

Employer's Advantage

VOLUME 11 ISSUE 2

FEBRUARY 2009

APPLIED BEHAVIORAL INSIGHTS

SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- *Change and NO Change*
- *The ASTD study*
- *Do I have leaders in the pipeline...*
- *The Truth about Time Management*
- *Top 10 e-Learning Courses*

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

- Keeping Employees engaged through a Culture of Learning* 2
- Plan for the Future* 3
- Getting things Done* 4
- New Course List e-Learning for Employees* 6

Edited by:
James A. Hazen, Ph.D.

[Applied Behavioral
Insights.com](http://AppliedBehavioralInsights.com)

1.866.746.4713

New Direction...New Plan... "To See Ourselves as Others See Us"

Two hundred years ago, when poet Robert Burns penned the words about seeing ourselves through the eyes of others in his famous poem (*To a Louse*, 1786), he could not have known that they would apply so fittingly today. Today's economy might be very different if only the leaders running some of our most respected organizations were willing to view themselves through the lenses others use.

Moving forward in 2009, we must deal with an uncertain national and global economy. It is a good time for us to reassess our priorities and goals. Instead of looking in the mirror and reflecting on whether the hair is combed or the jacket fits well, a wise leader will look beyond the outer image, go beneath the surface. He will evaluate and look inside his true self.

Viewing our deeper selves and honestly recognizing what we see is a difficult task. Getting to the truth will require the help of others, perhaps many others, since some people know only one side of us. Deciding what we are going to do with the information we get back will require help, too, because it is easier to make no change. If you are tempted to think that way, remember: change is the only way to grow.

So, facing two paths –
CHANGE and NO CHANGE –

let's say we opt for the first one. What will keep us on the straight and narrow path? Here is a plan that can enable change:

- **Seek feedback.** The only way to know how others view us is to ask. Getting their input can tell us where we are now, which is an important step in getting where we want to go. Honest feedback illuminates our current state and provides a foundation for our betterment.

In addition to seeking out trusted friends and mentors, it is helpful to learn from the people you interact with on a regular basis. How do you treat those who can neither hurt nor harm you, like the clerk at the convenience store? The answer could be revealing.



- **Be courageous.** Whether or not you believe in making new resolutions is immaterial. If you discover that you behave in ways that make it difficult for others to do their jobs, you have a responsibility to change your behavior. The

alteration might be as simple as communicating in person instead of through memos. Or it might be more complex, requiring you to restructure the way you and your management team do business. Remember that embarking on such a course implies to those who take the journey with you that you are serious about change. To request feedback is not easy, but to seek it and then do nothing invites cynicism.

Do not assume anything about your employees.

Know them better than they know themselves. New tools are available to tell you exactly who is working for you – their competencies, their weaknesses and their goals. Do not decide that you can apply the same management style to everyone and get the same results. A multitude of different faces greet you when you walk into the department. They are likely to include four different generations, both genders, and different races and ethnicities. In the global marketplace, you will find variations even within identifiable groups. It is imperative that you learn what skills your employees have, the skills they are capable of acquiring and what it takes to keep them motivated.

continued pg. 3



Be the
Dean of
your own
College!

"e-Learning and on-demand training allows small and mid-sized organizations opportunities to remain competitive – and grow – in a down economy."



Keeping Employees Engaged Through a Culture of Learning

Getting and keeping employees engaged is a challenging (and endless) process in organizations around the globe. Engaged employees don't accept satisfactory results. They are committed to and enthusiastic about their work, and in the overall objectives of the organization. Engaged employees feel a sense of connectivity with their employer and are more productive because they feel connected to and dedicated to the success of the company's mission. The American Society for Training & Development (ASTD) recently published a study titled, "Learning's Role in Employee Engagement," where they discussed leveraging learning opportunities to

optimize engagement. Nearly two-thirds of ASTD's survey respondents noted 'the quality of training and learning opportunities' as a factor positively influencing their engagement with their employer. The survey found that employees who recognized that their organization provided opportunities for advancement, with resources for learning and developing their career path, felt more engaged and connected to their organization of employment.

How do we ensure that our organizations provide a supportive learning culture to keep our employees engaged? The ASTD study suggests that highly engaged organizations are likely to have a number of influential practices at work:

- ◆ Peer coaching among employees
- ◆ Learning through stretch assignments
- ◆ Employee onboarding processes
- ◆ Communities of practice
- ◆ Informal learning opportunities

Highly engaged organizations leverage these communal learning opportunities, in addition to traditional development resources to provide an open culture of learning and career development. Link your learning objectives and practices with the performance management process at your organization. Providing your managers with the skills they need to engage their employees, and when you're designing your training curriculum and choosing content, technologies and platforms – keep engagement in mind.

ABOUT E-LEARNING FOR EMPLOYEES

E-Learning for Employees provides affordable training solutions for small and mid-sized organizations nationwide. Unlike other training solutions built and priced for large organizations, our e-learning system was designed specifically to meet the needs of smaller businesses. The solution includes a state-of-the-art Learning Management System, over 4,000 world-class online business and computer training courses, as well as services to assist our clients in the marketing and implementation of its e-learning program. E-Learning for Employees offers high-quality e-Learning that is cost-effective, easy to use, and results-oriented.

Learn more at www.elearningforemployees.com or call us toll free at 1.866.746.4713

See page 6 for
NEW courses
added and for
TOP TEN
e-Learning
Course
Favorites

Plan for the Future with CheckPoint 360™

A story told by former President Jimmy Carter illustrates the reality of life going on no matter what. He recalled a holiday visit with his family to an Aspen mansion that a Saudi prince, who was a friend of Carter's, owned. It was atop a mountain and the family had great fun. One day one of Carter's grandchildren asked him if he was going to die one day.

"Yes," Carter told him, "everyone dies." When his grandchild fell silent, Carter asked him what prompted the question. The grandson asked if he could still come to the prince's house once Carter died.

This story is a vivid lesson of looking to the future while remembering the past. This truth that applies to organizations during harsh economic times. Will we stick our heads into the sand like an ostrich until the storm passes, or will we face challenges bravely? We can

successfully endure challenges if we retain and develop our best employees and encourage them to find creative ways to perform their jobs.

It's helpful to remember that even in a dismal economy, your most talented people might be tempted away by seemingly better situations. Whether key workers are worried about the organization's future or their role in it, you can address the worry with an assessment especially designed to discern where your organization is now and where it needs to go. This useful tool is called CheckPoint 360™, and it will help you answer these questions:

- What strengths of this manager can I capitalize on?
- Which areas should my manager focus on developing?
- How can I provide guidance in this area?
- How do I effectively manage

conflict?

- Do I have enough leaders in the pipeline to meet tomorrow's needs?

CheckPoint 360™ employs 70 interview questions about specific management behaviors to give a complete picture of a manager's capabilities in such areas as communication, leadership, adaptability, ability to build relationships, managing tasks, productivity, development of others, and self-development. Our clients have used CheckPoint 360™ to help them grow effective leaders, build their talent bench, guide leaders through career transitions, develop top talent, and use leadership development to enact key changes in the business.

All things change, but commerce continues even when times are tough. Call Jim at Applied Behavioral Insights—866.746.4713 to help ensure your top performers are going up – at your place of business.

New Direction...from pg. 1

- **Stay focused.** Pledges you make to yourself come with a tempting reality: If you made them, you can also unmake them. The consequences of straying off-course can be daunting, however. One of the biggest is inertia that permeates your organization. If you start something you don't finish, who will keep others focused? Create an accountability system. Make a list and read it at regular intervals. Or go a step further and give your list to a trusted peer to review with you regularly. Think of your colleague's reminders as a pep talk.
- **Recheck midyear.** In today's fast-changing world, a goal that's only a few months old can quickly become obsolete. Examining each item on your list after six months will let you know whether you need to

stay the course or readjust. Of course, you may have seen some flaws in your accountability plan and made changes accordingly. Remember that the creation of new goals does not have to wait for a new year. You can set goals anytime. Build a new list as necessary depending on what has happened inside and outside the organization.

- **Manage frustration.** Realists know there are some things they will never change. Smart leaders recognize obstacles and adapt their responses when difficult changes are beyond their control. Keep this in mind whenever you feel caught between harsh choices.

- **Know your limits.** Sometimes achievers forget that no one is perfect. Just as an artist is never done with his creation, each of us is still a student of life and a creation in progress. This is not permission

to remain static, but we don't need to consider ourselves failures, either. Take the middle path: Admit your mistakes and resolve to do better.

As we commit to improve our leadership behavior in the coming year, we must remember that discomfort accompanies important change. But if we do nothing, the return will also be nothing.

In today's fast-changing world, a goal that's only a few months old can quickly become obsolete. Examining each item on your list after six months will let you know whether you need to stay the course or readjust. Of course, you may have seen some flaws in your accountability plan and made changes accordingly. Remember that the creation of new goals does not have to wait for a new year. You can set goals anytime. Build a new list as necessary depending on what has happened inside and outside the organization.

ABI HR Helpline



The Truth about Time-Management

Tom is the Manager of a small company. Even considering the difficult economy, his business is making money because he keeps the number of people he employs to a reasonable level and he watches expenses. He thinks he could probably do an even better job but he always seems to be running to catch up. He makes plans to work on the books and he gets a million phone calls or 2 people call in sick on the same day. He'd like to take more time off but he never seems to feel caught up enough to do that. Tom has always thought he was a good time manager but with the internet and voice mails he seems to be more and more in demand to talk to people and less and less able to get work done. No one appreciates his hard work; least of all his employees and they are the ones who do take time off. He feels like he's burning out and misses the days when work used to be fun!

Most of us are familiar with time management principles, but we tend to interpret them as getting more done in less time. "Getting things done" places the emphasis on doing things right rather than on doing the right things. True time management requires us to manage our decisions and set realistic goals before we set our schedule. Until then, we'll remain in the same time bind that Henry Kissinger once found himself in as Secretary of State. "There cannot be a crisis next week," he said. "My schedule is already full."

Reflections:

Are you working longer hours, handling one crisis after another? Do you feel unappreciated at work? Are you chronically tired, irritable, and depressed? If so, you could be among the 60 percent of all managers who have experienced burnout. The underlying cause of burnout, say psychologists, is the repeated failure to achieve "unrealistic goals." If you're feeling burned out, or just a little crisp around the edges, it could be time to reexamine your priorities and reorganize your life. Here are some ideas for reducing clutter, setting priorities, and approaching work in a more organized way. Thanks to Priority Management and Alex Seltzer for the information in this article and for sharing these tips.

Maggie Jackson, author of *Distracted*, has these suggestions for cutting down on electronic distractions in your working life.

- **Psyche Yourself.** Clear the clutter from your desktop, and make a conscious effort to put E-mail and instant messages in their place by not reacting immediately to each new message that comes on the screen.

- **Outlaw pleas for attention.** Disable pop-ups and reminders on instant messaging and don't label E-mails as urgent unless they really are.

- **A getaway in the office.** If you are doing complex work, get your employer to provide a quiet room, preferably windowless and with no phone or computer distractions, where you can escape to focus on a single task.

- **Meet with yourself.** Set aside one or two hour-long blocks of times on your calendar each week for reflection and catching up. Make no commitments during these quiet hours.

- **Avoid unclear E-mails.** Review your messages carefully and be as clear as possible about what you are asking for so that people don't have to ask for clarification. If a message doesn't require a reply, say so – and not everyone needs to see every memo you send.

- **Talk may be quicker.** If an issue requires more than a screen of E-mail to describe, it will probably be simpler to discuss the matter with people directly.

- **Avoid unnecessary chit chat.** Set up a flag or some kind of sign that signals others to avoid interrupting you.

GETTING THINGS DONE!

By Daniel Stamp

If you find it difficult getting to the important things and are constantly running out of time, there are many techniques that will help you squeeze **an extra hour** out of every single work day. There will still be just 86,400 seconds allotted to you each day, but by employing the five tips below, you will immediately make each second count more and improve your effectiveness:

- 1 Be more **honest** with yourself and your co-workers. Tell drop-ins that you can't meet right away but at a specific time later. Tell people on the phone that you have just a few minutes to complete the call. Set a **five-minute** limit for most calls. You will be amazed that you can get to the nub of most issues in this time if you are focused.

- 2 Always **plan** important calls in advance. It will put you in the driver's seat for your communications and you will also have a written record of what was said and promised.

Watch for your invitation....



NEXT Webinar:

March 18, 2009

2:00 EST.—1pm CST
12pm MDT & 11am PST

Right-sizing your workforce

- ◆ *Planning for now
and tomorrow*
- ◆ *Flexibility—
keeping the
keepers*
- ◆ *Beter time
management—
working smarter*



- 3 Use a **single** daily planning system. Be it paper or electronic, it will immediately help you set priorities. Your calendar, to-dos and communication records should always be in one accessible place, not scattered on bits of paper, your BlackBerry, post-its nor in the overloaded memory bank.

Don't allow your **email** in-box and in-basket to rule your life. Open your in-box at certain times of the day and decide immediately for each item to **do it now, date it for future action, delegate it, or delete/dump**. Use electronic folders to store information by subject and learn the *Priority* 'drag and drop' techniques.

- 5 Keep your **desk/workspace** clear of multiple folders. Have on view just the information you need for current tasks. Everything you look at that you are not going to get to that day, only serves to create unnecessary pressure and stress! Start today to develop the skills that will help you stay balanced and in control of your personal agenda. By developing essential skills such as personal organization, life/work balance and workload management you will improve every aspect of your life.

You are not available for discussion with co-workers if you're working on a task.

WHAT TIME WILL YOU FINISH WORK TOMORROW?

Just as few people are trained in information management, even fewer are trained in workload management. Yet every job in the world entails balancing a series of to-dos with the clock. Our experience with over 1,000,000 customers worldwide in best-practice productivity processes, shows that very few people have a realistic plan for each day. Most plans that we see are long lists of unprioritised tasks—more of a wish list than a plan. Here is a quick check as to how your workload management processes compare to best practice. Firstly, think about where you presently keep all the things you have to do. How many of the following tools do you use each day? Notepad, paper to-do list, scraps of paper, post-it notes,

whiteboard, piles on the desk, Inbox, electronic to-do list, diary, electronic calendar and your memory. No wonder we so quickly lose the plot and find ourselves unable to finish 'a day's' work.

Best practice demands just one place to plan (yes, that's ONE). When our work is in one place then we have something we can manage and control. Now we have consolidated our tasks into one location we have a process that will get you home on time!

1. Write down all the things you need to do tomorrow in **one** place. (It can be your Priority Manager or your electronic calendar)
2. Estimate how long it is going to take to get each item done. **Total the time** - does it fit into an 8 hour work day?
3. Are you likely to be **interrupted** tomorrow? If so, how will that impact your work? It will most likely double the time it takes to accomplish your work. Ask yourself if you can still get the work done after the interruption time is added?
4. Have you included time for lunch? What about travel time to and from your appointments? What about time to check your email? Remember that time for lunch, coffee breaks and checking email can easily add up to **one-and-a-half hours**.
5. Now **total the realistic time** and block out your calendar. What time are you going home? Is it the time you want to go home?

Start today to develop the skills that will help you stay balanced and in control of your personal agenda. By developing essential skills such as personal organization, life/work balance and workload management you will improve every aspect of your life.

Reprinted with permission from Priority Management's Learning Links, 2008.

Business & Professional Skills New Releases

Here is a sample of the Business & Professional Skills new releases:



- ✦ The Customer Service Representative (CSR)
- ✦ Customer Interactions
- ✦ Final Exam: Six Sigma Black Belt - 8 courses
- ✦ Economics: The Principles of Economics
- ✦ Business Performance and Financial Measures in Six

End User Computer Skills New Releases

- ✦ Lotus Notes 8.5: 1 Exploring Lotus Notes 8.5
- ✦ Lotus Notes 8.5: 2 Sending and Receiving E-Mail

Technical General New Releases

Here is a sample of the 90+ Technical General New Releases

- ✦ Cisco Related Series by MindLeaders CCDA 640-863: 9 Practice Exams 1, 2, 3 and 4
- ✦ Cisco Related Series by MindLeaders CCNA 640-802: (19 courses)
- ✦ Cisco Related Series by MindLeaders ICND1 640-822 (11 courses)
- ✦ Cisco Related Series by MindLeaders ICND2 640-816 (5 courses)
- ✦ CompTIA A+ Depot Technician 220-604 (9 courses)
- ✦ CompTIA A+ Essentials 220-601 (4 courses)

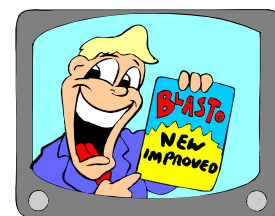
Technical Web Development New Releases

- ✦ Java 2 5.0 Programmer Certification 310-055 (12 courses)
- ✦ JavaScript Series: Start Using JavaScript
- ✦ JavaScript Series: Using JavaScript for Interactivity
- ✦ JavaScript Series: Using Advanced JavaScript

Technical Microsoft

- ✦ Windows Server 2008 Active Directory MCTS 70-640: 1 Config. DNS for Active Directory
- ✦ Windows Server 2008 Active Directory MCTS 70-640: 2 Config. the Active Dir. Infrastructure
- ✦ Windows Server 2008 Active Directory MCTS 70-640: 5 Main. the Active Dir. Environment
- ✦ Windows Server 2008 Active Directory MCTS 70-640: 7 Practice Exam 1
- ✦ Windows Server 2008 Active Directory MCTS 70-640: 8 Practice Exam 2
- ✦ Windows Server 2008 Active Directory MCTS 70-640: 9 Practice Exam 3
- ✦ Windows Server 2008 Applications MCTS 70-643: 1 Deploying Servers
- ✦ Windows Server 2008 Applications MCTS 70-643: 2 Configuring Terminal Services
- ✦ Windows Server 2008 Applications MCTS 70-643: 3 Config. a Web Services Infrastructure
- ✦ Windows Server 2008 Applications MCTS 70-643: 4 Config. Network Application Services
- ✦ Windows Server 2008 Applications MCTS 70-643: 5 Practice Exam 1
- ✦ Windows Server 2008 Applications MCTS 70-643: 6 Practice Exam 2

*“Ever wonder
which of
e-Learning for
Employees
courses are the
most well
received
amongst your
peers?”*



TOP 10 e-Learning List

Business & Professional Skills

1. **Analyze Your Use of Time**
2. **Communicating as a Leader**
3. **Accounting Fundamentals**
4. **The Manager as Coach and Counselor**
- Communication Skills for the Workplace**
- The Basics of Listening**
- Everyday Business Etiquette**
- Communication Skills for Leadership**
- Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO)**
- Why Diversity Matters**

Computer Skills

- Excel 2003 - 1 Getting Started**
- Excel 2003 - 2 Creating a Spreadsheet**
- Computer Basics: Using Your PC**
- Excel 2003: 4 Editing and Printing Worksheets**
- Excel 2003: 3 Formatting Data**
- PowerPoint 2003: 1 Introduction to PowerPoint**
- Word 2003: 1 Introduction to Word**
- CompTIA A+: 1 Computer Basics**
- Excel 2003: 5 Managing Worksheets**
- Outlook 2003: 1 Getting Started**