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Perspective

Nathaly Pinchuk, RPR, CMP
*Executive Director*

# E-Commerce: Does It Get Any Better than This?

*The benefits of online billing and payment*

Have you noticed how easy it is to pay bills online nowadays? Everyone's doing it so you better get on board soon. From a vendor's perspective, it may cost a bit more for advanced setup and security programming as well as the fees for transactions on credit cards. You can't beat the speed at which accounts get paid when you streamline the process. From a consumer's perspective, I find it truly helps with budgeting and monitoring your expenditures.

Do you remember the days when you had to run to your mailbox every day to check for bills to make sure you paid them on time to avoid late payment interest charges? Do you realize how much time and money you are saving on running around getting envelopes and stamps, not to mention bank cheques that they charge us for? We can get so much more accomplished with online banking and bill payment while saving on stationary and postage, not to mention gas and wear and tear on our vehicle to go shopping for these basic supplies.

Another benefit of getting invoices electronically and paying online is not having to worry about lost cheques and running to the bank to put stop-payments on them. If you pay online, you should get a confirmation of having made the payment. No more guesswork on how long it will be to receive the invoice or how long it will take for your payment to arrive.

We at IPM have used electronic billing for almost two years now and it's really been the best thing for both our clients and our accounting department. Your invoices arrive directly into your email boxes well before their due date giving you ample time to settle payment. Our members and subscribers appreciate the payment reminders we email them and payment on time has increased exponentially. If you need a receipt, all you have to do is ask and we can email it to you within minutes of receiving your request. Here again, you as the valued customer will not have to wait a week for your receipt to arrive by mail.

There are still a number of people who are hesitant to pay bills online for fear of fraudulent activity. We suggest that you check to make sure your vendor has a current security certificate/confirmation on the respective site before making payment. For our clients, we also offer the option of faxing back payment to a toll-free number that comes directly to our accounting department. Again, this is a process that takes a few minutes rather than days or weeks.

While this system of electronic billing and online payment has simplified our lives and freed up valuable time, it's important to pay attention to due dates on invoices. You definitely will save yourself considerable money and hassles by paying on time. As an example with most associations out there with professional designations and licenses involved, you'll probably want to settle on time to avoid recertification process and additional costs.

It's certainly easier to keep track of our expenses and manage our bank accounts these days. The trick is not to use the bonus time you have shopping for other items which will blow your budget!

*Nathaly Pinchuk, RPR, CMP*
*Executive Director IPM*
*Institute of Professional Management*

Do you remember the days you had to run to your mailbox every day to check for bills...

**inside this issue:**



*Send us your feedback and suggestions for articles. If you are interested in writing articles, send your contributions to info@workplace.ca.*

Brian W. Pascal
*President*

President's Message

# Monitoring Social Media: To Do or Not to Do?

*An employer's perspective*

One of the interesting moral and legal questions facing employers now is whether or not they should monitor their employees' activities on social media. Do you even want to? In many cases the answer will be simple. There may be no good or valid reason for this type of activity. Case closed. But in other scenarios, the answer is not as clear. Given the fact that social media continues to expand at a rapid pace, these situations will increase. So how do you the employer balance the need to respect the privacy of employees with the need to monitor and regulate employee conduct that may be prejudicial to your interests?

First, let's look at a little background on the World Wide Web. The Internet started as a research and analytical vehicle that allowed the military and academia to store and search massive amounts of data and information. Along the way, they let the rest of us in on the Internet action and we started to access the research and share it with others. Soon we were also communicating with each other through email and then shared our own ideas and opinions through chat groups and eventually blogs. Finally, social media blew the Internet wide open and now everybody could not just read the news but create it as well.

It is still amazing to me how this Internet revolution has evolved. By the time we got to 2007, email was being used by nearly everyone in the workplace and not just for work. According to Statistics Canada by 2007, Canadians were sending an average of three personal emails a day from their workplace. This has only increased in the past five years as has the use of social networking both at home and at work. Facebook, the most popular social networking site, has grown from 132 million active users in 2008 to over 500 million today.

So given the prevalence of social media, it is not difficult to imagine how problems arise for employers when it comes to its use. These problems generally fall into a number of categories as people email, post or tweet about their activities, about work or from the workplace. Those areas may include confidentiality, reputation, defamation or even harassment. The biggest problem is that there are few cut and dried answers when it comes to these topics and their definitions in the new world of social media. Here are a few questions to consider.

If an employee posts material on their blog, is it private or public? Who makes that determination? If an employee talks about their employer as being unfair in their handling of a labour dispute, is it damaging to the employer's reputation? Probably. Could it be the subject of disciplinary action? There is the new area for our lawyers and courts to handle.

An employee makes a Facebook post that infers that another employee has loose morals. Another employee uses Facebook on his own time to repeatedly ask a married co-worker to have a relationship with him. Are these cases of defamation and harassment that the employer has to worry about? I would certainly be concerned.

The waters around social media and the workplace are muddy and full of potential hazards for employers. We haven't even got into looking at the employee's reasonable rights to expect privacy in their personal communication or on their own time. Both the ethical and legal framework around these questions are still being debated and drawn up. So what can and should an employer do in the meantime?

Online activity at work is already being monitored, more so in the United States, but is a growing practice in Canada as well. We are still mostly looking at Internet and email usage, but it is moving into Facebook and the blogosphere. There is also a growing trend by employers all over the world to screen prospective employees' previous social media and Internet use prior to their employment. In Canada, this is already problematic because of human rights legislation but until we get the official legal policies confirmed, it will likely continue. The best advice about this type of monitoring is to use extreme caution or avoid this practice completely.

Another suggestion is to make sure that your employees are aware of the organization's policies regarding the use of social media and the Internet. If a problem arises in the future, it will be much easier to resolve if everyone knows the rules in advance. You also need to have a look at your company and industry and evaluate the risks and rewards of Internet and social media use by your staff. Then you can determine the appropriate limits to suggest as well as any penalties that might apply for any misuse of your policy.

The truth is that we are all still fairly new and green about how to proceed as responsible managers when it comes to these areas. But like all new situations, a little patience and a lot of common sense will go a long way, even in the Internet Era.

Hendrik Nieuwland
LL.B.

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Todd Weisberg,
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*Associate,*
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Feature

# New Leaves of Absence for Employees Coming Soon

*Employment Standards Act (ESA) Update*

On October 29, 2014, the statutory leaves of absence guaranteed to employees under the Employment Standards Act, 2000 (the "ESA") will be expanded to include three (3) new categories of leave: Family Caregiver Leave; Critically Ill Child Care Leave; and Crime-Related Death and Child Disappearance Leave.

The intended purpose of these new leave provisions is to help families care for sick loved ones or deal with a crime-related loss or disappearance of a child. The new leaves are in addition to the existing leaves available under the ESA and can be used in combination with traditional leaves under the ESA, such as the Family Medical Leave, if the employee qualifies for both. As is the case with the other leaves under the ESA, the new leaves will be unpaid. However, certain employment insurance benefits may be available in the right circumstances.

Here is a brief overview of the new leaves of absence and the key points of interest for employers.

### Family Caregiver Leave

Family Caregiver Leave allows employees to take up to eight (8) weeks of unpaid, job protected leave per calendar year in order to provide care or support to specified family members. The eight (8) weeks of leave apply to each family member described in the section and the leave can be taken in less than full week periods.

The leave is conditional on a qualified health practitioner issuing a certificate stating that the family member has a "serious medical condition". The definition of "qualified health practitioner" includes not only physicians but registered nurses and psychologists. The definition of "serious medical condition" has not been provided but the legislation has stated that it will include "a condition that is chronic or episodic", leaving considerable room for interpretation.

As is the case with the other leaves under the ESA, the new leaves will be unpaid.

*A family member under this section includes:*

- the employee's spouse, parent, step-parent or foster parent of the employee or the employee's spouse;
- a child, stepchild or foster child of the employee or the employee's spouse;
- a grandparent, step-grandparent, grandchild or step-grandchild of the employee or the employee's spouse;
- the spouse of a child of the employee; or
- the employee's brother or sister; or a relative of the employee who is dependent on the employee for care or assistance.

Excluded under the definition of family member are aunts, uncles, nieces, nephews and cousins. However, such individuals could potentially fall under the broad category of "a relative of the employee who is dependent on the employee for care or assistance".

The employee is required to advise the employer in writing that they will be taking such a leave, or as soon as reasonably possible if the employee must begin the leave before advising the employer. Employers are entitled to request the medical certificate and the employee must provide said certificate "as soon as possible".

### Critically Ill Child Care Leave

Critically Ill Child Care Leave allows an employee, who has been working for at least six (6) consecutive months, up to thirty-seven (37) weeks of unpaid leave to care for their critically ill child. This leave can be taken in less than full week periods. The definition of child includes step-child, foster child or child who is under legal guardianship and who is under eighteen (18) years of age.

In order for an employee to be eligible for this leave, the child must meet the definition of "critically ill" which is defined as "a child whose baseline state of health has significantly changed and his life is at risk as a result of an illness or injury". The determination of whether a child meets this definition is to be made by a qualified health practitioner. The qualified health practitioner must issue a certificate which states that the child is critically ill and requires the care and support of one (1) or more parents; and sets out the period during which the child requires the care or support. The employee will only be entitled to take a leave for the number of weeks in the period specified in the certificate.

An employee who wishes to take this leave must advise the employer in writing and provide the employer with a written

*continued ...*

# New Leaves of Absence for Employees

*... continued*

plan indicating the weeks in which the employee will be taking the leave. Similar to Family Caregiver Leave, employers are entitled to request the medical certificate.

Employees may be eligible to receive employment insurance known as special benefits for Parents of Critically Ill Children.

### *Crime-Related Child Death and Disappearance Leave*

Crime-Related Child Death and Disappearance Leave allows employees, who have been working for at least six (6) consecutive months, up to fifty-two (52) weeks of unpaid leave where the child has disappeared as a result of a crime, or up to one hundred and four (104) weeks where the child dies as a result of a crime. Under this section, the definition of child includes "a child, step-child or foster child who is under the age of eighteen (18) years of age".

The employee is only entitled to this leave if it is probable that the disappearance or death is the result of a crime. If an employee on a leave under this section discovers that it is no longer probable that the child died or disappeared as a result of a crime, the employee's entitlement to leave ends on the day on which it no longer seems probable. If the child who has gone missing is found within the fifty-two (52) week period, the employee is entitled to remain on leave for fourteen (14) days after the child is found or take one hundred and four (104) weeks of leave from the day the child disappeared, if the child is found dead. If the child is found dead more than fifty-two (52) weeks after the week in which the child disappeared, the employee is entitled to take another leave under this section of up to one hundred and four (104) weeks.

Unlike the other sections, the employee may only take this leave in a single period. As with the other leaves, the employee must advise the employer in writing of the intention to take the leave and provide a written plan that indicates the weeks in which the employee will take the leave. An employer may require an employee who takes a leave under this section to provide evidence supporting the leave that is "reasonable in the circumstances".

Employees entitled to leave under this section may be eligible to receive income support from the federal government in the form of Support for Parents of Murdered or Missing Children Grant.

### *Conclusion*

These three leaves considerably expand family-related leave entitlements under the ESA. Accordingly, employers should be prepared to manage potentially lengthy absences as a result of these new leaves. Employers should also review their existing policies, procedures and contracts to consider how best to incorporate these new leaves and ensure that any policies are compliant with same. Finally, employers should ensure that any employees who take leaves under these provisions are aware of their potential entitlement to employment insurance benefits under either general employment insurance, special benefits or income support as discussed above.

*Hendrik Nieuwland and Todd Weisberg practise employment law with the firm Shields O'Donnell MacKillop LLP of Toronto.*

...employers should ensure that any employees who take leaves under these provisions are aware of their potential entitlement to employment insurance benefits...

"Are you the genius who came up with the 'alternative payment' program?"

Luc Beaudry

*Principal, Cygnus Training & Consulting*

Ask the Expert

# Influence with Emotion

*Keeping your cool*

Q: "I'm generally pretty good at keeping my cool, but some people still manage to push my buttons and get my blood boiling. How do I stay in control and manage those situations?"

A: There's nothing more frustrating than when you're having a good day, doing your work and then a co-worker pops by and before you know it… snap! Maybe they barged in and started talking even though you're with someone else. Maybe they asked you the same question they've already asked you four times this week. Either way, the next thing you know, your breathing is shallow, your shoulders and stomach tense up and you're suppressing the urge to find out what sound a Dilbert desk calendar would make if it were to come into violent contact with your co-worker's forehead.

## The facts about emotions

We all experience emotions. It's a privilege of being human. Emotions are critical to our well-being because they are a signal from our brain that says "hey, something's happening that matters to you!" The more intense the emotion, the more it engages an automatic fight or flight reaction. We become aggressive or we shut down. Neither are productive behaviours in a business setting.

Like the average two year old, emotions get louder when they are ignored and their impact is then amplified. This is true whether your emotions are on display for the world to see or whether you're as hard to read as a professional poker player. Either way, those strong feelings affect your words, behaviours and decisions.

## Separating fact from fiction

While the emotions are real, the stories that give rise to your emotions are a work of fiction. That's right. Your emotions are a reaction to a story that your brain has fabricated on your behalf. Consider this example.

You're in the middle of a meeting and suddenly, Marilyn's phone rings and she leaves the room to take the call. What does the voice inside *your* head say? Here are a few possibilities: "Seriously? That's so disrespectful!"; "That's Marilyn. Always go, go, go!"; "The boss lets her get away with anything!"; "I hope everything's ok!"; "What a waste of time. Now we'll have to wait until she's back to make a decision."

Fiction. Yes, we know it's fiction because the same set of facts (Marilyn's phone rang, she answered and left the room) leads to multiple interpretations and reactions. This is your brain processing an input (e.g. words, tone, behaviour, thought) and interpreting it using your unique filters (i.e. your values, beliefs, experiences, traits). This interpretation which is completely subjective leads to the emotion. One person finds the behaviour acceptable while someone else finds it rude. Who's right?

…you're having a good day, doing your work and then a co-worker pops by and before you know it… snap!

## Keeping your cool

Self-Management is a pillar of emotional intelligence. Those who excel at managing their emotions focus on what they can control. They make a deliberate choice about how to respond to a person or situation. They separate fact from fiction.

Think of a person or a situation that sets you off and try these steps:

1) <u>Acknowledge:</u> your emotions ("I'm frustrated"), your assumptions ("Marilyn is disrespectful and thinks we should all adjust to her needs) and the facts ("phone rang, she took the call and left the room")
2) <u>Reframe the story:</u> come up with at least three possible reasons why the other person did what they did ("tight deadline", "CEO was calling", "personal emergency"). Yes, this is still fiction. It's empathetic fiction that helps you stay calm while you…
3) <u>Decide how to proceed:</u> make a conscious choice about how you want to respond to get the best result possible.

Your deliberate response may be the same as your automatic one. The difference is that it is a purposeful response and you are in control. You are distinguishing facts from assumptions and you are adjusting your approach if it's not working.

You can use these steps "in the moment". They are also ideal when preparing to meet someone with whom you have difficulty managing your emotions. By anticipating, reframing and readying yourself, you'll prevent or reduce the reaction and respond more effectively.

*continued …*

# Influence with Emotion

*... concluded*

**Influencing with "appropriate" emotions**

Suppressing and hiding emotions is unnatural and generally quite ineffective. Humans are quite leaky with their emotions. We are also designed to (consciously and unconsciously) quickly pick up on the emotions of others. Influencing effectively requires us to leverage emotions, not dismiss them.

Once you've succeeded at keeping your cool, your emotions become a powerful tool.

- Use them with purpose: Maybe raising your voice is exactly what's needed. Maybe it's not! When you're in control and you decide to show your emotions, you are in a state that enables you to gauge whether you are having the desired impact and if not, change your approach.
- Say it instead of showing it: When letting your emotions show doesn't seem like the best course of action, consider stating what you're feeling (e.g. "Marilyn, I was frustrated in today's meeting when we had to postpone a decision because you left the room"). Notice how this is sticking to the facts? You take ownership of the emotion leaving out judgment and assumptions.

Remember that emotions are there to help you. They provide feedback about how your environment is affecting you. They represent your passions and your humanity. Harness their energy and take control of the story before it takes control of you.

*Luc Beaudry is Principal of Cygnus Training & Consulting and can be reached via email at luc@cygnustraining.com.*

Humans are quite leaky with their emotions.

Philip H. Gennis, LL.B., CIRP

*Trustee, msi Spergel Inc*

Feature

# HR Professionals & Finance: Improving Your Financial IQ

*Step ahead towards the C-Suite*

There are many good reasons for HR professionals to improve their understanding of business finance and the language that financial experts use to convey this information to the rest of us. According to Philip Gennis, commercial insolvency and restructuring specialist with msi Spergel Inc., they include being able to fully participate in all aspects of the business cycle and for HR to take a full seat at the executive table. "There are no good reasons, just excuses, as to why HR professionals would not try and improve their financial IQ," says Gennis.

> … some finance people seem to think that HR doesn't need or want the goods on the money situation.

It isn't easy to break into the financially knowledgeable ranks of an organization because some finance people seem to think that HR doesn't need or want the goods on the money situation. Some even think that HR professionals won't grasp the complications of financial data and others just don't trust them with this information. HR must make the extra effort to learn and improve their financial intelligence.

When your team is ready, there are a number of great resources in print and online that can help. One of the best resources to assist HR professionals is a book by Karen Berman, Joe Knight and John Case called "Financial Intelligence for HR Managers: What You Really Need to Know About the Numbers." This book is written in user-friendly language and tells the HR reader what financial things really matter and which things just aren't that important. That means you can focus on learning the things that you will need at work and can leave the other matters for the real financial experts.

One of the core areas that all HR professionals need to focus on is how to read a balance sheet and understand financial statements. The above-noted book and others will help you do this so when you review your organization's financial statement, you will know how much profit the business is making and the extent of its liabilities and expenses. This will allow you to strategically plan any necessary workforce adjustments and improve your ability to plan your own work in collaboration and partnership with the rest of the organization.

That is the first step to improving your financial literacy and your financial IQ. "If you really want to get better, then you need to dig deeper into the financial tools of the organization," says Philip Gennis. "You can start working on some more important financial elements including profit and loss statements, cash flows and things like working capital and budgeting. You don't need to know in detail how all of these financial reporting vehicles work, but you do need to understand and know how they can and will impact on your organization's human resource practices."

Another area of vital importance to all organizations is how we manage risk. The financial impact of risk management is a crucial concern to organizations and the executives who run them. Some of these risks are directly related to the work of HR- lawsuits by wrongly dismissed employees and talent and skill shortages. Even though the HR risks should probably be managed by the HR team, this work is often handed off to finance managers because HR doesn't have the confidence or ability to deal with them. That's another good reason to improve your financial IQ.

In order to create a level playing field when it comes to financial literacy and intelligence, HR professionals have to move beyond their financial fears and learn to "talk the talk" of the financial experts in the organization. You need to not only know the difference between profit and cash, but

> "… you do need to understand and know how [financial elements] can and will impact on your organization's human resource practices."

*continued …*

Feature

# HR Professionals & Finance:

*... concluded*

understand how your activities like travel and training affect them. You must also talk to the finance department and senior executives using financial language, which is after all the language of business.

Another part of your growth in financial matters is being able to identify when the numbers are too good to be true. If they are, they are likely being manipulated in some way to make them appear better than they really are. This may take some time to master but when you can, you will really get your senior executives' attention.

You will also become a welcome team member at every table of the organization, including the one in the C-suite.

Philip Gennis also says that your path to a higher financial IQ means "that you have to take what you have learned and put it into practice in your own work. You can use your newly acquired financial acumen to analyze the numbers and make better projections about the future. You can also make your own return on investment (ROI) analyses to make a better case for HR programming and to influence better decision-making processes within your own department."

Any HR professional who takes the time and effort to improve their financial intelligence will be rewarded in their own work and recognized widely throughout the organization as someone who knows both the soft and the hard side of the business. So what are you waiting for?

*Members Quarterly*
*Staff Writer*

Teri R. Gentes

*Wellness and Nutrition Consultant*

Ask the Expert

# High Stress, Low Energy and Bad Eating Habits: A Deadly Combo

*Manage stress, nurture energy and increase productivity*

Q: Most of us are overworked and experiencing high levels of stress and low energy levels. What practices and foods would you suggest to help us handle all this?

A: In today's world we are living in what I refer to as chronic chaos. We juggle career demands, family and household responsibilities, community alliances and a need for social connections as well adequate rest and relaxation. Managing stress is a vital component to ensuring great overall health and well-being. Research shows that over 40% of all North Americans suffer from adverse stress-related health disorders and this is related to our leading causes of death including heart disease and cancer. It is also a major contributor to workplace absenteeism and decreased productivity. In order to manage our stress load and nurture our well–being, there are some very basic essentials and 'makes-sense' sustainable lifestyle habits to incorporate which are covered below.

## The Basics for Managing Stress and Nurturing Energy

**Mindful thinking:** Our thoughts create our experience. Consciously witnessing and reprogramming negative or limiting thinking to thoughts congruent with goals and objectives positively impact our neurological and neurovascular systems.

**Better breathing:** Our breath rate has immense impact upon our stress and energy levels. It is essential for us to be mindful of our breathing consciously inhaling long and deeply and exhaling slowly and completely.

**Increased hydration**: Drinking 1 glass of purified water per hour enhances energy levels, brain functioning, clarity, digestion, toxin release and so much more.

**Blood sugar and hormonal stability:** Maintaining balanced blood sugar levels enables the adrenals to function more effectively and assist in stabilizing hormones.

### *Mindful thinking:*

Most of us are oblivious to our negative self-image, our destructive self-talk and sabotaging behaviour. With over 80,000 thoughts per day, approximately 98% are the same thoughts running repeatedly and most of these are negative. This wreaks havoc on both our minds and our bodies. Numerous sages inform us of the power of our thoughts. The law of attraction! Buddha tells us: "We are what we think".

### *Better breathing:*

Improving our breathing habits has been proven to enhance our sleep, reduce stress levels, improve our thinking and boost our energy. There are numerous options available to assist in developing improved breathing techniques. Yoga practice, Qi gong and Energy Medicine are popular choices. Other options include magazine articles, books, CDs and videos teaching proper technique including Apps that regularly remind us to breathe consciously.

### *Increased hydration:*

Staying hydrated with clean filtered water is a familiar concept to most yet practiced by so few. Find a system that works for you such a investing in a high quality environmentally safe bottle, covering it in 6 or 8 elastics and removing one for each bottle drank aiming to get them all off by the day's end. Flavour the water with nouveau options such as rose or orange essence, mint chlorophyll, Angostura bitters or the more familiar flavor boosts from a splash of juice to cucumber, celery or mint. People are often more likely to consume higher amounts of water with a taste they enjoy.

### *Balanced blood sugar and hormonal levels:*

When we live in a constant state of stress, our adrenals become depleted and disrupt our hormonal balance. Chronic stress affects two very important hormones – DHEA and cortisol, two of our most abundant hormones produced by the adrenals.

DHEA is responsible for our cellular health and plays a major role in the production of the adrenal hormones estrogen, progesterone and testosterone. Cortisol well known as our fight, flight or freeze hormone. It has the ability to increase blood glucose levels by assuming control of the body's metabolic systems during high stress scenarios in order to protect us from harm. Living with chronic stress however keeps cortisol levels in overdrive causing excess production. This raises insulin levels, blood pressure, cravings for sugar, fat deposits and brain damage. In addition, it depletes the immune system.

Adding to the challenge, as cortisol levels rise, serotonin (our 'feel good' hormone) plummets typically triggering carbohydrate cravings to reboost the serotonin. Serotonin is formed in the brain from the

continued ...

Ask the Expert

# High Stress, Low Energy and Bad Eating Habits:

*... continued*

amino acid tryptophan after we eat carbohydrates. While some carbohydrate intake is needed for normal serotonin production, high levels of chronic stress typically trigger cravings for starches such as bread, potatoes and sugary foods. This may lead to excessive intake spiking blood sugar levels. The foods that lead to the highest serotonin production (starches and sugars) should be eaten in moderation in order to control hormonal and blood sugar levels as well as body weight and diabetes risk. Stress management is crucial in reducing these carbohydrate cravings.

Maintaining balance of these hormones is an essential component in nurturing our well-being. When balanced, we are healthier physically, mentally and emotionally enabling more peaceful and productive daily living.

Here are some suggestions to assist you in sustaining balance:

- Consume nutrient dense foods ensuring an appropriate amount of protein, quality carbs, essential fatty acids and adequate fibre aligned with your individual health, lifestyle and personal objectives.
- Avoid severe calorically restrictive diets and consumption of nutrient-void processed foods including the numerous packaged low fat/trans fat and artificially sweetened foods.
- Avoid the warrior attitude 'all or nothing' approach to physical training. Choose regular shorter workouts at a challenging level of intensity interspersed with enjoyable recreational activities. While exercise can be beneficial with stress management, an excess can add to the problem.
- Ensure adequate sleep – ideally seven to eight hours that is deep and restorative. Sleep deprivation raises cortisol levels.
- Stay well hydrated with purified water, herbal teas and chlorophyll rich beverages. Avoid caffeine and alcohol or keep it to a minimum.
- Nurture an alkaline state. Stress, poor diet, sleep deprivation, excess external stimulation and sedentary lifestyles are acidifying! Maintaining a slightly alkaline state helps reduce cortisol production.

While we know stress is a reality in our lives, these strategies provide coping skills to better manage the demands of our busy pace. If you still experience a constant state of overwhelm or are plagued with

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**Suzanne Nourse**

*Founder & Director, The Protocol School of Ottawa*


Ask the Expert

# Fundraising in the Workplace: How Much Can You Give?

*Establish the right policy*

**Q:** I may sound cheap, but I'm tired of all the donation requests at work. In the past year I've purchased wrapping paper, magazine subscriptions, chocolate bars and supported every charity and cause imaginable. Am I really obligated to give each time? How do I say no without looking like the office grinch?

**A:** Most of us have our own list of charities that we support annually. Being constantly approached to support numerous charities and events can be stressful. These are worthy causes and many choose to support them. This should really be a personal choice, not an obligation or contribution out of fear of alienating colleagues.

Some organizations have reached their limit with employee solicitations and HR has initiated a policy forbidding all such requests. I think that this is a bit severe, but some feel this is justified because their employees have been overwhelmed with requests and made to feel uncomfortable if they decline.

My preferred method is for HR to promote a post-it-in-the-lunchroom or employee bulletin board only policy. That means that NO going from desk to desk asking to support any organization or charity. Employees see the notice on the board and give willingly without embarrassment, guilt or resentment.

If your employer is unwilling to support either of these policies, then you must deal directly with the request. A polite "No thank you" when you don't wish or are unable to give is sufficient. No other explanation is required. I emphasize being friendly and polite – no eye rolling or "here we go again" sighs.

Many of us are solicited for donations by our neighbours, friends and family too. If you've already been approached for the same charity drive and have donated, you can just say so. Otherwise, the same polite "No thank you" should work. The people who know us can try to push all the buttons to get a donation, but it's not the tactic to use.

One of the advantages of raising funds for charity events now is the option of making your donation online without having your donation broadcasted. I was recently invited to an in-home high end jewellery sale with proceeds going to help fight cancer. What truly impressed me is that the hosts provided a link to the Cancer Society website as an alternative to attending the sale or feeling obligated to purchase an item on site. Even though I personally support the Cancer Society on my own, I still made an extra donation online on the host's personal page.

Don't feel guilty if you must refuse a co-worker's charitable request. You aren't the only one. We also need to keep these points in mind when canvassing for own beloved charities. Realistically, we can't donate to everyone and everything. In the meantime, put me down for two boxes of chocolate mint cookies.


*Suzanne Nourse is Founder & Director of The Protocol School of Ottawa and co-author of "The Power of Civility". She can be reached via email at snourse@etiquetteottawa.com.*


> A polite "No thank you" when you don't wish or are unable to give is sufficient. No other explanation is required.

# Motivating Employees Won't Break Your Budget

*Keep your employees motivated and happy*

Napoleon Bonaparte once said that "There are two levers for moving men -- interest and fear," but modern managers and supervisors have learned that there are many other ways to motivate their employees. Here are ten more ways to motivate.

### Understand what motivates your employees

Every employee has their own motivation, something that drives them towards success. Your job as a manager or supervisor is to find that out. Some employers have employees check off their own motivators from a list. Others do it the old fashioned way, by meeting and getting to know each of your team members. Once you know what they think motivates them, you can tailor your motivational techniques to meet their needs.

### Rewards matter

We can all say that money isn't everything. and material things don't matter, but people still like rewards of all kinds and can be motivated to achieve them. Why are affinity programs so popular? It's because they hold the promise of rewards in the future. So to the extent you can, based on your budget and organizational culture, reward early and often.

### Align your goals with their goals

One of the mistakes that many organizations make is that they leave the workers out of the strategic planning process. When this happens, it usually ends up that the organizational goals are miles apart from the day to day lives and ambitions of the ordinary employees. The way to remedy this is to bring more workers into the planning process at the start and allow them to help shape the organizational goals for the future. They have a much better chance of being achieved if everyone in the organization believes that are worthwhile.

### Create a positive work environment

There are many factors that are completely out of the hands of the manager or supervisor when it comes to motivating employees, but the working environment is not one of them. A workplace that is pleasant to come into where employees are treated with respect and feel worthwhile is not just a happy workplace, it is a productive one. It is up to managers and supervisors to create and maintain a working space that can allow and encourage employees to reach their potential.

### Celebrate success

The speed of the modern workplace and the demands on all of us often cause us to skip over the many minor successes that happen daily. It may not seem like a big deal to finally figure out how the latest software can actually work or to get the latest issue of the catalogue out the door on schedule. However, unless we stop to celebrate these small victories, our staff may become complacent and demoralized. A pat on the back on the way home might be enough to keep at least one employee motivated. Don't be surprised if they share this with others.

### Training can also motivate

Many of us think of training only when we bring new employees into the workplace. What about the people who have been here for years? Employees often see training as a benefit, particularly when it is not directly related to their day to day duties. Lunch time seminars and workshops allow them to learn new skills to help them grow and also feel appreciated and happier at work.

### Have some fun

Work is serious business, right? Work should be serious but that doesn't mean that you can't have some fun as well. Everyone loves pizza lunches or an extra snack in the morning. It doesn't have to be a lot but small acts of frivolity have a way of lightening the mood and sometimes even the pressure in a busy office. You don't have to go crazy, but having a little fun can go a long way to improving employee morale and motivating employees.

### Coaching and mentoring

Many organizations now use coaches or mentors to help senior level executives reach their potential. Many others use these methods to groom their best and brightest to move into the executive suite. But what about using coaching or mentoring for other staff as well? It may not cost too much to bring in a professional coach for one day a week to work with your teams. There are probably plenty of possible mentors in your organization already. As with training, this is a tangible investment in people that can help to motivate them to be better.

### Follow through

There is nothing more demoralizing to an employee than promising something and not delivering it. It causes them to question your intentions, motives and even your integrity. Just as word of your good deeds get around, your lapses travel even faster. Your word is your

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Ask the Expert

# High Stress, Low Energy and Bad Eating Habits:

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lingering health issues, consult with a professional health care provider for diet and lifestyle support. We are intended to thrive and joyfully embrace our lives with vibrant health. Be sure to reach out for additional resources if you need them- you'll be amazed with the results!

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Research shows that over 40% of all North Americans suffer from adverse stress-related health disorders and this is related to our leading causes of death including heart disease and cancer.

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bond with your staff. If you want both their trust and commitment to go that extra mile when things are tough, stick to your commitments. If you follow through, your employees will know it and appreciate it as well.

***Motivate yourself***

If you are just dragging yourself around the office or if you are moaning about how good things were at the last place you worked, don't be surprised if your employees are not too motivated to follow your directions. Enthusiasm and motivation are contagious. When it comes to motivation, you are the head cheerleader. So you better figure out quickly what motivates you before you try to motivate others. This may start with taking care of yourself and little things like getting enough sleep. Practicing self-improvement or even working on some of your more glaring weaknesses will also help. It is up to you to model motivation for the rest of the team. If they see a balanced and fairly happy leader at the helm, they will be more likely to row a little harder when the water gets choppy.

*Members Quarterly Staff Writer*

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