

Management Ideas



FOR STILL BETTER

RESULTS

RELATIONS

REPUTATION

a monthly newsletter to key executive-leaders
on practices, possibilities and ideas generally
for stepped up performance

edited by

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3301 TELECONFERENCE: The teleconference is rapidly becoming a preferred business meeting method because of its convenience, immediacy and cost effectiveness.

A teleconference enables a company to complete an entire meeting -- with participants located around the country -- for less than the cost of one airline ticket. According to a recent study conducted by Darome Teleconferencing, an international company, the total cost for the average teleconferencing meeting -- ten participants convening for 50 minutes -- is \$170. Compare this to the total cost of airline tickets, accommodation, meals -- not to mention valuable time lost -- and everyone comes out ahead.

Joan L. Milne of the Canadian Institute of Management has the following tips to offer:

Successful phone business conferences do require advanced planning and basic meeting etiquette. Meeting moderators need to modify some of the basic procedures used at a traditional meeting and learn some new tricks on managing a session by phone. Some guidelines include:

- * Identify the subject of the meeting in one sentence.
- * Pinpoint meeting objectives. What do you want to accomplish?
- * Develop an agenda. Limit the meeting to three or four items. Set a time limit for each item.

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- * Make the conference call reservation.
- * Determine equipment needs, will an ordinary phone suffice? If meetings last longer than half an hour a hands-free, amplified unit is best for comfort. It is important that all participants can be heard, so microphones may be required.
- * Notify participants. Inform them of date, conference call number (if required) name of moderator, subject and agenda, preparation needed and start and end times.
- * Prepare and mail printed materials or any visual supplements.
- * Plan the conference call itself: Arrange for frequent changes in speakers and ample opportunity for dialogue. For example, poll participants for reaction and comment. Or schedule several people to deliver short reports on different aspects of the topic.
- * When conducting the meeting stick closely to the agenda. Keep it, along with a clock, close at hand. Have people who speak spontaneously identify themselves and pause occasionally to allow others to raise questions. Ensure the meeting is free of interruptions.

If you prepare properly, your teleconference will run smoothly and be productive.

3302 COMMITMENT TO QUALITY: Quality improvement has become a major strategic goal in three out of four large companies, according to a recent survey by the American Society for Training and Development. Signs of the growing commitment to quality: 86 percent of the 221 HR executives polled said they're aware of the criteria for the Baldrige Award; over 50 percent have requested the criteria this year; and 43 percent use the criteria to support their quality efforts.

More than six out of ten executives said training is an integral part of the quality effort in their company. The most popular training areas:

- team building (74 percent)
- quality awareness (68 percent)
- customer awareness (61 percent)
- statistical/quantitative measures (52 percent)

3303 CONQUERING CLUTTER: Sooner or later, clutter invades nearly everyone's life. A key to clutter control is to have a place for everything.

To figure out what belongs where, Stephanie Culp (author of How To Conquer Clutter) has the following suggestions:

- * **Organize the clutter in one complete area without stopping.** Set aside a minimum of a half day--or tell yourself you won't stop until "two closets, the bathrooms or the garage" are clutter-free. Important: Avoid distractions.

Example: While cleaning her bedroom closet, Mary found something that belonged in the kitchen. But when she opened the kitchen cupboard she decided it needed to be organized as well--and never made it back to the bedroom closet.

Other distractions: Phone calls (take the phone off the hook)...old magazines, high school yearbooks, college term papers (do not stop to read anything)...errands (put them off until your task is complete).

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*** Set up large cardboard cartons. Recommended:** One each for elsewhere, charity and toss.

Elsewhere. For anything that goes in another room. Do not put away items from this box until the end of the day.

Charity. For useable items you no longer want. Do not put junk (torn clothing, broken toys that cannot be fixed, etc.) in this box--it will only tax the resources of the charity you're trying to help. Put this box into the car immediately and drop it off the next time you go out.

Toss. For the true junk. Suggestion: If you're the type of person who has a problem throwing things away, have another member of the family come by once every hour and empty this box in the trash.

*** Empty the target area of clutter.** Sort it into the three boxes as you go. Anything not sorted into a box should be temporarily put elsewhere--the hall or on top of the bed.

What doesn't go into a box goes back to where it came from--but stored neatly. Hint: Group like items together and keep in "clutter containers."

Examples: Underwear goes in the same drawer with drawer dividers to keep it separated...bobby pins and hair clips are stored in a covered container, etc.

*** Reward yourself for a job well done.** Have a nice dinner out, take in a movie...or spend a quiet evening in your newly clutter-free home.

To help keep your clutter from getting out of control in the future...

*** Take 20 minutes a day to tidy up by putting everything in the right room.** Toys go in the kid's room, papers and magazines go into a reading stack, etc. Later, when you have more time, you can put things away more specifically.

Examples: Toys in the toy chest, last week's unread newspapers in the trash, etc.

Find effective clutter storage containers. Games can be stored in a trunk that doubles as a table on top of which children can play the games.

Make an ongoing effort to get rid of things you never use. Keep a charity box on hand for useable items that you no longer want. The minute the box gets full, put the items in bags and take them to your favorite charity.

3304 FILING A (CONSUMER) COMPLAINT: We are both suppliers and consumers of goods and services. Since the Consumer Protection movement is a reality and 'Buyers Beware' is still the rule, we need to know how to file a complaint with the consumer forums.

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Here are suggestions from consumer affairs columnist Anju Aggarwal:

A statutory form has not been prescribed so far under the Consumer Protection Act. However, they are advised to keep the following ten points in mind while filing their complaint in the District Forum, the State Commission or the National Commission:

- (i) The complaint should have the name and address of the complainant.
- (ii) The name and address of the opposite party.
- (iii) The facts relating to the complaint; how, when and where it arose.
- (iv) Documents, if any, to support your allegations.
- (v) The total value of relief sought. Mention the relief you are seeking. How much is the price of the item? How much is the amount of compensation and how much is the cost of litigation? (Note: Keeping in mind the relief you are seeking, the redressal forum may either have the defect rectified, the item replaced, the price refunded or compensation awarded to the complainant.)
- (vi) One can send one's complaint in Hindi or English. If the complaint pertains to an office in another state, it is better to draft it in English.
- (vii) The complaint should be signed by the complainant. In case someone else has been authorised to complain on your behalf, you should give him a letter authorising him to do so.
- (viii) No post card or inland letter.
- (ix) Send at least four minimum copies of the complaint and documents. The number of copies should be increased, correspondingly, in case there is more than one opposite party.
- (x) A number of complaints should not be bunched together. For each grievance, a separate and self-contained complaint should be filed.

3305 WHEN YOU VISIT THE DISNEY WORLD: It is not everyday that we go to the Disney World. When we do go, we would like to get the best out of the visit ourselves - not merely give others the benefit of our hindsight.

The following tips from Kim Wright Wiley may come handy to the Reader or one of her/his dearest and nearest.

Walt Disney World in Orlando, Florida, is the most frequently visited man-made tourist attraction on the planet. Although it can be overwhelming, a little planning will increase your enjoyment immensely.

Not every ride at Disney World is a winner. To fully enjoy your visit, know what to see, what to avoid and what to see only if you have the time. The park is relatively empty until about 11 a.m. By noon, however, the lines for the best rides are horrendously long.

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Best advice: Arrive early--at least a half hour before the park's opening time--and head straight for the most popular attractions you absolutely want to see. Then spend the afternoon visiting the less-popular attractions that are, nevertheless, high on your priority list.

THE MAGIC KINGDOM

Not to be missed...

Space Mountain. The ultimate roller coaster. The most popular ride in the park. Warning: Too intense for children under seven...and for some adults. Very crowded.

Pirates of the Caribbean. A spooky boat ride through a seaport overrun by pirates. Too menacing for children under four. Moderately crowded.

Parades. The 3 p.m. parade down Main Street stars all the popular Disney characters. Very crowded.

Best for kids under seven...

Peter Pan's Flight. Ride miniature pirate ships through scenes from the movie. Moderately crowded.

It's a Small World. The classic visit to children of many different lands. Moderately crowded.

Dumbo, The Flying Elephant. Passengers control how high the Dumbo ride flies by pressing a button. Fun for kids...but parents may not find the 90-second ride worth the one-hour wait. Very crowded.

Mickey's Starland. A musical stage show that lasts 15 minutes. Have your picture taken backstage with Mickey. Moderately crowded.

Worthwhile--if you're staying two days or more...

Jungle Cruise. A boat ride. But the jungle animals look stiff and fake compared with Disney's newer figures. Moderately crowded.

Haunted Mansion. More funny than scary. It too looks dated. Moderately crowded.

Mad Tea Party. A gussied-up spinning-top ride like those found at any carnival. Still, kids love it. Moderately crowded.

Hall of Presidents. The lifelike figures of US presidents are impressive, although the dry patriotism bores young children. Moderately crowded.

Swiss Family Tree House. The ultimate tree house. Tough for small children to navigate. Not crowded.

3306 EVERY LITTLE COUNTS: Many a little make a muckle, we have all heard. A daily page illustrated-calendar has been brought out by Workman Publishing (New York.) It is called: 365 Ways to Save Your Planet, and has been described as "a year of facts, tips, and inspiration" on environmental welfare.

Here is a sheaf of samples:

"If you're not going to drink it, ask the waiter not to serve water. Discourage his habit of refilling the water glass whether you want more or not. And if possible, use a cup at the water fountain so you won't be pouring it all down the drain.

.....
"Devote plenty of garden space to vegetables. Home-grown carrots and tomatoes don't have to be brought to you, so fuel as combustion are saved; you can produce the food without synthetic pesticides; and finally, leafy plants contribute a bit to global cooling."

.....
"Dust your light bulbs. They'll not only last longer, but will burn 20% more efficiently. (Be sure to remove the shade, turn the lamp off, and wait for the bulb to cool before you dust.)"

.....
Companies that bring out costly calendars can consider this idea-alternative for informing, educating and inspiring the public -- taking any one theme of larger national significance.

3307 LAUGHING MATTER?

A great lawyer was constantly ill and was becoming quite disgusted and frustrated with his declining health. A concerned friend anxiously advised him to rest for a few months, saying, "Then your constitution might be rebuilt."

To this the lawyer barked, "My constitution was destroyed long ago. I am now living under the by-laws!"

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