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"Quotes"

"While it may seem small, the ripple effect of small things is extraordinary."

~Matt Bevin

"I'm realizing that a lot of people don't really care what happens to other people as long as it doesn't affect them."

~Madeline Brewer

"I love people that work with passion and love. When you make choices that way, there's reverberations, consequences. That's what I'm interested in, that echo, that ripple of choice."

~Derek Cianfrance

"Everything we do affects other people."

~Luke Ford

"I think we should all have a responsibility not to affect other people in a negative way."

~Ali Hewson

"Everything you say and do is having an impact on others."

~Barry Manilow

"The idea that everything is purposeful really changes the way you live. To think that everything that you do has a ripple effect, that every

Ripples

Although I grew up a city kid, I have fond memories of getting away during the summer and enjoying nature. Maybe it was the calm or the beautiful colors that contrasted the urban din and gray. (It certainly wasn't the country critters; I could have done without them!)

A must-do for us on any outing was locating a lake or pond so we could skip rocks. Which rock would travel farthest? Whose made the biggest splash? Which created the most ripples?

Hmm, ripples...

It's hard to imagine that a single rock, hitting the water in just one spot, could cause waves that flow out one-fold, five-fold, ten-fold, or more.

In this edition of *EA Insights*, let's think about workplace ripples. This month we explore how we, like rocks, can cause ripples in the way we function...in the ways that our work styles -- for good or for ill -- can create waves that have far-reaching impact.

Ready? I've found a good skipping rock. Let's go!

All the best,

June

June Melvin Mickens
Executive Advantage, LLC

Do You Manage Your Impact on Others?

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Honestly, I toyed with a few titles for this month's article. But, when all was said and done, it seemed most appropriate simply to ask the question.

Do you manage your impact on others?

You see, as much as we'd like to think of ourselves as self-contained entities... people who work in a world of three -- me, myself, and I -- we are not and do not. Our decisions and efforts, even those that seem largely isolated, often still impact others. But, do you know what that impact is and, quite frankly, do you care?

Our company has created a 360° assessment instrument that we've used effectively with people at various professional levels. One statement in the tool's *Organizational Knowledge and Commitment* section allows reviewers to offer impressions on whether the person being assessed appears to understand how his/her decisions and behavior affect the work of others. Perhaps as no other portion of the



tool, this one often elicits surprising ratings, interesting comments, and important fodder for later coaching sessions. So, let's devote a few moments to consider these two sides of an individual's organization-wide impact.

Do you think beyond your own business unit?

Clearly, the ability to make sound decisions is a critical trait for workplace success. And, that decision-making begins with wise choices about the specific tasks on your individual to-do list.

No matter how good you are at grappling with what's on the plate in front of you, you falter when your only concern is how your decision making relates to you and/or your department. Wherever you happen to sit in the organization, you increase your effectiveness when you also recognize the cross-unit and the organization-wide impact of decisions. Think about it. Very rarely are the effects of choices limited to the place in the organization where those choices are made. Most produce a ripple of some sort that can help or hinder efforts elsewhere.

One who demonstrates leadership qualities thinks beyond what a decision means for me and mine. Instead, the true leader's mindset appreciates each decision's larger impact and seeks to resolve each challenge in a way that yields the best overall result, not simply a self-focused or unit-centric outcome.

Do you behave in a way that negatively impacts others unnecessarily?

Okay, naivety aside, we all know that there are times when it's quite clear that there's a short straw and that someone has to pull it. That's not the issue here. Rather, the second portion of this effectiveness rating area relates to the point at which the rubber meets the road -- your actions. In other words, by your actions, are you rigging the container so others routinely are on the wrong side of the straw pull?

Be honest.

-- Do you wait until the 11th hour to produce without giving thought to what that delay means for those who must take your late product and scramble to tackle their pieces in order to meet the deadline?

-- Do you ignore review, comment, and open discussion periods only to stonewall a vote later rationalizing that you have not fully considered the matter?

-- Do folks find themselves pushing pause in their workday to attend meetings, only to find you absent because your online calendar was not updated for accurate scheduling?

Conduct has a ripple effect. What you do touches others, even when it may seem that you're acting independently. Again, sometimes the impact on others cannot be helped, but often it can. (That's why we ask about negatively affecting others *unnecessarily*.) Moreover, when others begin to expect this sort of conduct from you, you're establishing a pattern. When you're on the team, the message is: "Hold on." They prepare themselves because they sense that a hit is coming. It's frustrating because they know that the hit could be avoided with a little advance planning from you. And, what's discouraging, or sometimes infuriating, is that they feel you don't care that your actions frequently cause a hit to others. When this becomes your reputation, then there's a problem.

Managing your decision making and your conduct as it relates to others requires continual awareness and skill development if you your goal is to function effectively in the workplace. So, I ask again...

Do you manage your impact on others...effectively, that is?

Perhaps even more importantly, would those around you see your decision making and behavior as you do?

Managing your impact well is important both to individual and organizational success. However, to do that, it is important to first to know how well you are doing and then to devise and implement strategies to improve continually. Could you use some help in this area? If so, call on us at **Executive Advantage**. Let us assist you to take a status check and support your ongoing growth in managing impact. [Contact us today](#).

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At **Executive Advantage**, we are committed to providing results-based business and management consulting, leadership development, and coaching support. We partner with business leaders to build healthy, well-functioning organizations, where goals are met and people thrive. We also partner with individuals to create professional (and personal) lives with clearer direction, improved results, and greater balance.

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word that you speak, every action that you make affects other people and the planet."

~Victoria Moran

"In each action we must look beyond the action..., and at others whom it affects, and see the relations of all those things."

~Blaise Pascal

"Yes, I do believe that there is ... a ripple effect upon everything everybody does, and they have positive consequences and negative consequences."

~Kiefer Sutherland

"Though some choices may slow our journey, every path we take gives us more familiarity with how our actions affect the world around us, giving us more opportunities to learn how to help ourselves and others."

~Matthew Underwood

"Everything we do, even the slightest thing we do, can have a ripple effect and repercussions that emanate. If you throw a pebble into the water on one side of the ocean, it can create a tidal wave on the other side."

~Victor Webster

"I always try to remain aware that what affects others affects me, too."

~Forest Whitaker