

CareerSmart Advisor™

Strategies & Solutions for Your Career Success

A Note From Dave

How would you describe your approach to the management of your professional work life? If you're anything like me, you would say that it puts you "under the banner of the happenstance method of career planning." In other words, I have found myself in the position of the world happening to me rather than vice versa.



I was reminded of this when I recently received a copy of Peter Weddle's newest book, *Work Strong: Your Personal Career Fitness System*. I try to get to the gym at least 3 to 4 days a week — something that's been a priority in my life because I feel it's important to my overall well-being.

Unfortunately, bringing the same sense of priority and commitment to my professional life is a different story. The investment I have in what I do for a living should be equally as important as my commitment to being physically fit. I certainly invest more time and emotional energy on my personal goals than I do on the treadmill.

Apparently, Weddle recognizes this too. He knows a lot about physical fitness, and those in the career management and recruiting space will agree that Weddle clearly understands career fitness as well.

If you can relate to physical fitness, you will relate to career fitness. Perhaps we should all make a stronger effort to become more "fit" in all aspects of our lives. It just makes sense that we take charge of our professional success much like we do our own physical shape. Maybe this is what the experts really mean when they talk about striking a solid work/life balance.

Sincerely,

Dave

Dave Opton
ExecuNet Founder & CEO
www.execunet.com/davesblog

After Your First 100 Days

By Marji McClure

Fortunately, executives are increasingly recognizing the connection between onboarding and their career success. Ultimately, their success or failure in a new position will depend on how well they complete their onboarding program and assimilate themselves into the culture and processes of their new organization.

Typically, onboarding processes receive the most attention during the first 100 days of an executive's job, as evidenced by the focus currently being placed on the progress of President Obama during his first few months in office. While most executives won't face the scrutiny that Obama undoubtedly will as he works to translate campaign promises into early wins, most recognize how their first 100 days will define them as a leader and provide the framework for their tenure.

"The first 100 days sets the tone of an executive's leadership and how he or she is going to be received by the rest of the organization, which determines his or her long-term success," says Dilip Saraf, executive, career and life coach at California-based Career Transitions Unlimited.

Yet, because executives want their tenure to last, they need to also forge a strong connection between their first 100 days on the job (which is usually the main focus of onboarding) and their second 100 days. As important as that solid 100-day plan is, an even broader outline for their goals and objectives for their new company is a must.

"Executives must start with the organization's purpose," says George Bradt, managing director of PrimeGenesis and co-author of *Onboarding — How to Get Your New Employees Up to Speed in Half the Time*. "That informs the organization's objectives, the department's objectives and

Onboarding by the Numbers

- 84 percent of executives placed by search firms are not provided onboarding assistance.
- 77 percent of companies do not offer onboarding resources to newly hired or promoted executives.
- 11 percent of newly placed executives don't complete their first year on the job.

Source: ExecuNet's 2008 Executive Job Market Intelligence Report

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Career-Enhancing Programs
February/March 2009
Hosted by Dave Opton,
founder and CEO, ExecuNet

- 2/13 — **FREE PROGRAM FOR MEMBERS** — **Uncover the Hidden Job Market** — Karen Armon
- 2/19 — **Market Your Potential, Not Your Past** — Karen Armon
- 2/20 — **FREE PROGRAM FOR MEMBERS** — **Critical Components of Executive Compensation** — Charles Csizmar
- 3/13 — **FREE PROGRAM FOR MEMBERS** — **Differentiate Yourself as a Level 5 Leader** — Maureen Metcalf

Networking Meetings in Your Area
February/March 2009
Hosted by ExecuNet Facilitators

- 2/17 — **Wilmington** — Rick Hays
- 2/17 — **Houston** — Sharon Anglin
- 2/17 — **Irvine (Orange County)** — Mark James
- 2/17 — **Cleveland** — Rick Taylor
- 2/18 — **Greensboro** — John O'Connor
- 2/18 — **Hartford/New Haven** — Paul Mathews
- 2/18 — **Montreal** — Martin Buckland
- 2/18 — **Charlotte** — Merton Marsh & Michael Hall
- 2/18 — **Chicago** — Melody Camp
- 2/18 — **Portland, OR** — Jean Walker
- 2/19 — **Vienna/Tysons Corner, VA** — Peter McCarthy
- 2/19 — **Indianapolis** — Romona Camarata
- 2/19 — **Minneapolis** — John Wetzel & Barbara Johnson
- 2/19 — **Louisville** — Thom Crimans & Cathy Fyock
- 2/19 — **Pittsburgh/Cranberry Township** — Donna Korenich
- 2/20 — **Parsippany** — Linsey Levine
- 2/23 — **Boston** — Marg Balcom
- 2/23 — **Raleigh/Durham** — Stuart Levine
- 2/24 — **Vienna/Tysons Corner, VA Sr. Executive Roundtable** — Peter McCarthy
- 2/24 — **Seattle** — Susan Stringer
- 2/25 — **Toronto** — Martin Buckland
- 2/25 — **Denver** — Karen Armon
- 2/26 — **Atlanta Sr. Executive Roundtable** — J. Patrick Haly
- 2/26 — **Dallas** — Bob Hueglin
- 2/26 — **Los Angeles** — Eileen Hupp
- 2/26 — **Columbus** — Janine Moon
- 2/27 — **St. Louis** — Ken Coleman & Randy Hove
- 2/27 — **White Plains** — Linsey Levine
- 2/27 — **Detroit Sr. Executive Roundtable** — Marge Larsen
- 3/4 — **New York City** — Judy Rosemarin
- 3/4 — **Philadelphia** — Ed Kelleher
- 3/4 — **Cincinnati** — Jennifer McClure
- 3/4 — **New York City Sr. Executive Roundtable** — Judy Rosemarin
- 3/4 — **Philadelphia Sr. Executive Roundtable** — Mitch Wienick & Ed Kelleher

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From the Forums

Pricing a Consulting Project

ExecuNet's Forum is the online community area where members can meet and help one another network their way into their next assignment or share information and experiences. [Access the Forum under "Make Connections" on the ExecuNet member homepage.] In this excerpt from a recent Forum conversation, the question about how to price a consulting project is raised. [Some content has been edited].

ExecuNet member Mary Jennings:

I'm proposing a project that should save my former full-time employer \$20K or maybe as much as \$30K, if it succeeds. I think it has good odds, but it requires cooperation from some entities that I can't control. So I'm going to ask for about \$3K as a base fee and then a participation in the first year's estimated savings. The company, incidentally, is really frugal and in terrible financial shape. They need the cost savings. What portion of the first year's savings do you think I should ask for, if the project succeeds?

ExecuNet member keeper first: Price the job with and without you receiving benefit from the cost savings and submit both scenarios and have them choose and agree contractually.

ExecuNet member Matthew Kernodle: It may be of value to first state that I have worked in sales and marketing for 27 years and been a business consultant for the past two years, struggling with small businesses for the very reasons you mentioned!

In my experience, it is not unreasonable to craft a contract that includes 20 percent to 50 percent of the savings or profit. This is really a great deal for the client's business as it sounds like it is paid from gains.

I have found it critical to see a written example of how these payments will be calculated beforehand, and get this as part of the contract.

ExecuNet member keeper first: I am going to add to Matthew's suggestions

“

With the measurable milestones laid out in advance, and agreed to, and with a plan of how you are going to get there — you should have them signing up for your services.

”

and pose a couple of questions to you, which may help you craft the document. You estimate a savings of \$20K to \$30K. That's a 50 percent differential. What portion of the \$20K would you consider low-hanging fruit you can get to without too much support from others? Between \$20K and \$30K, what do you anticipate the barriers to success are? What/who would you need to help accomplish the goal? Is the \$3K reasonable given you will have to do some prep work?

Your contract could look something like this: X percent of the first \$10K “when these things are in place and can be verified as working.” Y percent for \$10,001 through \$20K and Z percent for.... With the measurable milestones laid out in advance, and agreed to, and with a plan of how you are going to get there — you should have them signing up for your services. ■

Insider Insight

Twelve Ideas to Reduce Stress and Have More Fun at Work

By Joel Zeff

It's hard to have fun at work during stressful times. Your stress builds after each media report about the recession. You start hearing whispers of a merger, layoff or the all encompassing "restructuring." Your manager doesn't listen. Your customers don't listen. The guy who sells sandwiches in the lobby doesn't listen. Maybe it is just easier to be cranky.

Maybe your sales numbers are down this quarter. Clients are taking longer to make decisions. You start to worry about expenses. What happens next? You walk into your next important meeting a bundle of nerves, feeling tension and worry. Do you really think you are at your best?

It is time to stop worrying and relax. Give yourself a break. Stop letting the media feed your fears with the dreaded "R" word. Even during an "R" people work. Companies manufacture, transport, distribute, sell, market, advertise, produce, grow, research, develop, entertain, build and purchase. We have to figure out a way to do it all without being cranky and stressed. Yes, we need to have more fun.

I sense that many of you have thrown this publication down on the table, rearing back from these words shrieking, "How dare we have fun during a merger/recession/layoff/restructure/something else that takes up time before retirement?" Fun is scary. Fun doesn't work. We are not fun people.

Yes, you can have fun, and in the process, reduce your stress and help create a more productive, innovative and fun work environment. First, we have to create a foundation so that fun can exist. Here are 12 simple ideas to reduce your stress at work and have more fun.

Have Patience

Be patient and positive in your tone of voice. It sounds simple, but a reassuring and patient tone in your voice will do

wonders for teamwork and for helping reduce stress. You will rarely see a stressed, impatient person having fun. Watch people stand in line at the airport. The guy in the suit with three carry-on bags and a phone hooked into his ear is not having fun. The guy in the Hawaiian shirt and hat made from palm reeds is relaxed and having fun. Both men are standing in the same line, but with different attitudes.

Take a Break

Again, a simple idea but something that has very real results. Ever try and assemble something from the store? Ever get frustrated? Ever throw the directions across the room in frustration? Stop, take a break, and then reassess. Just a few moments away will give you the energy to move forward.

Make a Great Day

Think about what makes a great day at work. The next time you have fun at work, take a moment to reflect. Write down what happened that made the day so great. What did you do? What did you say? You now have your "great day" list. You know what you need. Work toward it. Fun is different for everyone. Remember the kid in your high school algebra class who got really excited when he solved a complex math problem? That is fun for him. For me, math is the equivalent of jury duty, going to the dentist and cleaning the garage all in the same day.

Ask for It

Sometimes you have to ask. If something is bothering you and causing stress, then speak up and say something. Most people will just stew or whine in the break room rather than speak up. They don't want to hurt anyone's feelings. Guess what? Someone's feelings are being hurt — your feelings. If you ask nicely, most people would be happy to oblige and help. They

probably don't even know their words or actions are bothering you.

Focus on the Moment

Be in the moment with your co-workers. Working in the moment means being focused and connected. Listen to each other. Make eye contact. Engage in the communication process. Try something new: Put your email-enabled phone down and communicate with a living, breathing person sitting in your office.

Show Appreciation

Tell your co-workers you appreciate them. We all want positive support at work. When we don't receive appreciation and thanks, we are not very happy. You know how you feel when someone says, "You made a difference," or "Great job," or "I really appreciate your help." You get an incredible feeling right in the middle of your chest. Giving that feeling is a gift that doesn't take a budget, plan or approval. It just takes a few seconds from your day.

Create Opportunity

We all want the same things from our jobs: opportunity and positive support. We may want the opportunity to be creative; to be a leader; to help people; or to make more money. When we don't receive opportunity and positive support, we are not very happy. Figure out what kind of opportunity you want from your job. Make sure your employer understands what you need to be happy, and stand up and say something.

Be a Better Listener

Everyone thinks they are good listeners. In reality, we get into bad habits that prevent us from being good, active listeners. We multitask. We play solitaire on our computer during a conference call. Pay attention to your listening skills. When

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their long-term objectives.” With those, executives can then create a two-year plan, a one-year plan, a 100-day plan and a six-month plan, he notes.

“Onboarding never ends,” adds Bradt. “It’s all about the pursuit of mastery. The minute you think you’ve arrived, you’re on the way down. Executives need to keep onboarding until they start onboarding into their next role.”

An Ongoing Onboarding Plan

At the end of the first 100 days of their current role, executives should be nearly ready to implement the change plan they have formulated in their first months on the job, says Saraf. “As they enter their second 100 days, they should be well underway with their changes and getting everyone’s support and cooperation as the change is executed,” he continues.



Executives need to keep onboarding until they start onboarding into their next role.



Executives need to continue learning as much as they can about a company and its stakeholders so they can craft and modify their plan to address pressing organizational issues. They must build upon the fact-finding mission (learning about a company’s goals and objectives as well as its employees’ wants and needs) that usually defines an executive’s first 100 days. “Even after the first 100 days, the new executive should never stop asking questions and learning about the business and the co-workers personally,” says Peter Rosen, president of Atlanta-based HR Strategies & Solutions.

The First 100 Days as a Foundation for Success

Experts agree that an executive’s second 100 days on the job will only be a success if the proper framework is put in place during the first 100 days in a new position. To ensure that leaders accomplish what’s needed during those first few months, Dilip Saraf, a coach with Career Transitions Unlimited, offers this checklist of what should be done during those early days to pave the way for a successful tenure:

- **Orientation:** Your introduction to the organization and who you will be working with and your work environment.
- **Discovery:** Where you uncover what is really going on in the company.
- **Building relationships:** When you discover the real influencers in the organizations and build relationships with them.
- **Managing upwardly expectations:** When you understand what you need to do to make changes, you need to present your vision to the higher-ups in the company.
- **Holding the fort, managing your own team:** Gain the support of your team as you launch your change plan.
- **Developing change strategy:** Use the insights you’ve gained to formulate your change initiative.
- **Socializing change strategy:** Once your plan receives buy-in, launch an internal campaign to communicate the plan.
- **Developing an implementation plan:** Create a plan that includes milestones, roles and requirements (including assumptions) that is approved by management.
- **Communicating plan/milestones:** When the plan is approved, all stakeholders must share the plan to ensure they understand their roles and what to expect.
- **Implementing the change plan:** Officially get to work on that plan.

“Typically, at the end of the first 100 days, executives must have a plan that integrated what their boss had in mind before their arrival and what they have learned during this initial period,” says Saraf. “This plan must include all that can be done in the first year (before the performance review) with timelines, tasks, responsibilities and assumptions.”

Creating a strong action plan and getting buy-in for the components of that plan during the first 100 days certainly sets the tone for an executive’s second 100 days and beyond. Scott Eblin, executive coach and author of *The Next Level*, says that leaders should be able to identify early wins that can be launched during the first 100 days and completed during the second 100 days on the job. “These wins should provide a platform for initiating work on the ‘A’ list priorities that will begin to move the team toward accomplishing the two- to three-year strategic objectives,” says Eblin.

Building Relationships, Securing Buy-In

The success of a plan hinges on how well an executive builds relationships with his team and garners buy-in for

ideas. This framework should begin during the first 100 days and continue through the next 100.

Rosen agrees how a plan should be developed more as “an ongoing fluid roadmap” since things can change too fast for a solid plan for the next 100 days to be put in place. “It’s rare that anyone’s first 100 days go perfectly, so I have found that an effective way to earn trust is to publicly address those issues,” says Rosen. “Determining what they are can be done through personal conversations, formal or informal 360s (depending on the history and culture), boss or mentor’s input. Addressing them becomes a big part of the next 100 days.”

Saraf notes the experience of a recent client hired by a Fortune 100 company. This executive was brought in to help the company change how it conducted its business, yet despite a mandate from the CEO, he encountered resistance from others within the company. So he formed strong relationships with key administrative and support personnel during his first 100 days.

“They started helping him with ‘inside’ information to avoid certain traps

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and forewarning him about those planning to resist his initiatives,” says Saraf. “Pretty soon, he was able to use this knowledge to avoid these traps and start accomplishing what he set out to do. Without this simple and critical relationship, he would have been out of that company in about six months. Once good relationships are built, they can be harvested long-term.”

Yet moving the team toward its goals can provide a great challenge for leaders as they continue their tenure. Linda Dominguez, CEO and executive strategist for Executive Coaching and Resource Network Inc., stresses how you can't actually motivate other people; they have to do that themselves. “But you can, as a leader, create an environment of motivation for others that will sustain the momentum gained through onboarding,” says Dominguez. She suggests working with team members to build a custom-fit motivation plan, keeping in mind what motivates you may not motivate others.

Determining an individual's motivating factors (recognition, control, security and quality are just some that Dominguez highlights) can be accomplished through a DISC assessment or by just asking individuals what they believe motivates them, explains Dominguez. “Once you've identified the motivating factors for each individual, have them identify motivational opportunities with your help,” says Dominguez. “Then, check in during one-on-one sessions to see how well their motivational factors are working for them and tweak, when necessary.”

Your Team's Next 100 Days

Just as executives need to manage their own onboarding, they need to play an equally integral role in the continued

onboarding of their employees. Experts agree that this can prove to be quite a challenge.

“It's not so much that executives need to ensure that direct reports maintain the momentum gained by an organization's onboarding program as it is that the leader should make sure the onboarding program fits with their long-term plans for that new direct report,” says Bradt. “It is the leader's responsibility to create a plan for the individuals' second 100 days and third 100 days and fourth and so on. They should offer stretch assignments, and they should always expect too much from new employees, letting them grow into those expectations over time.”

Bradt notes how onboarding can sometimes become intermingled with other processes related to new employees and that executives need to ensure their organization's onboarding program is complete and effectively guides new hires. “The fundamental flaw with the way many organizations handle onboarding today is that they split recruiting, orienting and ongoing management into discrete pieces, with different people managing each other and often failing to coordinate across the pieces,” says Bradt.

Saraf says that some companies invest more time in the recruitment process, leaving little time for proper onboarding. “Hiring managers rationalize their lack of time for new employee onboarding by looking back on all the time they spend on this process, starting with posting the job opening, and convince themselves that the new hire is armed with sufficient information to hit the ground running,” says Saraf. “Studies show that nearly 30 percent of the hires (at manager or director level) do not work out, and many of them end up leaving in the first year. Worse yet, the rest simply check out and just stay on the job rather than *in* it.”

“Ideally, the hiring manager should

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Executives need to start preparing before they even make that first contact with a potential employer.

”

be clear about the objectives and what success looks like in a two- to three-year time frame and not just the first 100 or 200 days,” says Eblin. “With the 24- to 36-month strategic objectives identified, it then becomes easier for everyone to ‘reverse engineer’ back from those objectives and determine a broad outline of what needs to be accomplished and when.”

The Next 100 Days Until a New Job

Bradt notes how onboarding is comprised of stages that are marked by the gates of first contact, offer, acceptance and start. Executives need to start preparing before they even make that first contact with a potential employer, according to Bradt. “Before contact and offer, their only mission is to get the offer. The time between offer and acceptance is all about due diligence and negotiating,” explains Bradt. “The time between acceptance and start is a great chance to jump-start learning and relationships and craft their message so they can focus on building the team over their first 100 days and beyond.”

One of the most important points to consider is, while you will be enthusiastic about a new position and confident you can succeed, you have to recognize that it will still be a challenge to know what action items your second 100 days on the job will include; you don't want to promise too much and risk disappointing yourself and others. ■

Expert Resources:

- George Bradt, PrimeGenesis (PrimeGenesis.com)
- Linda Dominguez, Executive Coaching and Resource Network Inc. (Executive-Coaching.com)
- Scott Eblin, The Eblin Group (EblinGroup.com)
- Peter Rosen, HR Strategies & Solutions (hrsas.com)
- Dilip Saraf, Career Transitions Unlimited (7Keys.org; Career-Transitions-unl.com)

Leadership Briefing

Accidentally Upward, Consciously Successful

By Robyn Greenspan

Say the name “Carlyle Group” to any business person and an immediate association with monumental success will be drawn. The company, co-founded in 1987 by David Rubenstein, the current managing director, has become the largest private equity firm in the world. Surprisingly, with 33 offices worldwide and managing \$90 billion, Rubenstein admitted he was not destined to build the company.

Born to modest blue-collar parents, Rubenstein received scholarships to go to law school so that he could ultimately go into public service. “I wasn’t a great lawyer, but I ultimately got a job in the White House.”

After a couple of experiences with presidential campaigns, Rubenstein began to think he would not find lasting success in the political arena. His participation in Birch Bayh’s 1976 attempt to become the Democratic nominee for president lasted just three months before the Indiana senator suspended his run.

He then joined Jimmy Carter’s presidential campaign and saw the Georgia governor’s 33 point lead dwindle to a one point victory.

During his tenure in the Carter administration as deputy assistant to the president for domestic policy, Rubenstein said he “got inflation down to 19 percent, and mortgage rates down to 22 percent.”

He soon left politics, decided to start a buyout firm in Washington, DC, and recruited three people in finance who, Rubenstein said, “knew what to do.” This small venture eventually grew to its current state of nearly 1,000 employees, including 575 investment professionals, with \$43 billion in equity invested in almost 800 transactions.

During the more than two decades of growth at the Carlyle Group, Rubenstein

said he learned how to make the company successful by:

- Focusing immediately and directly on keeping investors very happy.
- Taking an extremely conservative approach. “Our theory was to never lose money.”
- Concentrating on businesses working with government because “that was what we knew.”
- Creating a “One-Carlyle atmosphere,” where you committed to building the business or you got out.
- Brand extension. “We were good at buyouts in the US so we got money for buyouts in Europe. We built a family of funds.”
- Globalizing early. “We invest more outside of the US than in. We hire locals instead of expats to work in other countries.”
- Choosing to not seek publicity.
- Limiting internal schisms.
- The firm invested its own money; today \$3.8 billion of the firm’s own money is invested.
- “We stuck to what we knew and avoided what we didn’t.”

Accompanying the brand, growth and corporate strategy, Rubenstein also shared personal lessons:

- If you don’t love what you are doing, do something else.
- Ignore conventional wisdom.
- Don’t take “no” for an answer.
- Share the wealth and the credit, and you can build anything.
- Make yourself indispensable so people have to come through you to get something done.
- Focus on service or the product you are selling, not how much money you are going to make.
- Think global even if you are in the US.
- Get out of the office. “There is no money or deals to be made there. The inspiration and stimulation are outside

of the office.”

- Don’t show arrogance. “Humility goes a long way. We try to instill that in people.”

“Seize opportunities whenever they come along,” said Rubenstein, outlining the four painful transitions at play in the US that will create opportunity: a new president; five years of a robust economy now followed by a recession; deleveraging; and going from the dominant economy to one of several important economies in 25 to 50 years. “We have to change our lifestyle or be creative with creating wealth.”

“Congress will pass legislation that will be the most massive wealth transfer, creating new businesses and wealth opportunity,” he added. “Nothing the federal government has ever done will create as much opportunity.”

Rubenstein imparted one final personal lesson that he said gave him greater pleasure than making money: “Be philanthropic.” His most recent demonstration of generosity was late in 2007 when he purchased the Magna Carta for more than \$20 million to be displayed in the National Archives.

“Nobody says on their death bed, ‘I wish I made more money or bought another car or house.’” ■

ExecuNet was invited by global executive education organization HSM to create a series of articles based on the presentations at their World Business Forum in New York City in September 2008. HSM delivered the articles to the senior business leaders who attended the two-day Forum of innovative thinking, and ExecuNet’s Executive Editor Lauryn Franzoni and Editor-in-Chief Robyn Greenspan will continue to share the insights from this exclusive event in upcoming member programs and reports.

Your Career Advisor

Positioning Yourself for Future Success as a Level 5 Leader

By Maureen Metcalf

During this dynamic time when businesses are facing unparalleled complexity, global connectivity and an accelerated pace of innovation, the leadership qualities and business practices required for success are changing.

The changes in the business environment are impacting people at all levels in small and large organizations. By taking time to examine your business environment, identify opportunities, make changes to increase your business's flexibility and equipping your leaders with the new skills needed in the global economy, your business will be better positioned to succeed.

Dealing with Change

Keep up with the exponential pace of change and be prepared to lead. Global interconnection leads to businesses being impacted in ways we would not have anticipated in the past. For example, the country of Iceland recently faced potential bankruptcy caused in part by the US financial market challenges and mortgage crisis. Unanticipated consequences in the business environment are impacting businesses of all sizes.

With this increased pace of change, having the right combination of business processes, technology and people in place is critical. People who may have thrived in relatively stable business conditions may not be prepared for today's more dynamic and fluid business environment.

While leadership still requires the skills we have been learning about for decades, new traits are also being identified as critical to the ability to lead transformation. What can leaders do to proactively position their organizations?

- Identify your best people. Invest in talent. You cannot solve problems alone!
- Build a strong network of people outside your organization to share

Differentiate Yourself as a Level 5 Leader

Presented by Maureen Metcalf on Friday, March 13, 2009, 1:00 to 2:00PM ET

In turbulent times, employers need to identify leaders who can successfully respond to the unexpected and change course appropriately, while continuing to learn and grow. Strong leadership still requires classic skills, but new traits are becoming more and more critical to leading transformation. Join Maureen Metcalf to learn:

- The characteristics of a Level 5 leader.
- What you can do now for your leadership development.
- How to apply this development to your current or future organization.
- How to differentiate yourself from other candidates in a job search.
- How to best assess the developmental level of new candidates and employees.

Registration information can be found at www.execunet.com

ideas and collaborate — connect with the rock.

- Develop comprehensive solutions for your opportunities that include people, process and technology.
- Use discipline and rigor while remaining nimble.
- Communicate, communicate, communicate.
- Create flexible and responsive organizations.
- Measure results, learn and refine approaches.
- Keep an attitude of experimentation. We do not have “right answers” — we have hypotheses to be tested and refined.

Making the Change

One of my favorite examples of an innovative and effective organization is a clothing business that designs professional clothing of high quality for hard-to-fit women. The entrepreneur who founded this company combined innovation, global resources for both production and sales, and a nimble business practice that allows her to quickly respond to market needs. The company also offers a full range of online resources for her customers to keep them coming back.

After starting the company from her home, this innovative entrepreneur now travels to Europe and China to select

fabrics and meet with manufacturers.

She works with multiple designers in the US to create patterns and specifications, and she has the clothing sewn in China — making sure the factories observe human labor practices and do not employ child labor — and shipped to the US for distribution.

On the leadership side, while she is a very competent businessperson, she has also assembled a group of advisors from many different fields. An advisory board of local industry executives who are experts in their fields offers a combination of advisory services and hands-on work. Leveraging the small business support networks provided by the state government and hiring the best talent she can find have allowed her to identify blind spots and improve business processes at a reasonable cost. A few key success factors include identifying a niche market, creating a scalable and flexible business model, seeking, taking and implementing advice. The desire to continually learn and improve accelerates her likelihood of success.

This clothing business is leveraging the global economy and using new leadership qualities to be successful. As the economy changes, this entrepreneur is able to anticipate and take corrective action quickly. This business did not exist

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Insider Insight

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we listen, we are more effective as a team; we are better communicators; we are more productive; and we have more fun.

Be Flexible to Change

When change happens, ask yourself two important questions: Does this change affect my ability to be happy and successful in my job? Does this change affect the ability of those around me — my family, colleagues, clients and vendors — to be happy and successful in their jobs? If both answers are no, then you know the change is not worth creating stress.

Make a List

If you really want to reduce your stress, make a list of everything that caused you stress and frustration in the last week. Take a really hard look at what you wrote. You will giggle. Why? Because most of the things on that list don't matter. Sure, there are some very important items on the list. Most of the items, though, we will forget about in a short time. Why do we forget? Because they really were not

that important. When you are in the middle of a stressful and frustrating situation, take a moment and ask, "Am I going to giggle about this in a week?"

Help Others Gain Control

Help your teammates (stressed or otherwise) take ownership of their happiness and passion. Too many times, employees let other people's actions or words determine their happiness. Happiness is a choice. Unfortunately, when we give control to other employees, managers, customers, partners or vendors, we are never very happy. We have to take back that ownership. We have no control over many things at work. We always can have control of our reaction and our attitude.

Don't Be Afraid to Make a Mistake

During my presentations, I use improvisation as a tool to communicate my messages. The audience participants engage in the process with passion and energy. They have fun. They are relaxed. Because they are enjoying the process, they are more creative and productive. Why? They are

not afraid of making a mistake. They understand they are working in a positive and supportive environment. We are all going to make mistakes. We want to minimize our mistakes and learn from them. If we take some of the pressure off and support each other, we will figure out that we will make fewer mistakes. We will also have more fun.

I hope these 12 ideas will help you reduce your stress. Fun helps create the energy and passion that fuels our productivity, creativity and effectiveness. Without fun, we don't have any fuel. Just like everything, fun is a choice. We each have to take responsibility and ownership of our fun and our goal to reduce stress. Remember, it is always your choice. ■

Joel Zeff is a national workplace expert, speaker and humorist. Corporations and organizations nationwide enlist his help to motivate and energize their employees on such topics as work/life balance, passion at work, creativity, communication, teamwork and leadership. He is the author of Make the Right Choice and can be reached at JoelZeff.com

Your Career Advisor

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widely until about five years ago. The availability of technology and an "unbundled" partner model has made new ventures possible for small entrepreneurial businesses to enter and scale for a reasonable investment. Her ability to respond to current trends, anticipate future trends and refine strategy and tactics will provide strong positioning for longer-term success.

A Competitive Advantage

What discussions and changes are needed in your organization to compete effectively in the rapidly changing business environment? Consider the global connectedness of the economy, technology as an enabler in innovation, and also how you can prepare your leaders for turbulent times. By identifying and preparing leaders to successfully anticipate change, respond to the unexpected, instill

confidence in their followers and alter the business course appropriately, you will position your company to better compete in a complex business environment. ■

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