

Well, at DDTP and me, on a personal basis, **I am asked for my opinion** on certain situations **and my input is very valuable. I am included in very important decisions.** I am also giving guidance that is a big help and also a great learning experience. I am told that I do a good job and I also been rewarded in many ways, just not to include monetary awards. The leaders that I have are great, I learned so much over the past few years and I learn more and more each day. Just by a **simple thank you and having patience to teach me and put me in the right direction, is a reward in itself.**

Penny Graff, DDTP



I think that a good leader demonstrates a valued employee by **respecting that person for his or her personal or professional opinions concerning work related issues.** I think a good leader needs to **listen to each and every one of his/her employees carefully** and set aside any of his/her personal feelings towards that person. I think a good worker leader needs to **express his gratitude** once in a while in what a great job one or all of his/her employees do for them and **give the employee the credit,** not to take the credit. I think a good leader needs to **initiate conversations** with his/her employees from time to time and ask on a one on one basis their **personal opinions on how they would change the work force for a better working environment.** A good leader tries to **see the positive of any given situation** rather than possessing a negative reaction. A smooth running working area is a great example of a good work leader who values his/her employees and sees the positives of each individual, and if there are any **negative issues,** they need to be addressed by the work leader and employee in a **private matter.** A good work leader needs to **hold confidence in his/her self and their employees at all times.**

Leslie Turner, DDJF

Card Games and Relationship Books Play Key Role in DDC's Mentor Program Both Prove the Importance of Effective Communication

By Jessica Walter-Groft, DDC Command Affairs

Since deploying the Mentor Program last year, employees of the Defense Distribution Center (DDC) have had opportunities to grow and succeed in a whole new way.

I had the chance to sit in on two mentor-protégé sessions recently to see how things were progressing. At first I was perplexed, then later intrigued, to learn what methods had been successfully used for skill building.

I met Kim Shearer, a Supply Management Specialist in DDC's Commercial Activities Program Office, outside of her mentor's office as she waited for him to wrap up another meeting. In his new role as the Chief of the Business Planning Division of DDC's Logistics Operations Directorate, Tony DeVito has very few open spaces on his day planner, but he always looks forward to his meetings with Kim.

As we sit down, Kim opens her folder, and from atop the *DDC Protégé Handbook* and the *DLA Mentoring Matters* booklet, she slides her Protégé Action Plan Worksheet across the table to DeVito. They have already determined her goals: to better balance work with family and to build her briefing and leadership skills.

DeVito is impressed with her progress, as she has just completed a leadership training seminar that used a unique exercise to prove how important effective communication can be.

"It was a card game," she explained. "Each team was told how to play with different rules and no one was allowed to talk. The winner from each team got to play another winner from one of the other teams. Because we all had been given different directions and we weren't allowed to communicate, the whole thing broke down."

Shearer described the players hitting the table, throwing their cards and getting very angry. "The exercise demonstrated how ineffective communication causes constant conflict."

Communication, no surprise, is a popular skill protégés wish to build as it is the backbone of everything we do in the workplace. Done well, it can promote respect, build trust and make us more productive members of our teams. Ineffective communication, however, leaves us unsatisfied, frustrated, frazzled and fit to be tied.

DDC Security Manager Sharon Heiner found a bit of light reading to be the cosmic key to helping her protégé navigate the galaxy of workplace communication.

"We started by reading John Gray's *Men Are from Mars, Women Are from Venus: A Practical Guide for Improving Communication and Getting What You Want in Your Relationships*," says Heiner who believes the information in the book is invaluable for resolving common interpersonal conflicts since it explains how to work with and understand different communication styles.

Her protégé, Brenda Smith, Financial Program Analyst in DDC's Financial Operations Directorate, agrees. "This book is about relationships, and it's amazing how similar communicating in personal relationships is to the communication that we do at work."

In Smith's position, she acts as a liaison between managers and the workforce, and that makes it necessary for her to communicate with a lot of people on many different levels.

The next book Heiner and Smith will read is also penned by John Gray – *How To Get What You Want at Work: A Practical Guide for Improving Communication*, another educational read on how women and men misunderstand and misinterpret each other in the workplace.

Card games and relationship books—there you have it—the secrets to communication success. You'll not only become a more effective communicator, but you'll improve your Pinochle game and your love life, too.

If you would like to become a mentor or a protégé, contact DDC's Equal Employment Opportunity Office (EEO) at 717-770-4128 (DSN 771-4128) or visit the EEO page on the DDC intranet for more information.

Although becoming a protégé does not guarantee promotion, it does provide many opportunities for professional growth. As DeVito puts it, "The sky's the limit."



Shearer and DeVito discuss strategies for achieving goals.



Heiner (left) suggested books for her protégé to read in order to better understand how people communicate.

DDC Seeking Aspiring Leaders

By Polly Charbonneau, DDC Command Affairs

Are you a motivated self-starter? Would like to improve your managerial skills? Be better at working in a team? If you answered yes, then the Aspiring Leader Program may be for you.

Part of the US Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Graduate School, the Aspiring Leader Program prepares federal employees at the GS 5-7 levels for positions as team leaders, supervisors, and managers. The program strengthens basic competencies in managerial skills such as oral and written communication, problem solving, leadership skills, self-direction, customer service, and decisiveness.

The Defense Distribution Center (DDC) has been participating in the program since 2000 and has several graduates around the headquarters and the distribution centers.

"The course really inspires one to strive for goals," said Dennis Amrhein, Defense Distribution Depot Susquehanna, Pa. (DDSP) Supply Technician, "both at work and personally. The program overall provided me many opportunities and allowed me not only a better picture of DDSP and DDC, but gave me an opportunity to better development my skills and learn more about myself."

Developmental assignments include some opportunities to consider your career in the long-term. Participants must interview a minimum of three federal managers at the GS 11-13 levels. These interviews

Good leaders set the pace of work and communicate verbal and written instructions received from their supervisor to the employees. They also train the employees in areas that require additional technical information or guidance. Good leaders recognize exceptional performance from their employees and reward them with monetary and non-monetary rewards.

Vincent Grace, DDDC

By telling them they are doing a good job, every now and then give them time off awards. Give them a monetary award. Have a picnic for them. Give them a letter of appreciation.

Patricia Freeman, DDJF

I think without a doubt a good leader acknowledges valued employees through recognition. **The recognition doesn't have to be elaborate but should always be timely.** It's important that the employee feels they are "Part of the equation" and that they are not being lost in the shuffle.

Rory Pitts, DDPW

Sometimes good employees have not been given the opportunity to work on high profile projects and due to that, have not stood out when awards are given. If a leader appreciates an employee for their steady devotion to their work, the good leader gives **words of encouragement** occasionally to let them know that their work is appreciated. Sometimes it is easier for a leader to only talk to an employee about their work when they have made a mistake instead of letting them know that they have been doing a good job.



Tracey Miles, DDCT

DLA Goal #2

Structure internal processes to deliver customer outcomes effectively and efficiently.

