

## Keep Your Valuable Yet Difficult Staff: People Can Change

One major failing was keeping Lori from being promoted to VP. Despite trying, Lori just kept getting irritated when she thought people were blaming her. And her irritation wasn't subtle. Lori didn't get loud, but her voice got tense, she dug in her heels and spewed justifications right back at the accuser. It never ended well.

Her CEO decided that Lori had such high value to the company that they just had to try everything before they gave up on her. One of the other senior managers had worked with me on a similar matter and suggested they mandate that she get coaching with me.

Mandates rarely work well so I requested a meeting with Lori's CEO and helped outline a series of steps he might initiate. He agreed to tell her she was a candidate for promotion, and that her style during conflicts was getting in the way of achieving that goal. He said that her approach had to change and suggested that a good place to start was meeting with me a couple of times to explore possible options.

Lori was reluctant and defensive and felt she had no good option but to call me. Not a great way to start, but one I'm prepared to negotiate. We agreed to meet to discuss different ways she might address her CEO's concerns. I was clear that it would be her decision whether or not to continue to work together beyond the first meetings.

Insisting that valued employees "get help" can be a hard sell. If you're having trouble figuring out how to get an important person to address tough issues, I can help you with a few simple ideas and some practice walking through what you might say. Don't give up because you're uncomfortable or because you think people can't change.

If you have someone who could use some fresh ideas about how to change their attitude or presentation, give me a call and let's get them started.