

# FrontLine

Wellness, Productivity, & You!

# Employee



University of Texas Employee Assistance Programs 713.500.3327

## Your New Coworker... Will You Get Along?

**T**he new hire has become your coworker. Will you get along? Here is what you can do (or not do) that will stack in favor of things going well: 1) Realize that first impressions count for you as much as for the new coworker, so act quickly to welcome this person into the fold. 2) Take the lead and dismiss the thought that others will judge your kindness as resulting from ulterior motives. 3) Don't "hover" over your new coworker, giving too much information and not enough space; allow him or her to get used to the new environment. 4) Value differences because there will be some. Consider how those differences will positively help the work unit. 5) Avoid asking personal questions early on, such as "why did you leave your last job?" or "where do you live?"



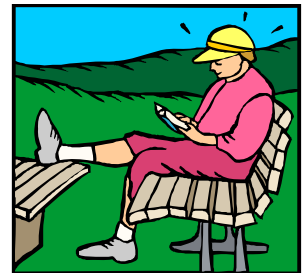
## Your Performance Exceeding Standard

**E**veryone enjoys that coveted prize on their performance review—the outstanding performance rating (also known as "exceeds standard"). Do you have a solid understanding with your supervisor about how to get it if this hasn't been sufficiently described? Or are your fingers crossed each year just before your review? Most employees don't ask, "Can we discuss criteria for "outstanding performance"? To get that top rating, discussion of it is required. Define it with specifics so you can work toward it all year.



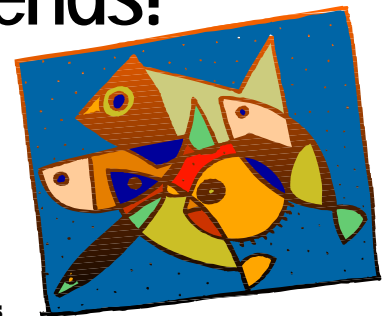
## Give 10 Minute Breaks More Respect

**T**en-minute breaks need more respect. They can be powerful recovery periods for managing stress. Don't head for the staff kitchen or a coworker's cubicle on break! You'll shortchange the health benefits. Complete detachment is what you're shooting for. If possible, leave your cell phone, pager, and BlackBerry behind. Try a quick walk, go to the lounge on another floor, or head around the corner and sit on a bench. The complete shift in focus is what maximizes these mini-rejuvenators.



## Valuing Diversity Pays Dividends!

**A** work culture is not just policies, procedures, mission statements, and goals. It's you. It's the collective attitudes and behaviors of the employees who work there. Your organization needs you as a team player in the valuing of diversity. Companies that value diversity and work cultures that support this value have fewer turnovers along with more satisfied and productive employees. The secret lies with understanding your biases. Biases are those strong beliefs that you hold about the way things should be, and they influence how we see people who are different than us. Your biases are part of your past, not your future. When you decide to value diversity, celebrating it is not far behind.



## Don't Burn Bridges if You Resign

**S**ure, it may have been pretty tough these past several years, but don't use that as a reason to burn bridges with your employer or to lose your professional cool when you resign. It may be a tempting idea to watch how it's done on television "in style," but in real life leaving in a huff doesn't work well. It will also leave you with a sour taste in your mouth when it's over. When you burn bridges, the one who ends up regretting it is you. You may know more people at work than anywhere else in your life. You risk losing these relationships when you burn bridges because these employees, whose paychecks are tied to the employer, are not likely to align themselves with your ire. You could lose a herd of help and great connections you may want down the road. The EAP will help you deal with the stress of separation. That includes anger that might be coming out now and perhaps the pain of letting go of relationships you've had for a long time.



## Addiction: Focus on Responsibility Not Blame

**I**f you are determined to play an influential role in motivating an alcoholic in your family or circle of friends to consider treatment this year, what major shift in your thinking must you make to increase the likelihood that you (and this person) will be successful? Those who have been successful at this task usually have one common denominator: They stopped blaming the alcoholic. They took the focus off the alcohol, cutting back, controlling consumption, guilt-tripping the drinking, and manipulation, and placed absolute responsibility on the patient for entering treatment. When friends and family make this decision, cover-up and enabling dramatically decrease, and the effect of consequences of drinking-related behavior on the alcoholic dramatically increases. This process increases the likelihood of a crisis that will produce a strong sense of urgency in the alcoholic to stop drinking and/or using drugs. Effective treatment is the only answer, of course. Would you like to learn more about the process of ending blame and putting the focus on responsibility? An employee assistance professional or a specialist in intervention can help.



## Workplace Coaching Tips for the Coached

**W**orkplace coaching is the art of improving the performance of others. It's a hot topic in management. And supervisors who do it well are in high demand. Less discussed is how



to be a good recipient of coaching. That might be you—the coachee. It's an art, too. These coachee skills will get you where you're going faster: 1) Continually assess your skills and abilities to determine what they should be to match your future goals. 2) Know how to ask effective questions, the answers to which will pull you up the career ladder (versus waiting for your supervisor coach to push you up the rungs). 3) See yourself as a "business" with your supervisor as a partner. This will keep you focused on the "whole you" as a developing employee rather than an employee who is missing some skills and experiences.

## Protocols for Political Talk & Workplace Productivity



**A**ccording to a 2007 survey by Vault (a career information and research firm), 66% of respondents say that their coworkers discuss politics at work, while 46% have witnessed a political argument at the office. If you're talking high-spirited politics, here are a few rules to help keep your office productive and harmonious. Remember that a particular political viewpoint is a set of ideas and has no bearing on an individual's integrity or intelligence. Never allow political disagreements to become personal. Always take care to avoid inflammatory language, personal insults, and sweeping generalizations. Allow your sensibilities to be guided by basic courtesy. A good rule of thumb is to follow the same conversational etiquette that you would follow if you were a dinner guest in your co-worker's home.