

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARIES

## Keeping Work and Life in Balance

Vicki Powers

Flexibility isn't merely a working mother's issue; everyone has need for flexibility in the workplace. Fortunately, many large and small organizations have adopted innovative programs that encourage employees to better balance their workdays with their home and family life.

Lancaster Laboratories, for example, opened an on-site child-care facility in 1986 and the Adult Day Care Center in 1991. The centers demonstrate the character of the company and make people want to work there. Turnover is 8 percent company-wide.

Ernst & Young, aware of the correlation between an increased number of women in senior leadership and bigger profits, created the Center for the New Workforce to address the challenges involved in retaining and advancing women.

Dedication to work-life balance for both its female and male employees has won these companies recognition from *Working Mothers* and *Fortune*.

*For complete text, see page 32.*

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## The Need for Reflection

Aviv Shahar

The increasing importance of reflection was exalted recently by Henry Mintzberg at the 2004 ASTD International Conference & Exposition. Why this resurgence? Because the 24/7 lifestyle that so many professionals live is draining and stifling. Professionals need to slow down and reflect on their lives and organizations to better serve themselves and their employees in the future.

Shahar explores the life circumstances that necessitate the need for executives to attend leadership retreats and unveils some of the unconventional activities that happen on those retreats.

For example, Shahar outlines an activity called "Life-Centering Moments," in which retreaters explore how a significant moment in their lives helped to sculpt one of their core values. Another exercise introduces a five-step coaching practice to guide participants as they hone their coaching skills. A third activity instructs retreaters to create a list of people with whom they've had significant interaction and reflect on how those relationships have taught lessons in life.

Ultimately, the return-on-investment for leadership retreats, besides a soothing lemongrass foot soak, is that it helps leaders learn how to unleash their employees' potential, and how to act as a catalyst for success.

*For complete text, see page 36.*

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## Performance Improvement Through Relationship Building

Stephen L. Cohen

What is the simplest way to improve organizational performance? Build better relationships between people. Yet, organizations aren't able to keep their employees satisfied because the relationships between the entities aren't strong enough.

What leaders must remember is that there are three relationships that they have to develop. Those relationships grow by an understanding of mutual interests and needs, and must be linked to business results.

**Organization to customer.** The organization strengthens the connection with its customers through learning solutions and performance improvement technology so that the organization meets customers' needs.

**Customer to employee.** Train to strengthen this relationship by providing a learning experience for employees that focuses not only on features, benefits, and processes, but also on the "What's in it for me?" factor.

**Employee to organization.** This connection is fortified by formal training, such as creating a performance management system tied to leadership dimensions.

Ultimately, organizations need to recognize, reward, and measure success effectively, while extinguishing behaviors leading to repeated failure.

*For complete text, see page 41.*

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## Consulting Today

Richard Koonce

The needs of the organizations HRD professionals serve grow more demanding every day; thus, those professionals assume roles that are increasingly complex and consultative. So, what can you do to ensure a more strategic role in your organization?

- 1 Recognize that being a well-rounded HRD professional means you must be comfortable playing the roles of trainer, facilitator, coach, and consultant.
- 1 Develop an in-depth knowledge of your company's core business, and use that to promote your credibility to upper management.
- 1 Ensure a place for training at the leadership table by not only learning the functional elements of your company's business, but also by partnering with top management.
- 1 Develop deep understanding of the internal "system dynamics" at work in your organization.
- 1 Become a resource to the company's top leaders on talent development, recruitment, enterprise learning, and other intellectual capital issues critical to future organizational health and competitiveness.

But that's not all. Perhaps even more important, be human. Push back with clients when you think they're wrong; display your vulnerability and your occasional ignorance. Such behavior conveys your passion, intensity, honesty, and humor for your professional work.

*For complete text, see page 48.*

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