

RAJ REVIEW

Ideas

Insights

News

Monthly Briefing for the Business Professional

A Message From RAJ

Now that we're firmly into May, we hope you're enjoying the (sometimes) great weather and bearing up well if you're in an area that's been hit hard by Mother Nature. It's been a strange couple of months that can make some people wonder "what next". The news is full of inflation and recession worries, soaring prices for necessities, and general gloom and doom predictions. Well, we (and many others) don't buy it! Admittedly the country is going through some rough times but we honestly believe that things will turn around before year's end if not sooner. So, what do we do in the meantime? We can't bury our noses in the sand or the dire predictions may become reality. Our solution is to believe in yourself and your product, use this time well to clean house of unnecessary clutter, streamline your business practices, and use your people to their best advantage. This is a great time to encourage your employees to look outside the box, to seek new solutions to old problems, and plan for the future. If you're facing some downtime, use it to better train your staff, get out there and network, and never forget that you've got a bright future ahead!



**May 2008
Edition**

Reader Highlights

**FEATURED
ARTICLE:**

Growing Pains, RAJ
Associates,
Chicago

TIP OF THE MONTH:

Four Lessons from
Bill Gates
(Adapted from
Business @ the
Speed of Thought)

**FOOD FOR
THOUGHT:**

Seven National
Crimes

Reminder:

We still have a few open spaces at our upcoming Leadership Training Seminar. Be sure to get your reservations in early so you don't miss out on this excellent learning opportunity!

Featured Article

Growing Pains, RAJ Associates, Chicago

What could be more exciting to up and coming superstars than to land their first management position? Everything seems to be going their way – until the sudden realization hits that they're largely responsible for other people's happiness and success. It's stressful, not only for them, but for their bosses, subordinates, clients, and the organization. Even though they possess excellent education and product knowledge and upper management has faith in them, it's quite overwhelming to be responsible for making decisions that can affect other people's lives. Add to that their own duties such as planning, analysis, and whatnot, and they start to seriously doubt their qualifications and coping abilities.

It matters little what type of organization they work for; nearly every new manager



questions whether he/she is making the right decisions and whether those decisions will have a positive or negative affect.

Many are uncomfortable acting as "experts". They also

assume that others are second guessing their authority or waiting for them to screw up. The thing to remember is that everyone in management – or other positions of authority – have to start somewhere, be they the young doctor diagnosing his first patient, a lawyer pleading her first case, or a teacher facing a class for the first time. They're all going to make some mistakes – let's call them growing pains – but with any luck those mistakes can be quickly corrected once they (or their boss) realize them.

Making the transition to management is rarely easy, but there are many things that can be done to ease the way. Most important, new managers need to believe in

themselves. They must grit their teeth and jump into the water – meaning plunging in head first! Part of being a new manager is learning how to "feel" like one; another is making people believe they have the capability to be *their* manager, and that often means putting on a good act during those first few months. The only way to become comfortable in a management position is to get management experience and the only way to get that experience is by managing! By working together, a new manager and his/her boss can save a lot of time and aggravation along the way. While the following hints are directed specifically toward new managers, they are also excellent checks for more seasoned managers and bosses.



Ask questions! While you've got to take responsibility for making some decisions, remember that your boss wants, indeed needs, you to succeed. When in doubt, look at the situation, take time to think about how it should be handled, and present a plan of action to your boss for input. If your boss makes changes, be sure you understand why!

Continue your education! Take advantage of training classes and seminars, read busi-

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Books of the Month

Riding the Blue Train: A Leadership Plan for Explosive Growth,
Bart Sayle & Surinder Kumar.

Y.A.P.: The Official Young Aspiring Professional's Fast-Track Handbook,
C.E. Crimmins.



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ness journals, get on professional mailing lists, and join a young professional society. Ask your boss for reading materials that he/she has found helpful in the past. If necessary, enroll in some night school courses! The more you know, the wider your management repertoire.

Learn as much as you can about your direct reports without trying to turn them into friends! That is not to say you shouldn't be friendly and open, but there's now a fine line between you and your co-workers and a certain amount of distance must be maintained in order to protect your objectivity. Listen to what they say, ask for opinions, prompt them to tell you what they see as positives and negatives in their positions and ask them to share their goals for the future. Understanding your direct reports helps you to better understand how to deal with each one on an individual basis. Let them know how important their contributions are to everyone's success and never underestimate the need for motivating and positively reinforcing them for a job well done!

Pay attention! A successful department requires that you understand lines of responsibility and whether things are proceeding in a timely and appropriate manner. That means keeping on top of things and confronting negatives as well as positives. Many problems can arise during the course of doing business and it is incumbent upon you, the manager, to figure out the cause of a problem and figure out how to fix it! Don't act in haste, especially if you're angry or upset; rather, take some time to look at the big picture before coming up with a solution. If you're still unsure, talk to your own boss and then handle the problem as quickly as possible because it's only going to get worse if you let it fester. If that means firing an incompetent employee, much as it pains you, that's what you'll have to do.

Network! Introduce yourself to other managers within and outside of the organization. Share your problems and concerns,

brainstorm, learn what has worked or not worked for them in the past. Above all, enjoy your new journey. Before you know it, you too will become a seasoned, effective manager!

For more on this subject, give us a call regarding our special leadership training seminars! We have great interactive programs, facilitated by both seasoned professionals and our own young professionals. Upon completion of these programs, we guarantee almost immediate results!

Tip of the Month

Four Lessons from Bill Gates (Adapted from *Business @ the Speed of Thought*)

1. Take two "retreats" every year. Leave your office to develop long-range strategies.
2. Read books on topics that don't pertain strictly to your business or industry. It's the best way to maintain a broad perspective.
3. Identify problems early by tracking exceptions, such as sales figures that suddenly sag for a particular product. Jump on them right away.
4. Stop at the end of each day to analyze how well you used it. If you wasted time on things you didn't need to do, eliminate them tomorrow.

Food for Thought

Seven National Crimes

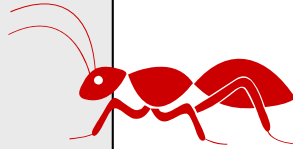
I don't think. I don't know. I don't care. I am too busy. I leave well enough alone. I have no time to read and find out. I am not interested.

-William J.H. Boetcker

Inspirational Thoughts

Inspiration is everywhere. If you're ready to appreciate it, an ant can be one of the wonders of the universe.

-anon



A person who doubts himself is like a man who would enlist in the ranks of his enemies and bear arms against himself. He makes his failure certain by himself being the first person to be convinced of it.

-Alexandre Dumas

On the Humorous Side

Why did the cookie go to the doctor? ...
Because he felt crummy.

Two blondes living in Oklahoma were sitting on a bench talking, and one blonde says to the other, 'Which do you think is farther away... Florida or the moon?'

The other blonde turns and says 'Hellooooooooooooo, can you see Florida from here?'

GET IN TOUCH

We love feedback. Let us hear from you about what's most useful in our newsletters, how we can make it better, and topics you'd us to tackle for you.

Call us to discuss your needs, explore how we can help, and learn more about our services.

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