

THE *FRONTLINE EMPLOYEE*

Wellness, Productivity & You!

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Share Information Turn on the Lights

Failure to share information is a perpetual cause of conflict among coworkers. Information is knowledge, and controlling information brings power to the knowledge holder, which explains the desire to withhold information, despite its drawbacks. You are more likely to share information if you see yourself as a team player and feel good about keeping others informed. You appreciate information, so you reciprocate. To break loose of the information-holding habit that binds you, create time to share information, help reduce secrecy and distrust in the environment, encourage a noncompetitive work environment, and acknowledge how good it feels to share information.

Lessons from Customer Rage

A customer whose complaints are not resolved will tell an average of 15 other people about it, while a positive experience gets shared with only about seven, according to the 2004 and 2005 Customer Rage Studies recently released by the Customer Care Alliance. They measure the impact that resolving customer complaints has on the bottom line. Fifty-nine percent of disgruntled customers reportedly leave for a competitor. However, resolving a complaint will endear customer loyalty, and success in doing so is as powerful as the quality of your product or service!

Source: Customer Care Alliance

Looking Past January 24th

January 24th is the most depressing day of the year, according to a formula arrived at by a British social scientist who says his equation includes seven variables: poor weather, debt, a stretched salary, time elapsed since the holiday period, realization of not sticking to a New Year's resolution, low motivational levels, and the awareness of the need to take action to make things better. Whether or not he's right about January 24th, consider a visit to the EAP in your fight against the winter blahs and your desire to put momentum in your life this year.

Source: Cardiff University, News & Events, Wales

Rules for Kids: Internet Safety

Web monitoring programs can safeguard computer-savvy children, but also create rules they must follow when they are online. Here are a few: 1) Never give out your name, phone number, address, passwords, or other personal information. 2) If something on the computer makes you feel uncomfortable, turn it off. 3) Never agree to meet in person with anyone you've met online. Web browsers may filter out the most explicit adult content, but if their "advance search preferences" are ever turned off, common key words like "teen fun" can produce explicit sexual and violent Web sites. Hint: If your computer tends to be online continuously, be aware that these defaults will not reset until you log off.

Diversity of Generations at Work

Social scientists have identified the merging of four unique generations within today's workforce: the Veterans (born between 1922 and 1945), the Baby Boomers (born between 1946 and 1964), Generation X (born between 1965 and 1980), and Generation Y (born between 1980 and 2000). Generally, each of these generations possess varying fundamental values, methods of communicating, goals, and ideas about how to get things done. A multigenerational workforce provides creativity, risk taking, myriad experiences, and a varied knowledge base. However, these opposing views can also collide when trying to build teams, deal with change, increase productivity, motivate others, and maintain employee retention. How do you merge the best of what we all have to offer? Understand that how we communicate is determined by the generation we belong to. Before jumping to conclusions about what your coworker just said, try seeing things from his or her point of view. Chances are you will be enriched by the diversity found in others' communication. Once you understand these differences, you can increase your productivity and satisfaction on the job by anticipating their influence in day-to-day communication.

Discovering Bipolar Disorder

Major depressive disorder—often referred to as depression—and bipolar disorder have many symptoms in common. However, they are different conditions that require different treatments. Many people suffering with depression are actually dealing with bipolar disorder, but they don't know it because they don't recognize the symptoms. In fact, one study showed that many patients with bipolar disorder initially received an incorrect diagnosis of depression. Bipolar disorder, also called manic depression, involves periods of depression but also periods of mania. Manic episodes can include excessive energy, inappropriately elevated mood, and/or risky behavior. It's not surprising that misdiagnosis happens. After all, depression and bipolar disorder do have some symptoms (the depressive ones) in common. And because there's generally less awareness about bipolar disorder, people often don't recognize manic symptoms and report them to their doctors. There is good news: there are highly effective treatments for bipolar disorder. The key is to get a correct diagnosis. The EAP can help you understand more about bipolar symptoms.

Getting Personal Without the Pain

It's customary to be social at work and share some personal information about our lives. But how much is too much? Finding a balance can be a hard-learned lesson. Here are a few guidelines to consider before self-disclosure: 1) Is the information so compelling or irresistible that it would be burdensome not to repeat it, although you want it kept secret? 2) Could the information interfere with the workplace? 3) Could the information be used by others in a malicious or inappropriate way? 4) Does the personal information adversely affect the way you are perceived by others? 5) Will sharing personal information open a dialogue that leads to awkward or uncomfortable questions from coworkers? If you are frustrated by a pattern of sharing personal information that causes difficulties for you later, consider talking to the EAP about ideas on drawing a better balance so you feel connected, not torn apart by gossip and misinformation at work.

EAP Confidentiality and Public Places

Q. If I participate in the EAP, do I risk being identified outside the EAP office by the EA professional saying hello to me at a training session or other event?

A. Confidentiality is so important that the EA professional will avoid engaging with you in public. If you approach the EA professional to say hello, he or she may minimize conversation. Don't feel offended. This detachment is important to preserve your confidentiality and the perception of confidentiality for the EAP.