Anger at Work

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Hostile emotions inhabit work places ...

Anger ... Aggression ...
Bullying ... Contempt ...
Irritation .. Rudeness ...
“30% of British Workers experience encounters with bullies on at least a weekly basis”

“27% of workers in a representative sample … in Michigan … experienced mistreatment by someone in the workplace.”
Most research is INDIVIDUAL ....

... but these are SOCIAL emotions
General Argument: Emotions are Social Influence Agents


Research in Organizational Behavior
“Emotion Cycles” Argument

One Person’s Emotions

Another … Person’s Emotions

Behavior

Emotions

Attributions

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Current Research Findings

Some One Displays Anger

Focal Person Fatigue and Resources

Performance of Work Tasks

Performance of Unrelated Tasks
Assumption Out There:

Anger Gets You Ahead!
Implicit Assumption: Displaying Anger to Others Gets Them to Do More or to Do Better …

Not Clear How True This Is
What Happens to the People Who Encounter the Anger Displayed by Others?
Emotions Reflect Responsibility

Anger $\Rightarrow$ Other Responsibility

Guilt, Sadness, Shame $\Rightarrow$ Self Responsibility

Lazarus, Smith & Ellsworth: Cognitive Model of Emotions

In Theory Those Who Display Anger Should be Rewarded
Emotions Are Tasks that Require Resources

Weiss, Cropanzano, Beal: Affective Events are Tasks people Work on
Bad Emotions Can Deplete Resources

Social Psychology Findings about Individual Emotion Effects

Concealing bad feelings

Bad Emotions Can Deplete Resources

Concealing bad feelings

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Available Research is about Effects of Own Emotions!

Other Person’s Hostile Emotions

Focal Person Resource Depletion
One Context: Effects of Customer Anger on Customer Service Employees

- **Employee Performance** (quantity, quality of work)

... As Well As

- **Employee Depletion**
Customer Contact Center

Customer request

Employee Task

Handling details.

Multiple folders

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Handling details.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Customer request</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employee Task</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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# Customers Convey Anger/Rudeness

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Polite Customer</th>
<th>Angry – Rude Customer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>My home phone</strong> number changed. Need to <strong>update</strong> it please. My number is 03-7526654. Thank you very much, George Ashley.</td>
<td>It’s such a nightmare to reach you! Your service is just horrible. <strong>Update my home phone</strong> to 03-7526654. George Ashley</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hi please note my request to move me <strong>to the weekend deal</strong>. My password is &quot;Friends&quot;. Thank you, Josh.</td>
<td>I am sick and tired of your lousy service. Move me <strong>to the weekend deal</strong>. Password is &quot;Friends&quot;. Josh.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Data

Undergraduate Students

Training
(15 minutes; rules, tools).

Practice
(6 minutes; no pay).

Real Work
15 minutes; up to 40 customers.
pay for correct work.
Task Performance

requests handled correctly

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>N</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Angry Requests</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>0.46</td>
<td>0.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affect Free Requests</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>0.57</td>
<td>0.12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$t = -2.05, p < .05$
Employee Fatigue after Customer Anger

Reported exhaustion (scale 1-7)

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<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Angry Requests</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>3.52</td>
<td>1.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affect Free Requests</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>2.77</td>
<td>1.13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

t = 2.71, p < .01

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Another Test ...

- Auditory anger ➔ Recall of details
Vocal Anger

Performance with Vocal Anger

Customer Statement:

Angry: “Can you fix my account? I can’t believe your service is so slow and lousy!

Neutral: “Please fix my account. There is an extra charge that need to be fixed”
Anger Usually Vocal

Performance with Auditory Anger

![Performance Success Rate Graph]

- Anger – Neutral: $p < .001$
What Have We Learned?

Some One Displays Anger

Focal Person Fatigue

Performance of Work Tasks
Others’ Anger and Cognitive Resources?

e.g., Influence on Prioritization?

- Some tasks are more important …
- Higher payment for some tasks ($1.00) than for others (25 cents)
Others’ Anger Hurts Ability to Prioritize

Accurate Performance (%)

- **Affect-free Requests**
  - 1.00$
  - 0.25$

- **Hostile Requests**

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Anger and Others’ Cognitive Processes?

Memory?
Weaker after others’ anger?

Recovery?
Longer after others’ anger?
Method

Employees Read Transcripts of Hostile / Non-Hostile Customers.
# Others’ Hostility

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hostile</th>
<th>Affect-Free</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Customer:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Employee:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am having reception problems</td>
<td>Perhaps you have a problem when you</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>with my phone.</td>
<td>are in an area with no reception?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Customer</strong></td>
<td><strong>Customer</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It happens all the time! I need</td>
<td>I don’t know but I think it happens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to know your problems? I am in</td>
<td>all the time. I am in all sorts of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>all sorts of areas. Your phones</td>
<td>areas. There should not be such</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>are bad quality; your technicians</td>
<td>reception problems. It seems to be</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>are lousy. Every time a new</td>
<td>anywhere I happen to be.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>problem pops up?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Slides and Papers Available at http://Anat.Rafaeli.net**
Measures: Recall of Details

When did the person previously call?
- Last week.
- Two weeks ago.
- Three weeks ago
- Four Weeks ago

What was the name of the caller?
- Eric
- George
- Dan
- Sam

What hour of service was caller promised?
- 09:00 – 10:00
- 10:00 – 11:00
- 11:00 – 12:00
- 12:00 – 13:00
Number of Angry Others Influences Ability to Recall

Mean Number of items recalled (1-9)

<table>
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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>N</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0 angry calls</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>6.00</td>
<td>1.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 angry call</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>5.56</td>
<td>1.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 angry calls</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>4.44</td>
<td>1.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 angry calls</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>4.14</td>
<td>1.29</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\((F(3,140)=15.94, \ p<.000)\)
Recovery of Depleted Mental Resources?

Please wait. I need to recover. I am temporarily depleted from the previous customer.
... Need to Press Enter ...

(A Test of Relief Time)
Relief Time in Between Requests...

Customer Request Number

- Enthusiasm
- Neutral
- Anger
What Have We Learned?

Some One Displays Anger

Focal Person Mental Resources

Performance of Work Tasks
How Long Does Effect of Others’ Anger Last?

Effects on Problems Not Related to Anger?
Resource Depletion Suggests Weaker Performance on Subsequent Tasks

Performing Unrelated Task After Another Person’s Hostility

- Ten (10) Raven’s matrices;
- 8 minutes;
- After encounter with anger
Others’ Anger Depletes Focal Person of Resources for Subsequent Task

Mean Number of items Solved (1-8)

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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anger Condition</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>1.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral Condition</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>1.53</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$t = -2.22, p < .05$
Effects on A Different Task?

**Creative Thinking Tasks:**
Solution to Creative Task
Accurate Performance

Creative Task

Angry

Non-Angry

P = 0.0001

N = 36
What Have We Learned?

Some One Displays Anger

Focal Person Fatigue and Resources

Performance of Work Tasks

Performance of Unrelated Tasks
Anger or Arousal?

Performance with Angry and Overly Positive

Customer Statement:

Angry: “Can you fix my account? I can’t believe your service is so slow and lousy!

Neutral: “Please fix my account. There is an extra charge that need to be fixed”

Overly Enthusiastic: Please fix my account. Your service is always so amazing and superb!”
Vocal Anger ➔ Recall of Details
Could it be Arousal?

Performance with Angry and Overly Enthusiastic

Anger – Neutral: $p < .001$

Anger – Positive: $p < .01$
A Note …

Powerful effects with very benign anger!

This must mean … VERY powerful effects with strong anger
How Do We Manage all of This?

IN CASE OF EMERGENCY, BREAK GLASS.
YOU'LL FEEL BETTER.

www.offthemark.com
MarkParisi@jcom.com
Turnover / Carryover Issues

“HAVE YOU FOUND MY HUSBAND’S TEMPER YET?”
Please Visit Me at Technion
Anger in a Team?

One Angry Member

No Angry Member

Virtual Team: Shape Factory Task

- Interdependent teams;
- Electronic communication;
- Negotiate with others to buy and sell shapes;
  - Several rounds;
- Rewards for performance.
- Measures of individual and group performance
  - Measures of emotion
One Angry Member

- One Shape is a Confederate
- Acts Out **Anger** or No-Anger During Game

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Non-Anger</th>
<th>Anger</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“I can’t accept your offer as it is below my production costs”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“It’s a pleasure doing business with you :-)”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I Refuse to accept your offer! It is WAY below my productions costs”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Your offer makes me really ANGRY!!”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
One Person can Hamper Performance!

Weaker Performance With Only One Angry Person

Better Performance When No One Is Angry

Individual Performance

\[ T_{(145)} = 4.22 \]

\[ p < 0.0001 \]
One Person Anger can Hamper Whole Team Performance!

Weaker Performance With Only One Angry Person

Better Performance When No One Is Angry

Group Performance

\[ T_{(47)} = 2.97 \]

\[ p < 0.001 \]