

Are you the *you* or the *us* on the team bus?

 By Prinella Pillay

17 Sep 2019

The privilege I have had over my years within this industry - apart from continued learning - is observing and being exposed to new thinking, new attitudes and new generations of PR practitioners.



Image credit: Roman Fox on Unsplash.

None more than our up-and-coming PR employees, who have taught me about different personalities at work, how to have fun with work and alternate work ethics and styles that differ from my own and my senior colleagues.



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Stop the bus

However, one concern that has always been a needle at my side – lest I committed this cardinal sin myself – is the need to deviate or hide one's mistakes in a time of bad choices or crisis.

Of course, every work environment and culture will dictate the rules of engagement, but I have been head-strong over the years of culling the culture of throwing your team members under the bus. (Note: The situation dictates when one should expose a team member at the risk of the company's reputation or other. This is about general and daily tasks and work commitments.)

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my need to young PR practitioners is that although self-accreditation and promotion is naturally part of the profession, it can come at the loss of team spirit, cohesive engagement and, in extreme cases, isolation, when one practices “under the bus” tactics.

According to my trial and test methods, a basic three-question check-in list can be used as a litmus test:

1. Am I conscious of the effect this will have on the team/team member and me?
2. Will I be gaining or losing more if I behave in this manner?
3. Am I going to be happy with the results of being isolated or marked by the team who very well could retaliate against me or throw me under the bus for other errors?



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Although an extremely difficult personal conversation, as junior teams’ dynamics evolve, it is still the responsibility and onus on team members to dictate the nature of engagement between each other. Certainly, this is also marked by the presence of a team leader and their values and ethics in leading impressionable novices.

So, next time you have the urge to throw blame within the team:

1. Deliberate the three questions.
2. Take ownership of errors and mistake.
3. Trust your team enough to consult with your team members to see if another solution can be found.
4. And be brave, mature and bold enough to take accountability and responsibility.

In the end, this is the only way we develop and master our professional and people management skills within the industry.
We have all been there, and learnt!

ABOUT PRINELLA PILLAY

Courtesy of over 21 years of successful experience in the media, PR and marketing industry, Prinella Pillay is a seasoned PR and Communications specialist. Priding herself in mapping innovative communication programmes and delivering results-driven brand messaging and development, she has effectively contributed to leading blue chip corporates within the FMCG, Retail, Motoring and Finance industries.

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