

THE CIVILITY LEADERSHIP SERIES



# MANUFACTURING CIVILITY

People Treatment  
as a Continuous  
Improvement Strategy

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## **Incivility at work is real. And it is real in manufacturing.**

According to a Gallup *State of the American Workplace* report, 75 percent of manufacturing workers are disengaged at work. In fact, the manufacturing industry, according to the Gallup report, is the least engaged industry across sectors.

A closer look at the research reveals that a primary cause for this disengagement is poor leadership. Specifically, supervisors and managers with low social acuity are co-creating uncivil workplace cultures.

*Manufacturing Civility* provides a 6Cs formula for solving people problems. These strategies result in continuous improvements that shift workplace culture away from traditional toxic and uncivil organizations towards healthier, more positive workplace experiences for employees in manufacturing environments.

The “people-treatment” aspects of the proprietary *Manufacturing Civility* methodologies have been co-created by 20 year, internationally recognized experts in the field of civility training—Lewena Bayer, CEO of Civility Experts Inc., and a 20-year veteran of the manufacturing industry, Christian Masotti. The tried and true methodologies shared in the book have been proven to impact individual morale, wellness, and outlook in organizations across sectors, including manufacturing.

Civility—when specifically applied to how people are treated at work, is a continuous improvement strategy that has been proven to have measurable impacts on:

- Retention and engagement
- Performance
- Workplace wellness and safety
- Innovation, creativity, and problem-solving
- Bottom-line business metrics, including profitability



Christian Masotti



Lewena Bayer

## **Manufacturing Civility – Chapter 1 – The Current Culture**

*“I would not describe the typical manufacturing plant as a nice place to work. While some of the people might be nice some of the time, the workplace itself is not very nice. Manufacturing is dirty work under harsh conditions, tight timelines, constant change, and ever-increasing demands to do more with less. As a result, the overall tone of the environment is far from nice”. C. Masotti*

To say most manufacturing organizations are “not nice” is a bit of an understatement. In many cases words like, “unhealthy”, “oppressive”, “toxic” and “uncivil” might be more accurate. Of course, there are workplaces that strive to be more civil, manufacturing organizations included, and some are successful in achieving this. Knowing however that the research shows that the manufacturing industry, according to a recent US-based Gallup report, is the least engaged occupation.

As referenced in the Introduction, much of this disengagement can be attributed to incivility in the workplace. The symptoms of this incivility manifest in many ways and reflect behaviors that are broadly categorized as stress or depression related.

### **What is workplace “incivility”?**

“Workplace incivility”, can be defined as low-intensity deviant workplace behavior with an ambiguous intent to harm. (Schilpzand, Pater, Erez). The fact that, by definition, the intention and/or motivation to be uncivil is both individualistic and subjective in interpretation, makes it difficult to manage in many workplaces.

That incivility is not objective like harassment or workplace bullying where the intent to harm is unambiguous and clear is in and of itself one of the reasons the team at Civility Experts Inc. suggests that workplace civility is rampant e.g., it is sometimes difficult to define what is ignorant versus rude versus uncivil versus unethical versus illegal, etc. This difficulty in defining the terms is also one of the reasons many workplaces, even when aware of the issue and of its significant impact, opt not to address it. This failure to resolve incivility in the workplace carries sometimes dire consequences. For example. Research by Pearson and Porath shows that 45 percent of the workforce reports that incivility negatively impacts their motivation and 66 percent report that incivility negatively impacts their ability to perform their job.

### **What does a toxic workplace look like?**

Here, according to Forbes.com are 10 general signs of a toxic culture:

- Interactions are more formal than friendly, e.g., not much communication, not a lot of smiling, joking, reinforcing, or positivity. Basically no one seems happy to be there. There is no community. The few people who laugh and joke with one another get suspicious sideways looks from people who are too afraid to let their hair down.

Outspoken employees and non-traditional thinkers don't last long. They get disgusted and leave or they are invited to leave when their style clashes with the status quo.

- Employees seem very concerned about titles, job descriptions, and levels in the hierarchy. Power is more important than the mission being pursued. Status, visibility and perks are more valued than success, and even more important than team trust.
- Rules and policies are more important than good judgment. People are afraid of breaking the rules, so they keep their heads low and try not to step out of line.
- Managers and employees make up two completely separate groups that seldom interact. When they do interact it's usually one-way communication e.g., manager telling employees what to do. There is very little give and take and very little collaboration.
- Employees show they are unhappy, and everyone knows morale is low, but nobody talks about it openly. Human Resources is ineffectual or oblivious to the rotten culture and are not a valuable resource to employees.
- Employees have little to no latitude in performing their jobs. Every procedure is spelled out for them. If they are rewarded at all, they are rewarded for hitting their goals and following the rules, but never for having breakout ideas or pushing for much-needed changes -- activities that could get them fired. Infractions and demerits are talked about, but there is little to no recognition of extraordinary efforts or triumphs.
- Employees do not speak up even when they are presented with impossible goals, ridiculous plans or patently stupid ideas they are expected to implement. They say nothing, but later they complain to their friends about the stupid ideas and foolish goals.
- The communications network is the informal grapevine versus any type of official company communication.
- Doors slam and whispered conversations take place in stairwells. Everybody is concerned with his or her own spot on the company's constantly shifting, internal stock index. They ask one another "Does the big boss like me? What did he say about me?" and fret and worry about who's up and who's down. Fear is palpable.

One could argue that some, or all, of these general symptoms are present in organizations across sectors, and sadly this is true. Many leaders in manufacturing however – because their tendency is to focus on process first and people second - don't recognize that where these general symptoms are obvious, they hint at significantly more damaging, deep-rooted "people-treatment" problems. Ignorant of the far-reaching impacts of incivility, many manufacturing leaders fail to observe and acknowledge the manifestation of these

people-treatment problems as measurable (and reparable) symptoms of incivility. And more importantly, managers and supervisors fail to accept that they play a crucial and primary role in creating cultures where incivility is the norm.

*“People-treatment is a civility term that refers to an overall attitude about what constitutes a fair and good way of interacting with people. It includes how you speak, nonverbal gestures, the extent to which you are empathetic, and how you define honesty and integrity”.* L. Bayer

Some common and measurable symptoms of incivility have been identified over 20 years of field work by Civility Experts Inc.

### **Civility Symptoms Survey**

- Persistent miscommunication, such as non-responsiveness, misunderstandings, arguments, and withholding of information
- Diminished morale and/or mood, e.g., negative attitudes, lack of energy
- Poor engagement, lowered confidence and low trust
- Measurable lack of accountability
- Decreased productivity
- Increased lateness and laziness
- Reduced quality and quantity of output
- Diminished collaborative effort
- Increased customer service complaints, e.g., due to visible decrease in product and/or service standards
- Growing gap in alignment between personal and/or corporate goals and leadership’s abilities
- Lack of integrity and ethics
- Inability to adapt effectively to change
- Inability to navigate cultural and communication barriers
- Increased difficulty recruiting and hiring competent personnel
- Difficulty identifying and practicing core values
- Lowered common sense
- Failure to attend to social cues and follow social conventions
- Increased disengagement e.g., as indicated by difficulty maintaining relationships, less involvement in social, civic and community events

There are certainly workplaces more toxic than manufacturing. And there are manufacturing organizations (for example Toyota) that have successfully built healthier, kinder, more civil workplaces than what is traditionally seen in the sector. Statistically, however manufacturing is still perceived as one of the “toughest” environments. Whether people recognize “tough” as uncivil depends on a range of factors, but the research suggests that relative to other industries, there is a great deal of work to do in manufacturing related to improving workplace culture.

A recent survey conducted in the US, found that the main contributors to incivility in the workplace are:

- senior employees(6%)
- denial of worker rights (24%)
- Internet access (25%)
- young employees(34%)
- competitiveness (44%)
- economy (46%)
- employees(59%)
- leaders in the workplace (65%)**

Research aside, it isn't hard to understand that in traditional manufacturing environments where hierarchy is well-embedded, and what can be described as old-school approaches to leading people are common practice, why leadership is a critical piece of the incivility puzzle. Maybe it's because manufacturing has traditionally been male-dominated, or because the work is perceived to be strenuous or physical and the conditions tough, that the tendency has been for leadership to be "rough" on their teams. By rough we refer to behaviors perceived as stereotypically "male". No weak behaviour tolerated. No crying, no touchie-feelie nonsense, and no acting like you care about anything other than getting the job done. Basically no "nice" is expected or allowed. Nice is for the weak.

In traditional manufacturing environments, you need to show you are not weak. Fitting in often requires being "rough" which might include engaging in uncivil behaviours such as:

- Swearing
- Calling people names
- Ignoring people
- Criticizing people in public
- Walking away when people are talking to you
- Shouting
- Demonstrating physical strength, e.g., punching a wall, stomping, making a fist
- Toughing it out when you experience small injuries
- Crowding others, e.g., getting into their personal space
- Overtalking and/or interrupting
- Rolling your eyes
- Gesturing rudely e.g., giving the finger
- Shutting people down verbally
- Speaking in a harsh tone
- Taking a staunch stance, e.g., wide postures
- Failing to acknowledge others
- Avoiding showing softness, e.g., formal thank you, hugging, too much smiling
- Avoiding apologizing
- And generally, just not being nice.

Some of this behavior might be understood as normal or acceptable by those who live in these organizations, but technically, these are uncivil behaviors which when left unaddressed collectively create a toxic work culture.

As a result of this “be strong to survive” mindset, manufacturing plants are not perceived as great places to work. Sure the noise, the time constraints, the stress, the union aspects, etc. all contribute to a what can be described as a toxic workplace culture, but **the hard truth is that for the most part, the lack of niceness is due to leadership (including supervisors and managers) and their respective attitudes toward what constitutes acceptable “people treatment”**.

“People treatment” is a term coined by Civility Experts Inc. CEO, Lewena Bayer that term that refers to an overall attitude about what constitutes a fair and good way of interaction with people. People treatment includes how you speak, nonverbal gestures, the extent to which you are empathetic, and how you define honesty and integrity. An individual’s idea of people treatment can vary from one context to another

Regardless of why manufacturing culture is the way it is, the fact is...Much of the toxicity in manufacturing (as indicated by the civility symptoms indicated in the Symptoms of Incivility Survey) could be eliminated, if leaders including both managers and supervisors were taught how to be civil when interacting with people.

This opinion is supported by research documented in Careerbulider.com showing that a whopping 58 percent of managers said they didn’t receive any management training. Digest that for a second. Most managers in the workforce were promoted because they were good at what they did, and not necessarily good at making the people around them better. This statistic obviously unveils a harsh reality. We have a bunch of leaders who aren’t trained on how to lead. Consider as well, that if the organization couldn’t be bothered to offer formal training in the technical skills leaders need, how much time and attention do you think they gave to the soft-skills side of leadership competency?

We, Christian Masotti with 20+ years in manufacturing, and Lewena Bayer, with 20+ years working in the field of civility, suggest that if organizations implement strategic training, by way of the **6 Cs Civility Strategy**, they will see continuous improvement related to the people-side of their manufacturing operations.

Specific aspects of people treatment include those on the checklist below. Consider doing a quick check the box assessment of your own people-treatment skills and/or assessing your managers and supervisors.

## People-treatment Self-Assessment

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<input type="checkbox"/> Posture, e.g., I present myself (physically) as open-minded, ready to engage, and approachable
<input type="checkbox"/> Time management, e.g., I show that I understand time is a valuable resource, e.g., don't waste my time or time of others, be on time
<input type="checkbox"/> Expectations, e.g., have clear expectations for oneself and for others
<input type="checkbox"/> Treat people fairly e.g., equal opportunity, use same criteria to measure equally etc.
<input type="checkbox"/> Honesty, e.g., be honest, tell the whole truth whenever possible
<input type="checkbox"/> Tone e.g., I consider tonal elements when I interact verbally with others including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Pace</li><li>○ Word choice</li><li>○ Volume</li><li>○ Timing</li><li>○ Privacy/confidentiality</li><li>○ Emotionality</li><li>○ Impact</li><li>○ Relationship, e.g., accountability and familiarity</li><li>○ Cultural nuances</li><li>○ Risk, e.g., perceptions related to gender</li><li>○ Expectations of listener, e.g., generational aspects</li><li>○ Mode of communication, e.g., face to face, phone, etc.</li></ul>
<input type="checkbox"/> Indication of bias e.g., Am I aware that I change my approach depending who I am interacting with?
<input type="checkbox"/> Common courtesy e.g., eye contact, handshake, proximity, smile, introductions, please, thank you, offering food or beverage, etc.
<input type="checkbox"/> Care with word choice e.g., consider frame of reference
<input type="checkbox"/> Perspectives on role, rank, status, and contribution
<input type="checkbox"/> Communication approach e.g., formal versus informal, conversational versus legal, personal versus professional
<input type="checkbox"/> Willingness to adapt to individual need e.g., if someone needs supports due to physical or physiological barriers
<input type="checkbox"/> Perception of differences e.g., Do I see differences as advantages or as barriers?
<input type="checkbox"/> Ability to show respect e.g., by interacting in a way that leaves the other person feeling valued (I understand that respect is not something people need to earn; we are all deserving of respect because we are human beings)
<input type="checkbox"/> Ability to build rapport e.g., ease and flow of interaction
<input type="checkbox"/> Response in stressful or emotional settings e.g., Do I stay calm? Do I help others be calm? Can I exercise restraint?



<input type="checkbox"/> Ability to build trust and to be perceived as trustworthy
<input type="checkbox"/> Openness, e.g., authenticity and vulnerability
<input type="checkbox"/> Ability to effectively interpret verbal, nonverbal, tonal and contextual cues
<input type="checkbox"/> Situational awareness e.g., recognize factors that might impact people
<input type="checkbox"/> Ability to adapt social style appropriately
<input type="checkbox"/> Cultural competence, e.g., recognize, adapt, and work with differences
<input type="checkbox"/> Emotional Intelligence e.g., be aware of my own issues and hot buttons
<input type="checkbox"/> Ability to empathize and share perspective
<input type="checkbox"/> Ego, e.g., attitude about one's own importance
<input type="checkbox"/> Humility, e.g., ability to acknowledge gifts and contributions of others over focusing on one's own gifts, talents and contributions
<input type="checkbox"/> Willingness to learn
<input type="checkbox"/> Patience e.g., to listen
<input type="checkbox"/> Willingness to apologize
<input type="checkbox"/> Curiosity, e.g., interest in learning and asking questions
<input type="checkbox"/> Readiness to forgive e.g., accept apologies with grace
<input type="checkbox"/> Recognition of human condition, e.g., acknowledge that I can't always understand or know what another person is experiencing
<input type="checkbox"/> Generosity, e.g., ability to give with no expectation of return
<input type="checkbox"/> Systems thinking, e.g., ability to consider impact of actions and decisions
<input type="checkbox"/> Social acuity, e.g., ability to assess and interpret interpersonal connections and cost, benefits and consequences of same
<input type="checkbox"/> Values, e.g., Can I articulate my values if necessary, and do I live my values?
<input type="checkbox"/> Ability to acknowledge and celebrate achievements and contributions of others
<input type="checkbox"/> Positive attitude, e.g., look for the best in people and in situations
<input type="checkbox"/> Responsibility, e.g., take care of myself, don't blame others or expect other to manage me (my daily life or actions or activities)
<input type="checkbox"/> Accountability, e.g., own my own tasks and decisions
<input type="checkbox"/> Service-orientation, e.g., Do I show through my actions that I am "other-focused" and can put needs of others before my own needs and wants when appropriate or required?

### **Six (6) Cs for Manufacturing Civility**

Once an organization has assessed and identified that people-treatment is a causal factor related to incivility in their workplace, the next step is to understand the various factors that contribute to a successful civility initiative. The components are depicted in the graphic below and will be discussed in subsequent chapters.

# “THE CIVILITY IN PRACTICE” MODEL

