

# Honest talk does wonders

*Published in the Vancouver Province, Working, August 1, 2010*

Q: “I’m a newly promoted manager in a five diamond hotel and have encountered a challenge with a staff member who works on a service oriented team. I’ve had complaints from other employees about how she treats them; bossy, arrogant and condescending. I’ve had positive comments from guests about her as she knows how to provide great service. I know I have to address this and don’t want to discourage her. I thought you might have some advice?”

A: She obviously communicates well with guests. A person’s strengths, as in her great customer service skills, can come across negatively in stressful situations or if the person is not feeling confident. You do need to have a conversation to discover what’s going on for her — there could be issues you’re not aware of. As a new employee, performance type conversations should be an ongoing part of her training, so set up a meeting to talk about her performance.

Let her know what you’ve noticed about her behaviour with her peers and try to understand her point of view — how is she feeling about her work and her relationships with her coworkers? Make sure she knows what you expect in terms of her interactions with guests and fellow employees. Give her some positive input regarding the service she’s providing to guests.

Together, create a plan to improve her interactions on the job by building on her service know-how to help her shift her behaviour. How would treating her peers like a five diamond hotel guest impact her work relationships? Request she commit to doing one thing differently and establish a followup meeting to review her progress.

© Lisa Caswell, Being A Better Leader 2010