

New Year's "Workplace" Resolutions

The end of the 2009 year brought great relief to some – those who still have their jobs and businesses afloat – and great angst to those who are getting word of budget cuts, layoffs and closings. But fear not!

Although our economic environment is showing credible signs of recovery, our nation's workforce is still under great stress and unpredictability. No one is immune. Everyone is affected. So this first article of 2010 is dedicated to the warriors, every one of us in today's workplace. Here are a few New Year's Resolutions for the workplace:

1) Your value (whether a company or employee) shouldn't be a hidden secret. You have to set yourself apart, strategically marketing yourself is the key. If you're looking for work, are you clearly branded on your resume, portfolio or website? What makes it/you distinctive and unforgettable among the hordes of me-too's? If you have a job, what are you doing to become more valuable? Really think about what you have done that's decidedly unique in your life. The message here is: Bust out of your normal framework and think and act differently.

2) Bizarre ideas are more successful than boring ones. Life is full of these examples. Who could've imagined a few years ago that we'd have cell phone technology at our fingertips providing so much information, access, and interconnectivity? Make a note: *status quo out*. Connect yourself to those who share your passion. Then take good ideas to the next level. If you are the boss, owner or manager, how can you better utilize your employees to improve your products and customer service? Investing in enhanced staff development should be an ongoing commitment because it broadens one's thinking and skills which is ultimately added-value to the clientele you serve.

3) What drives your professional goals? Define your key goal in one sentence of ten words or less. For Bill Gates, founder and former CEO of Microsoft, his leadership was fueled by his long-held dream that "millions might realize their potential through great software."



A graphic with a yellow-to-orange gradient background. The text "Happy New Year" is in a blue, sans-serif font at the top, and "2010" is in a larger, bold, blue, sans-serif font below it.

4) Dreams come in all sizes. Take a simple activity like shopping, but first turn back the clock pre-1994. If you needed something you had to go to the store and buy it. Enter: Jeff Bezos. He didn't just invent online shopping, he turned it into a multi-billion dollar enterprise. Amazon.com began as a bookstore in 1994 and quickly expanded into dozens of product categories, forcing the world's biggest retailers to rethink their business models and ultimately change the way people shop today.

The challenge for most of us in the workforce is in defining what we can do that will make us an asset to our company/agency and benefit a broad base of the public we serve. After we figure that out we must then find a way to make it happen and market ourselves as the change agents to bring those goals into reality.

Make your mark by understanding where your company or agency can be innovative. Being innovative does not have to mean discovering the Internet or being the next Microsoft. It just means providing a unique perspective that decision-makers and customers find interesting, helpful, fun, and fresh. How you do that is your own creative methodology designed for your specific situation. Sometimes we have to experiment. There are a lot of companies and agencies debilitated by the fear of trying something new. Fear is to no one's advantage. **Properly implemented technology stimulates business and professional growth.**

By building your value and your connectivity – you become your own best asset. That engagement transcends its power and capacity for employees as well as companies.



Happy New Year!

New Year's Eve has always been a time for looking back to the past, and more importantly, forward to the coming year. It's a time to reflect on the changes we want (or need) to make and resolve to follow through on those changes.

If you're anything like me, you're gearing up to make some healthy 2010 resolutions. Especially since, for the last few weeks now, I've been telling myself, "It's okay, sleep in and indulge in that cookie/cake/pie. It's the holidays. I'll get back to exercising and watching what I eat after the holidays."

Why not make a pact with the employees in your department to be healthier this upcoming year? After all, you and your coworkers spend the majority of your day together. If you don't engage in healthier habits during that time, there's not much time left in the day to make your resolutions a reality. Plus, better health leads to a better mood, and a better mood positively impacts performance. So what have you got to lose by supporting your coworkers' healthy habits right alongside yours?

Here are some suggestions to get you all started.

Do make wise food choices.

- *Instead of:* coffee with cream and sugar, *try:* coffee with low-fat milk and a sugar substitute.
- *Instead of:* a large blueberry muffin, *try:* a bowl of whole grain cereal with fresh blueberries.
- *Instead of:* a burger with cheese and a side of fries, *try:* a sandwich with lean meat (e.g., turkey, roast beef) and a side salad with low-fat dressing.
- *Instead of:* cookies or candy bars, *try:* chewy granola bars.

Don't overlook easy ways to add physical activity to your day.

- Park farther away from the facility.
- Take the stairs rather than the elevator.
- Use a restroom on another floor.
- Walk to co-workers to have a face-to-face conversation, instead of constantly relying on e-mail and the telephone.

Do listen to your body.

- Prevent stiffness from setting in by stretching from time to time; stretch your arms above your head, extend your legs, bend deeply at the knees, or twist at the waist.
- Prevent eye strain by adopting the "20-20-20" rule; for every 20 minutes spent looking at a computer screen, spend 20 seconds focusing on something that appears 20 feet away.

Don't let stress get the best of you.

- Try deep-breathing techniques. For example, breathe deeply through your nose while counting to four, and then hold your breath for a few seconds. Exhale slowly and empty your lungs completely. Repeat the process three or four times. Stop if you begin to feel dizzy or lightheaded.
- *Another idea:* Find amusement during the day since laughter is a great stress relief. Look for humor in workplace situations. Get a humorous non-offensive calendar to keep at your desk.

I'm sure you can think of plenty of other suggestions to add to the list!

Happy New Year!

National Mentoring Month



National Mentoring Month is a campaign held each January to promote youth mentoring in the United States. It was inaugurated in 2002, and is spearheaded by the Harvard School of Public Health, MENTOR, and the Corporation for National and Community Service.

Each year since 2002, former President George W. Bush and now President Barack Obama have endorsed the campaign by proclaiming January as National Mentoring Month. The declaration has been endorsed by both chambers of the Congress. The campaign's media partners have included: ABC, CBS, Fox, and NBC; Comcast; National Association of Broadcasters; Time Warner; and Viacom.

Participants in the National Mentoring Month campaign include leading nonprofit organizations and numerous governors and mayors. Designated nonprofit and governmental agencies are responsible for coordinating local campaign activities in communities across the country, including media outreach and volunteer recruitment. Local lead partners include state and local affiliates of MENTOR/National Mentoring Partnership, Corporation for National and Community Service, Points of Light Foundation and Volunteer Center National Network, America's Promise Alliance, Big Brothers Big Sisters of America, Communities in Schools, and United Way of America.

A highlight of the campaign is Thank Your Mentor Day, in which Americans thank and honor their mentors. People are encouraged to contact their mentors directly to express appreciation, become a mentor in their own community, make a financial contribution to a local mentoring program, or post a tribute on WhoMentoredYou.org.

January Tid-Bits

January is the first month of the year in the Julian and Gregorian calendars, and one of seven Gregorian months with the length of 31 days. The first day of the month is known as New Year's Day. It is, on average, the coldest month of the year within most of the Northern Hemisphere and the warmest month of the year within most of the Southern Hemisphere.

Dates you may want to remember...

- New Year's Day- January 1
- World Braille Day- January 4
- Epiphany- January 6
- I'm not going to take it anymore Day- January 7
- Show and Tell Day at Work- January 8
- National Clean Your Desk Day- January 11
- Humanitarian Day- January 15
- Religious Freedom Day- January 16
- Fun at Work Day- January 29
- Women's Self Empowerment Week- Jan. 4-10
- Healthy Weight Week- Jan. 17-23
- No Name Calling Week- Jan. 24-24
- Financial Wellness Month
- National Poverty In America Awareness Month
- Cervical Cancer Screening Month

For more interesting dates, observances and celebrations,



On January 18, 2010, people of all ages and backgrounds will come together to improve lives, bridge social barriers, and move our nation closer to the "Beloved Community" that Dr. King envisioned. Dr. Martin Luther King devoted his life's work to causes of equality and social justice. He taught that through nonviolence and service to one another, problems such as hunger and homelessness, prejudice and discrimination can be overcome. Dr. King's teachings can continue to guide us in addressing our nation's most pressing needs---poverty, economic insecurity, job loss and education.

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DLLR Presents: Brown Bag Lunch Series



Financial Well-Being

Financial Well-Being

When: Thursday, January 28,
2010

Where: Lower Level Training
Room @ 1100 N. Eutaw
Street.

Time: 12:15 – 1:00 P.M.



Please come out and join the Office of Fair Practices as we present a series of lunchtime workshops and seminars that will promote economic, personal and professional development. As we kick off 2010 our first seminar will focus on Financial Well Being. There will be tips and information from our special featured guest on how to gain a financial edge in today's economy.