

Bullfrogs Have It Easy, They Eat What Bugs Them!

By Anne M. Obarski

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People like to do business with people who are like them! People like to work with people who are like them. Then why do 60% of workers hate going to work every day? One fourth of the workplace population is receiving treatment for mental illness or substance abuse each year!

One of the biggest reasons is that people have a hard time getting along with different behavioral styles of fellow human beings. Just like in kindergarten, these people did not get a good grade in, works well and plays well with others!

I have divided people into five unscientific categories. I have named each of these categories after bugs. We all live in the same swamp and we see all of the same bugs and some bug us more than others. We have to either learn to get along with what bugs us or we can be mean and EAT what bugs us.

I personally would like to leave peacefully on the same lily pad. See if you can recognize some of your favorite people or customers or even yourself in the following profiles! Then note some of the ways to communicate better and not let yourself be "bugged".

Bee: This person is driven and has a short fuse. Don't bother them when they have had a bad day! They are industrious and a risk taker. They are the ones who ride the highest and scariest roller coasters. They drive fast. They like the black diamond runs on the ski slopes. They leave short voice mail messages like, "Dave, it's Tim, call me". They read Cliff notes in school. They are abrupt, to the point, demanding and thought to be rude. They do well in management positions. And when they decide to do something to relieve their stress, it is probably something physical.

Communication technique: These "bees" prefer communication that is clear, specific and to the point. To give you an example, let's say you work in the ticket sales booth at a Broadway theater. A "bee" person comes up to the window. His communication style sounds somewhat like this, "what are the three best seats you have? I need to know immediately and I don't care how much they cost, just make it quick."

Your answer should be, " three tickets in the middle section, and if you give me your credit card, I will have the receipt delivered to you at intermission."

Fly: This person is the eternal optimist and everyone's friend. These people are the life of the party

but just like flies, they can be annoying! They are enthusiastic, expressive and talkative. They hold positions on PTA and are always involved in something. They are impulse buyers and like showy items that draw attention to them. They live in the moment so planning or goal setting is not top on their priority list. Spontaneity is their middle name. These people do well in sales or any position that involves a large amount of contact with people. When they are under stress they probably pick up the phone to call someone or maybe just go shopping.

Communication technique: These "flies" prefer conversation. They like to socialize and become your friend. These are also people who are hard to get away from if you are at a social gathering. They like to write very long e-mails and probably forward cute pictures and tear jerker poems. Try to ask for their opinion, they will love to share it with you.

Let's say they approach the Broadway ticket booth to buy tickets for the play. Their communication probably sounds like this, "Hi, how are you? Great night for a show! Have you had a chance to see this show? I bet the costumes are just great aren't they? Do you have three seats near the aisle, because I love to get out first for intermission to see who is here!"

Your answer could be, "yes, here are your tickets right on the aisle. You will be able to see the fantastic costumes and I know you will just love to see the romantic scene from there. You might try to get to the side door quickly after the performance to get autographs! Enjoy the show!!!"

Lady Bug: This person is non-emotional. They are very steady and reliable. They are very patient. It's the mother "lady bug" who takes ten children to the playground, five of which are her own, and never raises her voice. They don't drive very fast and nothing ever seems to be a crisis. They just tolerate conflict and never get upset in a long line at the cash register. If they are under stress, my bet is that they would just take a nap!

Communication technique: Lady bugs prefer communication that is non-threatening and allows them time to think. They like positive assurances and you can count on them to be a team player. I think good secretaries are ladybugs!

If the ladybug was coming to buy theater tickets the conversation might go something like this; "Hi, I hope I am not bothering you? Do you think you could check and see if you have three seats together, anywhere? Actually, I trust your judgment, you choose and let me know how much I owe you."

Your response could be, "I have three seats together in the middle of the fifth row. I have sat in these same seats and I know you will really enjoy the show from there."

Ant: This person avoids conflict and loves information! These are those perfectionists around us. They are also the ones that probably got straight A's in math and love to read all of the directions on how to assemble that bicycle the night before Christmas. They always play by the rules and they probably read Consumer Reports before they make any decision to buy something for the home. Coupons, calculators and comparison shopping are rules they live by. I live with a "ant" and he is what I call a great "bean counter." Number crunchers are usually "ants".

If they are under stress, you just might find them happy to be alone, thinking!

Communication technique: This person is information driven. They like conversation that is straightforward. They need details to make a decision.

This is the person who comes to the theater window and says; "I have 8 minutes to get my ticket

and get to my seat, do you have three seats in the third row on the left side that are no more than \$28.50?" "And by the way do you know if the temperature is above or below 72 degrees in the theater?"

Your response for this person could be, "Yes, I happen to have those exact seats and as I ring those up for you, I will call to check with maintenance on your request and I will have that information for you before you sign the receipt." Ok, maybe this one is a stretch!

The last bug comes as a suggestion from someone who was in my audience recently. He came up to me and said, "don't you think there are some people who are slugs?" After a brief chuckle I laughed and thought, he's right! So I came up with descriptors for a slug!

Slug: This person just exists. It takes a major crisis to motivate them. They are great couch potatoes. They don't have an opinion on anything. They could care less if they ate the same thing everyday or wore the same clothes everyday or drove the same car their whole life until they were buried in it! Change is the worst word in their vocabulary! They probably were the last person to be picked playing "red rover"!

This person would probably never go to the theater. Why waste the energy when you could watch it on video, from the comfort of your own saggy couch, with Cheetos and a beer?

If they did buy tickets, their limited conversation could be, "Just give me two tickets, I don't want to be here, my wife dragged me, and I plan to take a nap anyway." Now I know why beer make such good slug bait!

Did you recognize some "bugs" in your life? Did you realize that people have different needs when it comes to communication? That is why I have a hard time teaching greeting skills to sales associates. The worst thing you can do is to train associates to be a bunch of parrots.

A customer walks in your store and hears your associates say the same greeting to every one who walks in. Example: "Hi, how are you today? If there is anything I can help you find, let me know." Next.

That customer makes the assumption that this is the extent of your customer service. Everyone is basically the same and everyone gets the same service.

So how do you avoid this? Teach your associates to be sales and service spies. Suggest they watch their customers' body language their eye contact and listen to their conversation style. Then tailor your conversation to their "bug" behavioral style.

If they are bees, get to the point. If they are flies, prepare for a long conversation. If they are ladybugs, gain their trust. When you deal with ants, know what you are talking about. And if they are a slug, well pass bug spray!

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