

SOAR to SUCCESS

July 2016

MAGAZINE

**DIANE
HELBIG**

A TRUSTED ADVISOR TO
SMALL BUSINESS OWNERS

**HOW TO
SAY NO AND
STILL BE NICE**

PLUS:

- + Effective Networking Techniques
- + Delivering a Powerful Performance Review
- + Hire a Web Designer vs. DIY Your Next Website
- + Business Owners—Engage & Retain Your Employees
- + Creating A System for Measuring Intangible Strategic Indicators

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PAT ALTVATER



Soar to Success
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Is This Idea a New Opportunity or a Shiny Object?

We entrepreneurs by nature are ideas people, aren't we? We are innovators who like to think big and are willing to take risks to put our plans into action.

I've noticed that when a business is brand new we have so much excitement knowing that our idea is becoming a reality, it consumes our thoughts and we push forward with vigor.

However, there comes a time, typically when a business starts to grow, that new ideas and opportunities present themselves. For the idea loving entrepreneurial mind, these new opportunities are like a strong magnet pulling us in their direction.

Shiny Object Syndrome can be detrimental especially when your business is not growing as fast as you thought it would, which is typical for even the most seasoned business builder. You start to question your strategy and perhaps even your entire concept. Then, someone or something comes along and presents what could be the solution to all your challenges, distracting you from staying focused on your strategy.

So how do you discern if it's a distraction or a real opportunity for you? Here are some suggestions: 1) ask a mentor or coach, 2) ask your board of advisors, if you have one, or finally 3) trust your gut. Quiet your mind and ask yourself, why am I interested in this opportunity, what will it do for me and is it in alignment with my vision. Use the 5 whys technique to keep delving deeper into it until you are at the place of understanding your real motivation. That's when you'll know if it's a true opportunity or a distraction.

Pat Altvater

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Diane Helbig,
A Trusted Advisor to Small
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DIANE HELBIG

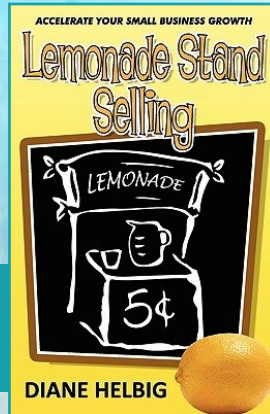
A TRUSTED ADVISOR TO SMALL BUSINESS OWNERS

Have you ever had a tragedy change the trajectory of your life? That is exactly what happened in 2005, when Diane Helbig's father passed away suddenly. At the time she was married, with two small children and in a career that had lost its challenge and excitement for her. As she and her siblings were packing up their father's belongings, they began discussing where they were in their lives and what they would prefer to be doing. A great deal of soul searching ensued.

Diane realized that her current job situation didn't give her as much time with her family as she desired and her father's death along with the conversation with her siblings, gave her the push to examine her goals and life. A friend recommended that she consider Life Coaching as a profession but as Diane conducted her exploratory journey, it became clear that Business Coaching, Consulting and Advising was a much better fit. With extensive experience in sales, management and leadership and an understanding of small business, Diane realized this new path would allow her the opportunity to walk side-by-side with entrepreneurs as they develop and succeed.

Before she started her own coaching practice, Diane was a sales manager for a large company based in Michigan; ultimately she came to Cleveland as Director of Operations for the area for that company. The 27-years of experience and training she received working in management, leadership and sales with the large corporation, plus a college





degree in Social Science, Sociology and Psychology provided the foundation to become the well-respected small business consultant and adviser she is today.

It is a long, hard road to start any business, especially one in the coaching field, but her strong business background, as well as, friends and contacts in Cleveland were a huge help to get her new endeavor off the ground. Diane admits that knowing how to sell was a big bonus that made her start up easier.

Realizing she needed training in how to launch a coaching practice, Diane enrolled in a certification program where she learned the basics. Using new marketing techniques learned in her class work, she sought out public speaking opportunities, began writing, networked and informed her friends and associates of her new career. She is now a sought after speaker in the area.

She also believes it is extremely important to volunteer and be involved with charitable organizations. She started by joining the Council of Smaller Enterprises and accepted a seat on the advisory board. That position allowed her to connect with a cross section of business people from other business sectors, which was a huge advantage when growing a business.

Diane has been recognized for her charitable work. In fact, she was recently named "Volunteer of the Year" by the Women's Business Center of ECDI. Her book, "**Lemonade Stand Selling: Accelerate Your Small Business Growth,**" was named a Best Business Read, and she has also received numerous other honors for her work outside of her regular business.



Diane said of her passion to help small business people,

"Small business owners don't have lawyers, CPA's and Harvard MBA's at their fingertips to guide them. Still they are out there every day courageously fighting to make it happen. They have the right to be successful and access the same expertise that large corporations have at the ready."

Diane has witnessed small business owners struggle and fail due to issues that could be avoided with proper guidance. That fuels her drive to help small business owners navigate those bumps and be successful. She believes small business owners are many times isolated and simply need an outside voice to help mentor them and provide assistance.

Diane assists small business owners recognize and face their challenges and overcome their obstacles. She monitors their progress and is actively involved in their journey to grow and improve their business. She has found that many times, simply answering questions as a guide or a trusted advisor is what a struggling client really needs. She strives to be the person they can count on to tell them the truth, but also be a mentor and help them achieve their goals.

Diane realizes that every business is different and has varying needs. That's why she believes it is necessary, in an initial conversation, to explore each client's needs and learn what concerns, problems and goals they have. Does the business

need to increase sales, improve communication with employees or a more complete system of procedures? Do they need more structure or is a consolidation of decision-making at the top restricting the business? She also wants to know in what direction the individual wants the business to go.

These questions and concerns are then addressed after an initial consultation. Once she understands the direction, the problems and the client's concerns, a path, as well as, a process is implemented to assure positive results to achieve success.

It's clear that Diane is more than just a coach, but rather is a partner with her clients. Helping them make the difficult decisions that shape their business and keep their business moving forward.

Start-up companies or sole proprietorships seldom feel they have extra money in their budget to invest in outside coaches or consultants. When asked about growing businesses that don't feel the need to spend the money to invest in outside coaching help, Diane said,

"I think that they need to surround themselves with as many resources as they can. The reality is that many entrepreneurs start a business without a proper budget or operating plan. I think it's valuable for people to have someone, who can be a trusted resource to help them through the rough spots."

Her suggestion to new business owners is do the research and find someone you can trust and then find the budget for it. Many coaches have different programs to make their service more affordable. The right business advisor or coach can be as valuable as an attorney or accountant.

Diane's vision for her business is to be able to provide resources to small business owners in a variety of methods. Her intention is to have a complete library of training materials on sales, leadership and other related business topics available for every business owner.

Diane believes very strongly in connecting with other business owners and networking for mutual assistance. She even created a networking group that provides a real sharing of ideas. Every member has the opportunity to bring a topic or concern to one of the meetings and each member can then



weigh in with an idea or solution to the problem at hand. Insight from a group of peers is a powerful thing. There is also a referral sharing portion to the group and its members have contributed fabulous testimonials and success stories. There are currently several groups operating in Cleveland and she is now offering this networking idea to other coaches nationwide to spread the concept and help grow businesses in other cities across the country. Please contact Diane if you are interested in learning more about this.

Diane Helbig found her passion in helping small business owners navigate the difficult waters of 21st century commerce and "Soar to Success." Her past experience and training makes her the person to call if your business is facing problems or concerns.

For a no-cost consultation contact Diane at her website: seizethisday.co. Be sure to watch her video series, Business Growth Acceleration: Tips for Succeeding at Sales on NE Ohio BizTV Shows®. Also go to our website to listen to our complete interview with Diane.



3 TRAITS TO SOAR TO SUCCESS

Diane shared the three attributes she believes are necessary to Soar to Success:

1. Being willing to learn. They know they need and want help in solving whatever it is that's going on.
2. They can hear a different view point. They are open and coachable.
3. They are resilient. If they fall down, they will get back up, shake it off and continue their quest..

30-SECOND COMMERCIAL

Jokingly, Diane shared one of her pet peeves - the "30-Second Commercial," which is a requirement at many networking meetings. Diane believes business should be about building relationships or starting a conversation, so a "30-Second Commercial" that gives the appearance that I am trying to sell **ME**, rather than finding out what is important to others or building relationships, seems contradictory.

Diane told us,

"Business people simply care about results. They don't need the extra jargon and they certainly don't care how brilliant you are. They need to know what you can do for them."

Diane prefers that we just introduce ourselves in plain English, as if we're talking to a teenager and just share what we do. So think of it as a **"30-Second intro"**, not 30 second commercial. The perfect format for those 30 seconds is to share the problem you solve, who you work with, the value you bring and the results they are going to get.

By the way, here's what Diane said when we asked her to share her 30 second introduction:

"I spend most of my time with small business owners. We talk about the challenges they're facing as well as where they'd actually like to take their business and then we create a plan and I walk with them while they implement that plan. The result is that they realize greater results for their business and achieve the success that they were looking for and ultimately are happier." Then Diane added, "I can go on because that's not even 30 seconds so I can say they might need a selling plan or a way to communicate with their employees or more structure, something along those line but no matter what we get them moving forward, they're a lot happier and more successful. And all of that is less than 30 seconds."



no

BY BETH CALDWELL

HOW TO SAY NO AND STILL BE NICE

Do you have trouble saying no to people who ask you for your time and talent even though you have no time to help them? Are you afraid of being perceived as un friendly or not as a team player if you don't help everyone who asks?

I struggled with that issue for years, and learned many lessons. Here are the strategies I use now to say no, so that I can maximize my time and move my business forward.

People ask me all the time, Beth, do you ever seep? How do you get so much done? Do your run on batteries? Well the truth is that I do sleep, every night, and the reason I get so much done is because I've learned how to say NO to the things that drain my time and

keep me from achieving my goals. This is NOT a trait that comes naturally to me.

In fact, I spent many years doing more for others than I did for myself. That habit does not lead you down the path of prosperity, so today, I'm inviting you to embrace the idea of saying no. If you are a people-pleaser, like me, this will take some practice.

Here are some phrases that you can use while you work on this new habit of getting your own work done and keeping your goals prioritized.

I wish I could, but.... That is a simple way to get started, because you're not saying no and you're still being nice. *I wish I could, but it's not possible right now. My schedule is jam packed.*

Thanks for thinking of me. This is a great way to say no without saying no, and I will sometimes offer an alternative as well. *Thanks for thinking of me. I can't. I'd like to introduce you to Sally, a woman I am mentoring who would be ideal.*

Saying Yes. Here are some ways that you can say no by saying yes. *YES! I can help you with that. I'm busy right now, come back at 4pm if you still need me, or YES! I can take on an additional project. What would you like me not to do?*

And finally, **the compliment**, and the one I use most often now. *I think you're project is fantastic. I can't help you, but I wish you success.*

Don't Apologize and Don't Over-Explain

Women sometimes tend to over-explain. For example, when someone invites you to a fundraiser, instead of saying: *I would love to come to your fundraiser but I'm very sorry to say that I am out of town that week, It's my 2nd cousins wedding and I haven't seen her since she moved away 12 years ago, I'm really*

looking forward to the wedding, but not the flight, but gosh. I wish I could be there, it sounds really fun. Gosh, I'm sorry.

Do you recognize that tendency shared by many women who feel that they have to apologize, over-explain, or both. Instead, say this: *I wish I could be there.*

I hope you have a great turnout.

So, there you go, simple ways to say no and still be nice.

When you learn to say no with confidence, you'll notice that people will begin to value you and respect your time because after all, we teach people how to treat us.

Referred to by her clients as "The Provocative Leader", **Beth Caldwell** brings a refreshing style to leadership and innovation. She works with companies who need help to confront conflict, deal with drama, and make important decisions. Beth is best known as the founder of **Pittsburgh Professional Women and Leadership Academy for Women**. Her books include *I Wish I'd Known THAT! Secrets to Success in Business*, *Inspired Entrepreneurs*, *EMPOWER*, *INSPIRE* and *Smart Leadership: 12 Strategies to Help You Shift from Ineffective Boss to Brilliant Leader*.

Connect with Beth at her website and on



Watch Beth's video series



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WORDPRESS MAINTENANCE

BY KAREN LEONARD

Are you currently using WordPress? When you login, is it notifying you that it's time for you to update it and its plugins? Wordpress takes up every fourth website created, and although the platform makes it virtually possible for anyone with a computer to create a site, ensuring your website is up to date is crucial. Let's take a closer look at the importance of keeping your site updated and the benefits of doing so as well.

Did you know 59% of all CMS (Content Management Systems) driven websites are built with WordPress?

WordPress is more than a blog publishing platform. It is versatile and flexible and can be used to create any type of website, blog, etc. that you can think of. WordPress is also SEO friendly allowing users to

reach their target markets more effectively and enabling their website to be found. It is also user friendly, making the ability to make changes on your website easy and simple. As WordPress increases in popularity though, maintaining your website and updating it becomes a key factor in keeping a healthy proficient website. Here are 4 reasons you would want to keep WordPress updated.

Keep it Secure from Hackers and Data Thieves

Especially because of its popularity, it has become a popular target for hackers, malicious code distributors, data thieves, and wannabe hackers. Every time a security vulnerability is reported, the WordPress Community works diligently to release an update that fixes the issue. So this means if you aren't using the

latest version of WordPress, then you are using software with known security vulnerabilities. Hackers in particular search for websites running the older version. Those who don't update their site can become a victim of a sophisticated attack.

That being said, you absolutely need to make sure that all your WordPress plugins, themes, and the core itself is always up to date.

Feature Enhancements

Maintaining your site reflects well on your brand image. Having your site up to date with all the new features and changes will say something about your business; that you pay attention to detail, even minor ones. When it comes to major WordPress releases, each come with new features and changes to the software as well. For

example, the updates associated with 4.4 offered responsive images. This meant that your images displayed with to correct proportion on all devices.

Performance Enhancements

Each new release comes with several performance improvements that makes WordPress run faster and more efficient. Since speed is a huge factor in SEO, you should

definitely keep your WordPress updated to ensure maximum performance benefits.

Fix Bugs

Despite the rigorous testing of major WordPress releases though, sometimes bugs may slip through the cracks. Running updates regularly corrects those flaws and keep your site functioning properly.

So as you can see, running

updates are not just essential, but crucial in order for you to maintain a secure and functional site. However, in some cases, an update can break your existing WordPress site or plugins if the new update is not compatible with your plugins. For this reason, it is best to have and experienced technician take care of the updates for you. Contact us if we can be of service to you.

Karen Leonard is the co-founder and Chief Marketing Officer of Innovative Global Vision, Inc. (IGV), a website design and digital marketing company in Ohio. With over 17 years' of experience in the IT field, Karen has a passion for helping small businesses grow. She works closely with her extraordinarily talented team of developers, designers and marketing specialists to help businesses increase profits through their website and build deeper, more profitable relationships through the use of online marketing tools.

Connect with Karen at her website and on



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VIRTUAL CIO, DO I NEED ONE?

BY JEANNE DEWITT

Many small and mid-sized businesses need vision and guidance for their business when it comes to technology. Large businesses have CIOs, a very costly, but necessary position, but if you are small or mid-sized business, what do you do?

As a small and mid-sized business owner, you typically don't have the resources to have a full time CIO or Chief Information Officer, however there is help. Some IT consulting businesses, like ourselves, can fill this ever growing need through vCIO services or Virtual Chief Information Officer. This service provides the high-level vision and guidance that many small and mid-sized businesses need today. So what are the benefits of using a vCIO?

1 Leading-edge Expertise. A vCIO is an experienced, high-level IT Expert whose job it is to follow and understand all of the latest trends and technology in the IT world. It would be nearly impossible for a CIO at a small business to keep up with all the options and opportunities available for the business. He or she is likely to get bogged down in daily IT operations, without enough time to take a longer view. An enormous variety of IT challenges exist in sales, HR, finance and manufacturing, and identifying and implementing the right

mix of solutions requires a true expert. A vCIO can provide that, especially for an SMALL BUSINESS.

2 Flexibility. It's quite possible that the IT strategy requirements at a small business will vary significantly over time, so it's a great option to have a flexible vCIO whose time can be allocated as needed.

3. External Point of View. A vCIO also brings the benefit of an external point of view to your executive team. Along with IT expertise, the vCIO can provide insights on a wide range of business issues, especially since he or she has likely provided services to many different companies.

4. Infrastructure Cost Savings. With a vCIO, you are



likely to have more access to the lowest cost solutions. For example, a vCIO would be an expert in cloud services, and that can provide a tremendous savings over internal servers and other hardware that an internal CIO might select.

5. Personnel Cost Saving. Hiring a C-level executive is expensive – if you can even find the right person. With a vCIO, you won't have all the overhead expenses of another full-time c-level person. Outsourcing this position is a very effective cost-reduction strategy and the CIO

role is no exception.

CPU is the trusted choice when it comes to staying ahead of the latest information technology. Please contact me for more information about our vCIO services or any other IT questions you have.

Author, entrepreneur, IT expert and speaker, Jeanne DeWitt has over 30 years of IT experience helping businesses navigate their way through the ever changing world of technology. Starting CPU, Inc. back in 1986, along with her partner David Hood, she has now become an international, go-to-source for expert advice in the IT Industry including Cloud Services, Infrastructure Security and Support, Cybersecurity, VoIP Phone Technologies, Enterprise Resource Planning and Business Continuity Planning.



Watch Jeanne's video series

Connect with Jeanne at her websites, Hire An IT Expert and CPU Cloud Solutions as well as on



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Hiring a virtual assistant can be a great way to grow your team. You may be wondering how much they cost. Let's take a look at how much a virtual assistant costs and a few best practices to make sure you get the most bang for your buck.

Usually if someone asks me "How much does a VA cost?" I like to respond by asking them "How much is it costing you NOT to hire a VA?" I know that doesn't really answer the question but it is fun to turn it back around. In all seriousness, what should you expect to pay for a VA?

Like everything else, there's a range. There isn't a single standard rate that virtual assistants charge. Typically an experienced VA will charge between \$30 and \$75 per hour. These more experienced virtual assistants will almost always have particularly specialties.

New or inexperienced VAs may cost \$20 or less per hour. An offshore VA, many of which are located in the Philippines, can cost significantly less – sometimes as low

as \$2 or \$3 per hour. However, if you plan to go that route for your virtual hire, be sure you include some testing, request samples and extra references along with including a crystal clear expectation of what your finished product or outcome requirements are.

The bottom line is that VA rates will depend on three basic ideas:

- geographic location,
- individual skills and experience, and
- their business overhead.

To make sure you get the most bang for your buck be sure to weigh out the skills of your candidates based on your needs. If you use Infusionsoft, for example, you do

not want to hire someone who is not highly skilled at using it because it will ultimately not only cost you more time but also you will probably end up with a few campaigns that aren't running as they should.

Another good thing to note is that as you narrow down your choices, ask the candidates if they are willing to offer any discounts. Often a VA will offer a discount for signing a retainer agreement rather

than working by the hour or they may even offer a discount for paying in advance. Either way, you won't know until you ask.

One final note, you shouldn't let price be your motivating factor in a hire. It should always be a decision guided based on what option fits your business growth strategy the best.

Please watch my video series, The Shift, for more great information about using a VA.

Holly Kile works with professional coaches and work-at-home entrepreneurs to help them create more time, energy and money through leveraging the power of virtual tools and teams. Using her extensive background in operations management, systems analysis/implementation and strategic business marketing, Holly works with business owners and entrepreneurs who struggle with figuring out how to effectively achieve their vision for their business. Holly is the president of HJK Global Solutions and founder of Connect Coaching Academy.

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AFFORDABLE CARE ACT

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

BY TINA MOE, CPA

PART 4

It's no secret that tax law, in general, can be complex and even sometimes controversial but The Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act also referred to as Obamacare has sparked a lot of debate and even more confusion. Regardless of whether you're pro or against the Affordable Care Act, there are certain compliance issues you should know about or be prepared to pay an additional tax.

My last three articles discussed the most frequently asked tax questions of 2016. Part one answered the question "How much is the penalty if I didn't have health insurance last year?" My second article covered the question "What are the exemptions for the penalties?" and the 3rd part

answered the question "What is the Exchange and do I have to get my health insurance there?" If you missed these three articles, I encourage you to go back and read them.

The final part of my series answers the question "**How much will insurance cost me through the exchange and what if I can't afford the premiums?**" I realize that's actually two questions but they are most often asked together so I will cover them both here.

The cost of health insurance coverage through the exchange will depend upon several factors such as your income, how many family members will be on the plan, where you live, whether or not you smoke, your age among

other factors. For those taxpayers who make below a certain income amount, you could end up qualifying for a subsidy which would make your premiums very low or even free.

The law is relatively generous with subsidies for qualifying taxpayers who have an income level of 100% to 400% of the federal poverty level. For individuals, this income level is anywhere between \$11,500 and \$46,000 and for a family of 4 with income up to around \$94,000. There are also subsidies available for deductibles and co-payments for people that have an income level that is less than 2.5 times the poverty level which is around \$28,000 for an individual or around \$59,000 for a family of 4.

These subsidy amounts are based on your modified adjusted gross income and includes your wages and interest income then reduced by certain deductions such as tuition and self-employed taxes.

As with most things in life, you do get what you pay for so buyers beware and shop carefully. The cheaper the plan, the higher the deductibles and other out of pocket costs associated. Also, you'll want to check

the limited list of doctors and hospitals covered in the plan before you sign up. For more information visit healthcare.gov to learn more and enroll for coverage.

Tina L. Moe, C.P.A., CGMA, formed A.C.T. Services in 2002, and began building her business. Her practice has grown to a clientele more than 1,200 clients and a team of more than a dozen staff members. Tina attributes her business growth to being proactive with her clients, maintaining affordability and accessibility of the business owner herself.

Tina is a member of the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants (AICPA) and the Indiana CPA Society.

Contact her at: www.actservices-inc.com and on



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HIRE A WEB DESIGNER VS. DIY YOUR NEXT WEBSITE

BY LEE DROZAK

Do you need a website for your new business or an update to your current website to reflect your business brand? Are you trying to decide if you should take on the task of designing your website? There's a lot to consider for your business website design.

Let's look at the pros and cons of hiring out or taking on the task yourself.

First, you need to consider...

Time

Do you have a chance to learn the program of choice to create a functioning website?

Many web professionals know how to reach your target audience and design a website that suits your brand and business. They also know the best framework to use of the many choices out there.

Professional designers know how to structure the content so that it makes sense to your audience while being visually appealing. When hiring a designer, you'll be working with someone who knows best practices and can advise you on steps to take to increase traffic and conversions.

However if know what your target audience needs then, the DIY route could be a viable option for you.

Budget

If you're working with a small

budget, the DIY option will be very appealing. And there are tools out there that give you drag and drop options to make the process more user-friendly.

But you will be limited in how custom your site can be. While it's not bad to have a familiar layout and flow, you certainly don't want your site to look like your competition.

Going the DIY route can come with frustration and limitations that you won't get by bringing in a professional developer.



Functionality

What type of functionality do you need on your site? Will it be simple or interactive? If your needs include minimal functionality like filling out a form or opting into your list, the DIY route can be a path for you.

But if you are looking to add a shopping cart, membership area or

appointment scheduling system, hiring out would be your best bet. The more functions you require, the more moving parts and for this, hiring a professional will save you both time and headaches.

The main factors in deciding whether to build it yourself or not are **cost, customization, time and difficulty.**

Remember your website is the **first touchpoint that many potential clients** will have to your business, and you want to make the best impression possible.

If you're deciding between DIY and hiring out, let's schedule a chat so we can find the best option for you and your budget.

Lee Drozak, a WordPress Website & Digital Marketing expert, helps small business owners and self-employed renegades by developing and designing websites that are not only beautiful and reflect your personal brand but also have the proper layout and coding to help you step out of the shadows and stand out in a crowd. Lee offers a wide range of programs and services for WordPress websites – from a one-time re-design to being your right hand for ongoing changes and updates to your website.

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CREATE YOUR BUSINESS FOCUS WITH ESSENTIAL OILS

BY DEB REIS, NP, MSN

Have you ever wished your business setting was peaceful, energetic or joyful? Did you know you can help create that focus with your essential oils? Here are some tips on how to create the environment you wish to support in your work setting.

There is growing research that aromas are linked to emotional and memory parts in our brain. The sense of smell connects to the limbic system of the brain which is responsible for emotions and memory. When we breathe in an aroma, the outcome is almost immediate!

So what focus do you wish to create in your business setting?



To give a sense of confidence and strength, consider essential oils of Spruce or Cedarwood. In addition, both of these oils may support mental clarity and emotional confidence.



Maybe you are working on a project with deadlines and you need to stay focused and alert. Then, consider peppermint or rosemary essential oils. Both oils are stimulating and energizing.





Sometimes you may feel stressed out or overwhelmed. If that feeling happens, then bring out the Lavender or Orange essential oil. Consider combining the two together to bring relaxation and peace to your mind and emotions.

So, how do you use these essential oils in your business? You can use either inhalation or diffusion.

These are simple yet effective ways to obtain an outcome in seconds. This is truly a powerful way to create a specific focus into your work setting.

So, what message do you wish to create in your business? You have several options to consider. For more information or consultation, please contact me at my website.

Debra Reis is a nurse, teacher and author specializing in holistic health and supportive therapies. She is the director and an instructor for the Certification in Clinical Aromatherapy program for the Institute of Spiritual Healing & Aromatherapy and nationally known expert in the area of essential oils for cancer care. Deb is also a Nia Black Belt instructor with current research and recent publication in the area of Nia benefits for women with a breast cancer diagnosis.

She is the founder of the Supportive Therapy Engagement Program (STEP) to assist organizations to implement and integrate supportive therapies into a patient treatment plan for better outcomes.

Connect with Deb at DebraReis.com and on



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Yes, the bypass was successful. The chemotherapy worked. The kidney was a perfect match. Does this mean that your job is over?

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BUSINESS OWNERS-ENGAGE AND RETAIN YOUR EMPLOYEES

BY CINDY ALLEN STUCKEY

What would happen to your business if a third of your employees walked off the job—tomorrow? That would definitely cripple your business, wouldn't it?!

Have you ever had a key employee announce his resignation with little warning? With the improving economy, 37% of all employees hope to leave their job within the next 3 months. Employee turnover is staggering to the economy—it costs businesses in the U.S. \$11 billion/year.

Instead of filling the leaky bucket, companies are now focusing their efforts on reducing employee turnover and on retaining their high quality employees, especially those that are new to the company, by “engaging” their employees more. Engaged employees are defined as those employees who are involved in, enthusiastic about, and committed to their work and workplace.

In a 2014 engagement survey of 80,000 employed adults, the company Gallup found that:

- 31.5% of U.S. workers were “engaged”
- 51% were “not engaged”
- 17.5% were “actively disengaged”
- Younger workers are least engaged—only 28.9% of millennials were “engaged”

The business results of higher engagement are amazing. Businesses with higher engagement have:

- Better financial performance
- Higher customer satisfaction
- Higher retention
- Higher productivity

Here are 7 best practices that you can implement at your business immediately, to ensure that your people are involved in, enthusiastic

about, and committed to their work and workplace:

1 Create a common hiring process and follow it every time—this includes clarifying and defining what is valued in your culture.

2 Focus on engagement, not just communication. From the moment a job offer has been extended, the onboarding, engagement, and relationship process begins.

3 Make sure there are seamless transitions in the employee life cycle—recruiting, selection, performance, succession, and development—so that all employees know what is expected.

4 Connect your employees' goals to your company goals. Have regular one-on-ones and trainings with expectations outlined to help set the stage for learning, growing, and developing.



5 Develop and engage your supervisors and managers so that they can provide coaching and feedback to their employees.

6 Provide positive reinforcement personally and promptly when you catch them

doing something right.

7 Balance rewards (merit increases and bonuses) with recognition (typically are free or of minimal cost)

Engagement is simply about providing the tools, the

environment, and the leaders to help your employees care about their jobs and the future of your company.

For more tools to help you work on growing your business, please go to my website.

After many years in the business world, Cindy Allen-Stuckey, founded Making Performance Matter (MPM) to empower business owners and leaders to achieve sustainable high performance. She does this by providing strategy planning and execution; business and executive coaching; and facilitation and leadership development. Cindy is certified in Human Performance Improvement through Association for Talent Development, is a Certified On-Site Extended DISC Facilitator, and is a Certified Results Life Coach. MPM is a National Certified Women's Business Enterprise (WBE).

Connect with Cindy at Making Performance Matter and on



Watch Cindy's video series



Making Performance Matter works with organizations to close the gap between their business strategy and execution by focusing on their only real competitive advantage -- **their people.**

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What is Attitude?

BY ROCHELLE FORREST

What is attitude? If you ask 10 different people you will get 10 different answers. Counselors tell people to change their attitude and your life will improve. Doctors tell patients.... well it is up to you... what is your attitude? Sales managers say your attitude can control your sales???

Let's look at ways to shift aspects of your life....beginning with your attitude!

You would think we would all be experts on attitude since it impacts so much of our lives! When you have a good clear understanding of what an attitude is and how attitudes are formed, it will become very apparent that only a small percentage of the population are in control their attitudes!

Most people's attitudes are controlled by the media, other people, the conditions and circumstances in their life. **And that is not good.** Look at the impact of even TV commercials. Just take a pill and you won't be depressed. The world is going down the tubes because of one or two people! Where is our power? Where is our discipline?

Let's talk about one aspect of attitude, your thoughts. Your conscious mind has the ability to accept, reject, or ignore ANY idea that flows into your consciousness. If that idea isn't internalized, it will have no effect on your physical body. Let's take a look at what happens when that idea is internalized. Your subconscious mind accepts anything that is impressed upon

it and that dictates the vibration of the body. The nature of that idea that is impressed upon the subconscious mind determines the vibration or the feeling that is expressed.

For example, I had an old thought that I had to work at being loved. I impressed upon my brain that I was not enough so I would have to work to exceed other's expectations. So I attracted

people that were unavailable. My attitude was wrong, it needed to change. I had to stop, breathe and look at the results in my life. I had to think different thoughts to create different feelings. Once I did, I attracted a man that is emotionally available and he's now my husband!

You can do this, too. Pay attention to your thoughts and feelings and your attitude will change.

Holistic Transformation Coach, Author, and Motivational Speaker, Rochelle Forrest, R.N., encourages individuals to step fully into their soul purpose and live their full potential. Wouldn't you like to wake up each morning feeling as though it was Christmas? Rochelle Forrest has that much joy and enthusiasm for life. Her mission is to teach you to find it too. Re-Ignite Your Inner Light and the companion workbook are Rochelle's action oriented tools that can light your path.

Learn more at her website and the website of her philanthropic endeavor, Tummies, Minds and Spirits. Also connect with her on



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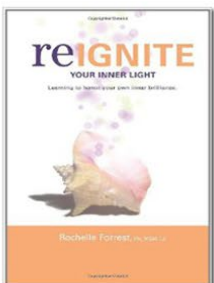


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YOU PROMISED!

THE POWER OF YOUR PROMISES

BY JOAN WASHBURN

A promise is your word that you will take action on something. It says: "I guarantee this will be done."

Promises need not be big. However, no matter their size, they are powerful. Keeping them moves you forward and ever closer to your goals. Let's look at what happens when you make a promise, keep it, and what happens when we don't keep a promise.

When we make a promise we are compelled to make good on it – to do what we said we would do – it's as simple as that. Making a promise produces a gap that we are pulled forward to close. Here's what I mean by that.

When you don't do what you said you would do, you're left with the tension of incompleteness. **An unfulfilled promise is a real energy drain.** You expend more energy worrying about it than resolving it. You become physically, emotionally, and spiritually tired. So, it makes it more difficult to move ahead.

It doesn't matter with whom you made your promise or how big or small it is: not keeping your word is what creates the energy drain. Unfinished business just weighs you down.

When you put your word out there, you create a gap that can only be closed when you do what you

said you would do.

Here's an example of what I mean - I recently told a friend I would bring something special to a party she was having. This created a gap, the expectation of something yet to be done. Well, in the hustle of the day, I forgot to bring it. When she asked me about it, I remembered my promise and felt awful. Being the gracious person she is, she brushed it off as no problem, but I still felt awful. There was a gap, a broken promise, a misplaced trust. Luckily, I live

close by so I ran home and got it. The gap was filled and the energy field was balanced. All was well.

Promise is a big word. If you break it, it will also break a lot of other words as well. A big one is Trust.

So, here is your quick tip for today – look for a promise you made recently that you just haven't found the time to keep. It's been bugging you, I know. Find the time and resources to make good on that promise. Large or small – it's still your word.

Joan Washburn coaches busy professionals to reclaim a sense of order and balance in their life—to essentially bring “calm to chaos” if you will.

When we are overwhelmingly busy, more often than not, our priorities fall victim to circumstance. Her ultimate goal as a coach is for her clients to break free of what is not working for them, discover what they really want for their lives, then support them as they make it happen!

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SECONDARY TRAUMATIC STRESS

BY KRISTIE KNIGHTS, LPC

The expectation that we can be immersed in suffering and loss daily and not be touched by it is as unrealistic as expecting to be able to walk through water without getting wet. –Rachel Remen in Kitchen Table Wisdom: Stories that Heal (1996)

Secondary Traumatic Stress (STS) is defined as the indirect exposure to trauma via a firsthand account or narrative of the traumatic event. This STS may occur when a client shares their story of abuse, vehicular trauma, or some other trauma-related event. Most often this is discussed regarding emergency workers and mental health professionals. However, it affects lawyers as well in the same manner. It is often necessary for a client to detail the trauma for litigation purposes. Often, it affects the memory and internal imagery of the client's experience. Long term, STS affects daily living and work performance.

How can a litigator avoid STS? Trauma and burnout can result from ongoing exposure to clients' stories, thereby increasing the risk of impact by the symptoms of STS. Caring for one's self on a regular basis is imperative to counter these effects. The symptoms include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Poor Eating Habits
- Drug and Alcohol Abuse
- Poor Sleeping Habits
- Relationship Issues
- Detachment Issues
- Anxiety
- Depression
- Poor Boundaries with Clients
- Irritability
- Headaches
- Cynicism
- Hopelessness
- Fatigue
- Aggression
- Disruption in beliefs

Certain factors may make one lawyer more susceptible than another to STS. Ask yourself the following questions:

- Do I currently have a stressful personal life?
- Have I been insufficiently trained?
- Am I a perfectionist?
- Am I reluctant to have supervision or ongoing education?
- Do I have a personal history of trauma?

Do I have poor coping mechanisms?

If you answered 'Yes' to any of these questions, you have a higher susceptibility to STS. Therefore, it is paramount to maintain a healthy lifestyle to address the symptoms. Negligence of self-care will not only lead to burnout but ultimately result in a loss of zeal for the profession and life. Make it a habit of engaging in the following methods to ensure a healthy lifestyle:

1. Maintain awareness of the possible effects of Secondary Trauma.
2. Practice daily self-care to lower stress.
3. Self-reflect to address your work/life balance needs.
4. De-brief with colleagues to lessen the burden of trauma.
5. Engage in regular exercise to promote release of the stress and experiences.
6. Take time to enjoy your hobbies.

7. Monitor your inner dialogue to ensure it is positive and non-judgmental.
8. Create a balanced work schedule to permit time for self-care.
9. Seek professional support to process the trauma.

10. Seek professional support if the symptoms are not manageable.

It is evident STS is prevalent in the lives of lawyers. The biggest obstacle to health is the lack of recognition and treatment less afforded to other professions. It is very necessary, as is more

training to understand STS.

Each day a lawyer works endlessly for their client. They often sacrifice their health and well-being by skipping meals, exercise, and time with their family to ensure their best work is done for the client. Today, take the time to love thyself!

Kristie Knights is a Licensed Psychotherapist, Collaborative Divorce Coach, Professional Speaker, Author, and Co-Owner of the Life Balance Center in Mars, PA. She facilitates a Divorce Recovery Seminar Series entitled Release, Recover, & Renew geared for clients going through the divorce process. In her private practice, she has helped guide hundreds of clients, both nationally and internationally, to lead a life of joy and purpose. Kristie is a contributing author to *Inspired Entrepreneurs: A Compilation of Women's Triumphs in Business and Life*.



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Kristie Knights is a
Licensed Psychotherapist,
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LIFE IS LIKE AN APPLE – GETTING TO YOUR CORE

PART 3

BY LILLIAN ZARZAR



Because Life is like an Apple, every bite you take brings you closer to the CORE of who you are. The Orchard of Life journey continues. The four elements are Courage, Omniscience, Resilience, and Enthusiasm. **Resilience is the third part of this series.**

Your growth stems from the experiences you weather. As the apple tree blossoms under many challenging conditions, you blossom under the events that shape your life. The word “resilience” originates with the Latin “re” for “back” and “salire” meaning “leap.”

Your ability to bounce back from what you perceive as a debacle propels you onward. The more you can adapt to challenging conditions and brave the elements, the easier it is to thrive. Being resilient is also being multidimensional, being flexible.

The apple may be eaten raw or cooked, as in a pie, a dumpling or a turnover. It can be pureed into a sauce, processed into a spread, or pressed into cider. While the apple may take many forms, every morsel, just as every lesson in life, fortifies your body and mind with nutrients

for growth. Myriad flavors and textures tantalize the palate.

You seek to repeat the pleasures enjoying each bite. The pleasure of what you want is fleeting, however. For what satisfies the body doesn’t satisfy the soul. You are born for something greater, and deep in your soul is the message of your purpose. You are endowed with the gifts to make it so.

Bend as the branches do in the storms of life, yet remain steady as the trunk of the tree withstands the pressure of the elements.

Both flexibility and strength are necessary for your growth. Your mindset determines how you handle every situation. Take a chance and bloom with wisdom where you are. Take every challenge as an opportunity for your

growth, for your evolution. Re-frame every difficult event as a learning experience. Stay steady, commit to your purpose and remain focused no matter what storms appear on the horizon. The deeper the roots of your convictions,

the stronger and more stable you are.

When you learn to appreciate all of life's opportunities as gifts, you break through to a greater understanding of your existence and bring forth the fruit of your purpose!

Lillian Zarzar, Certified Speaking Professional, (highest earned designation by the Global Federation of Professional Speakers) offers interpersonal communication insights through thought-provoking sessions as a Trained Demartini Method® Facilitator with the Demartini Institute in Texas.

She is member and past president of the National Speakers Association-Ohio and adjunct professor, Communication Studies, Ohio University.

Zarzar was quoted in Self Magazine, highlighted in Columbus Business First, appeared on Fox 8 Good Day Columbus, and has written articles and books including Conversations on Success.

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LEARNING HOW TO FORGIVE

BY DEITRA HICKEY, PHD

We have all heard the term, “forgive and forget”...but how easy is that? I can empathetically agree that sometimes it is much more difficult than other times. Learning how to forgive is critical to our peace, contentment, and even your health!

So who is it that you need to forgive? Is it a friend, a co-worker, a family member, or yourself? The anger and lack of forgiveness can be consuming which can lead to other scarred relationships, a lack of focus at a job and the inevitable stress can cause health issues to top things off. Here are some simple suggestions on forgiveness:

First, reach out the person you're having trouble forgiving and attempt closure with them. Even if it is for selfish reasons, contact them and be open to their opinions—even if they are different from yours. Your friend or family member will likely be surprised and extremely grateful that you took the first step and will likely soften their attitude in hopes of closure and forgiveness as well.

Next, live in the moment. Even if the person you're having trouble forgiving should no longer be in your life, cherish the present and move on from the hurt. Be appreciative of all

that you have in your life. If you find yourself dwelling on the past and allowing damaging emotions or anger to dominate—take control and create situational perspective to move forward. Life is so short and we do not want to waste time being consumed with negativity.

Consider embracing some of your dark moments or conflicts. The power of what we can learn from adversity is amazing. The growth potential is priceless but we need to understand that most things in life do not happen on accident. Once you learn to take away something positive from a tough

episode, a break-up, a hurt or a disappointment, you will be more likely to forgive a situation or a person and move on feeling more equipped, mentally strong, and emotionally independent.

Lastly, if you are having trouble

forgiving *yourself* for a situation or a circumstance, take pride in the reality that **you are control** of this self-sabotaging thought-process and it is time for you to forgive yourself once and for all. Dwelling on a mistake that you

may have made will not make it go away and all it will do is interfere with the circumstances ahead of you.

Remember, when you change the way you look at things—the things you look at tend to change.

Dr. Deitra Hickey has a passion to help others find balance and reduce stress through her motivational speaking and wellness professional developments. She enthusiastically brings humor and real-life analogies to her audiences in a powerful, relatable manner. Deitra developed strong will and resilience early on by taking care of two paralyzed parents after witnessing both of them being shot. Deitra dedicated her life encouraging others to capitalize on life's challenges to reach their maximum potential.

Connect with Deitra at her business, Serenity Health and Wellness Center, her website and on



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THE EFFECTS OF BRANDING THE INTANGIBLES!

BY THE MERIT GROUP



The tangible aspects of a business include the physical pieces of the business such as: the material product, logos, marketing of the product, contracts etc. The intangibles of business are generally revealed through the mission statement, core values, and service promises to the customer. Every successful business, whether it has a physical product for sale or is a service, must relate emotionally to customers by means of its Brand Identity.

Branding the intangibles to consumers means that the product or service provides emotional comfort to consumers whether they need to make routine recurring purchases or just those irregular large purchases. Reflect on purchases you've made or conversations you have had with either family or peers. Consumers make their purchasing decisions on everything from soda or bottled water to cell phones, computers, and automobile purchases

with a brand commitment in mind. Even when the economy experienced tremendous difficulty, consumers remained loyal to their most important products because of the emotional connection they derived from those brands.

Although there may be many factors that ultimately impact the brand of a particular product or service there are three fundamental components that must exist in order to build that emotional brand connection.

1. **Personality** – Make your product or service stand out like a rockstar or a sports hero. Make sure your customers are similarly connected to your brand much like they are to these celebrities. They need to connect with all of the features, advantages, and benefits of your product or service.
2. **Story or Vision** – Anheuser Busch branded a story about historical beer delivery in a wagon pulled by Clydesdale horses. Becoming as popular as the horses was the Dalmatian riding with the driver. Consumers connected with the beauty and power of the horses and the dog. It's counterpart Coor's Brewing touted its own brand as being "Rocky Mountain Brewed" and over the years incorporated the mountain visual on its packaging and temperature reading on its bottles and cans. Again, consumers connected with the beauty and majesty of the Rocky Mountains and eventually their inquisitiveness of the mountains changing colors on the bottles and cans reflecting the optimum temperature of the adult beverage.
3. **Keep the brand Consistent** – Maybe one of the most notable offenses of consistent product branding has to be Coca Cola when they rolled out "New" Coke. It's not that

the addition of a new product itself is altogether bad. Their counterpart Pepsi has also had its trials of product snafus such as Crystal Pepsi. The greatest difference in the two flops was that although Pepsi introduced a product that was a disaster, they did not

pull their mainstay product brand from the shelves like Coca Cola. This remarkable event in marketing history likely set the precedent for where product branding is today and specifically the importance of brand consistency.

If you would like support in assessing the tangible and intangible components of the brand in your product or service, we are eager to team together with you to get the results you desire. Visit our website at www.themeritgroupindy.com or call 317-805-4896 today!

Shamara Cox has worked with businesses partnering in strategy, technique and implementation. Shamara is the proprietor of Shamara Cox LLC, Partner at The Merit Group LLC, CEO of BLING Sorority and Founder of Pressed Oil Life Ministries, Inc.

Terry Dove Pittman was Authentication Deputy for former Indiana Secretary of State Todd, where she acted as International Liaison/ Special Deputy between the State and many foreign embassies and foreign nationals. She is a Partner in The Merit Group.

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ARE YOU HIRING BIG ENOUGH?

BY DAN TOUSSANT

Have you hired in the last year and upon reflecting realized that you didn't think big enough, that there were parts of the role that you minimized until you had the person on board?

Thinking big enough when you hire is especially important for key positions. I recently encountered a situation where a key role had turned over twice in the last five years and the incumbent was not getting it done either.

Before that situation happens to you, as the hiring manager, whether you're an owner or an executive or a department manager, think about, what

do you still do that you really wanted that last hire to be able to handle?

For example, yes, you want someone to run your operation, handle production, handle quality, manage the team. Do you also want them to deal with customers and prospective customers and be a part of the new business development function as well?

So tip number one: Ask yourself AND one or two key members of your senior team, what you want this job to accomplish over the next 1 to 3 years, and all the possible responsibilities this could involve. Challenge

yourself to think about all aspects of the job; for example, you don't traditionally expect an operations leader to part of the sales team, yet you may need someone who offers that skill set, of talking to customers.

Second tip, have you linked this job to your growth strategy for the business? If you think about what you want to accomplish with your business, for example, if you want to grow your business by 10 percent on the average over the next 5 years, and over the last 5 years you have not accomplished that, how are you going to operate your business differently and what are some of the things this new hire will

help you to do differently to grow that top-line number.

The third tip is to use some outside counsel to get a different perspective than yourself and your internal team. It could be an advisory board, membership in a business-owner peer group, or a one-on-one trusted advisor

such as your accountant, lawyer or a search consultant. Meet with them before beginning the interview process, talk it through and give yourself a chance to really examine all aspects of this hiring profile before you go out and find that candidate,

If you do these three things, it

will be time well spent, utilizing the cost of a key hire as a good investment, and saving you from the burden of the cost of a bad key hire; for the long term, making your business that much stronger.

Contact us if we can assist you in the process.

Dan Toussant uses his extensive human resource and talent management experience to specialize in management and professional recruiting with Dan Toussant & Associates, a member of the Sanford Rose Associates network and as a partner in The Interview Doctor, Inc. with Katherine Burik. He speaks regularly about the job-seeking process, and coaches professionals in interviewing skills, resume preparation, and career transition. Their 3 book series, The Job Search Manifesto, is published on Amazon, Apple, and Barnes & Noble.

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Dan Toussant
Recruiter/HR Consultant



EFFECTIVE NETWORKING TECHNIQUES

BY DIANE HELBIG

Networking is really important when you're growing your business. And there are good - and bad - ways to behave at events and online.

No matter where you go there are things you should, shouldn't do. Let's start with business cards. You **SHOULDN'T** give your business card to anyone unless they ask for it. You **SHOULD** ask everyone you meet for theirs.

What you really want to know is who actually has interest in building a relationship with you. If you give your card to everyone there, you are telegraphing that your focus is on you, not them. And, let's be honest, when they get back to their office they are either going to throw it into a box of other meaningless cards, or add you to their newsletter list and **THEN** throw it into that box.

Speaking of newsletters, you

SHOULDN'T put the people you meet on your list without their permission. You **SHOULD** send them a handwritten note saying how much you enjoyed meeting them. And, those who you feel a connection to are those you should reach out to for coffee or a call. Continue to move the relationship forward.

You shouldn't try to meet everyone! You **SHOULD** have a goal of meeting a couple of

people and getting to know them. So, you shouldn't be the person doing all the talking. Ask an open ended question and let the other person talk. I'm not a fan of "So, what do you do." It's overused and prompts a canned response. Instead, ask them what they are working on, or what brings them to the event. Ask them what 3 things you should know about them.

Different, more compelling questions will help you learn more about the person you are talking to.

You may have noticed that the '**shoulds**' are all focused on the other person, and the '**shouldn'ts**' are all about you. That's the point! Networking should be about relationship building. You can't build

relationships if you are totally focused on yourself. Focus on the other person. Believe me, your turn will come.

Get out there and give it a try! I'm sure you'll notice a difference. And if you'd like help with this or other business challenges, visit seizethisday.co and sign up for a 30 minute complimentary phone consultation.

Diane Helbig is an international business and leadership change agent, author of *Lemonade Stand Selling and Expert Insights*, speaker, and host of *Accelerate Your Business Growth* Radio show. As president of *Seize This Day*, Diane helps businesses and organizations operate more constructively and profitably using her expertise in small business, sales, social media, networking, and leadership.

Diane is the creator of the Clarity of Course Sales Training Program and the founder of Business Opportunity Network™, a business referral/mastermind program with chapters throughout the United States.

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IF YOU BUILD IT, THEY WILL STAY

BY LISA RYAN

What takes years to build, seconds to break and forever to repair?

Did you guess TRUST? You're right. Without a solid foundation of trust, nothing else matters. By taking the time and making the effort to let your employees know that you care about them, appreciate them, and want to create a more positive workplace experience for them, you will start to build a solid foundation that will help connect your employees more strongly to your organization. Keep in mind, this process takes time.

After all, your staff might be suspicious of your intentions when you start to focus on

creating a more engaged workforce. The first time you acknowledge an employee for a job well done, he may think, "Okay, what does she want now?" You've seen that before, haven't you? Don't be discouraged, you can turn things around.

How do you build trust? Here are three ways you can get started.

1. **Be approachable, competent and consistent:** Your employees need to feel that you have their back. They want to know that they can come to you and you will hear them out. They also want to believe that you are good at your job and they can depend on you when they need your help.
2. **Act with honesty and integrity:** Your employees may not always like what you have to say. However, if they know you will always be honest with them and act in integrity, they will trust your judgement. The main difference between the best boss I ever had – Dale – and the worst boss ever – he who shall not be named – comes down to integrity. I could tell Dale anything. He celebrated with me when things were going well, and he talked me off the ledge when they weren't. Think about your favorite boss of all time. You trusted him or her implicitly, didn't you?

3. **Admit mistakes:** A client at a large hotel chain shared how she made a potentially career-ending mistake that almost lost their largest client. Thankfully she was able to save the account and keep her job. Instead of avoiding the topic, she now begins her staff meetings with the question, "Who

messed up worse than I did this week and what did you learn from it?" When your employees feel safe, they are more likely to admit and learn from their own mistakes.

There you have it, three steps that set the foundation for trust in the workplace. By using

these first steps in the THANKS process, you'll discover what it takes to keep your top talent and best clients from becoming someone else's.

To get your special report, 101 awesome ways to increase employee engagement, please send an email to lisa@grategy.com with "101 ee" in the subject line.

Award-winning speaker, Lisa Ryan, delivers life- and career-changing strategies and inspiration to her national and international audiences. She is the best-selling author of eight books and a featured expert in two films.

Focusing on workplace culture and personal empowerment with "Grategies" - gratitude strategies, Lisa works with organizations to keep their top talent and best clients from becoming someone else's. Her audiences receive ideas that positively impact them both personally and professionally.

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Lisa travels locally, nationally and internationally. Single programs range from 30 minutes to full-day. Short- and long-term implementation programs also available.



CREATING A SYSTEM FOR MEASURING INTANGIBLE STRATEGIC INDICATORS

BY MICHAEL KAPLAN

This quote, attributed to Albert Einstein, applies to us today!



Not everything that can be counted, counts, and not everything that counts, can be counted."

In our world, there's no shortage of data. Instead, our challenge is creating good key strategic indicators that measure both those items that can easily be counted and the more intangible items that are harder to quantify. Establishing milestones and key indicators, both tangible and intangible, that provide valuable insights into your business, keeps you on track and moving forward.

The Intangible items that you'll want to measure have probably already been defined in your vision. These Indicators are more difficult to ascertain and measure, yet vital to the operation of your business, some examples are:

Customer satisfaction and service
Core values and positive work environment
Marketplace positioning and innovation



Here's how to establish a tracking system for those intangibles:

Create a Scoring System for Intangible Indicators along with a rating sheet. Be objective in how you rate your intangible indicators. Specify how you score each intangible indicator and identify the ratings you give to each.

For example, assign a range of numbers both positive and negative for each indicator. Let's say you are rating "employee satisfaction" - you then create a scale that goes from minus 10 to plus 10 and define best case (+10) and worst case (-10) and a few points between. For example the summary definition of various employee satisfaction points could go like this:

+10 – Employees love working here, they feel appreciated and useful

+5 – Employees enjoy working here; they often feel appreciated and useful.

+1 – Employees think working here is just OK, it's a job

-5 – Employees dislike working here; they often feel ignored, unproductive, and underutilized.

-10 Employees hate working here, they feel ignored and unproductive

Some of the items that you measure in this intangible way can be the most important indicators in your business to measure, especially considering the culture of your business. So delve deep into the intangible indicators, you'll be a step ahead of your competitors who may be in the majority of small business owners without a clue about

how to quantify their key intangibles.

However, tracking is not enough. You need to **evaluate what needs to be done** (or not done) to move your company into the rating you want and plan how your results can be used to create systems for improvement in the areas being measured.

Visit my blog or contact me for a free consultation to find the exact five steps to creating a tracking system that shows progress and gives an accurate reflection of where you are in your business at any given point. This is an important tool to see your business objectively and to implement strategic thinking to ensure your company is on target to achieve your vision.

Michael Kaplan is a seasoned business owner with a skill for creating successful businesses, leadership transformations, and personal growth with owners and managers of mid- sized businesses. He has a passion for people development. Kaplan has more than 36 years of experience in sales, business coaching and entrepreneurship. In 2008, he opened his own coaching business, Strategic Solutions Coaching, and developed his business coaching system, GPS (Growth Producing Strategies) for Business™ that gives business leaders a new way to look at their businesses to accelerate growth. As a Certified EMyth Business Coach, he has access to the most comprehensive business development system anywhere.



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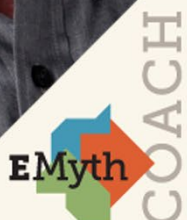
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CLARIFYING YOUR BUSINESS MESSAGE

BY ANN N. GATTY, PH.D.



Being a small business owner can be a struggle with events occurring, often beyond your control. Unexpected occurrences, can quickly alter the best laid plans. If you're not careful, your business plans can spiral out of control and you find that your company is running you rather than you running the company. How do you stay focused, energized and on track with your business? The answer? A clear message.

In the business world, leaders find themselves bombarded with noise on all fronts. Noise from social media marketing, from

vendors trying to get you to try new products, customers asking for more personalized service, and even your employees who might ask for direction. And yet, every business must have a voice that can rise above the rest of the competition in order to be heard. A clear message is the only way to cut through the noise and get noticed.

Successful business owners have one thing in common. They maintain a clear, straightforward business message that conveys their purpose and passion to both their employees and their customers. Then everyone is

singing the same song. As Albert Einstein famously stated, "If you can't explain it simply, you don't understand it well enough." So if you haven't clarified your vision, purpose, and process that you, your staff and your customer base understand, then it may be time to return to the drawing board and rework the message.

It is crucial to communicate your message clearly in order to share what you offer that is different from other companies in your industry. Sometimes when daily business gets harried, it's difficult to remember why you're here in the first place!

Having a clear message reminds everyone about the purpose the business serves and helps you maintain focus.

So take some time, maybe away from the office, where you can think without distraction, and review the reasons you're in business and how you are conveying that message to staff and customers.

At Strategic People Solutions, we use these questions to help our clients clarify their company message:

1. Why do we do what we do?
2. Whom do we serve?
3. What are we trying to see accomplished?
4. What are the steps?

Answer these questions honestly and objectively. Then share with us how you did at <http://www.strategicpeoplesolutions.com/contact-us/> and we'll get back to you with our comments! And here's a tweetable quote for you: "Things which matter most must never be at the mercy of things which matter least." You'll stay focused with a clear message.

Dr. Ann is an expert at building businesses to work brilliantly. She helps her clients create workable strategic business plans and success initiatives, while improving their workplace processes. She is frequently featured in the media and writes for AllBusiness.com and WomenOnBusiness.com. Her interactive speaking engagements assist participants in discovering new-found talents and skills they can immediately apply in the workplace. To see how Dr. Ann can help you to improve your business, visit www.StrategicPeopleSolutions.com.



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DELIVERING A POWERFUL PERFORMANCE REVIEW

BY MEGAN PATTON

Oh No! It's performance appraisal season! How many times have I seen expressions of dread on managers' faces when they realize its THAT TIME OF YEAR. In fact, the employees dread it even more than the managers do. So, how can we take this seemingly universally hated experience and make it a powerful and positive one? Here are five steps to do just that.

1 - prepare thoroughly.

You can't over prepare for a performance review; spend time reading over notes from the past months, any commendations, letters of gratitude or support on behalf of the employee. Perhaps there was some disciplinary action - review the progress that has been made. Also, if your employee had measurable objectives, review how they did. Prepare your "script" of any key points you'd like to mention in the session.

2 - ask the employee to complete a self evaluation.

What are their feelings about their performance? What are they celebrating, and what

would they like to do differently next year? Ask them to provide specific examples and suggestions for what they would like to focus on in the coming cycle.

3 - prepare the meeting space.

Don't hold a performance review in your office because the power vibe is all too apparent on your home turf! Instead, hold the review in a private space that is neutral. If the employee has an office with a door that would be a good spot or a private conference room works as well. Some people go off-site, or have the conversation over lunch, but that is not ideal - restaurants aren't really private. And, many people won't have much of an appetite while they are reviewing or being reviewed.

4 - during the meeting, always lead with the positives!

Celebrate any successes they've had this year - praise their work ethic, or their ability to work in teams, anything that you can call out in a genuine manner to praise them. Then ask for their input. Ask them what went right

this year - really listen to what they say, and congratulate them on their success. Next, ask what frustrated them, or what they felt didn't go as well as they had hoped. See if it matches any of the weaknesses that you identified in your preparation, and brainstorm together some solutions.

5 - work on developing a plan for the next review cycle.

Empower the employee to come up with some measurable goals, a new direction or focus, a significant project, or anything else that will stretch and challenge them in the coming year. Ask them what they would like to achieve, where they see themselves progressing in the company, and what new skills or work challenges they would like to develop in the coming year.

It is really critical to note that this should NOT be the first conversation you are having with your employee about their performance this year. Celebrate their accomplishments when they happen. Provide guidance and course corrections

immediately as problems arise. Discuss general progress towards goals throughout the year, or the performance cycle. I can't stress enough that nothing you say in the actual performance appraisal session should come as a surprise to

your employee.

At the end of the review, show some genuine gratitude for this employee. Thank them for their service. Be genuine - point out 2 or 3 things that you really value about this individual. Let them know that they are appreciated!

Let them know that they make a difference in your company!

If you'd like help preparing your company for performance reviews, feel free to give me a call. I'd like to help you focus and thrive in your company.

Megan Patton is a business strategist who has been a management consultant, trainer and executive coach for most of her career. She spends her time working with individuals, companies and non-profits to help define and implement strategies that enable peak performance and growth.

Megan is also a licensed affiliate of The One Page Business Plan Company. Megan is a strong believer in lifelong learning, and continues to take classes on a variety of subjects.

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