

How To Survive The Donald Trump At Your Agency: A Few Characteristics You Will Certainly Recognize

(Author's Note: This is the 11th in a series of occasional political columns that I'll be writing for CommPRO.biz until Inauguration Day, January 20. Previously, I wrote 17 political columns leading up to Election Day. FYI: My first public relations job was with a political firm, where I worked on local, statewide and presidential campaigns. In this column I write that many agencies have a Donald Trump type executive, and ways to deal with such an individual.)

Arthur Solomon

Donald Trump's nightmarish assault on American democracy and our Constitution is soon to end. Thank God! Hopefully so will his involvement in politics. I never wish poor health on anyone, but I do hope that the soon-to-be former president and would-be dictator never again has a golf game that results in him having less than 200 strokes a round. If that causes him to have high blood pressure or an ulcer, it's his own doing. Instead of playing lousy golf, he could have prayed for forgiveness for the damage he has done to American society.

For many in our business, the flawed Trump characteristics that were exposed daily since 2015 was nothing new, because there was and will still be at least one Donald Trump at your agency.

If you were fortunate to stay at the same PR agency for more than a cup of coffee, as I was before starting out on my own (full disclosure: 10 years at a fairly large agency, no longer in business, before being recruited by the mammoth Burson-

Marsteller firm, where I toiled for almost 25 years) you certainly have known of or worked for the Donald Trump at your agency. It's the supervisors who lie, bullies, threatens, takes all the credit for your good work and blames you for their mistakes.

Here are some characteristics of the Donald Trump at your agency, hopefully not at your expense.

- Have you ever toiled to craft a new client program and when it was completed and ready to be submitted for client approval a higher-up, who added nothing to the program's elements and remained quiet during its crafting, said, "I don't like it. Redo it.?" **That's the Donald Trump at your agency.**
- A supervisor's dismissal of anyone that disagreed with him: **.That's the Donald Trump at your agency.**
- A supervisor's discarding the advice of staffers when crafting a program or media strategies because he/she thinks no one is smarter. **That's the Donald Trump at your agency.**
- A supervisor refusing to admit that things went wrong because of his or her screw-ups. **That's the Donald Trump at your agency.**
- Promoting individuals because of their loyalty. **That's the Donald Trump at your agency.**
- Thinking that lashing out at lower level people will result in their doing better work. **That's the Donald Trump at your agency.**
- Belittling people. **That's the Donald Trump at your agency.**
- Supervisors writing "team concept" reports to management, instead of giving credit to individuals. **That's the Donald Trump at your agency.**
- Supervisors rejecting ideas from people in their groups. Then making trivial changes to give the impression that they developed all the ideas and let higher management

believe it was so. **That's the Donald Trump at your agency.**

- Supervisors threatening staffers with dismissals for not showing enough loyalty to a manager. **That's the Donald Trump at your agency.**
- Supervisors setting unrealistic time frames for the completion of a project without offering a helping hand. **That's the Donald Trump at your agency.**
- Supervisors giving poor evaluations to people who are smarter than they are for fear of being exposed that they lack the skills of people lower down the ladder. **That's the Donald Trump at your agency.**
- Supervisors making false promises to staffers to keep them from leaving. **That's the Donald Trump at your agency.**
- But, perhaps, the most upsetting Donald Trump characteristic to a low level account staffer at an agency is when a manager resorts to playing office politics, rewarding favorites or drinking buddies, at the expense of those who deserve to be rewarded. **That's a supervisor's Donald Trump trait that many people at agencies have surely witnessed,**

If you are unfortunate enough to report to the Donald Trump at your agency you must protect yourself.

Here are a few ways to do so:

- You can become a supervisor's lackey.
- You can become the office spy and report any griping to management.

But I don't approve doing the above; it's self degrading. Also, you will lose the respect of other employees and when management shifts occur, all your ill conceived hopes for advancement will disappear. *(No one, except the actual Donald Trump, likes a conniver.)*

Instead do the following:

- Keep detailed notes after every conversation or group meeting with your supervisor and write a memo for file.
- If your ideas are constantly being appropriated by your supervisor you must let management know or you will never get the recognition and promotion you deserve.
- Ask a client who complements you to please put it in writing and to specifically mention you in the client's year-end evaluation to agency brass.
- As a last resort, you must go over your supervisor's head by preparing a memo detailing how you have helped accounts and send it directly to top management. This will upset your supervisor. But let's face it. Despite the in-house agency propaganda of "we're all in this together," agency life is similar to being ship wrecked and then trying to out swim chasing sharks, of which there are plenty at your agency.

Remember: At an agency, there are five rules to commit to memory: **1)** It's every person for themselves, because if you can be replaced with someone who will work for a lower salary than you, it's only a matter of time before management will find reasons to terminate you. **2)** On a merry-go-round, there are only so many brass rings to go around. **3)** At an agency, the green eyed jealous monster is alive and thriving at promotion time. **4)** Good work is no guarantee of long tenure and **5)** As Niccolo Machiavelli wrote in "The Prince," "The promise given was a necessity of the past: the word broken is a necessity of the present". Remember that when management makes a promise.

It is also important to understand that H. R. people are not your friends. Their job is to protect the agency. So never complain about being treated unfairly to H.R. personnel. Chances are that you'll be listed as a "complainer" by the H.R. person whose traits are like former Trump Attorney General William Barr.

Yes, in addition to the Donald Trump at your agency, there is also a William Barr type, who is a devotee of another Trump-like person at your firm – Kellyanne Conway, the former Senior Advisor to President Trump, better known as the originator of “alternate facts,” which surly is used often by supervisors at your agency.



About the Author: Arthur Solomon, a former journalist, was a senior VP/senior counselor at Burson-Marsteller, and was responsible for restructuring, managing and playing key roles in some of the most significant national and international sports and nonsports programs. He also traveled internationally as a media adviser to high-ranking government officials. He now is a frequent contributor to public relations publications, consults on public relations projects and is on the Seoul Peace Prize nominating committee. He can be reached at [arthursolomon4pr \(at\) juno.com](mailto:arthursolomon4pr@juno.com) or artsolomon4pr@optimum.net.