turnover. Would a class on Hostage Negotiations or Incident Command help with this? Only to give people a break — to return to the same ways, methods, interactions that didn't work before they left.

In determining where to spend a training budget there are questions to ask. "What problem am I trying to solve?" "What needs have I noticed?" "What is happening that

should not be happening?”

“What needs to improve?”

“What don’t they know.” “What are they asking for?”

Learning is a change of perception, behavior or attitude brought about by acquiring new information, experience or insight.

Therefore training is about changing or ensuring something. What do you want to change or insure. In Hostage Negotiations you want to ensure that the call is handled with skill and techniques — even if it happens once in a career. Yet the perception about what is needed in training may differ from those who live there and those who make the final decision.

What is so difficult about this? How do you change old mentality, stiff ways, people who are not listening or do not value your expertise or needs? Trust the wisdom from the world — you will supply the way to use that wisdom with your own nay-sayers as you study the problem

and explore solutions that fit your unique situation.

*“When you come to a roadblock, take a detour.” — Mary Kay Ash*

Find alternate ways to accomplish your goals without asking for permission or support from the non supportive.

*“Press on: nothing in the world can take the place of perseverance. Talent will not; nothing is more common than unsuccessful men with talent. Genius will not; unrewarded genius is almost a proverb. Education will not; the world is full of educated derelicts. Persistence and determination alone are omnipotent.” — Calvin Coolidge*

Once you are told NO, mutate and come back with the same request. Once you are told NO again, ask how you could re-package it to be accepted as you feel it is vitally important. Do this with passion.

*“I must uphold my ideals, for perhaps the time will come when I shall be able to carry them out.” — Anne Frank*

Believe in your standards and in your expertise. If you feel it is needed, don’t question it, it is needed. Hold the higher ground and continue to hold the intent to be heard without being threatening.

*“You can measure a man by the opposition it takes to discourage him.” — Unknown*

We often see burnout as the result of knowing what is needed, what is possible and the feelings that it is never going to be reachable. It will eventually — patience and trust of a passionate one.

*We must remember that one determined person can make a significant difference, and that a small group of determined people can change the course of history.” — Sonia Johnson*

You have allies, you have professionally powerful people that you know, use them, ask for help.☺



## Rethinking Training? THINK STARZ!

*Reduce training time.*

*Increase skills*

*Involve Trainer creativity*