

Personnel Power

A Focus on Workforce Management

It's Time to Change the "Preparedness" Message

By SEAN SCOTT

ARE your employees *truly* prepared for a natural disaster? In the event of a catastrophic event, how resilient will your employees be?

In light of the devastation brought on by recent natural disasters around the country, including the wildfires recently experienced throughout California, it's pretty apparent that the current disaster preparedness message of "Get A Kit, Make A Plan, Be Informed" is missing something. If you take a close look at the disaster preparedness information that is typically promoted, you will find that it is almost entirely focused on personal safety and survival. Although these topics are extremely important to prevent loss of life and should not be downplayed, there is a critical piece missing that is crucial to the long-term effect and outcome of disasters.

Have you ever wondered why so many homes that are damaged or destroyed by disasters never get rebuilt? Or why there are so many foreclosures and families who become permanently displaced? What happens when you don't have adequate insurance or FEMA can't give you enough to make your home livable again? What if your life savings is in the equity of your

home and you can't afford to pay for repairs out of your pocket? What if you can't afford to pay your mortgage and temporary housing or if your mortgage company withholds your insurance proceeds? What if your home is contaminated with flood water, sewage, mold, asbestos, or other hazards? These and a wide range of other issues are likely to hinder employees from returning to their homes — and simply having a kit or knowing how to survive will be of little value in terms of their ability to rebuild their lives.

Most business emergency plans exclude employees because the focus is on IT, cyber security, supply chains and other infrastructure details. However, these plans aren't much good if the employees' homes are destroyed and they can't go to work because they are stuck trying to figure out how to take care of themselves and their families' needs.

"Resilience" is supposed to mean the ability to recover, rebound, and come back to a state stronger than before. However, most if not all of the current preparedness messaging is about safety and survival, which is really more about disaster "resistance" rather than resilience. So, getting a kit and stockpiling supplies, making a plan to evacuate, and knowing what to do if separated from loved ones, etc. has little to do

with rebuilding your life. So, what can we do to enhance the current preparedness message to better promote resiliency? One thought is to help people map out a strategy and plan for recovery in advance.

Here are ten ways you can plan for recovery and strengthen your employees' resiliency to disasters:

1) Have employees assess their risks to fire, flooding, trees falling on their homes, etc. and take steps to protect their property by correcting drainage problems, creating defensible space, etc.

2) Whether an employee owns a home or rents, they should make sure they have adequate insurance to replace the home and contents.

3) If possible, anyone should open a home equity line of credit that can be used in the event they need to borrow money to make repairs. Banks typically won't loan money on a home that is heavily damaged or destroyed, so having this money available ahead of time can really help, especially in cases where the damages are not covered by insurance or when FEMA can't help.

4) Make a list of vetted local contractors, roofers, and other disaster restoration service providers so your employees will know who to call when they need one.

5) Everyone should have a plan for where they will stay in the event their homes become unlivable or destroyed.

6) Find out what it takes to get utilities restored if electric or gas is shut off or the meters are removed.

7) Learn what the recovery process entails and what could keep employees from rebuilding. Talk to those who have gone through a disaster before and jot down the lessons they learned so your team can avoid mistakes others have made.

8) Everyone should make copies of the building plans of their homes and get estimates of what it would cost to rebuild, if needed.

9) If your employees have insurance, they may run into problems with the claim process. Visit United Policyholders and their Claims Help Library at www.uphelp.org/resources/claim-help to find out what challenges might be faced.

10) Encourage employees to make copies of important or irreplaceable items such as family photos, awards or citations, recipes, etc., and store them in the cloud or in a safe place off site.

Sean Scott is the author of 'The Red Guide to Recovery – Resource Handbook for Disaster Survivors.' A comprehensive reference designed to help property owners before and after a natural disaster, the Red Guide is now used by fire departments, relief organizations, government agencies, and communities across the U.S. The Red Guide to Recovery is helping countless people prepare for and recover from disaster events. It is Sean's hope that this book will empower individuals, families, and whole communities to make sound decisions in the midst of one of life's most difficult trials. Scott has spent over 32 years in the construction and restoration industry helping thousands of families restore their homes, businesses, and lives. To learn more, visit theredguidetorecovery.com



PERSONNEL POWER

Communicate Effectively with Your Staff

By **BARTON GOLDSMITH, Ph.D.**

To understand how to effectively communicate in the workplace, you have to first understand some basic psychological truths about how we, as people, tend to communicate.

If we communicate to a person in the way they understand best, that communication will be accepted and the team member will respond faster and with more motivation. There are three types of communicators. The first are the Visuals, those people that take in and process information through their eyes. They also prefer to think, or rather visualize with their mind's eye. To be effective with them, you need to use key words such as “look, see, picture,” etc. It is also valuable to give them printed or written materials to go along with what it is you are communicating. They prefer words that enable them to picture things.

The second type are auditory communicators, these people use their hearing to develop

understanding. They talk to themselves in words that their minds can listen to. They like words that help them hear things. When talking with them, use key words like “hearing, listening, sound,” etc. These people tend to process information quickly and are sometimes likely to respond before you have finished talking.

Kinesthetic, the third type, are feeling people. It doesn't matter how things look or sound to them, it needs to feel right (not necessarily good). Still, others imagine things in terms of movement, feeling and action. The famous scientist Einstein used this kinesthetic type of thinking when he formulated his famous theory of relativity.

Listen to how your team member communicates, they will use the key words for their type in normal conversation. After you have discovered how they communicate, speak with them in the same manner. It will greatly enhance your interactions.

To gain maximum interest, remember people

are most interested in anything that has to do with them. This isn't egotistical — it's natural. Once you understand this, you can tailor your communications so that you receive maximum interest.

BE AWARE OF NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATIONS

Our senses shape our thinking. We remember and think about things as we saw, heard, or felt them. Some individuals and cultures stress one kind of thinking more than others do, though all cultures use all of them at one time or another.

You may not be sending the message you intend when dealing across cultures. You may be misinterpreting the sender's message because of cultural differences. It is important to be aware of mixed messages and not make assumptions about the meaning of non-verbal communications.

Many people believe that when they speak, their words are the primary transporters of their

thoughts. That's just not the case. Become aware of nonverbal messages to harness your communication power.

DON'T LOSE IT

This final tip is one of the most powerful things you should NOT do. If you get angry, you lose. When you “lose it” in front of team members, their confidence is shaken and your credibility is undermined. If you start to get over-excited, take 20 minutes to cool off and then reconvene your meeting. It may help you to remember this quote by Thomas Jefferson; “Nothing gives one person so much advantage over another as to remain cool and unruffled under all circumstances.”

Dr. Barton Goldsmith is a keynote speaker, business consultant and author. Considered an expert on small business, he has spoken to audiences worldwide. He may be contacted through his web site BartonGoldsmith.com or at (818) 521-2922.

The Positive Impact of Functional Health for Employees

To explore the benefits physical activity can have on employee well-being as well as an employers' bottom line, we posed a series of questions to Dom DiLuigi, M.A., a training expert and innovator in functional health.

You use the term “functional health” when describing healthy lifestyle goals. Can you please define the concept for us?

DiLuigi: “Applied Health,” or “Functional Health,” in a nutshell means the utilization of both the mind and body to everyday tasks rather than relying on technology or the path of least resistance to get through one's day.

There is an application for ‘Societal Tools,’ but when a person becomes dependent on them rather than using them as needed, he or she can slip into a dependence situation quickly, not unlike using medications when one needs them vs. being a hypochondriac.

It's important to use and challenge both the mind and body daily in order to keep them in tune and nimble. In a society where most people under 30 can no longer drive a manual transmission car or do math in their head, we have a problem.

Use it or lose it!

What are some of the benefits for businesses when employees are physically active?

It depends on the starting point of each person. Today, here in ‘economically developed’ nations, people seem to come in one of two flavors, hypo- or hyper-active. Those that park up close as they can in a parking lot to get to the building in the least number of steps and go home, and those that do the same thing at health clubs, only to get on the first cardio machine and sit on it for an hour plus.

I don't separate mental activity from physical activity, so I'd have to say, mental stimulation would come first, and physical, second. Both are relative to a person's background, general profile and lifelong habits.

In a generic sense, there's been much research already done on the matter. What I would say is that everything should be promoted in moderation, balance and nothing to excess.

The immediate benefits of a flexible, mental, or physical activity session at work (or before and after) include effectively staying off stagnation throughout the body, thus helping to maintain balance, which is the key to prolonged

health and productivity.

Also, physical activity helps people stay off the ‘anything-addictive-a-holic’ syndrome that so many people suffer from in economically developed societies (which those coming up through agrarian societies don't have to contend with).

Does good physical health translate to good mental health, and ultimately, superior performance at work?

The correlation between physical health and mental health has been established repeatedly in countless studies and research. However, good plus good doesn't equal superior.

Taking the baseline of any given individual with consideration as to what their potential output could be, better health will almost always translate to more wealth. And by “wealth,” in this case, I mean output.

I believe the overall stress realized in economically developed countries is simply too much collective stress for both the mind and body.

With the advent of technology, and its improper use/abuse, I see people being much more ‘distracted’ in general, and a huge spike in ADD/ADHD type symptoms preventing consistent output from being achieved and fulfillment being realized.

Today, less duration — with more focus and determination — results in positive reinforcement and consistent progression on the physical side. This pattern of positive reinforcement and balance better equates to improved mental health and work performance on the output of whatever mental endeavor an individual engages in.

Henry David Thoreau said that “It's not enough to be busy; so are the ants. The question is: what are we busy about?”

Is encouraging a healthier diet part of this philosophy — in terms of being something that can help employees be more productive?

Healthy diet is suggestive and subjective and there are so many schools of thought on it, each feeling they're correct that it's not something I get into conversations over regularly.

I myself should eat better, but on the flip side of occasional carbs and sugars I like, I don't partake in recreational drugs or alcohol.

The general population would probably be surprised to find out the collective ‘ingestion’ patterns of known celebrities and so-called

health and fitness experts in the field preaching their dogma, but not necessarily following suit.

People must remember that the health and fitness industry are just that -- an industry. And they are an industry that generates revenues based on trends and the formation of so-called innovative ideas and insights.

The truth is that there is very little that's new under the sun, and just like anything else, I would recommend the proper application of moderation when it comes to all things, and avoiding trends and snake oil solutions to problems that either don't exist or the origin of the ailments being attributed to things that are not scientifically sound.

Overall, a diet limited in grains and sugars, high in fats and plant fibers and moderate in proteins is an effective way to go. Water intake should be a metric of your total output and environment, and don't forget, mental exertion in today's society is more important than physical. Many people come to the gym mentally exhausted, which has a significant negative impact on the body physically.

My best advice is to feed the brain, and the body will follow.

Your Sweat23 concept suggests that short, focused training sessions are the most effective when it comes to physical training. With that in mind, do you think 9-to-5 employees should go for a quick, half-hour training session during their lunch breaks? Or does it make more sense to exercise before or after work?

I'm very biased here, so I'll just say this:

Just like I'm not a proponent of eating late in the day, I'm not a proponent of heavy exertion after mid-day. In addition, I find 90% of people that attend exercise classes do so prior to 1pm, if following a normal routine.

There are those who will say they don't have time and they're too busy, or their work schedules won't permit anything other than evening exercise, and to those people my sympathy goes out.

30 minutes at mid-day followed by a light lunch and hydration will do wonders for your productivity for the balance of the day without having to resort to stimulants and go a long way toward reducing stress hormones, diminishing stress on the adrenals and lowering cortisol count.

The sad reality is that lunch is typically the ‘social’ meal of the day, and those in a constant

state of adrenal stress simply find it more comfortable to have a few drinks at lunch and make small talk with co-workers at a nice restaurant, then they see value in taking those same people to a lunchtime exercise and recovery session.

I believe for most 9-to-5 workers, an hour spent taking a quick 30-minute walk, workout or other focused physical activity followed by a small meal consisting mainly of protein, plant fiber and hydration would improve their collective health and maintain their balance tremendously.

Would you agree that it's a smart investment that any company should make — to provide its employees with healthy living training programs or activities?

I believe it's in any organization's best interest to provide access and opportunity for individuals to invest in their own collective health.

From a business owner perspective, I feel it's next to impossible to get people who don't subscribe to certain philosophies to suddenly see the light and begin adhering to a better, healthier lifestyle. I would say the best course of action would be to have leadership within a given organization vet certain programs they feel will achieve the objectives they would like to see, envision the end results they're likely to realize and work the steps backwards until the objective is best met. The realization will be had when organizations define parameters and set incentives to meet these objectives.

It's more a matter of “what you inspect” vs. “what you expect,” and once you define and reward those things that best serve the collective effort between employer and employee, you will be in a better position to realize goals that are mutually beneficial to the collective whole.

Dom DiLuigi, M.A. (BUD/S Class 162 “Iron Man”), founder of Sweat.Haus, is one of the nation's foremost experts on functional health and effective training. After decades of research and road-tested training, DiLuigi came to the conclusion that the vast majority of injuries occur between the 26th and 46th minutes of physical exercise. He also discovered that typical hour-long training sessions often result in diminished returns and ‘overtraining’ symptoms. To build balance, flexibility, cardio, and strength — the essential elements of functional health — DiLuigi developed the Sweat23 training program. Learn more at www.sweat.haus