

Strong EAP

Employee Assistance Program

February 2012

Stroll into a "Walking Meeting"

A "walking meeting" is exactly what it sounds like—a business meeting afoot. Its dual purpose is to accomplish legitimate work while obtaining exercise. But there's more. Physical activity can make you more alert and increase your productivity. A different environment may inspire your creativity. Fresh air will liven up your senses, and the less formal environment, without a "desk barrier," may improve communication, the flow of ideas, and a more natural comfort with your peers and/or boss. Plan walking meetings just like regular meetings. Use an agenda. Soon you'll appreciate the value of this type of meeting, and you won't look back.

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The Great "Effective or Efficient" Debate

Which is more desirable, being effective or efficient? Don't be fooled. The two are not always compatible objectives. While being effective focuses on doing the right things to complete a task, being efficient is performing or functioning in the best possible manner with the least waste of time and effort.

When beginning a work task, ask yourself whether you should be effective or efficient. Is there a correct mix of the two? This exercise will increase your productivity, maximize quality, and help you avoid perfectionism, procrastination, and missed deadlines.

February Is for Flu

The most significant behavior to help prevent the flu is washing your hands with very warm water and soap. You may recoil at someone's sneeze, but according to the Centers for Disease Control, 80% of infectious diseases—including the influenza virus—are transmitted by touch. You're not likely to avoid touching the miniscule virus-laden

droplets found on surfaces of objects; however, you can wash or sanitize your hands frequently. Flu virus enters your body via your eyes, nose, or mouth after you touch an infected surface. Shaking hands and using doorknobs, a computer mouse, keyboards, and telephones are common actions that transmit flu virus.

New Year's Resolution Checkup

If you made a New Year's resolution last month, you have a ten times greater likelihood of succeeding in your goal than if you had simply "strongly decided" to make the change. You already know that New Year's resolutions are hard to keep, but one social scientist, fed up with New Year's

resolution naysayers, discovered about 45% of the time, people who make resolutions are successful six months later. Those who only were determined to make a change, without a New Year's resolution, eked out only a 4% success rate for the same length of time. (Audio) Source: <http://n.pr/new-years-listen>.

Maintaining a Positive Work Culture

A positive work culture is like a well-tuned automobile—it requires preventive maintenance. Everyone has a role to play. Do you participate in the “preventive maintenance” of a positive work culture? Here are ways positive work cultures thrive: 1) A positive work culture is characterized by employees who consciously place a high priority on mutual positive regard for one another. 2) Employees rigorously guard a positive work culture because they are aware of its powerful affect on job satisfaction and productivity. Google employees are a good example, where the positive work culture is considered paramount. 3) Dignifying differences among staff members is valued, and employees give

attention to how their personal and interpersonal communication reinforces or diminishes a positive work culture. 4) Employees seek ways to resolve conflicts quickly. Stopping toxic work behaviors or practices before they affect productivity and morale is essential. 5) Employees reinforce a positive message of unity. They develop traditions of praising and rewarding successes of peers. 6) Employees are proactive about removing barriers to communication. 7) Employees are encouraged to practice self-awareness and understand how attitudes affect others. They “check” their attitudes before coming to work and while they are on the job.

Leave a Motivation Trail for Employers to Follow

You have the skills and you have the experience, but you didn’t get promoted or picked for the position. What happened? A quick look at discussions among recruiting experts in online forums such as LinkedIn shows that the ability to demonstrate a pattern of motivation is often the winning factor in the hiring process. Showing excitement in a hiring interview is a plus, but are you also leaving a motivation trail for employers to follow? This trail may include directly relevant extracurricular activities and things you do that shout

your passion. Those who hire and promote know, if only instinctively, that motivation is a combination of desirable traits such as passion, energy, availability, ability to invest time, going the extra mile, and willingness to take a risk. Have you let your motivation trail grow cold? Work-life balance issues, depression, burnout, or medical issues can all affect your motivation. Seek support or an evaluation with a counselor if these factors sound like roadblocks to getting your groove back.

Helping Your Coworker Complain Less

Some people who complain without taking action do so primarily to feel heard, which delivers relief. This requires listeners. Unfortunately, you’re a captive audience at work, so not listening may be a tough assignment. Offering a solution is the instinctive response, but it seldom works because it misses the mark—the other person needs to feel heard. The solution: Offer a genuine heart-felt, empathetic response. Also do that each time a complaint comes

forth. Are you thinking this will make the complaining worse? It won’t. Empathy gives your coworker what he or she wants, and almost instantly gives complainers what they want. Try it. For example, if your coworker complains (again) about the terrible location of your company’s office because it’s devoid of convenient lunch spots, don’t head to Mapquest®. Instead say, “It must be awful for you to experience this stress each day.” Notice the result.

The Up Side of a Down Experience

Is it true that “what doesn’t kill you makes you stronger”? New research says probably so. There are exceptions, of course, and certainly continual trauma isn’t a recipe for improved mental health. However, one study showed that those people with no traumatic experiences in their lives at all had more problems than those with some traumatic events did after they had weathered them. Facing a traumatic event requires developing new coping skills—reaching out to others for support, for example. People who face trauma often bounce back and acquire wisdom, improved coping skills, and resilience. Understanding this beneficial effect in the weathering of difficult experiences can give victims of adversity more hope and personal strength in overcoming them. Source: <http://bit.ly/resilience1>.

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