

THE FRONTLINE EMPLOYEE

Wellness, Productivity & You!

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Is Your Handshake Making It Happen?

First impressions can mean the difference in getting a job, a client or an opportunity. Is your handshake making a good impression? Shaking hands sends a message – a message about you. Is your handshake limp or too firm? Is it sweaty or greasy? Do you out-squeeze the other person or grab so fast you miss all but a few fingers? Etiquette experts agree, make sure you firmly shake a person's hand – and always look him or her straight in the eye (one of the most common mistakes when shaking hands with others.)

Find Your Team Player Score!

Are you brave enough to get feedback from others? Try this team player survey.

Use these ratings:

5 - Always; 4 - Frequent; 3 - So-So; 2 - Rarely;
1 - Almost Never.

Survey items:

- 1) I am willing to receive feedback.
- 2) I spot interpersonal conflict early and bring issues to the group for problem solving.
- 3) I share control and resources with team members.
- 4) I am open to using outside help with team conflicts.
- 5) I am focused more on team achievement than my achievement.
- 6) I am willing to use others' ideas.

Score values:

27-30 = Team Guru; 24-27 = Team Pro;
20-23 = Team Wannabe; less than 20 = Team Thorn.

EAPs & Confidentiality

Q. I gave consent to the EAP to inform my supervisor that I participated in the EAP. If the next-level manager (his supervisor) phones to ask if I was at the EAP, will the EAP disclose my participation?

A. No. The employee assistance professional will not disclose your participation in the EAP to the next-level supervisor unless you provide his or her name in writing on a form for the release of confidential information.

Facts About Stalking

Criminal stalking is the unwanted, willful and malicious following and harassment of another person. Approximately 1,000,000 women and 400,000 men are stalked each year. Better laws, resources and websites are being put into effect to protect victims. Here are some of the best tips for victims: 1) Be sure to tell the stalker “no” – that you want to be left alone and have no contact with him or her whatsoever. 2) Keep and document everything for legal use: letters, gifts, voice mail recordings, etc. 3) Do not let victimization cause you to blame yourself for the stalking. 4) Inform people that you are being stalked to prevent the stalker from manipulating others to gain access to you. 5) Get support from the EAP and a victim assistance organization in your community.

Source: National Violence Against Women Survey, Centers for Disease Control

21st Century Workplace Jitters

If you are feeling the stress of the new 21st century workplace – living on the edge of uncertainty or panic about what’s coming next in the way of a merger, downsizing, layoff, or your transfer to a lower-paying job – it’s time to feel more in control in the face of the stress. Consider following these five steps:

- 1) Decide that you will not let the uncertainty of your job’s future cause you to be a victim of the stress associated with it.
- 2) Get the right information. Rumors can run rampant in financially stressed organizations. Don’t accept false information as fact, and avoid reacting to the “buzz on the street.”
- 3) Use the EAP for support. There is no substitute for an empathetic listening ear to help you sort through options, ideas, and “what-ifs.” This “processing” will also help you cope more effectively with stress.
- 4) Avoid wishful thinking and denial about job security. Instead, use some energy to formulate a plan that you can implement if you lose your job. Knowing what you will do if you lose your job is the most powerful weapon against the stress of uncertainty, and it can help reduce the tossing and turning in your sleep. Do not permit this stress to linger and affect the quality of your life. Many employees fearful of job layoffs have suffered for years pending a decision by their organization to eliminate their position, and then the job loss never came! So long-term chronic stress is your enemy. This stress can be more harmful than the layoff itself!
- 5) Act. Start acquiring new skills and abilities that are transferable to a new employer, a new position within the organization, a new job or even self-employment. This step can build your confidence and generate excitement about a possible new future. You just might leave before the “bad news” hits. Few victories are as sweet.

Clinical Trial Opportunities

Medications and treatment for hundreds of diseases are continually being researched through clinical trials throughout the country. Could you or someone you know benefit from this information? Research and track developments for conditions that interest you at Acurian.com. They will send you weekly email updates about new clinical trial opportunities and new medical therapies for selected conditions. The subscription service is free, and the website assures confidentiality for subscribers.

Neat Ideas

Jenny Lovins, author of the book *Neat Ideas*, offers the following tips to help you untangle yourself from disorganized stuff: 1) Don’t let possessions possess you. Chances are you are spending 80 percent of your time using only 20 percent of your possessions. So ask yourself: “If I throw this out or give it away, will it affect my life?” If the answer is no, get rid of it. 2) When acquiring possessions, think: Is this a need or a want? Go for needs; hold off more on wants. You will accumulate less stuff and save money. Buying something new gives many people a lift, but this trap can swamp you in clutter. 3) To fix a cluttered work area with paper, mail, magazines and accumulated stray objects on your desk, use the **FAT** intervention – **File It, Act on It or Toss It**. 4) Only use clear plastic storage boxes so you can see what is in them.

Source: Jenny Lovins, and www.aboutneatideas.com

Don’t Dismiss Violence Warnings

Never dismiss threats by coworkers or consider them as “simply the employee getting something off his chest.” Report it to your manager, or follow your organization’s policy on reporting threats of violence. According to researchers the typical profile of an employee prone to lethal violence: is typically a 25—40 year old male; a loner; feels the workplace has been unjust to him; has frequent disputes with management; may cause fear among coworkers; has made threats against coworkers, supervisors, or the organization; has a fascination with the military or paramilitary; is a multiple gun owner/weapon collector; is sympathetic to media reports of violence in the workplace; may have an unstable family life; has a history of past family/marital troubles; and, has poor anger control.