



THE MULVANEY GROUP



## COURAGEOUS CONVERSATIONS

# The Mulvaney Group, Inc.

To fix the unfixable. When you're worried that a lawsuit is just around the corner or you are looking at a discrimination complaint. When you need an OD intervention to solve the behavioral issues quickly, effectively and efficiently.

Tim Mulvaney's experience has shown to reduce employee attrition (by 50% for one client), to increase revenues (25% for another), and to reduce turnover costs (\$500,000 for one retained executive).

Some clients include:

- Altria Corporate Services
- Best Buy Company
- Blue Cross Blue Shield of Minnesota
- Brookdale University Hospital and Medical Center
- Cambridge University Press
- Carat USA
- Cargill
- Citigroup
- Collegiate Church Corporation
- Columbia University
- Consumers Union, publisher of Consumer Reports
- Fairview Health Services
- International Truck and Engine Corporation
- Medtronic, Inc.
- Methodist Hospital
- Prudential Financial Services
- RBC Dain Rauscher
- Standard Americas
- United Auto Workers – GM
- United States Tennis Association
- Volunteers of America
- Weight Watchers International



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## “I’m canceling your event”

April 1, 2008

### Courageous Conversations to fix the unfixable

#### April 1, 2008 Coffee Conversations Lessons Learned

*Topic:* Susan has been planning the panel discussion for weeks. She got three senior leaders to agree to be on the panel. Another senior leader jumped in at the last minute to be moderator. But Mike, Susan’s boss’ boss - who is on the panel - decided to cancel the event at 4:00 the night before because Mike decided he didn’t like the new moderator. Susan heard about the cancellation second-hand. She decides to speak to Mike to see if she can change his mind.

- **Have alternatives**

- Susan was willing to offer, and consider, a variety of alternatives. How about I talk to the moderator with your concerns? Maybe we go without a moderator. What about the possibility that I moderate? She is trying to make this event happen. The alternatives help to manage Mike’s concerns and keep the event on the calendar.

- **An intention to dialogue**

- The second characteristic of a Courageous Conversation is to have an intention to dialogue. And to dialogue means listening to the others opinion. Being curious about how your conversation partner sees the issue. Not to dismiss his/her opinion out of hand, but to ask questions for clarity and seek alternatives that have not been considered.

- **Be a peer**

- Another Courageous Conversation characteristic is to be equals in the context of this conversation. There is an obvious organizational power difference between these two people. Mike is Susan’s boss’ boss. And the final decision about whether this event occurs or whether Susan even gets to talk to the new moderator is up to Mike. But that doesn’t mean that during the course of the conversation each person and his/her opinion gets treated equally.

- **Be willing to have multiple conversations**

- Susan and Mike didn’t have time to completely consider whether it made sense for Susan to be the moderator. But it does leave open the possibility of further conversation. As well as further conversation on how to avoid this situation in the future.

- **Avoid the phrase, “I want to be on record...”**

- Susan had been very clear throughout the conversation what her position was. At the very end, when she said, “I want to be on record as saying...” just about derailed the conversation. In the debrief, Mike said it as completely clear what her opinion was and she didn’t need to put that sharp of point on it.