STAND OUT IN A STACK
Get Noticed and Get Hired!

In This Issue:

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TODAY’S INSURANCE PROFESSIONALS • SPRING 2013
2012-2013 President’s Message

Todd Bermont states “So many people out there have no idea what they want to do for a living, but they think that by going on job interviews they’ll magically figure it out. If you’re not sure, that message comes out loud and clear in the interview.”

If you are not sure what you want to do then would your resume pass the ten second test? That is approximately how long an employer will spend glancing at your resume. How do you grab their attention and stand out in a stack of hundreds, possibly thousands of other applicants? In today’s job market where the supply of professionals seeking work almost always exceeds demands, you have to do everything you can to ensure that you get your foot in the door.

Before you apply for that position you need to figure out what you want in life, you need to develop a clear value statement and create a noticeable resume. You need to show the employer what makes you different than all the other applicants. What tangible results that you can deliver? Once you obtain the interview you need to be thoughtful and wise in your questions regarding the position and the company, which is one way that they will remember you.

In this issue of Today’s Insurance Professionals there are tips and tools on how you can stand out in that stack of resumes, how to get noticed and then get hired. There are articles on resume writing, how to be confident when you are in the interview and what to do after the interview.

Your membership in the International Association of Insurance Professionals gives you that professional boost that you need. It offers networking opportunities, alliances with others in the insurance industry, leadership development and skill enhancements.

Employers look at membership in a professional association as a positive thing. The education classes that you take show that you are willing to invest time and resources to make yourself a better employee. The new Certified Leadership Professional (CLP) designation would be another way that you can increase your chance to stand out. The course includes things like Strategic Planning, Project Management Fundamentals, Problem Solving and Employee Accountability, which translates into a better employee.

Also in this issue, you will find information regarding the 72nd Annual Convention on June 6-8, 2013 in Orlando, Florida at the Caribe Royale. Our keynote speaker, Erick Burton, CSP, has some insights on if you are externally or internally focused on the vision of where you want to go. This topic can translate to your membership with the association, your job, or personal life. We have over 16 hours of educational classes, along with our business meetings and of course a bit of fun tossed in.

Success doesn’t come to you – you need to go out and find it, IAIP can help you by Connect Members- Building Careers.

In fellowship,

Penny Haworth-Rich
AU, CPIW
2012-2013 International President
Editor’s Note

Any things go into finding the right job…writing the perfect resume, having a great connection during an interview, dressing the part and so much more. Sometimes, it can all seem very overwhelming. In this issue, we hope to simplify the process, by breaking down each step of the process and providing you with tips and trick to help you “stand out in a stack”.

According to Kerry Hannon from Forbes magazine, here are some great tips to keep in mind when updating your resume:

- Avoid the fancy-schmancy layout, font, and other special effects. Stick to traditional font of Times New Roman, 9 to 12 point size, and black type against a white paper. You might try a different type size for your name and the companies you have worked for, perhaps your title. But try to be consistent. Go easy on boldface type, italics, and underlining.
- Prepare it in a simple Word format that can easily be viewed on most computers. Not a table format or template.
- Use a reverse chronological order. List your present, or most recent job, first, and then work backwards. You state the complete name of the company you work for, or have worked for, and what they do, how long you were there—month and year. Then list the position you held and your accomplishments. You don’t have to use full sentences. Begin with verbs. “Managed company tax reporting, finance, invoicing, purchasing,” for example.
- Get rid of objectives and summary and all that silly stuff. It’s all fluff. An employer doesn’t care about your objective. He cares about his.
- Skip personal information such as married with three kids. Sounds stable to you. But to a hiring authority looking for someone to travel, it may keep you from being interviewed.
- Stories sell. Numbers, statistics, percentages get attention if you put in bold type. Increased profit by this 28%. Came under budget by 30%. If you were born and raised on chicken farm, note it on your résumé.
- Fuzzy key words and phrases should be avoided. These include customer-oriented, excellent communications skills, and creative. These words lack meaning and do absolutely nothing to help you get an interview.
- Use words that refer to titles—customer service, controller, manager, accountant,
- Get the photos off your résumé. You are looking for a job, not a date.

In addition to the tips and information found in this issue, did you know that the association offers many ways for you to communicate with your fellow insurance professionals so that you can ask questions or get feedback from someone who has personal experience in the area of question? The association’s Online Community, iConnect, is a great forum where members can post questions and get answers. In addition, to iConnect, the association also has Mentor Programs set up to assist you as you navigate through your career. Take advantage of these programs by visiting the association’s website at www.insuranceprofessionals.org.

While you are on the website, don’t forget to stop by the Annual Convention page to get the latest information regarding the course offerings, speakers and events offered at this year’s event. In addition, this year, we have added resources on the website to assist you in getting your employer’s support to attend the event. Mark your calendars for June 6-8, 2013 in Orlando, Florida. It is sure to be a convention to remember!

Melissa D. Cobbs
Managing Editor
Whether you work for yourself or are employed in an organization, one thing is for certain: at some point your career will change. It could be a gradual change, such as a job or industry slowly evolving or phasing out; or it could be a sudden change, such as the Board of Directors mandating a reduction in staff immediately. Regardless of the exact scenario, the key trait that will enable you to reposition yourself and thrive after a career setback is your ability to embrace adaptation.

Unfortunately, many people lack a belief in their ability to adapt. As such, they become immobilized by fear when change is apparent. So rather than adapt their mindset, approach, and even skills,
3 KEYS FOR ADAPTING TO ANY CAREER CHANGE

By: Marty Martin, Psy.D.

they choose to stay stuck in their comfort zone, even though it’s no longer comfortable at all.

Realize, though, that adaption is natural. For example, when you travel to a location that has a different climate than what you’re used to (such as going from Miami, Florida to Chicago, Illinois in the winter), the new weather feels harsh for the first day. But after a few days in the new climate, your body adjusts and the colder temperatures don’t feel as frigid. Your body and mind acclimates and you get used to the new environment. This natural ability to adapt at a physiological level also applies to dealing with changes in the career environment. You simply need to tap into your natural ability to adapt and apply it to your professional life. The following suggestions will help you achieve that.

1. Reflect On Your Past

When change is upon you, reflect back on a few times in the past when you overcame an adversity and identify what you had to do to get through those events. Ideally, choose examples from your past workplaces. If you can’t think of any, then go back to your school days and your personal life. If you really have led a challenge-free life thus far, then think about books or movies where you’ve learned about others overcoming adversity.

Once you choose a few situations to reflect upon, determine the actions and attributes that helped you or others in the past. There’s a high probability if you repeat the mindsets and actions that worked in the past, they’ll work for you now as well. This exercise helps you shift your energy from victim to victor. You prove to yourself that success is possible.

2. Choose To Associate With Like-Minded People

To keep your mindset strong, surround yourself with individuals and groups who support you in doing something different, rather than those who try to keep you chained to the status quo. Of course, this step is always easier said than done, especially when your family or closest colleagues are the ones holding you back.

First, in your work life, assess your transferable skills. For example, if you were a video store manager whose store closed, your skills likely include hiring and staffing, inventory,
merchandising, and customer service. Look at what other stable and growing professions and industries use those skills and join their leading association. This enables you to actively make connections with new people in a sector that has more optimism than the one you’re currently in.

If your loved ones are contributing to your negative mindset, sit down with them and have an honest conversation about the current situation and your options for change. For example, if you realize you need to relocate to find a new job, and your spouse does not want to move, show the reality of the situation. You might say, “If we remain here we can’t maintain our lifestyle. We’ll have to downsize to a one-bedroom apartment or move in with family. But if we relocate to this area where jobs in my sector are plentiful, we can maintain our lifestyle, just in a different zip code. What makes the most sense to you?” Be calm and use specifics when you talk. Chances are the loved one will see the necessity for whatever change is needed.

3. Do Scenario Planning

Write out detailed scenarios about what can happen if you adapt, if you fail to adapt, and if you somewhat adapt. You need to do all three rather than single point planning, because single point planning can set you up for frustration if the plan doesn’t go exactly as outlined. This sort of triple scenario planning is based on stress inoculation training, which encourages people to anticipate a negative event and explore how they might deal with it in various ways. Should the negative event actually occur, the person has an idea of what to do to overcome, which makes the negative event less stressful. The scenario planning works a lot like stress inoculation training.

For example, if you’ve been laid off and can’t find a new job in your area, you may decide that your best case scenario if you adapt is to find a job you love—one that pays great and offers high satisfaction—albeit in a different part of the country. If you fail to adapt, that scenario may include you moving back in with your parents and working at a minimum wage entry level job that you hate. And if you somewhat adapt, perhaps you find a good paying job in your town, but you’re doing work that doesn’t give you much joy or satisfaction.

With these three scenarios detailed on paper, you have the option of choice. Which scenario do you want to pursue? Now, instead of becoming paralyzed with thoughts like, “I don’t know what to do next” or “Until I figure out what is the right decision I’m not going to do anything,” you can make an informed choice of the best way to overcome your current situation. If you are involved in joint decision-making with loved ones, share what you wrote with them so they can be part of the choice process too.

Embrace the New Reality

Make no mistake: Everyone’s career is going to be affected at some point in their life. This isn’t an “if” scenario; it’s a “when.” So even if your work life seems to be going well right now, start developing your capacity to adapt so that when change occurs, you know what to do.

If you’re in the midst of a change and need to adapt quickly, remember that learning is inherently difficult because you often feel awkward, incompetent, and insecure for a temporary period of time. Eventually, though, you become so fluent in the new knowledge or routine that you can’t imagine your life any other way. Therefore, the sooner you start cultivating and embracing your ability to adapt, the sooner you can thrive in your new situation.

Dr. Marty Martin, known for his state-of-the art content presented in an engaging, dynamic fashion, has been speaking and training nationally and internationally for many years. His second book, Taming Disruptive Behavior, will be published by The American College of Physician Executives (ACPE) in 2013. He is currently working on his third book, Do You Have Career Insurance? Dr. Martin is the Director of the Health Sector Management MBA Concentration and Associate Professor in the College of Commerce at DePaul University in Chicago, Illinois. For more information to obtain a free chapter of Do You Have Career Insurance? please visit his website: http://www.drmartymartin.com.

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Certified Leadership Program (CLP)

Certified Leadership Program (CLP) provides individuals a premier learning program to develop essential leadership skills for career development. The program consists of 4 modules encompassing 17 course topics.

Individuals completing the entire program are eligible to apply for the Certified Leadership Professional (CLP) designation.

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Learn more under Education and Training - Course Offerings at www.insuranceprofessionals.org
The success of any personal encounter begins the second someone lays eyes on you ... often long before either of you speaks. A professional image - appearance and behavior - helps start the experience in the right vein since people decide ten things about you within ten seconds of seeing you.

The business casual look that really took hold in the 1990s workplace has made it more difficult to look as professional and powerful as before B.C. While some laud the trend, others think it shows less respect for self and others.

**Dress for the occasion.**
If the occasion is business, Then dress as if you mean business.

Women frequently suffer more
DRESS FOR SUCCESS: CREATING A PROFESSIONAL IMAGE

By: Lillian D. Bjorseth

Learning the art of impression management - planning how you look and how you act to get a certain reaction - is sure to impact your career or business more favorably!

You tell others how to treat you. Your business associates and coworkers mirror whether you want to be treated as Number One or Number Ten in your area of expertise and how much respect you want.

How You Do It - Appearance-wise

Color, style and fit provide the one, two, three punch in your appearance arena. Color affects people physically and psychologically, and business casual doesn’t change that.

Color

• Dark colors - black, navy and darker shades of gray - psychologically connote power, authority, knowledge, responsibility, and success.
• Brown shows that you are dependable and stable - however you lack power and authority.
• White is a good choice for a blouse or shirt since it connotes clean, formal and sophisticated.
• Pastels denote softness and femininity.

Every color has a message of its own. How you put them together sends your message.

Style

Here again, business casual takes its toll, if it’s power and professionalism you want to convey.

• A suit coat with long sleeves, slightly padded shoulders and a collar make you appear one-third more powerful. (Your sales will come easier when you know when to take your suit jacket off in a sales call and when to put it back on!)
• Shoulder pads add authority.
• Pleats and darts add bulks.
• Vertical lines formed by classic three-button jackets contribute to the illusion of heights, as do pin stripes.
• Single-breasted jackets with a center vent are best for men and women of average height. Double-breasted jackets complement taller people.

Fit

Few people have “hanger figures.”

negative career consequences from business casual dress than men because they have far more choices. Women often choose leggings, stirrup pants, mini skirts and skorts. For men, casual typically means pants and a shirt or sweater. Their biggest fault may be to choose jeans or sweat pants or muscle T-shirts.

To see the full article, please visit the Today’s Insurance Professionals website at www.todayinsure.com.
Almost all of you need help to make your clothes look as if they were made for you. Many stores offer free tailoring. If not, find a neighborhood tailor who can do wonders with a nip here and tuck there. Take the shoes and any other items you will wear with the garment so your tailor can work with the real thing. Knowing that you have chosen the right color, style and fit for the occasion will give you increased self-confidence and add immeasurably to your presentation of yourself and your products and services.

What You Wear Reveals Eight Things About You

Self-Esteem
How you dress is your love of self made tangible to the world. When you wear ill-fitting, soiled, torn, tattered clothing, it can make others aware of a poor sense of self-worth. What people see on the outside lets them know you feel about yourself on the inside. Image is the tip of the iceberg, yet it adds immeasurably to helping people understand what’s going on inside you.

Self-Respect
How you wear it and what you choose to wear show others how much you respect yourself. Few people come even close to naturally having a “perfect” shape or size. Those who respect themselves know how to dress to emphasize strengths and minimize body flaws. Respect for self is lacking in women who in the workplace wear skirts that are too short, necklines that are too low, pants that are too tight; for men who wear long pants that are too “short,” ties with spots, jeans with holes; and with anyone who gains weight and then wears clothes that used to fit. Self-respect plays a big part in knowing/wearing the acceptable thing socially and professionally.

Confidence
The way you carry yourself contributes greatly to the air of confidence others perceive. What you wear also contributes to that look of confidence. When I wear a hat, inevitably men and women will say to me they love the confidence I portray. Some women say they would love to wear hats but are afraid they can’t carry it off. Men and women both say how it completes a woman’s outfit. Your goal is to create an aura of confidence and assuredness when you walk into a room. Make sure your clothing contributes its part.

Organizational Skills
Even people who don’t like to file or plan the details of an event need to appear organized in their clothing color and style choices. You want to create a unified look from head to foot, without calling attention to any one item or color. Frequently in my “Polishing Your Professional Presence” workshops, I will ask attendees up front to describe what they think our time together will be like ... knowing they have been sizing me up, even though I have only said a few words.

I remember the man who said, “organized, because everything from your suit to your blouse to your shoes to your hose to your jewelry is coordinated and looks as if it came together.” Recruiters tell me they use appearance to judge organizational skills. If they know where the potential employee parked, they may send someone to walk around the car to see if it looks clean and orderly, or if it resembles the refuse bin for a fast-food restaurant or the repository for a week’s clothing that needs to be taken to the cleaners.

Soundness of Judgment
Knowing and wearing the right outfit for the right occasion is an important indicator of whether you can make the right decisions at work, too. When I owned a business leads group and held after-hour events, most of the attendees wore suits or business casual wear. The member who owned a singles dating service and came attired in black velvet slacks, a rhinestone-studded strapless top and a black shawl turned more than one eye! She may have been dressed appropriately for one of her events, but not for a business event. She made a statement, and judging by all the comments I received, I doubt it was the one she wanted to make. Know when to wear a suit, business casual or formal attire to blend in appropriately.

Attention to Detail
About 90 percent of your body is clothed in business - the remaining 10 percent of your impression is made through your grooming and includes manicured nails, trimmed mustache and beard, lack of a 5 o’clock shadow, neat and attractive hair style and the right amount of makeup and jewelry that can be seen and not heard.

Creativity
While some jobs allow more creative expression than others, all of them permit you to individualize at least a bit. Express your uniqueness through a special tie and matching hanky, a scarf or a special or exquisite piece of jewelry. Maybe your mark will become the special way you tie a scarf or how you find just the right one to complement or coordinate with your suit and blouse ... or maybe a pair of cuff links that looks expensive yet apropos for your important meeting.

Reliability
The sum of the above adds up to how reliable you are ... from the big picture to the details. Can you be counted on to look and behave in a professional manner wherever your job takes you?

Lillian D. Bjorseth, according to the The Chicago Tribune, is a “networking expert”. The Association Forum of Chicagoland calls her “the business networking authority”. She’s a speaker, trainer and author who helps entrepreneurs through Fortune 100 employees build high-value relationships by honing their business development, business networking and communication skills. For more, visit www.duoforce.com.

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Know Your Businesss...
STAY CURRENT ON INDUSTRY TRENDS AND EDUCATION

Check out the association’s Educational Offerings and Webinars

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Download a free QR Code Reader app to your smart phone and scan this code to visit the IAIP Store now.
Are you worried about getting the right kind of job? There are lots of people who fail to have proper job satisfaction just because they do not get the job they would love to do. If you do not want this to be repeated to you then you need to be very careful while searching for a job.

First of all you should make a list of the criteria for the job required. After this you should prepare your resume according to that job. Different job applications usually have different kinds of criteria. Therefore it is very important to learn how to write a resume. After you finish with the writing part you might think about how to post my resume. To post your resume online you first need to find the places where you can post it.

You might be aware of the number of job boards available on the internet.
to do is keep your resume updated every time. There are people who post their resumes and tend to forget about it.

To send my resume to the best employers I need to keep my resume updated and at the top of the website. Whenever the employer would want to search for the resumes of eligible candidates my name and resume should come up. This will surely help me get better opportunities.

Other than updating the resume the eligible candidates also need to follow certain other things. Writing the resume in the most attractive way with all the required information is one of the biggest criteria.

If you want to learn how to post my resume using the job boards and the distribution services then you first need to find them out. Choose your job board and they will tell you the method to post your resume.

When you want to know how to make my resume attractive before I post my resume, you need to learn the strategies of writing the resume. Include certain important keywords in your resume regarding your job search. These keywords will help the employers locate you and find your resume fast.

You must make sure that the employer is attracted in the first 30 seconds of your resume reading. You should not include any unnecessary information in your resume to make it a crap. Now you might have got your answer to how to post my resume so that employers always have a look at their first effort.

To learn more about how you can post your resume online, please visit http://www.resumeboomer.com and sign up today to get your resume posted instantly on over 60 job websites.

Silas Reed, Writer for ResumeBoomer, writes articles that inform and teach about using your resume most effectively to help get you a great job.

Photo credit: Monkey Business Images/Shutterstock.com
A recent research study identified the ten biggest mistakes companies make when hiring. The study included over 130 companies ranging in size from Fortune 500 to mid-size privately held organizations, a wide variety of industries, and more than 250 job openings.

The number one hiring mistake made was rather surprising and one rarely even considered by most companies. Yet, this one mistake impacts the whole hiring process, including how candidates are sourced, where to find candidates, compensation, performance management, advertising, position title and what questions should be asked during the interview. Everything seems to go sideways all because most companies fail to properly define the real job. There are two reasons why traditional job descriptions are ineffective as a
hiring tool. The first reason is traditional job descriptions describe the minimum qualifications required for the position such as the minimum duties, tasks and responsibilities. Add to that the minimum education required, minimal years of experience, and minimal skills, plus the endless list of behavioral traits: team player, a good communicator, self-motivated and big thinker. Most job descriptions describe the least qualified person, not the real job. This often leads to hiring the least qualified. The harsh reality is, when you define a job in mediocre terms, odds are you will attract and hire mediocre candidates.

The second reason is traditional job descriptions fail to focus on what defines success in this role. If you want to hire successful people, start by defining success, instead of the person. Most people
would agree that a person who simply performs the duties and responsibilities outlined in traditional job descriptions would rarely be considered a success. In fact, most candidates would not last long in a company that is growing and outpacing the competition. Just because the person has the experience listed doesn’t mean they can deliver the desired results. Here’s the misnomer: past experiences are a good indicator of future performance. Past experience is actually a poor indicator of performance. Past performance is a better indicator, but the best indicator is their ability to deliver results in your company. After all, you are hiring for your company with your culture, your resources, your systems, your budget, your management style and your company’s values, not for what they did at a past company.

For example, how many times have you heard someone say: “We’re looking for a VP Operations” The reply is, “What are you looking for?” The typical answer is usually, “We need a person with 10 years experience, 5 years in our industry, team leader, strategic thinker, good communications and an MBA is preferred.” This is all about the person and nothing about what defines success in the role or what the person is expected to deliver once they come on board. It is naturally assumed if the person has the experience mentioned, they can deliver the expected results. It is our contention that experience has nothing to do with delivering results. Just because the person was a great VP of Operations at their last company, doesn’t mean they are the right VP of Operations for your company. Instead of using the traditional job description, consider defining success in the role. Do this by creating a list of success factors. Success factors are simply the results you want this person to deliver, in order for you, the hiring manager, to consider this person a successful hire.

For example, the success factors would read:

- Within the first 30 days develop a plan of action that will improve on time deliveries from 85% to 96% and present the plan to the CEO.
- Within 6 months, develop and begin implementing a vendor qualifications program that will insure zero defects and 100% on-time deliveries from vendors.
- Within 9 months consolidate the operations of two plants and produce a cost savings of at least 15%.

Continue developing these success factors until there are 5 or 6 which clearly define what is expected of the candidate once they come on board. Now when asked the question “What are you looking for?” The answer is, “We need someone who can improve on time deliveries to 96%, can implement a vendor qualifications program and consolidate operations with at least a 15% cost savings.” Instead of defining experience, start defining success in this role.

Now, find a person that can accomplish these success factors. When that happens, this person will have the right experience. It might be 5 years of experience, it could be 10 years of experience; it really doesn’t matter, as long as they can deliver the results.

Using the success factors as a hiring guide sets the stage for a successful hire. Instead of the traditional job description, the success factors clearly define expectations and let candidates know what is expected of them once they come on board. The success factors define success in the role, not minimum qualifications. After all, isn’t that what you really want to hire?

Brad Remillard is a speaker, author and trainer with more than thirty years of experience in hiring and recruiting. Through his corporate workshops and industry association speaking engagements he demonstrates how organizations can effectively attract, interview, hire and retain top talent. Brad is also the co-founder of IMPACT HIRING SOLUTIONS and co-author of, “You’re NOT the Person I Hired: A CEO’s Guide to Hiring Top Talent.” For more information on Brad’s hiring training programs or speaking, please visit www.bradremillard.com.

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Prepare for the Inevitable: The Four Cornerstones of Career Insurance

By: Dr. Marty Martin

There is more to job security than mastering job search skills. There are plenty of books about resume writing, networking, interviewing, and developing a LinkedIn profile. These job search skills are important, but not sufficient in an age when companies and even entire industries are undergoing radical changes. Career Insurance fills the void by preparing people for what’s to come – before it arrives.

There are four cornerstones of Career Insurance; the organizing framework for putting together your own personal Career Insurance plan. These four cornerstones further solidify your survival in the turbulent waters of today’s economy:

• Embracing adaptation
Embracing Adaptation

You must get in touch with your built-in adaptive nature. This means being alert, responsive, and engaged; knowing how to survive in what sometimes feels like the jungle of work, careers, and jobs.

A practical way to assess your adaptive qualities is to ask, write down or record your answers to these questions:
- How did I overcome obstacles in the past?
- What lessons can I draw from folks I know and those I don’t about how to bounce back and move forward?
- Who can I lean on to support me emotionally when it seems as if I cannot or will not climb the summit of change?

Your answers to these questions will put you in touch with your built-in adaptive nature. If adversity is foreign to you, then you probably know others in your life that have stories and secrets to share about how to tap into the resilient spirit that we all have.

Positioning for the Next Advance or Change

A very important skill for Career Insurance is to predict what type of work is in demand, the supply of talent available to meet that demand, and how to position yourself to fill the gap. This skill will be used consistently throughout your career.

Self-assessment using surveys and questionnaires as well as soliciting feedback from peers will provide you with most of the information you need to map out these three scenarios:
- Your desired career scenario
- Your most probable career scenario
- Your nightmare career scenario

Your job is to vividly describe, in writing, the details of each of these three scenarios. After detailing each of the scenarios, determine what decisions and actions you must make while in your current position that will affect you in the short- and long-run in realizing your desired position in your company.

Investing in Cutting Edge Skills

Given the fast paced change in the world of work, it is a good idea to learn new skills to increase your value as an employee. Today, you never really finish learning; if you do, you may find yourself and your career on a dead-end street.

There are costs to learning new skills, yet, there are also benefits. The decision is yours to create or seize an opportunity to learn about skills now in demand in your industry, how to acquire those skills, and how to keep those skills on the cutting edge. Train for skills in demand in the future.

Tapping into Abundant Thinking, Creativity and Emotional Non-Attachment

Reflect back on a time when you or somebody else could only think of the downside of a situation or viewed the world from the perspective of loss, competition and survival. Those thoughts come from a scarcity thinking mindset. Scarcity thinking triggers fear and anxiety. If you more often than not think in the following way, then you may be suffering from scarcity thinking:
- My job offer means that somebody else is without a job
- My raise/promotion means that somebody else gets less of a raise/promotion
- My acceptance at a training event means that somebody else is robbed of the change to grow and develop

To standout in today’s job market, you have to demonstrate value. Demonstrating value is a two part equation: first, let folks know about your past accomplishments. Second, and most importantly, express what you intend to do in the future. This holds true whether you are seeking another opportunity in your current company or an opportunity outside your company perhaps due to situations beyond your control such as restructuring and downsizing.

Many organizations today are re-vamping their processes, updating their technology, and offering a different portfolio of goods and services with the same and different consumers. Are you poised to be as flexible as the market demands? Do you find yourself thinking “I’ve got by this long…I’ll be OK?” Or, do you find yourself thinking, “This will be rough initially, but I can see how it will be better in the long-run for me, our customers, and the company.” It is the latter thought that illustrates abundant thinking. Abundant thinking has many benefits including creativity and innovation. After all…somebody had to make up the job of being a webmaster. Why can’t you make up a job based upon a need or opportunity in your company?

Building Your Career Future

The four cornerstones are the foundation of solidifying your job, career, and work future in this new world of work. The good news is that at each point in history when industry underwent radical changes, our ancestors adapted most with grace, poise and optimism. We
Dr. Marty Martin, known for his state-of-the-art content presented in an engaging, dynamic fashion, has been speaking and training nationally and internationally for many years. His second book, Taming Disruptive Behavior which will be published by The American College of Physician Executives (ACPE) in 2013. He is currently working on his third book, Do You Have Career Insurance? Dr. Martin is the Director of the Health Sector Management MBA Concentration and Associate Professor in the College of Commerce at DePaul University in Chicago, Illinois. For more information to obtain a free chapter of Do You Have Career Insurance? please visit his website: http://www.drmartymartin.com.

Photo credit: ArtisticPhoto/ Shutterstock.com
Farmers and chefs know that we love to eat foods described as “organic,” because we know it means natural, pure and without pesticides. Most people have never seen advertisements for an “organic meeting” or one featuring an “artificial speaker,” yet meeting attendees will tell you that interactive games feel “stale,” group discussion questions seem “generic,” or many speakers give a “canned” speech. When done well, an audience views facilitation—defined as, “the act of productively making collaboration easier for an audience”—as a normal, important conversation. When you fearlessly facilitate, the audience will know that they are in good hands.

It’s easier and less expensive to bring organic content to your next meeting than you might think. Just like organic
foods, organic facilitation is less known, healthier in the long run and takes time to perfect.

1. Organic Facilitation is Less Well-Known

Most organically grown food is less well-known than other brands; often it isn’t branded at all. The same holds for the activities designed for great facilitation. While “off-the-shelf” games, case studies and role-plays can certainly be used to help people learn and apply concepts, use caution. Today’s audiences quickly figure out when they are being manipulated to employ a strategy or system. When you develop customized discussion topics, surprise interventions and audience involvement from scratch, you stand a better chance of engaging people. You also bring the wonderful element of surprise to them.

Presenters today often confuse noise, repetition and ego for useful, engaging content. Traditional speakers say, “Audiences won’t want to participate,” “Facilitation is too hard!” or “All they want to do is listen.” The experienced speaker, though, knows that it’s nearly impossible to connect with a group of seated people in a windowless room by talking at them for several hours and then expecting them to learn!

2. Organic Facilitation is Healthier in the Long Run

Fewer pesticides and carefully-supervised growing conditions make organic foods healthier. The common tomato is a clear example; bright red full tomatoes from your neighbor’s garden carry more nutrients than the pinkish, waxy imports grown in a commercial greenhouse. When involvement—led by a skilled facilitator with a watchful eye—occurs naturally, conversation becomes more natural, productive and fun. At your next meeting, consider being the skilled farmer who tends to the participants, watches them closely, and arranges them in specific ways. For a meeting with a small group, arrange attendees in a circle with no tables (yes, this is possible!) and begin the discussion at the point of their pain (e.g. current stressors, challenges, or number-one priorities).

3. Organic Facilitation Takes Time to Perfect

Fearless facilitators see perfection as the appearance of imperfection. When a speaker is too polished or perfect, audiences see the presenter as unapproachably distant. Furthermore, because traditional training emphasizes “giving” over “probing,” these sessions omit the audience’s innate brilliance, experiences and contributions. There are many ways to enhance and perfect the flow of organic discussion.

Solicit “burning questions” (i.e. what people most want to learn after their time with you). Because outcomes are vital for the meeting planner and participants, a good set of burning questions, gathered at the start of the meeting, will create an informal agenda. Meet, address, or answer those questions and you will have one happy audience! Form small groups to
Career Point

discuss or solve a problem and let them talk to one another. Toward the end of your allotted time, pull out one question at a time and ask, “What did we say about this one?” Don’t answer it yourself, but have them do so. Write what they say on a flip chart, and have them explain it to one another. They know more about how it hit them than you do, and it is a great way for you to discover what outcomes they really received. Ask how they will apply the skills that they just learned tomorrow, at their next team meeting and in one year.

Give your content in targeted chunks or “lecturettes” of no more than 8-12 minutes before you ask the audience to talk again with one another. If you believe that you need to talk for 45-60 minutes, know that you have lost them by the 13th minute! They may appear to be paying attention, but they are certainly thinking elsewhere.

Revise your internal mindset

Move your audiences in a direction that will engage their astute listening and creative thinking on the spot. It will not always come easily; it takes time and many imperfect attempts to discover the timing and appropriateness of the involvement.

Acknowledge what few professionals allow themselves: it is okay, and often preferred, to be imperfect and to go with the flow. Know that your audience is there for the experience together and not just for the experience with you.

When you take the stage, call the meeting to order or begin your presentation, remember that engagement is always more important than the notes that the audience takes. At so many conferences, people fill legal pads with ideas, yet rarely apply them to their everyday work. When you facilitate a dialogue that produces engagement, learning and partnership, you build connections and develop influence and you help them begin to implement which is the goal of the meeting anyway!

Have you ever worked for a very technical professional who was promoted to lead a team of their peers, because he or she knew how to do a job but not how to lead? Kevin E. O’Connor, CSP focuses on working with these “peer leaders” as a facilitator, medical educator, and author. He presents and coaches over 175 times per year around the world to corporations, individuals, associations and non-profits about how to move teams from conflict to consensus. His latest book, co-authored with Cyndi Maxey, Fearless Facilitation: The Ultimate Field Guide to Engaging (and Involving!) Your Audience, is set for release later this year. For more information, please visit www.kevinoc.com

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He full-page ad in a Sunday edition of The New York Times stated boldly that $60,000,000 was received in 2012, over $1,000,000 a week by a variety of recognized charities and community causes. The ad was not from a charity or fund-raising organization. It was from one of America’s largest retailers with multiple stores all across America. Why run full-page ads announcing charitable giving? Why not a sales ad or holiday offers? Because statistics prove over and over that customers, if given a choice, prefer to buy from those who provide support to charities and causes they see as valuable to their community.

More and more companies understand the balance sheet is more than numbers and have developed values that are stated, respected and carried out. Generosity is one of those values. The buying public has made clear that they prefer to buy from good corporate citizens. Generosity demonstrates a genuine corporate value that benefits the company, employees and the community.

When corporations were first granted their charters to do business in our new democracy, they were evaluated on the contributions they made to the public good. While much has changed in the way companies do business, providing public good is still very important and part of every balance sheet.

Generosity comes in all sizes. It will fit nearly every business. How is true generosity recognized? Generosity is noticed if its goals are visible and more than a sales or a morale booster. If your company is
looking for ways to give back, consider the following options:

Money Talks

• Money works. In Louisville, Kentucky, the Chairman of the United Way Campaign for 2012, Tom Monahan, wanted to encourage greater participation at all levels of business. But he also had another goal: “to blow away the stereotype of greedy companies interested only in the bottom line.” Cash gifts were recognized in a new fashion.

• Partnerships work. Monahan enlisted the help of other community leaders and organizations to create a “Partners in Philanthropy” publication and an awards banquet to showcase funds for the United Way and demonstrate the many examples of community generosity. Both the publication and banquet recognized the corporations and businesses that gave the most in cash contributions to non-profits in the city.

• Gifts in-kind work. Categories were designed to recognize large, medium and small corporations for their cash gifts. Non-profits and the work they do were presented. Small businesses were also recognized for the difference they made in a category called “partners in innovation.” A number of family-owned business leaders were included in this new recognition program. A local design company won for their work in renovating dormitories at a youth treatment center and for enlisting many others for gifts in kind to complete the project.

Volunteers matter

• Volunteering works. Businesses that encourage employee volunteer days at a local non-profit of their choice get a double bonus. Employees enjoy serving and local non-profits see your company in a very different light. With employee verification, write a check to an organization representing the value of an employee’s work if a paid day-off can’t be granted. Schedule an employee generosity day for all employees to sign up for a community or team project.

Helping build a house for Habitat for Humanity, spending a day at a soup kitchen or shelter or helping in a local school or community center are all team building events as well as acts of generosity. Here are just a few of the dividends that corporate generosity creates according to VolunteerMatch.org.

• Raises employee morale - 94% of companies surveyed believed employee volunteering provides a way to raise employee morale
• Boosts employee health - 92% of people who volunteer through their workplace report higher rates of physical and emotional health
• Provides skill development - 88% of employees volunteer report that volunteering provides networking/career development opportunities
• Increases employee loyalty - 66% of employees reported a greater commitment to the company as a result of their experience as volunteers.

There are many more examples of creative ways to be generous. Look around your neighborhood, your community. How can what you do every day become more evident and beneficial to others?

Little things count

“Giving” actually multiplies what you are “receiving.” Walk into most Sam’s Clubs or Costco’s at 1 p.m. on almost any weekday and you can basically have a free lunch—and not by ordering at the lunch counter. Just walk down the aisles and you will find hot foods from pizza to burgers, cold beverages, hot beverages, sweets and treats of all sorts—freely and gladly handed out. Whole Foods and Trader Joe’s are doing the same for their customers.

Why generosity? The truth is, even if the goal is not necessarily to be generous (as we think of it), generosity can build sales. Coupons for free items, free bonus gifts and prizes have always worked to gain attention and build sales for products from cereal and soap to jewelry and big ticket items such as automobiles and even homes.

Generosity pays dividends:
• It is attention-getting
• It is cost efficient
• It builds top-of-mind awareness
• It may increase sales

• Customers or clients perceive a benefit
• There is a spillover effect to other areas and products

But how can you be generous when your cash is low, your business consists of products or services that you can’t give as samples—or you have few employees to volunteer? What then?
1. Offer discounts to charitable organizations.
2. Give time or funds to community projects.
3. Participate in a community event that is not business-related.
4. Offer your place of business for community use, seminars, calling-marathons, a meeting room.
5. Lead a class on your specialty for the Chamber of Commerce or any local organization or non-profit.
6. Speak to senior citizens clubs, retirement communities, schools, and PTAs and let the group charge participants for your valuable information and keep the revenue.

Customers and potential customers will take note. Positive publicity is generated. Commit to generosity in the true sense of the word and it will make a difference that can pay dividends for years to come and build your balance sheet in ways that simply can’t be quantified.

Remember, your bottom line may not only be measured by revenue received, but by resources shared. Generosity is a business vitamin that will build a healthier bottom line.

Stan Craig, the founder of the ForeTalk Seminar, is an accomplished financial planner, executive coach and keynote speaker. He is also author of “ForeTalk: Taking Care of Tomorrow Today.” As a finance professional, Stan enjoyed a 27-year career at Merrill Lynch, which included positions as National Sales Manager, Director of Global Sales for Defined Asset Funds and the First Vice President and Senior Director of the Office of Investment Performance. For more information on Stan, please visit www.ForeTalkSeminar.com.

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You’ve probably heard the ancient story of the 3 blind men trying to describe an elephant. One touches the tail and describes the elephant as a snake. Another stumbles against the side and describes the elephant as a wall. Yet the other touches the leg and describes the elephant as a tall tree.

The point? Perhaps the issue in front of you is not of as much significance as the angle you are experiencing it from. Learning to position yourself at...
There are millions of things you can do to position yourself on the right side of a stressful situation, but here are four simple mindsets that you can adopt today regardless of the obstacle at hand:

1. **Nothing in Life is Permanent, Not Even You**

   So if you are impermanent, how can your problems be permanent? While this might sound negative, understanding that everything in life is transitory will give you an empowering viewpoint in regards to your current challenges. Reminding yourself that whatever turbulence you are experiencing at this moment is temporary will encourage you to keep elevating yourself in search of that perfect cruising altitude.

   On the other hand, even when things are perfect, embracing a temporary mindset can be very helpful. You see, people’s zest for life is frequently killed not by misfortunes but by their inability to appreciate what’s already great around them. Therefore, if you begin to remind yourself that this moment, no matter how perfect, will too come to an end, you will start appreciating all of the positives in your life that you have been taking for granted.

2. **Failure is a Prerequisite**

   Your failures exist for one and only one reason: to make your future successes possible. Instead of complaining and asking life to stop throwing things at you, start recognizing your current dilemma as building material. Life tosses bricks to all of us; it’s up to you to build an artistic masterpiece or to end up with a pile of rubbles.

   Keep this thought in mind by Ralph Waldo Emerson: “Cultivate the habit of being grateful for every good thing that comes to you, and to give thanks continuously. And because all things have contributed to your advancement, you should include all things in your gratitude.” Be thankful even for failures, for they are an indispensable piece of your success puzzle.

3. **Find the Silver Lining**

   Constantly ask yourself one simple question: what great opportunity can come out of my current circumstances?
Leadership Development

Asking this question will direct your energy to look for the hidden positives that lie within your challenges and keep you from wasting it on complaining about the negatives.

Once you start seeing the silver lining in every incident, your challenges will cease to be the heavy blocks that previously burdened you; for they will now become stepping stones from where you can stand just a little taller. It’s at this point that you will experience a new height regardless of the negatives thrown your way.

4. Trust the Bigger Plan

You no doubt have big plans. But understand that however big your plans are, the universe has much bigger plans for you. When you are discouraged and things are not working according to your plans, realize that there’s something else out there guiding you; and that which you perceive as a detour might be the actual road you must travel on.

Don’t get so caught up on the way things should’ve been, could’ve been, or would’ve been because looking from where you stand you will never be able to comprehend the magnitude of the grand plan that’s in store for you. Trust that you are where you are because that’s where you need to be; then you might get a glimpse at how insignificant your initial plan was and how grandiose your current one is.

Call to Action

Everyone says in life you have to be positive if you want to get somewhere. The question is how can you become positive when negative things keep happening to you? Just like anything, being positive is a habit that can be developed. All you have to do is for the next 30 days when you are faced with a challenge adopt one of the four mindsets by reminding yourself that:

1. Whatever is troubling you is temporary;
2. Your current setback is an indispensable part of the success puzzle;
3. There is a silver lining or a great opportunity within every challenge;
4. No matter what happens, you must trust that you are part of a much bigger plan.

Andres Lara is an international selling author and sought-after motivational speaker who speaks to companies and groups from all walks of life on the psychology of how to move forward when you feel like quitting. Connect with him at info@TheCubanGuy.com or www.Facebook.com/Motivation911, @motivation911 or call 239-424-9152.

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Now That You Are Required to Address New Data Protection/Identity Theft Regulations: Could We Interest You in an Effective, Low Cost Solution?

“You only need to worry about Privacy and security laws and rules if you have customers or employees.”

No one is exempt from taking reasonable steps to protect the information they have.

We do not believe that Congress intended to apply enumerated Security Rule sections to business associates in a different manner than covered entities … Federal Register July 14, 2010

You are responsible to make sure that everyone you work with takes the same precautions as you.

The passage of HITECH and subsequent changes to HIPAA have changed the rules for anyone who has any relationship to the healthcare industry.

The Red Flags Rule, effective January 1, 2011 adds yet another duty of care that requires business owners to take reasonable precautions to prevent Identity Theft.

Approximately 50% of data losses are the result of employee errors. Approximately 42% of data losses come from third party mistakes. Since you are liable for their mistakes, can you afford not to take action to make sure they protect your data?

What if taking steps to reduce this liability, and help you meet the compliance requirements was inexpensive and comprehensive?

Covered Entities/Large Agencies
Most Covered Entities and large organizations have taken the steps they need so that their own organization meets the requisite compliance requirements. New rules under HIPAA/HITECH and Red Flags Rule require you to make sure that all of your Business Associates, vendors, service providers, contractors, and agents are doing the same. For more information on how Accurate Data Partners can help with your required oversight contact: jmccartney@accuratedatapartners.com

Business Associates/Small Businesses
Accurate Data Partners’ services are ideally suited to help small businesses meet compliance requirements through online training and document template delivery. We can also help you with your vendors, service providers, contractors and agents. Go to http://naiw.accuratedatapartners.com/Special-Discount/ to learn more.

Accurate Data Partners helps you to turn compliance requirements into business advantages.
All salespeople know that making a sale involves much more than a simple conversation with a prospect. In fact, the number of things the average salesperson has to do to close a deal can be staggering. There’s prospecting, information-gathering, research, cold and warm calling, sending emails and traditional marketing materials, doing pitches and demos, performing follow up, and a host of other activities. As a result, it’s easy for salespeople to get burned out and unmotivated.

But success in any type of sales environment depends on having the
proper mindset, and that includes being motivated, inspired, educated, and pumped up to perform all aspects of the sales cycle—even the parts you don’t like. So how do top salespeople keep the proper mindset to continually outperform their peers? Often, it all comes down to the messages they feed their brain.

Let’s face it. Success in sales is 90% mental. If you can keep your mindset positive and stay motivated to do the things you need to do every day, you’ll not only make more sales, but you’ll also enjoy doing it. If you’re ready to take your sales career to the next level, then it’s time to create your personal sales success soundtrack. Following are the three elements to include in your soundtrack so you can stay motivated and sell more.

1. Music to Motivate

Realize that music is much more than just background noise. Studies conducted by sports psychologists have determined that music has a great impact on an athlete’s performance level. In fact, Dr. Costas Karageorghis, a sports psychologist at Brunel University, found that synchronous music (music that has a clear and steady beat) elevates a person’s performance by 20 percent, whereas asynchronous music (melodic background music) calms the nerves of people by as much as 10 percent. If the right kind of music can help improve athletic performance (which also requires a lot of mental stamina), it can certainly help improve sales performance as well.

Therefore, create a playlist for all aspects of the sales cycle. For example, prior to a prospecting meeting, listen to “Let’s Get It Started” by The Black Eyed Peas. When you’re about to do demo or a sales pitch, listen to Survivor’s “Eye of the Tiger.” Immediately after closing a sale, listen to “Party Rock Anthem” by LMFAO. And when you’re feeling low and unmotivated to do anything, listen to Eminem’s “Lose Yourself,” a song about putting your best self out there, being a serious risk-taker, and overcoming your fears of failure. Pick a few songs that motivate you for each aspect of the sales process and listen to those songs at the appropriate time so they anchor you in the moment.

2. Stay Inspired

Staying motivated is certainly important, but sometimes you just need some inspiration to keep your spirits high. This is when listening to uplifting stories, religious and spiritual verses,
3. Educate Yourself Often

Would you want to send your loved one to a doctor who graduated from Harvard Medical School in 1971 but who hasn’t done any continuing education since then? Of course not! You’d want a doctor who not only went to a prestigious school, but who also stays abreast of the latest medical innovations and technologies. Your clients expect the same level of continuing education from the salespeople they work with.

But sales education doesn’t always come from a classroom. For busy salespeople, education can come from listening to “how to” type sales trainers, tuning in to business radio and podcast programs, and downloading audio books on sales and general business topics.

And when it comes to educating yourself, remember that not everything is digital. One good technique is to listen to an audio book and read the printed book at the same time. As you hear things that resonate with you, you can highlight it in the printed version and bookmark certain pages you want to reread later. The key is to never stop learning. Experience can’t always come to you; sometimes you have to go out and seek it.

Winning the Greatest Game of All

The sales profession can be stressful and challenging…but it can also be rewarding and profitable. No matter what you sell, you have to be able to respond to clients and be spontaneous. You have to be able to think outside your box and be able to add value. It’s definitely a profession that requires sharp mental agility, so that means you have to continually keep your mind in tiptop shape. When you listen to music, inspirational messages, and educational subjects on a daily basis, you’re keeping your mind well-fed and well-rounded so you can always be at the top of your game. And that’s where you’ll find the real success and profits in your sales career.

Victor Arocho is a sales development expert, sales trainer and managing partner with Potential Sales & Consulting group. He specializes in exponentially growing sales by bringing accountability to the sales process and crafting a sales culture of success. His numerous career highlights include tripling a publicly traded organization’s profits within 24 months. With his passionate and strategic style of sales, Victor has assisted others in growing their business and achieving their revenue potential. To learn more about Victor, please visit www.victorarocho.com.

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16. This statement of ownership will be published in the Spring 2013 issue of this publication.
17. I certify that the statements made by me above are correct and complete.- Melissa Cobbs, Managing Editor. Date 10/16/2012
WELCOME
NEW MEMBERS

New Members from November 15, 2012 thru February 19, 2013.

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Briana Callahan
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Richard Coskren
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Dawnmarie Flanagan
Loresa Ford
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Ramona Gray
Sarah Gregg
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Alba Milo
Monica Morales Hope
Vilma Perez
Brenda Rivera
Kristi Satterwhite
Trina Tanner
Candice Trezona
Diane Walsh
Susan Wilhelm
June Abrams
Jeremy Bryant
Heidi Dworin
Mary Jones
Casey Lee
Matthew McLaughlin
Natalia Menendez
Cheila Oliverio
Brandy Schenkel
Susan Simpson
Catherine Van Tiem
Tamura Wallace
Selda Baumberger
Shelly Curl
Karen Engebrect
Cari Juika
Robin Kams
Alyssa Lloyd
James McFarland
Cyndee Morton
Angela Olsen
Lisa Rensland
William Summers
Cheryl Wolf
Beverlie Alfred
Ciara Bibbins
John Dunn
Natalie Heinrich
Tiesha Johnson
Michelle Lambert
LeMika McRae
Laura Phillips
Alicia Richert
Laci Cummings
Stephanie Ironmonger
Ashli Tallman
Tara Tallman
Melissa Wheeler
Kerry Wyatt
Christina Arnote

REGION VIII
Lorina Bishop
Ashley Christensen
Bradley Craig
Ila Derrington
Lisa Foley
Julie Frank
Erin Friedermann
Bob Funnell
Silvia Gourian
Kathy Harrington
Dayna Herron
Barbara Kearns
Liz Kroft
Michele Lee
Hershyall Mann
Marleny Milan
Melissa Nesbitt
Danielle Newsome
Tamera Noll
Jason Park
Taylor Peterson
Shawn Poulin
Michael Randles
Robert Remeika
Robert Reza
Elizabeth Riley
Karly Sanchez
Michelle Sanchez
Catherine Sariana
Susan Simpson
Mary Smith
Cindy Taylor
Anita Thibadeau
Nari Tieman
George Trice
Marla Wilson
LaDawn Zavadil

REGION IX
Teena Applegate
Sylvia Brown
Suzette Burgess
Alicia Cole
Elizabeth Holdeman
Michelle Meyer
Bonita Ott
Katy Peterson
Brandy Price
NEW CPIWs AND CIIPs


REGION I
Monique Duquette
Melissa Gustafson
Dawn Halkyard
Barbara Hartmann
Eileen Polito

REGION II
Norell Myers
Diana Vuksie-Harris

REGION III
Sharon Cirillo
Jenna Gregory
Teresa McCoy
Vickie Rose
Tammy Smith
Paige Stiefel

REGION IV
Deborah Boop
Vicki Gritton
Allison Hammons
Denese Thomas

REGION V
Pam Allison
Buffy Guinther
Arlene Schwartz

REGION VI
Sheryl Spann

REGION VII
Gayla Martin

REGION VIII
Jeanette Kane
Robert Rubinstein
Valerie Williams-Cole

REGION IX
Rebecca Anderson

NEW DAEs


REGION I
Ami Drew

REGION III
Ingrid Tirado

REGION V
Pam Allison
Buffy Guinther
Arlene Schwartz

REGION VI
Brenda Hornyak
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$495 - April 15th - May 16th
$525 - May 17th - June 8th

Room Rates

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Kind Deluxe
$139
*Additional Adults $15 each, per night

2013 Pricing

Convention Registration Rates

Full Registration (all events)
$395 - until April 15th
$495 - April 15th - May 16th
$525 - May 17th - June 8th

Room Rates

Queen Double or Standard King
$119
Kind Deluxe
$139
*Additional Adults $15 each, per night

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Erick Burton, CSP

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Kristy had finally worked her way to the front of the store after standing in line for 45 minutes with about 30 other people with their holiday packages at one of the shipping stores in a mall. The two women working behind the counter were frantically trying to take care of customers, as the line grew increasingly longer with each passing minute. Close enough to the counter now, Kristy was able to overhear one of the women behind the counter utter to herself “Oh no, the computer screen blacked out.” One of the two computers had crashed, as the two behind the counter exchanged one
of those “Oh no!” glances at each other. Instead of addressing those waiting in line, both employees just kept their heads down and kept working. People in line got anxious and tempers got short, as they noticed that the line was getting serviced by only one of the employees. Kristy again overheard one clerk tell a customer, “This computer crashes all the time.” Obviously they weren’t prepared for an event that appeared to happen frequently. Both ladies seemed to have lost a major portion of their thinking capacity. They were knocked out of the moment and lost an opportunity to connect with customers.

What could have happened if they had stayed in the moment? They could have addressed the customers and told them they had a computer problem and they were rebooting. It was going to take a couple of minutes. They could have used the opportunity to get the customers to play: Who would like to share their plans for the holidays? We’ll give a small gift to the person travelling farthest for the holidays. They could have even done a quick raffle of one of their office items to keep the customers engaged.

Do you remember those hot summer days as a kid when you would go to a convenience store and get a slurpee to cool down and after a few slurps or gulps you would get this incredible searing pain in the middle of your forehead? Remember how this physical brain freeze would render you useless for about 20 seconds until the pain went away?

There is another type of brain freeze, which is a chemical reaction our brain performs when we are under anxiety or stress. It is called a chemical brain freeze (CBF). This is a very primitive but effective way the brain copes with the stresses and difficulties in today’s chaotic world. Our brain is trying to keep us alive and it takes on the role of our triage center. Fight, flight or freeze, our brain will shut down the more complex thinking brain in order to get out of the situation and allow us to cope better. However we don’t always perform at our best when the brain shuts down the thinking mind.

Remember that time you got so mad you couldn’t think straight? Or got called on in a meeting and you were unprepared for the answer? These situations don’t have to be life threatening for that to happen. They can be as simple as having your computer shut down in front of customers.

When we are prepared and “stay in the moment,” we utilize all of our mental resources available and get creative. When you’re not prepared you can impact your customers in a negative way. Your reaction to a stressful situation can cause your customers to react in a quick decisive way that has them leaving your business and not coming back.

Here are 4 key areas to help you connect with customers during stressful situations:

1. Stop what you are doing for a moment and step back to analyze the situation. Recognize the fact that your customers are going to be observing you whether you acknowledge them or not. So step back and try and gain an overall perspective of what is happening at the moment.

2. Take a deep breath. Literally, by taking a deep breath you stop the chemical brain freeze that is beginning to happen. Shallow breathing causes your heart to race and your brain to dump survival chemicals into your system. Deep breathing eliminates that process.

3. Engage the thinking brain again by asking yourself some key questions. What impact is this going to have on my customers? If I were a customer how would I feel? How would I want to be treated? What would be a simple solution from the customer’s perspective? By asking these questions the thinking brain becomes engaged again and you can start using your creative resources to their capacity. You can start by asking them questions. Sometimes it is a short-term solution, while other times it takes some longer-term decisions to meet their needs. Make sure your actions are directed toward helping them with their problem.

4. Be prepared for problems, especially if a particular busy time or complex situation is anticipated. Run through some scenarios if things don’t go right or as planned. In a cockpit when the Caution/Warning Signal flashes,
the pilots have been trained to handle problems associated with signals. What options are available? How can you turn a less desirable situation into an opportunity to show the customer you care about their business and loyalty? The more prepared you are the better you will be at handling difficult situations.

Controlling Chemical Brain Freezes is not easy. They typically happen when things don’t go according to plan. If you don’t take control of the situation you can wind up with unsatisfactory results. In Kristy’s case, she watched as the people in line slowly started talking amongst themselves and probably starting having their own chemical brain freezes. One by one people started leaving the line and walking out the door. The long line of customers dwindled down to single digits. How much lost business happened that day? How many unhappy customers would tell others about the poor service and how many customers would never come back?

Know that chemical brain freezes can happen to all of us and be prepared for something not to go right. The more we can anticipate something going wrong the better prepared we are to help our customers during these difficult times.

Chuck Inman is a leadership and emotional intelligence specialist. He is a keynote speaker, trainer, coach and founder of Crystal Clear Motivation, LLC. His leading edge keynote on “Customer Connect with C.L.O.U.T Bringing Value to your Customers” is a dynamic program that’s addresses key challenges in today’s world. He has traveled across multiple continents and presented his programs to people from over 40 different countries. To find out more information about Chuck and his programs please visit www.ChuckInman.com.

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Work At Home Virtual Employees
Some presenters think that if they talk longer, they are giving more value or getting their point across more effectively, when in reality, audiences of any size, from 5 to 500, are eager for content presented as efficiently and memorably as possible.

One of my friends was a sales manager at the Fairmont Hotel in San Francisco. He was a great salesperson one-on-one, but now he was facing a group of ten. “I’m very nervous,” he
confessed. “How do I sell to so many people?” A professional association was debating whether to bring their convention to the city.

Here are the five tips I gave him to make his message memorable:

**Build Rapport**

His audience was convention committee. When building rapport with an audience, you need to emotionally and intellectually connect. Think of it this way: logic makes you think, emotion makes you act. You intellectually connect with your logical argument through specifics, statistics, charts and diagrams. You emotionally connect through eye contact, stories, content that creates a visual in the audience’s mind, and “you”-focused (rather than “I”-focused) language. This is incredibly important if you want to sell your ideas, a product or service.

**Don’t be Polite… Get to the Point**

“Let’s step backwards,” I said. “How long do you have for your presentation?”

“Seven minutes.”

I asked him how he would start if left to his own resources. The sales manager took a deep breath and began, “Well, ladies and gentlemen, I hope you’re enjoying our hospitality. I know…” and he was off on a stream of platitudes.

“You’re polite,” I told him when he finished, “and that’s not a bad habit, but you don’t have much time. They know who you are because you’ve been entertaining them. They know where you are.

**Make it About Them**

I advised him to say, “Welcome and thank you for the opportunity to host you. In the next seven minutes, you are going to discover why the best decision you can make for your members and your association is to bring your convention to San Francisco and the Fairmont Hotel.”

**Make Your Message Sound Valuable**

How valuable does your message sound? Just for fun, I had my friend choose either to rehearse his presentation and time it or transcribe it. He calculated the financial impact of his
proposal, and the investment of his prospect, and divided by the length of his presentation. That gave him a dollar value for his words.

Then I asked, “What are you actually ‘selling’?”

“Well, it isn’t the Fairmont because if they come to San Francisco, they’ll definitely use our hotel. I guess I’m selling San Francisco because they are seriously considering San Diego.”

Then I asked him a question that rarely gets asked: “How much is it worth to the Fairmont Hotel if you get their business?”

“Half a million dollars,” he said.

“Mmm,” I said, grabbing my calculator. “Let’s see. Half a million dollars divided by seven minutes—that’s $1,041.66 a second, even when you pause.”

**Remove Fluff and Filler**

Naturally you want to remove all the unnecessary fluff and filler. For example, avoid clichés like “each and every one of you in the room.” How often have you heard presenters say that? It’s adding nine unnecessary words! When you have made your message is clear and concise, divide the word count by the amount of time needed to deliver your presentation. Notice how much more valuable each word has become. Make every word count!

Watching the I-focused language, that is 7 ‘yous’ or ‘yours’ and 1 ‘Fairmont.’ He should continue with, “San Diego is a magnificent destination, and you should definitely go there in the future. However, this year you should come to San Francisco because…” and then list the specific reasons.

This is an emotional opening because it’s ‘you’ focused. And because my friend never disparages his competition, he’s acknowledging that San Diego is fabulous. He connected emotionally with his audience, and the logical specifics connect him to them intellectually.

It can be argued that those polite opening comments are necessary, because the audience is still settling down and not focused on you. This may be true, but don’t let it be an excuse. Go to the front of the room and wait until you have their attention, maintaining a strong, cheerful gaze and willing them to be silent. If needed, state the opening phrase of your comments and then pause until all eyes are focused on you, awaiting the rest of the sentence.

**Logic Sells, But Close With Emotion**

Continue a presentation with logical incentives, but end with emotion. Remember that last words linger, and your goal is to be memorable.

Finally, I told my sales manager friend, “Imagine years from now when your attendees are sitting around a convention lobby reminiscing about the best conventions they’ve ever attended, and they talk about their experiences in San Francisco at the Fairmont. And you’ll know you were part of that experience because you were on the planning committee.”

Persuasive presentations give you a competitive edge. You now have eight tips that add value to your words and make your message memorable. Use my friend’s model of how to emotionally connect in the beginning and end of a presentation and intellectually connect in between. Plus, you will be making your words sound more valuable.

Patricia Fripp, CSP, CPAE, Keynote Speaker, Executive Speech Coach, and Sales Presentation Skills Expert, works with organizations and individuals who realize they gain a competitive edge through powerful, persuasive, presentation skills. She builds leaders, transforms sales teams, and delights audiences. Fripp is Past-President of the National Speakers Association. To learn more about Patricia, contact her at http://www.Fripp.com, (415) 753-6556, @PFripp, or PFripp@ix.netcom.com.

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Celebrating 20 Years of Promoting Excellence through Education”

“Thank you” to each and every donor of the Insurance Scholarship Foundation of America for 20 years of support. Your donation dollars have made it possible to award gifts of education to 461 college and professional scholars, representing in excess of $430,000 in scholarships. ISFA has helped build the careers of many men and women within the industry, and many future industry employees. Each dollar given provides new strength to the professionalism of employees in the industry we serve. Because of our donors, the Insurance Scholarship Foundation of America scholars have been able to achieve their educational and professional development goals.

ISFA is pleased to announce the recent Academic and Professional Scholarship recipients. Congratulations to Courtney Bass, CPCU, ASLI, ARM – Troy University, Troy, AL and Cameron Annas, Appalachian State University, NC on receiving academic scholarships, and Dot Francis, Tampa, FL on receiving a professional scholarship.

Courtney B. Bass, CPCU, ASLI, ARM, received a Marsh Scholars Scholarship Award. She graduated from Troy University, Troy, AL with a double degree in Risk Management & Insurance and Finance with a 3.737 GPA. Courtney has recently started her PhD studies in Risk Management/Insurance at Florida State University. Courtney tells us: I would like to extend my deepest thanks to the Insurance Scholarship Foundation of America. Being awarded the Marsh Scholars College Scholarship by this fantastic organization means more to me than I could ever express in words. My educational goals and future career path would never be possible if it were not for organizations such as ISFA. Being recognized for my accomplishments by ISFA is flattering and appreciated, but the greatest reward is the financial relief provided by their generous scholarship. By receiving assistance from ISFA, I will now be able to focus even more on my studies and allow myself to realize even higher achievements. ISFA’s continued support of insurance students is honorable and treasured among the industry and educational institutions. I am very proud to be affiliated with such a noble organization. Again, I thank ISFA from the bottom of my heart for allowing me to be a recipient of such a prominent award.

Cameron N. Annas, UACIC, received a Susanne N. Wolfe College Scholarship. Cameron is a senior at Appalachian State University, Boone, NC majoring in Risk Management & Insurance with a 3.68 GPA. Cameron says, “The ISFA has been promoting excellence through my education for 2 years now. Thanks to you I am able to focus on acquiring designations while in college instead of working to pay for college. Upon graduation in May, I look forward to embarking on my successful career and helping invest in driven students’ education like the ISFA has. Thanks so much for your support ISFA!!

Dorothy “Dot” Francis, RCSR, CIC, CPIW received a Susanne N. Wolfe Professional Scholarship. Dot is an Associate Account Executive employed by M. E. Wilson in Tampa, FL and is a member of the Tampa Association of Insurance Professionals. She received her scholarship to begin her studies to obtain the CPCU designation. Dot says: I am on an accelerated path for my educational goals and plan to finish my CRM by the end of 2013. This scholarship will allow me to continue my educational goals and I look forward to giving back in the future!

The Insurance Scholarship Foundation of America’s strength is its donors and we are counting on you in 2013 to continue your support of Promoting Excellence through Education.

“ISFA is a 501 (c) (3) public charity. All donations are tax deductible.”
To a lot of CEOs, a website is bit like owning an older car: It’s given you a pretty good run for your money and it does what you need it to do. Sure, the mileage isn’t great – but is upgrading really a top priority?

As you are looking at your marketing strategy for the coming quarters and trying to decide whether it’s time to get a new site, or whether you can get another year or two out of your existing design, here is a website design formula to help you make your decision:

**Will Your New Website Design Pay Off?**

By: Natalie Henley
For many businesses, it’s strongly recommended to consider having a website built on an open source Content Management System (CMS) – for example Wordpress, Drupal, Joomla!, Dot Net Nuke, etc. These sites work well, are easy to scale and typically cost a lot less.

An average cost of this type of design is around $5,000-$15,000. You can use $10,000 as an “anticipated cost” of a website design project.

A word of caution: many companies “know a guy” that does website design out of his basement, or, have a cousin in college taking web design classes who is willing to design your website for a steal. Many of these projects go south quickly, so follow the golden rule– you get what you pay for.

**Formula # 1 - Got Content Management?**

Is it easy to login and make changes and add pages to your website? If the answer is no, try to analyze the last years’ web changes. Most companies that want to actively gain Search Engine ranking should be making updates to their websites at least 2-4 times/month. Assuming 3 website changes happen in one month, taking 1 hour per change, and the typical website developer hourly cost is around $125:

- 3 hours/month = $375
- 1 year of web edits= $4,500
- 3 years of web edits = $13,500

Looking at the numbers, it’s possible that not having your website on a Content Management System can cost you up to $13,500 over a 3 year period.

**Formula # 2 - A Conversion Rate Your Mother Would Be Proud Of**

This really comes down to a fundamental question – what actions do you want people to take on your website? Your conversion rate is a simple calculation based on how many “hits” you are getting, and how many of those “hits” take action on your website. Simply put, a conversion is when someone takes the next step on your site – whether that’s filling in a form, signing up for your email program, buying something, etc. Industry standard conversion rate
Technology Tips & Tricks

for companies generating leads is usually right around 1% - for ecommerce websites, this is closer to 2-3%.

If you have no idea how many hits you are getting, or how many of those hits are taking action, call your web developer and make sure you have Google Analytics installed on your website, and that Google Analytics is tracking “goals” (which is also conversions). This program is free and will give you all of this information.

Out of every 100 people coming to your website, if you are driving leads, you should be getting at least 1 lead, and if you are selling products, you should be getting 2 sales. If you are quite a bit lower than these numbers, consider a good website design will easily take you to your 1% conversion. So, if you have a .5% conversion rate (which is where many older website designs are at), a new website design can easily double your leads (or sales).

What’s the value of that? Only your company can assign that value. You will need to sit down and determine whether doubling leads is enough to overcome a $10,000 investment.

Formula # 3 – Planning on Getting to the Top

The last big indicator of whether it’s time to overhaul your website would be whether you want your website to rank in Search Engines like Google or Bing, when your prospects are searching for your products and services. This is called Search Engine Optimization (SEO). If you want to get that great traffic to your website, you must have a good technical website.

As you start to think about the potential of SEO you should keep in mind that an average website with Search Engine Optimization should see traffic increases by 40% in one year. So, if you are getting 1,000 “hits” to your website each month, a 40% increase means an additional 4,800 hits/year. For lead generation companies, 1% is a good estimate of a conversion rate on a new site design, which is 48 leads off of your increase. Over 3 years, this will be 144 leads. Again, your company will have to make its own calculations of whether this makes financial sense.

Most importantly, for these kinds of results, just a website design won’t cut it. These results are more likely for companies who do an SEO and Content Marketing program after a new website is built. That being said, if your company wants to take on an SEO campaign, your website must meet technical best practices.

Set Goals

A website design project can be a huge undertaking for your organization, so it makes financial sense to really think through the ROI and potential before putting your team through this kind of project. Also, to ensure you maintain those ROI goals throughout the project, it’s important to be very clear with your web development firm regarding the results you are expecting from your website.

Natalie Henley has been in the Internet marketing industry for over 4 years and specializes in the Search Engine Optimization, Paid Search & Social Media Marketing fields. She is the Marketing Manager at Volume 9 Inc. Volume 9 creates custom search marketing campaigns for clients, including a mix of SEO, paid search management, social media, local search marketing and website development for over 100 clients and 200 managed websites. Natalie and Volume 9’s enterprising team leverage search marketing into real bottom line results for their clients’ businesses. They were recently honored by both the Inc. 5,000 and the Denver Business Journal as one of the fastest growing companies in Denver, and in the US. For more information, please visit www.volume9inc.com.

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CANDIDATE QUESTION:
“Insurance Professionals is a volunteer association - our diverse members work in all areas of the insurance industry. What techniques have you found when in a leadership role to be most helpful coaching leaders to achieve their goals?”

It is crucial that coaches and mentors observe and actively listen to the individual in order to help them identify steps they can take to succeed in achieving their goals. The technique I use has three phases:

1) **Assessment:** I ask the leader what their goals are and what they believe are the obstacles that may keep them from achieving those goals. We need to make sure the goals are realistic/achievable and make sure the perceived obstacles are the real obstacles. This exercise helps to define and refine the goals and clarify the obstacles. I also ask them what they have done so far, how successful that approach has been and why. The answers to all of these questions provides us with a foundation to build on.

2) **Plan:** Once the foundation is established we can develop a plan of action. During this process we discuss ways to use their strengths, we look at what others have done to achieve similar goals and we also explore “out of the box” ideas for new and creative strategies. Once we have come up with the plan that they believe will work best for them, we write it down and decide on benchmarks and time frames. The plan might include a number of undertakings like completing IAIP’s Certified Leadership Professional curriculum, finding a mentor or practicing more effective delegation.

3) **Follow-up:** Once the action plan is in place, I check back regularly to see if the benchmarks are being met and to help the leader make adjustments if needed. This also serves as an opportunity to provide additional moral support.

Regardless of what the goals are, what obstacles are in the way or what the action plan consists of, underneath it all must be a relationship of mutual respect and a shared desire for the leader to succeed. You don’t help leaders achieve their goals by showing them that you know more or have more experience but rather by helping them find their own path and the tools necessary for them to become the leader they aspire to be.
CANDIDATE RESUME:

As a member of NAIW/IAIP since 1998, it has been my honor and privilege to serve at all levels of our organization including 2 terms as the California Council Director and as the 2009-10 Region VIII Vice President. During my 30 year career in the insurance industry I worked in a wide range of positions from file clerk to Senior Business Analyst. My career and IAIP experiences have given me a broad perspective on the needs of our membership and the positive impact we can have on our industry. They have also provided me with the skills necessary to tackle complex projects, create successful teams and accomplish strategic goals.

IAIP EXPERIENCE:

Member of NAIW-IAIP since 1998

Local - Tri-Valley Insurance Professionals:
- President 2006-07, 2012-13
- Newsletter Editor 2011-12, 2012-13
- Bylaws Committee Co-Chair 2011-12
- Parliamentarian 2011-12
- Secretary 2002-03, 2004-05, 2010-11
- Immediate Past President 2007-08
- Vice President 2005-06, 2008-09
- Treasurer 2003-04
- Education Chair 2004-05, 2005-06, 2012-13
- CWC Instructor 2005 through 2009, 2012-13

Council - California:
- Bylaws Committee Chair 2012-13
- Credentials Chair 2011-12
- Young Professionals Committee 2010-11
- Council Director 2007-08, 2008-09
- Council Public Relations Chair 2006-07
- CWC Committee Chair 2006-07
- Council Education Liaison 2005-06
- Minutes Committee Chair 2001-02
- CWC Contestant 1999

Regional – Region VIII:
- Conference Instructor 2012-13
- First Timers Committee Chair 2011-12
- Delegate to Nominating Committee 2010-11
- Audit Committee 2010-11
- Region VIII Vice President 2009-10
- Bylaws Committee Chair 2007-08
- Credentials Committee Chair 2006-07
- Pages Committee Chair 2005-06
- Written Program Chair 2003-04
- Conference Host Committee 2003-04

International:
- Convention Education Committee Chair 2012-13
- Leadership Mentoring Task Force Chair 2011-12, 2012-13
- Delegate to Nominating Committee 2010-11, 2011-12
- Convention Instructor 2011-12
- NAIW Board of Directors 2009-10
- Legacy Foundation Board of Directors 2009-10
- NAIW Education Committee 2009-10
- First Timers Committee Chair 2008-09
- Tellers Committee 2007-08
- CWC Committee 2006-07

INSURANCE POSITIONS PROGRESSION:
- File Clerk
- Policy Typist
- Manual Rater
- Records Control Supervisor
- Mailroom Supervisor
- Manual Rating Supervisor
- Customer Service Supervisor
- Underwriter
- Production Underwriter
- Underwriting Assistant Manager
- Underwriting Manager
- Underwriting Specialist
- Compliance Specialist
- Quality Assurance Analyst
- Business Analyst
- Senior Business Analyst
- Independent Consultant & Instructor

DESIGNATIONS AND CERTIFICATIONS:
Certified Insurance Industry Professional
Diversified Advanced Education Certificate in General Insurance

OTHER IAIP ACCOMPLISHMENTS:
- Region VIII Hall of Fame Award 2011-12
- Region VIII RVP Recognition Award 2011-2012
- Created Leadership Relationships Course 2011-12
- Initiated Creation of CIIP Designation Course 2011-12
- CWC Regional Winner 2004-05
- CWC Council Winner 2004-05
- TVIP Member of the Year 2002-03, 2005-06

INDUSTRY EXPERIENCE:
30+ Years in the P&C Insurance Industry
20+ Years in Management
As a small business CEO observed a window washer at the Atlanta airport one day, she asked what she thought to be a straightforward question, “What’s the secret to window washing?”

“No secret, ma’am,” the window cleaner said as he continued working. “I just focus on keeping on with my tools and my experience. I keep on going.”

The master continued working with repeated, slick motions, his tool remaining fixed to the glass, and leaving not one smudge. Then, true to his word, he kept on going.
When the CEO asked what was in the blue water, the cleaning professional smiled and said, “I can’t tell you that! If you knew that, you could do my job!” Then, before attacking another pane, he said, “It is very special, though.”

When a professional window cleaner uses just the right combination of resources—minimal tools; years of experience; a flowing, non-stop motion; and a secret concoction of suds—his or her work is efficient, engaging, and looks natural—perhaps easy—to those who observe.

Unlike the window washer, many team leaders don’t find their work to be efficient, easy or appear natural. These leaders often do not have degrees in leadership; they are promoted because they are very good at their jobs. Their former colleagues and friends now report to these “peer leaders.”

There is a skill to leading your former peers without encountering resistance, resentment and regret. When your toolbox contains a simple collection of thinking, communicating, and acting that is coherent, ordered and intentional, your leadership appears as if it is natural. When you’re charged with leading a team of your peers or former peers, the right combination of resources makes all the difference. The following techniques should be at the core of every peer leader’s toolbox.

1. Minimal Tools Keep You Focused

The most effective leader uses only one tool: his or her personality. One great peer leader uses his thirst for understanding and information. When a member of his team enters his office, he asks that person to be the teacher while he plays the role of student.

“Any questions I ask are merely a student asking,” he explains. “Then, I never use the words ‘I’ or ‘you’... I only use the words ‘we’ and ‘us.’ I want them walking out of my office feeling better than when they walked in.”

By using the mindset of education, the pressure is removed from his “teacher” so that no question is off limits. This philosophy sets the tone for education and teamwork. If, instead, he were to use his intellectual curiosity to demonstrate that only he knew the correct answer, he could face resentment. The best peer leaders learn to harness their personality to inspire trust and teamwork.

2. Experience Gives You Credibility

Just as window washers have well-exercised wrists, your team wants to see...
that you still need and relate to them. While your team is working to create the next product, researching relevant case law, or driving across town at a moment’s notice to meet with a customer, they want to know that you’re there with them. Sometimes that means that they want your hands working alongside theirs, and sometimes it just means that they want to know that you understand their daily routines, frustrations and joys. Regardless of which approach your team members prefer, they want you to guide them in the next, and right direction.

Your team will remember that you were there with them when you encourage. Today’s culture makes it easy for bosses to find faults, but you will have much greater influence when you frequently ask this question of your team members: “You know what I liked about what you did (or said)?” Be relentless as you look to find the ways that their input, skills and contributions have benefited the entire team. This is always of interest to the receiver; no one has ever responded, “No, I don’t want to know what you liked!”

3. A Flowing, Non-Stop Motion is Very Intentional

There are few things more beautiful than a leader who knows how and when to listen and where and when to speak; the times to agree and those to dissent; when to stay with the group and those other times when to go out on a limb. Just as the window washer intentionally follows a specific pattern, the successful leader never allows these moments to be chance events. Instead, they are always intentional. While employees sometimes want to be inquisitive, your peers want to be connected with you. With intimacy comes great trust and loyalty.

A consistent engagement with your team on a personal level (within the business environment) turns your role from that of a boss to one of a fearless leader, mentor, and teacher. This intimacy comes when you go beyond their favorite sports team to learn about their childhood passions, when you understand their family’s immigration experience deeply affected their outlook on international business, and that their self-directed nature comes from their Eagle Scout training. To the inexperienced leader, these characteristics are mere factoids. The best peer leaders know that an understanding of these experiences and traits lead to unbreakable loyalty, an impassioned work-ethic and—most importantly to the company’s owners—higher profits.

4. Your Secret Formula Keeps You Ever Useful

Famous chefs sometimes share their secret recipes, for they know what many of us have learned after carefully following the same recipe three times: there are just some techniques that can’t be explained with words. Food rarely tastes the same way twice and rarely as good as it does in your favorite restaurant!

The window washer humorously refused to share the ingredients in his bucket for fear of being replaced. The best peer leaders are afraid that their talents and “secret concoction” may go unused, so they focus on how their team is furthering the company’s mission. When leading a group of your peers, you must have a firm hold on the secret formula that lies within you. Ask your team members what they believe to be your “secret sauce,” and be ready to listen without judging their responses. You may find that your team wants you to talk more at meetings, even though you might think you talk too much. Your team may want you to consult them but ultimately make a firm decision, while you may lead by consensus for you fear making decisions alone. When your team tells you what they want, find a way to do what they have asked!

Dolly Parton said, “Figure out who you are and then do it on purpose.” All of what you do as a leader must be naturally intentional, obviously purposeful, yet elegantly skillful.
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