

People Focus

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Editor's Message

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Aurora Executive Solutions

Those of us who are engaged in work are fortunate, regardless of whether you're an employee, a business owner or self-employed. We are all enthusiastic about work because it supports our lifestyle; some of us are even very passionate about the work we do. Often we work too hard, the stress builds up; we become less motivated and we lose sight of the important things in our lives.

In this issue of the **People Focus** newsletter, we share our thoughts about achieving peak performance at the workplace whilst taking care of ourselves to achieve the right amount of work-life balance.

If you think that this newsletter would be beneficial to your friends, colleagues or family members, please feel free to forward it to them. Thank you.

The **People Focus** newsletter delivers informative articles and resources to organisations to help improve workplace performance and to individuals to develop their personal effectiveness in their career and life goals.

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5 Steps To Make The Rest Of 2005 Extraordinary

Simply by paying positive attention to what you want all kinds of things can just fall into place, but there's nothing like quite doing something about what you want!

So here we are in July. Where did the first half of the year go? It only seems a couple of weeks ago that I was drinking festive egg-nog, wearing my Christmas sweater and humming 'Sleigh Ride' too loudly in line at the supermarket.

It's kinda scary to think that there's just six months of 2005 left to run, and we've already had the longest day of the year which means that the nights are starting to draw in (I'm not trying to get you down, honest!). So how's the first half of the year gone for you? Was it what you expected?

Most importantly, what do you want the next six months to be about? To help you get clear on the rest of your year, here's what I want you to do:

1. Take a moment to think about the last six months - January to June. Think about everything you've done, the opportunities that came along, the tough times and the fun times, and think about where you are now having gone through the last six months.

Give the first half of 2005 a rating from 1 to 10 - it could be a big-grin scale, a temperature scale or a fulfillment scale. How would you rate your 2005 so far?

2. Now go forwards in time six months, and imagine yourself on a crisp December morning (or warm if you're somewhere hot!). You've put effort into moving things forwards and it's worked - things have progressed in some important ways and you're seeing results and reaping the rewards. Using the same scale as before, what rating do you want to give to July to December? What rating represents how you want to feel about the next six months?

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3. Imagine that it's still that December morning. You wake up, your eyes flicker open and things are different. Things have moved on, you have more of something and things have changed for the better. What one thing would make the biggest difference to you? What do you want things to look like or feel like on that December morning? Be as specific as you can be (close your eyes if it helps) and write down what comes out for you. Maybe it's building your confidence or boosting your self-esteem, maybe it's finding a new partner or improving your relationship, or maybe it's finding work you can love or feeling more fulfilled in the work you already do. Whatever it is for you, have fun thinking about what will be different when you have it.

4. Don't stop there - create another two things that would be amazing to have, do or be on that same December morning. What's bugging you right now that you'd like to change? What would make a huge or powerful difference to you? Again, be as specific as you can be about what you want to have, do or be on that December morning and write down your ideas.

5. You've just created three goals that you can achieve within the next six months. Keep them somewhere close to you and be sure to pay positive attention to those things as often as you can. Feel good about them and imagine yourself there with all three in place - pretty darn good, right?!

Simply by paying positive attention to what you want all kinds of things can just fall into place, but there's nothing like quite doing something about what you want! Be excited about the rest of the year because it truly can be extraordinary - you just have to make it extraordinary and allow it to be extraordinary. Yep, we're half way through 2005 already - but the best can still be to come.

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Organise Yourself For Success

Organizing your office and work life helps you fulfill your own potential and that of your company.

The person on the phone wants to go over the contract she sent you. This is THE call you've been waiting for! However, looking at your cluttered desk and the bags full of paperwork waiting to be filed, you have no idea where the document might be.

You bluff your way out of the conversation ("Can I call you right back? I was on the other line when you called.") and spend 30 minutes hunting for the paper. When you finally find it, you notice the note reminding you of action you were to have taken on the document last week. Yikes!



This office nightmare comes to life countless times every day by people who miss or ignore the direct connection between organization and success. It's not just that organization allows you to move more easily around the office. Organizing your office and work life helps you fulfill your own potential and that of your company.

"Organizing is the process by which we create environments that enable us to live, work and relax exactly as we want to," writes Julie Morgenstern, in her book, ***Organizing from the Inside Out***. "When we are organized, our homes, offices and schedules reflect and encourage who we are, what we want and where we are going."

For most people, the three biggest obstacles to an organized office and work life are: clutter (paper and email), planning and follow-through, the latter two being more an issue of time management. And while a disorganized office can be much like a disorganized schedule - overly packed, haphazard, limited in space or hours - it makes sense to organize space and paper first. Below are some tips for tackling office clutter.

If you're starting from scratch - organizing the entire office and creating a new system - Morgenstern advises to first analyze the situation, taking an overall look at space, furnishings, equipment, supplies and types of paperwork. Ask yourself five questions:

1. What's working? It's helpful to know what's not "broken" so that you don't spend time fixing it. Also, a little "good news" is nice to hear.

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2. What's not working? Take a big picture approach here. It takes forever to get things done, because I can't easily find what I need, so I work a lot of overtime.

3. What items are most essential to you? What do you need to have at hand? What papers represent the crux of your business?

4. Why do you want to get organized? These are the benefits you will derive from an organized office/desk. Less anxiety, more energy for work, more room for work.

5. What's causing the problems? Some of the most common sources of office clutter: inconvenient or insufficient storage, no designated "home" for things, perception of not enough time to get or stay organized.

The Manager As A Coach

When acting as a coach, the manager has to remember that coaching should be a continuous process.

In an effort to attract and retain talent, companies are employing new approaches to managing their employees. More and more we see a shift towards offering employees the opportunity to achieve professional growth through self-awareness, clear and detailed career plans and a coaching management style approach.



When acting as a coach, the manager has to remember that coaching should be a continuous process. As such he/she should avoid employing it solely for dealing with an acute problem. While coaching can deal with the odd issue such as: absenteeism, low productivity, etc, managers should use coaching as part of their talent management activities.

All managers who successfully use coaching as a management style base their actions on a few principles/beliefs:

Know your employee. The more you know your employee the easier it will be to help them on the path to self-

awareness. Knowing their strengths and weaknesses will pave the way to better development planning increased performance on the job, job satisfaction and recognition. All these translate into a happier and more loyal employee.

Listen. The managers successful in employing a coaching management style have great listening skills. It is more important to listen and understand the other person than it is to think of immediate solutions. These managers listen to what it is said and also to what is left out. Sometimes discovering what is not put into words holds the key to a successful coaching session.

Ensure commitment. Both parties (manager and employee) have to be fully committed to the process. Lack of commitment on either side will result in failure. The International Coach Academy has introduced the term UAC which stands for Underlying Automatic Commitments. According to this principle people are always committed to something whether it is something beneficial or not, whether on a conscious or unconscious level. Therefore our experiences are based on what we are committed to at the time and on our core individual commitments. Developing and ensuring commitment to the coaching process will result in a successful coaching process.

Offer structure. A successful coaching program needs a cohesive structure. Building appropriate structures is sometimes half of the work offering the work frame for the process, ease of results monitoring and clear parameters to work with.

Inspire trust. A coaching relationship cannot exist without trust. The employee should feel supported, enthused and safe in his/her coaching relationship. There are no shortcuts for this. Lack of trust will lead to lack of communication, lack of commitment and ultimately failure.

Don't judge. A good coach is non-judgmental. The manager as a coach should avoid judging. A safe and supportive coaching environment cannot be built on judgments.

Give feedback. Feedback should be neither positive nor negative but simply state facts. While you would be happy to have your client read positive feedback in your praise you do not want to imply criticism when the feedback can be seen as negative. Stick to the facts and they will send the right message.

Follow-up. Following up on results reinforces commitment and creates the right environment for continuous improvement. There are no substitutes to a consistent and structured follow-up. Be fair, be consistent, be open and supportive in your follow-up and the changes will follow.

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Working The Networking Groups

Networking functions just like those childhood "Connect-a-Dot" pictures. One person leads to another and another and, eventually, a new client, customer or employer is revealed. But with all the networking groups that exist, which ones are best for you? And how can you get the most out of each mixer? The following seven networking tips will help you not only improve business but also make interesting new friends and acquaintances.

- 1. Explore your opportunities.** Joining a variety of networking groups gives you access to the widest range of people. There are generally four types of groups: business networking groups, such as LeTip International; geographic groups, such as your local Chamber of Commerce; service groups, such as Kiwanis; and industry-specific associations. Attend a group at least three times before deciding whether it's for you. Groups don't have to carry the "networking" label to be good opportunities. What about community groups connected with schools, sports, theaters? Where do people in your business' target market gather?
- 2. Farm, don't hunt.** Many approach a mixer with the hope or expectation that they'll make a new client from that event. You'll find more success, however, if you view networking as a long-term process. Get clear on why you're networking. "It's more about farming than it is about hunting," says Dr. Ivan Misner, co-author of *Masters of Networking* and Founder of BNI, a well-known international business networking group. "It's about cultivating relationships with other people."
- 3. Don't forget your networking "accessories."** Of course, always come to a mixer with business cards and a name tag. On the latter, include not only your name but what you do as well. This gives others an easy starting point for conversation.

In addition, make a habit of writing notes on the back of each business card so you can personalize your follow up calls and emails. Handing out your newsletter (if you have one) with a business card attached has a doubling effect.

- 4. Get curious.** First, be genuinely interested in the people you meet. Ask questions that aren't limited to someone's profession. For instance: What is one way you have fun at work? What is something that makes you special or unique in your industry? Such questions open up conversation and encourage connection on a more personal level.
- 5. Have your "elevator speech" down cold.** Have a clear, concise and specific explanation of what you do and how it helps others. What problem (what "pain") do you solve for your target audience? Be able to clearly articulate this without people's eyes glazing over.
- 6. Offer referrals whenever possible.** Often, those who gain the most at networking events are those who give the most. Focus more on what you can give to others than on what you'll get from them. "When I walk into a room, I'm always looking at how I can benefit someone else's life," says Melanie Benson Strick, Director of Shared Vision Network-Los Angeles, a professional and development networking group for entrepreneurs.
- 7. Be scrupulous with your follow up.** Meeting people is just the beginning. It's the follow up that turns connections into relationships. However, the first contact is not the place for a sales pitch. Instead, follow up within 48 hours with material that will help the person, such as a free audio download or a clipped magazine article. "You don't build trust when the first thing you do is ask someone to buy your product and service," Misner says. The key, really, is to court. But with sincerity and a genuine desire to help others. ■

About Us



Lionel L Lim is the founder of Aurora Executive Solutions (AES), a Human Talent Management and Development Solutions firm. He is a US-certified EQ trainer, a career and life coach, a People's Association approved trainer, and a licensed facilitator of the Profiles occupational assessments. Lionel is also an experienced facilitator of the EQ Map, the Emotional Intelligence Style Inventory, DiSC tools and the INSIGHT Inventory.

Lionel is a graduate of the University of South Australia with a BA in Communication and Media Management. He also holds a Diploma in Training and a Certificate in Counselling Skills. Lionel has a varied experience in executive search, communication, leadership, training, coaching and mentoring, as well as the effective management of teams in both local and overseas assignments.

Lionel is a professional member of the Asian Association of Career Management Professionals, the Six Seconds Emotional Intelligence Network, the Career Planning and Adult Development Network, the National Resume Writers' Association and the International Association of Coaches.

Our Programmes

- Hiring, Executive Selection & 360 Feedback Tools
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