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Maximize Your Time

Setting priorities and managing time effectively is basic to enhancing individual and organizational performance. The pressure to find innovative ways to achieve goals, keep abreast of the competition, respond quickly to customer needs, and enjoy life outside of work is increasingly intense in today's less structured information driven workplace. Meeting the daily challenges of managing professional and personal responsibilities requires a learning strategy designed to meet individual needs.

If you could reduce your staff's wasted time by just five minutes every hour, productivity would jump 8.3 percent! Efficiency levels would also rise as employees began to devote more time to critical tasks.

The advantages of efficient time management are significant. Employees can accomplish more daily, departments and teams can meet project deadlines

more often and your organization can serve more customers without adding staff, equipment, or office space. Managers can spend more time pursuing opportunities and less time struggling with paperwork or attending unproductive meetings.

Two tools to improve time management include Treasure Associates seminar *Time Management for Busy Professionals* and the *Time Mastery Profile*, by Inscape Publishing.

Time Management for Busy Professionals is a proven program for managers and employees to help improve job management skills. Topics include:

- The six steps to managing time
- Time Wasters
- Understanding your critical results
- Maximize your planner
- Communication skills that

make a difference.

This program can change behaviors. It is interactive and allows participants to use their new skills before they leave the session. People leave the program with a clear understanding of effective time management tool and habits.

The *Time Mastery Profile* provides a foundation for understanding your habits and identifying what is important. It provides people with a complete self directed assessment of their current time management effectiveness. The program comes with a workbook that transforms self-awareness into results. It is comprehensive, fast and easy. The profile can also be used alone or incorporated into the seminar.

Time management is an important and popular subject and a worthwhile investment for any organization. For more information on both programs visit www.harassmentprevention.com.

Court to hear on Sexual Harassment Case

The Supreme Court agreed in December to decide how much authority employers have in transferring workers who claim discrimination, a case with potentially costly implications for businesses.

The court is being asked to determine what constitute "materially adverse" changes in employment and whether employers can be found liable for retaliation if they transfer workers who have lodged complaints to jobs with similar pay and job descriptions. Businesses say employee lawsuits alleging retaliation for trans-

fers are becoming more prevalent. They say if the high court sides with workers it will mean even more litigation.

"This is going to have a wide-ranging impact on businesses and in any kind of employment litigation," said attorney Stephen Kinnaird, representative for Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway, which filed the appeal.

The case involves Sheila White, a worker for the railway in Memphis, Tenn., who was hired as a forklift operator. White, the only woman working at the railroad yard, soon complained that her foreman was sexually harassing her.

When the foreman was suspended, White was transferred to work as a regular track worker. The job involved repairing track and was more physically demanding.

After she filed a complaint with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, White was fired before the Christmas holiday in 1997. The railroad eventually rescinded its decision and compensated her for back pay. The discrimination charge was rejected, but she was awarded \$43,000 for the retaliation claim.

The Associated Press December 2005



Free e-newsletters

The editors of *Training* magazine are introducing two free e-newsletters. They provide subscribers with a variety of information important to business professionals involved with training and development. Inside *Training* includes topics such as business intelligence, best practices, training industry news, new products, events, and more.

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It's easy to find flaws in your team members if you're looking for them. Some leaders make this a hobby and then wonder why things at the office no longer feel comfortable. Instead of going on an investigation for problems, how about detecting the good things your team members do?

Many companies are caught up in what I call a negative feedback loop, where people are constantly in defensive mode. In order to break this destructive pattern, you first have to identify it. Sit down with your team and discuss how to relate; and if you agree that there needs to be a

change, you're half way to a solution. The next step in creating some emotional balance in your company culture is to catch your team members doing something right, and tell them when you see it. Sometimes all it takes to break a negative cycle are a few well-chosen words. Getting a pat on the back from the company leader has proved to be a number one motivator of staff members. The tangible proof that this technique works will show up in your bottom line.

The Phelps Group is a great example of how this process works. Joe Phelps, CEO, strongly encourages his team members: "Be clear. Be Concise. Be Kind." These words of

wisdom have helped his company grow to be the number one independent marketing communications company in Los Angeles.

Don't wait for a team member to make the first move toward changing things for the better. Take the initiative and deal with the problem directly by finding a way to give a little extra direction to everyone involved.

Success is about transitioning through problems as gracefully as possible. Having interpersonal issues doesn't mean that you're a failure; it means that you're human. Once you learn to accentuate the positive, your company culture will become inspirational.

Office Solutions Dec 2005

Music To Go: Web-based royalty-free music resources

Do you need music to go with your presentation? Although music can complete a presentation, it comes with a risk. Without permission from the owner of the song you can not legally use any of your personal favorites.

Luckily, there are several websites offering music you can use without fear of copyright infringement. Royalty-free music is offered by a variety of companies today. "Royalty Free" means that you don't have to pay royalties to the artist or owner of the song each time you use it, however purchas-

ing fees. The websites make searching for music surprisingly easy, allowing you to find the best selection to send your message more effectively. There is a wide range of websites to choose from, but here are a couple of the most popular:

Award Winning Music

www.royaltyfreemusic.com

This site delivers a wide music selection suitable for a variety of projects. It's easy to navigate, audition and preview from 674 available tracks. Single tracks are \$59.95 each for high quality MP3 files, but you pay \$1.99 more to download CD-quality files.

The site also has a bonus area that offers free sound effects and music loops.

Freeplay Music

www.freeplaymusic.com

The unique twist is that you can search, preview, select and download MP3 tracks immediately, and you can listen to them all you want for free. Rates depend on specific usage, such as \$25 to use a music track and \$85 to use a track in Microsoft PowerPoint.

Despite the pricey usage fees, it is savings in the long run compared to what owners charge for copyright infringement. Check out www.clearance.com to compare costs. Presentations November 2005

Universal Skill: Listening

What skill enables you to hire the right person, discipline an employee or take a sexual harassment complaint? The skill is listening. When we listen, really listen, the person speaking realizes two things:

- that you have heard and understood the message
- that you cared about them personally.

They feel good about themselves and they respect you more.

There are two kinds of listening. One focuses on content, the other is basic to interpersonal relationships, active listening. Active listening communicates to the other person an understanding of him/her and the situation. It validates the person and their message.

A sister skill is paraphrasing. When you repeat back to the speaker the essence of their words, it is empowering.

Paraphrasing is perfect in performance appraisals, invaluable when conducting an interview, necessary when taking a sexual harassment complaint. To be a good listener, focus your mental energy, use self discipline, and eliminate distractions. The next time you are in a listening situation, pay attention to how well you control yourself and reap the rewards. Written by Linda Treasure

www.harassmentprevention.com

Treasure Associates