



Powerful Play Experiences

All Work & No Play???

by *Robert Manolson* BA, CCDP

Isn't it really all about happy staff during this most unsettling economic time?

100% of staff surveyed agree that they all can use more fun at work. Permission to play at work then becomes your commitment to raising fun levels while creating an empowering sense of how strong your workplace team can be. Let's agree here. Your company is a great place to work, right? Play at work creates a positive energy exchange between people and results in everyone feeling more energized.

Play is permission for a time out from an all too busy world of work to feel engaged, manage stressors, open lines of communication, and foster employee relationship building through fun and laughter. The atmosphere at work is much more appealing, and staff report a feeling of "community" in which co-workers are truly connected and operating more effectively together. Now, go ahead. Make it happen! Have fun! Play! Show your staff how important they are. Without a doubt, "play" at work is an innovative leading edge practice that factors into shaping your company's success.

www.powerfulplayexperiences.ca



Charmaine
HAMMOND INTERNATIONAL INC.

Igniting Resilience at Work

By *Charmaine Hammond*, MA, BA, RSW

Bounce Forward with Charmaine Hammond
Building inspired and resilient teams

During uncertain and changing times, teams often experience stress, fear and increased conflict. Workplace resilience is an essential skill for sustainability, overcoming challenges, and recession busting. Resilience is commonly defined as the ability to bounce back after change, challenge, conflict and adversity. A Manager sought out many ways to build resilience in the team throughout the year so that in times of change, downturn and turmoil, the team would be able to respond with less stress and interruptions to morale and productivity. As the manager and some internal champions initiated resilience-building activities (weekly motivational quotes via email and on staff bulletin boards, getting back to daily coffee breaks, monthly staff BBQ, quarterly messages from the CEO which came through voice mail messages to entire staff group, lunch time walking group, once a week yoga class on site over lunch, financial planning workshops, and innovation awards), the ignited resilience took on a positive contagion and spread throughout the workplace. When teams tap into their individual and collective resilience, they are better equipped to effectively manage issues with minimal interruption. By investing in the team, creating a common purpose, demonstrating proactive leadership, and strengthening processes, like this manager did, you build a solid and resilient foundation - a team that stands the test of time!

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A foreman takes the lead with language and culture at work

By *Marie Gervais*, PhD

Collaborative solutions for a changing world!

An attitude of willingness to learn about employees' culture and language can be significant in motivation, productive workplace atmosphere and retention. One plant foreman decided to learn a couple of Spanish phrases from an El Salvadorian front-line worker. Before long all the other El Salvadorians on the foreman's line were smiling and friendly towards her. They began asking her to correct their English and came more freely to her with problems on the line, improving line efficiency. Encouraged by this warm response, the foreman decided to purchase a five-dollar language audio book to practice her Spanish at home and surprised her workers with a new phrase each week. They were thrilled! The foreman found that both trust and work quality were significantly higher. There were less interpersonal conflicts and fewer problems with re-working product. Following the foreman's leadership example, workers who were not Spanish-speaking began to associate with the El Salvadorians. This leadership example shows how one small movement towards someone whose culture and language feel unfamiliar can unite staff, improve efficiency and boost production. Don't be afraid to learn from your co-workers, the benefits for everyone are real!

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Economic Slowdown has a Silver Lining

By *Karen Link*, BED, MA

Connecting People and Ideas. Creating Opportunities.

First boom – then bust. Who would have predicted the economic changes we have experienced over the past 12 months? While adjusting to the economic slowdown can be hard, a recession can also present employers with the opportunity to take a step back, take a deep breath, and look at the big picture. Consider it a much-needed chance to switch gears from being reactive to being proactive. Employers who have weathered this type of storm before are taking advantage of the opportunity to review their business processes and strengthen their unique value proposition (what makes them valuable in the eyes of their clients), in order to become more efficient and build a model that gives them the greatest opportunity for growth in the future. It's an ideal time to move out or move around low performers to match people's interests and abilities, and to ensure that the best and the brightest have room to grow. Involving employees in the organizational review and needs assessment can improve morale and communicate that you value them as an integral part of the team. Take advantage of the down turn to review your rewards program in order to differentiate your business from the competition. Keep an eye open for top talent. There is more available now than there has been in quite some time. The frenetic pace is sure to return before you know it. Build your corporate capacity in anticipation of better times ahead.

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