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# The Training Connection

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June 2004

Volume 4 Issue 6

THE TRAINING CONNECTION, INC.

*Strengthening the Connection Between Employee Development and Organizational Effectiveness*

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## Managing Stress

The business world is filled with many challenges and opportunities. In order for a business to take advantage of opportunities and overcome the challenges, a businessperson must be able to continuously perform at top levels of achievement. When stress is not managed it consumes much of a persons energy; therefore, not allowing great portions of that persons capabilities to be effectively used in the work or personal environment.

### A Simple Stress Test

#### Take the Business Owners Stress Test

1. I am impatient with others at least several times a week.
2. I worry about the sustainability of my company's revenue streams.

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### How Are You Managing Stress?

## The Top 10 Audit Questions: Customer Service

1. How do we define customer satisfaction?
2. How much should we be spending on retaining customers?
3. Why do customers defect?
4. What report/index/measurement do we need daily/weekly, etc. to track our progress in this area?
5. What are the needs that our customers haven't even asked us to fulfill for them?
6. How rapidly are customer questions/problems responded to and/or resolved?
7. Do customer questions/complaints get forwarded to our product/R&D/systems people?
8. Are our customers delighted, or just satisfied?
9. Do our customers brag to their friends about our product or service?
10. If we were a customer, where would we ask the company to improve?

Original Source: T. Leonard, Coachville



Continued from page one – *Managing Stress*

3. I have business debt that is more than 20% of my annual revenues.
4. My spouse (or employees), just don't get how big a job this is.
5. Given the effort I'm putting in, my net income is nowhere near high enough.
6. If I wasn't here, the place would fall apart within a month.
7. I can't seem to attract – or keep – the right staff.
8. I'm doing tasks that I do not like or am not very good at.
9. I am working more than 10 hours a day.
10. I am running faster and harder than I probably should be.

If you have checked off three to five then you might consider what stress points could be reduced and how you will go about accomplishing that reduction. Consider stress management as an investment in your business, no different than any capital expense. As a small business owner your largest single capital investment is yourself.

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## *Motivational Quotes*

***When you get to the end of your rope, tie a knot and hang on.***

~ Franklin D. Roosevelt

***He who rules must humor fully as much as he commands.***

~ George Eliot

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## *Where Is Your Comfort Zone?*

Does the following cartoon speak to you?



### **The Choice Question –**

Are you making choices because they are in your comfort zone or are you making choices to take you where you need and desire to go?

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## *How To Improve Persuasion Power*

To upgrade your persuasive power, capitalize on these situations:

- ♦ **Lend a sympathetic ear.** When an employee discusses a problem, listen with patience and understanding. By showing that you care, you earn a reputation as a sensitive manager. That will pay off when you ask your staff to sacrifice to attain or stretch goals.
- ♦ **Feed off others' enthusiasm.** When someone presents a new idea, support it. Don't look to shoot holes in what you hear. *Example:* Your boss may want you to be upbeat about a new product rollout, so focus on opportunities rather than criticism. *Payoff:* If you do have legitimate concerns about the project, this gives you the credibility to raise them later.



Source: Robert L. Dilenschneider, writing in *Executive Excellence*.

# Web Site Of The Month!

## *The Library of Congress*

The Library of Congress has an incredible site for historical references and catalogs. You can also learn what Congress is doing on a daily basis. One of the more interesting things I found was a scanned image of General Benedict Arnold's letter to George Washington asking that Washington spare his wife and child after Arnold had fled.

Check it out at: [www.loc.gov](http://www.loc.gov)

## *How To Set Up A Gift Certificate Sales Incentive*

1. Select your gift certificate provider(s). Match the demographics of your sales force with the merchant's demographics.
2. Establish specific, measurable, attainable, realistically high goals. Determine the program's duration.
3. Set up results reporting for the participants.
4. Plan the redemption and fulfillment procedures with the merchant.
5. Communicate the goals and rewards to the participants. ***Create excitement in the program!***
6. Enjoy the results.



## The Training Connection



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## ONE MINUTE IDEAS

### *Customer Service*

Use positive language – not negative – to ask customers how satisfied they are.

**Say:** "Can you suggest ways for us to improve our service?"

**Not:** "Do you have any complaints?"

### *Test Phone Skills*

Need to hire someone for a job that requires good phone skills? Consider the approach used by Chuck Surack, president of Sweetwater Sound in Fort Wayne, Ind.:

- ◆ **Run an ad** listing only the job and a phone number to call.
- ◆ **Have callers listen** to a brief message describing your company, and then give them five minutes to persuade you to hire them.
- ◆ **Invite only those who provide** an impressive "audio resume" to submit a resume in writing.

Source: Inc., Boston, MA





## *The Mentoring Connection*

### *Mentoring Generation “X”*



**E**ffective mentoring requires skill, communication, and a unique ability to relate to a wide variety of people and personalities. Most mentors are senior members of an organization. Often, the people they are tasked to mentor are much younger. Generational gaps can be an unforeseen challenge to developing an effective mentoring relationship. One of these younger generations that presents a unique situation for the traditional manager and mentor is that commonly referred to as “Generation X.”

Generation “X”-ers are broadly classified as those people born after the baby boom, between 1964 and 1980, consisting of those elements of the workforce that are in their late teens, twenties, and early thirties. They represent the primary supply of labor for the next 10-20 years, thus, if you aren’t already working with them, you will be. It is vital that you understand some of the philosophies and conditions under which this generation operates in order to be able to effectively mentor them. Some typical outstanding characteristics of Generation X mentorees are (Zemke, Raines, Filipczak, 2000):

- **Flexibility**
- **Multi-tasking**
- **Self-directed and independent**
- **Technologically savvy**
- **Creative**

Unlike the “Baby Boomer” generation preceding them, who generally adhered to a “live to work” philosophy, Generation X-ers subscribe to a “work to live” attitude. They have a strong work ethic but also a strong desire to excel in a variety of outside interests. Generation X-ers have an inherent need for financial and emotional security.

Awareness of the apparent differences in philosophies between the generations is a good foundation, but it fails to address the critical action

of bridging that generational gap. The following tools can be used to create a successful mentoring partnership with Generation X employees (Zemke, Raines, Filipczak, 2000):

- **Give them control over their own destiny.**
- **Provide positive feedback.**
- **Give them freedom; avoid micro-management.**
- **Give them access to cutting-edge thinking and technology.**
- **Show you care about them as a person.**
- **Help them navigate the system and cut through the red tape.**
- **Share knowledge and information continuously.**
- **Ask for their opinion.**
- **Show them the future and how they add value to the organization.**
- **Engage them with a variety of challenging projects and tasks.**
- **Recognize their successes!!**

Be sure to recognize and respect the inherent differences between your views and those of this youthful generation to unleash the power that their ambition, creativity, and technical savvy provide. By applying some of the above coaching techniques combined with a principled understanding of the goals and philosophy of Generation X, you can create a mentoring partnership that will foster cooperation, productivity, and an overall positive attitude toward the company and its goals.

#### **Bibliography:**

Zemke, R., Raines, C., and Filipczak, B. Generations at Work. New York: AMACOM, 2000.



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