

Administrative Solutions

October 2007

Volume 7 Issue 10



ARI ADMIN

Specialists in the Placement of Administrative Professionals

Fueling Personal Accountability

Maximize Results through Motivated People

A major responsibility of leaders in organizations has always been to develop plans and lead their people in successful execution. Today's business environment presents additional challenges to leaders in that change happens faster and more continuously than ever before! This means an increased need for effective and frequent planning, and a smaller margin of error for plans that fail to produce results. We all realize this is a given in today's business environment.

In addition, have you noticed that the people who make your plans work have also changed? For example, their interpretation of "following the leader" has taken a new direction. In our workplace today, dictatorial leadership and micro-management are being shunned by people who view multiple career moves as a normal part of working life. People now produce results for leaders who recognize and value their talents.

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Are You Obsessed With Time?

Are You Obsessed With Time Or A Lack Of It?

The world today seems to be obsessed by time – and the ubiquitous perception that there is not enough of it. There are prepared meals in the supermarkets and drive-through pharmacies. There is article after article on time management and news segments that boast to give us the latest and greatest time saving tips on just about everything.

But rather than looking at tasks and activities as time consuming, we should instead study what we are doing and analyze what our time consumption has actually yielded.

The other day I was walking the shoreline with my niece searching for coveted beach glass. As these pieces are difficult to find, each becomes a special treasure. As we were well into our search, my niece found a very small piece and said "Auntie Al, this piece is too small to keep." I thought about what she said and replied, "But it still fills the vase, Courtney."

And when I thought about it a little more, I found that I actually had my time management piece for this month's newsletter. In recently researching for this article, I was referred to the Steven Covey book, First Things First in which he tells the story of the Pickle Jar. In brief, there was a speaker at a seminar who brought out a large jar and enough large rocks to fill it.

When he asked the rest of the attendees if there was enough room in the jar for anything else, they said they didn't think so. As the demonstration went on, he was able to add gravel, sand and water to the jar and "fill up" the spaces made by those large rocks in the jar. This is a very creative lesson that we all can learn from.

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More and more people accomplish their jobs through networked teams, creative collaboration, flexible work arrangements, outsourcing contracts, and a “*results only*” focus – all of which emphasize the prized talent of personal accountability. Achieving success in our modern work environment now depends largely on your people being personally responsible for results.

What can you do, as a leader, to fuel personal accountability in your organization? The answers may be easier than you anticipate.



1. **Hire people to work for you who already have demonstrated a high level of personal accountability.** You can achieve this through a combination of effective talent assessments, reference checking, and behavioral interviewing.
2. **Become aware of the additional, unique personal strengths and talents your key people bring to their work.** Get to know each of them and what they do well, which is the best indicator of what they will most naturally be personally accountable for achieving.
3. **Regularly seek input, suggestions and commitment from each of your key people to create and support the success of your organization’s plans.** People who play a role in formulating a plan are more committed to personal accountability in achieving the targeted results.
4. **Give feedback, recognition and rewards to people for demonstrating personal accountability in support of your organization’s success.** People who are duly recognized for their contributions feel increased motivation to achieve further success.

Make a concerted effort to maximize and reward the level of personal accountability in your organization starting today – and achieve increased success through people!

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In motivating people, you’ve got to engage their minds and their hearts. I motivate people, I hope, by example – and perhaps by excitement, by having productive ideas to make others feel involved.

– Rupert Murdoch

Investing In Others As A Mentor

Are you ready, willing and able to mentor others? Are you emotionally and psychologically prepared to invest time and effort in helping another person? Do you have the time, skills and freedom to devote yourself to another person? If you answered “yes” to one or more of these questions, and you are ready to make a commitment, you may be ready to begin mentoring others.

To mentor is to change a life, if only in small ways. It can be applied to a variety of people, situations and purposes. Mentoring can range from an impromptu, off-the-cuff intervention, to an intense long-term relationship.

More and more businesses and government organizations use mentoring as a tool for organizational growth and development, not just for career development. Mentoring is quickly becoming a valuable tool in preparing an organization for competitive challenges and succession planning. However, be aware that taking on a formal mentoring assignment may mean occasional inconveniences and less time for other duties. And, mentoring that causes you significant stress or loss in other areas of your life, should be weighed carefully before you make a commitment. Yet, if you are ready, the personal satisfaction may be well worth your time and effort.

Mentoring is a brain to pick, an ear to listen, and a push in the right direction.

— John C. Crosby

If you have never been a mentor before but feel you are in a unique position and ready to become one, seek out people and resources to help you prepare for your new role. As a mentor, you should be adding value to a person, enriching their quality of life and, expanding their life purpose and capabilities. As a mentor, you need to believe in the value of your work without worrying about returned favors. If you have, or can develop, a freely giving nature, you will likely mentor all through your life – probably without thinking much about it.

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We too can fill up our jars – or in my case – my beach glass vase – with those tasks we may find challenging but have merit. The trick is to find the meaning and the merit in each and everything we do and to specifically allot designated time frames for the large tasks and the tedious chores.

The following are thoughts to keep in mind when formulating your own customized time management plan:

Establish what your main priorities are and do them well. Instead of filling up your day with tasks that are not a priority, concentrate your time on activities that have the highest payoff (or as Steven Covey would say ... figure out what the Big Rocks are). If you find yourself spending time on things that are not important and rush through an important aspect of your job, you will not be successful and worse, you may never feel the personal satisfaction of a job well done!



Eliminate procrastination. Have you ever found yourself procrastinating on a top priority task because you thought it was the toughest task to complete? Many employees today stay busy with unimportant tasks and save the most important work for the end of the day when they are physically and mentally exhausted. Consider working on tasks that will yield the greatest results early in your day and then focus your energy on the less important activities. Completing important tasks first is an energy giver and will help you maintain your momentum and feel positive about your work for the rest of the day.

Set aside planning time. Learn how to discipline yourself to spend 15-20 minutes a day (uninterrupted) to focus on planning and prioritizing. Carefully investigate what needs to be done, what can be eliminated and who can help you. Consider using a time or project management tool. It eliminates the “*flying-by-the-seat-of-your-pants*” mentality and also gives you a focus point when and if you do get interrupted.

Look for ways to limit interruptions. Who and what interrupts you the most? Once you have exposed your interrupters, look for ways to bundle your time and energy with them. For example, once a week meet your boss, peers or teammates and discuss important events and activities that are coming up. Take care of any necessary questions or concerns (at one sitting) rather than interrupting each other all day or all week long.

If we re-think our thoughts and current perceptions on time and how our time is spent, we will find that we actually do have time to focus our energy on the important things in life!

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Time is the coin of your life. It is the only coin you have, and only you can determine how it will be spent. Be careful lest you let other people spend it for you.

– Carl Sandberg



ONE MINUTE IDEAS

Reduce Back and Neck Strain

If you ever get a sore back and/or neck while working on the computer, try these helpful tips.

1. Position the monitor at a comfortable level, recommended at a height where the top of the monitor is even with your forehead.
2. Sit in a comfortable, relaxed, and good posture position to help reduce strain.
3. Finally, take breaks often. Get up, walk around, get a drink, and stretch.

The 10-Minute E-Mail Rule

If it takes longer than 10 minutes to compose your e-mail message, it is probably too long. Try to condense it and still get your message across. If you can't, you're wasting your time with the e-mail communication. Try calling, having a meeting, or writing a memo. You will save yourself and everyone else valuable time.

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Administrative Professionals”*

Is There A Secret To Success?

Have you truly defined success? Is it your own definition – or what the “world” expects of you? Successful people set their own goals *considering* what others say but *deciding* on what they want to do with their lives. Another common difference between “successful” and unsuccessful people is that unsuccessful people prioritize their schedules and successful people schedule their priorities. Of course, the “secret” lies in truly knowing your priorities. Better yet, the secret is being *clear* about your priorities – where you are now, what you deeply desire to have, do and become.



What is of greatest importance to you right now? Every moment you spend trying to remember what is important can cost you time, money and emotional energy. So successful people clarify what success looks like, feels like, and sounds like in their own terms. Their priorities are stabilized by balance among them and purified by strong beliefs that support them. They make decisions and act daily based on their own predetermined goals, which creates direction and ultimately a unique sense of purpose. Clarity leads to commitment, and commitment leads to satisfaction, peace of mind, creativity, pleasure, powerful relationships, wealth...or however you want to define your own success. You exist to serve. The secret to success begins with getting clear on who and how you serve.

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Administrative Solutions

A publication of ARI Admin
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