

formerly Training & Development Journal

Published by
The American Society for Training and Development
1640 King Street, Box 1443, Alexandria, VA 22313-2043

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Training & Development, vol. 46, no.10
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Voice Mail

Beating Stress

Job stress has reached critical proportions in the workforce, according to a survey by Northwestern National Life Insurance. The following letters and voice-mail messages are in response to TUWYT (June 1992), in which we asked readers to share their stress-management techniques.

As an HRD practitioner, the major cause of my job stress is people. The following list identifies some of these people, but the list is by no means exhaustive:

- ▶ People who refer to themselves as or who are identified as "movers and shakers." They should be avoided. Fortunately, they're easy to spot; they usually drive Volvos.
- ▶ People who try to make themselves look good by making others look bad.
- ▶ People who take themselves and their positions so-o-o seriously. The way they walk makes them look as if their underwear is hiking up.
- ▶ People who, when you mention your quality program, say, "It's not a program; it's a process."

I feel better already. Now, here are a few techniques that may help others relieve stress.

Larry's List for Laid-Back Livin':

- ▶ Be in touch with the cycles of the moon. Simply step outside to see whether the moon is waxing or waning. Take along a friend and refreshments.
- ▶ Next time you're at a grocery store, buy a discounted—but still living—houseplant to take home and nurture.
- ▶ Laugh every day. Listen to comedy tapes in your car or rent funny movies.
- ▶ Reduce the noise levels in your home and office. Leave your radio at home on low, so that soothing music

greet you when you return at the end of a hard day's work.

▶ Send a note card to at least one person every week. The person can be a loved one, a customer, or even your hairdresser.

▶ Make a list of suggestions on how others can be more relaxed. Then follow the advice yourself.

— **Larry Sanders**
Johnson & Johnson
Arlington, Texas

We each define stress differently. But, generally, stress occurs when we try to change the things we don't like. We need to be aware of our circumstances and be prepared to take action. But we can't control everything that happens. We have to accept situations that are beyond our control.

I deal with stress by exercising daily. Exercise helps keep my mind clear and my outlook positive. I do floor exercises before work and take a brisk, 30-minute walk during my lunch hour or after dinner. Also, I recommend cutting down on caffeine. These are lifestyle changes you can make without spending a lot of money to join a fitness club, an expense that might cause stress.

Above all, trust yourself to make the right decisions. If you need help, ask for it. Your well-being is your most important asset.

— **Carrie Gathers**
Erie Insurance Group
Erie, Pennsylvania

Editor's note: In addition to the responses printed above, *T&D* has received the following stress-reduction tips via the "Voice Mail" phone line.

An editor/musician tells us that his solution to stress is sex. Or did he say "sax"?

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Voice Mail

Another caller suggests reading children's books, especially out loud. She says it's impossible to remain stressed while reading, "I do not like green eggs and ham!" The caller also says that she and co-workers used to set loose wind-up toys at meetings. "That was always good for a laugh."

Other suggestions from "Voice Mail" callers are to take a day off to stay home and watch "Gone With the Wind" on the VCR, or to take an afternoon off and go out for a cocktail or two.

It's Unanimous

In the March 1992 TUWYT, we asked whether the federal government should establish a regulatory board to oversee technical performance. Well, several readers actually scoffed at our notion (see the August "Voice Mail"). The following letter is no exception.

Quality is determined by the ultimate user of a product or service. Therefore, quality standards may differ radically from business to business and from industry to industry. Government control or one-size-fits-all standards wouldn't be appropriate. Quality must reside with individual organizations. The ones that recognize and understand the importance of quality will establish their own standards. The ones who don't won't be competitive and won't be around.

Organizations need to shift from a paradigm of arrogance that says, "We

know what you want and need." They need to pay more attention to what customers really want and need. Then quality will automatically result and the position of the United States in the global marketplace will be more solid.

Government intervention isn't the answer.

— Donald Yeomans
Fluor Daniel
Greenville, South Carolina

Correction

In the August issue's "Beyond Hierarchy" section, Geary Rummmler's address was printed incorrectly in "Managing the White Space: The Work of Geary Rummmler." The correct address is 50 Mount Bethel Road, Box 4337, Warren, NJ 07059-4337. Rummmler, who is a principal with the Rummmler-Brache Group, can be reached at 908/757-5700.

"Voice Mail" is compiled and edited by Haidee Allerton. "Voice Mail" welcomes your views. Send your letters and comments to "Voice Mail," Training & Development, 1640 King Street, Box 1443, Alexandria, VA 22313-2043; fax them to Allerton at 703/683-9203; or call them in on the "Voice Mail" line, 703/683-9590.

Tell Us What You Think

You're on your way to deliver a training workshop. What's your biggest concern? Your materials? Your audiovisuals? Maybe it's this: "What should I wear?"

What should you wear? If it's going to be an all-day workshop with a lot of activity, should you opt for whatever's comfortable? Or should you "dress up" no matter what? Should you dress conservatively to promote a professional image, or should you jazz it up a little to get your audience's attention? Should you vary your attire

according to the organizational level of your audience?

Please share your fashion dos and don'ts for presenters. And we'd appreciate it if you'd throw in a few tips on dressing for interviews. Thank you.

To respond, call the "Voice Mail" line at 703/683-9590. You can also reply by letter to "Voice Mail," Training & Development, 1640 King Street, Box 1443, Alexandria, VA 22313-2043; or fax your response to Haidee Allerton at 703/683-9203.