



## Randy's Work *and You*

August Edition

Dear clients and colleagues,

### **The need for succession planning:**

Survey: most executives have not identified a successor

Robert Half Management Resources recently conducted a survey of 1400 CFOs from a random sample of US companies with 20 or more employees. An independent search firm conducted the survey. Results show that:

- \* Few financial executives know who will take their place in the future, but most have no plans for leaving.
- \* The majority of CFOs polled said they have not identified a successor for their positions.
- \* Seventy-four percent of respondents had no plans to leave their present companies in the near future as the primary reason.

"Executives should plan for all contingencies, even if they have every intention of staying in their current role," said Paul McDonald, executive director of Robert Half Management Resources. "Change - planned or otherwise - is a fact of life and companies that are prepared are better equipped to maintain productivity during times of transition."

McDonald noted that with many baby boomers nearing retirement, succession planning is especially important.

Source: *Business Examiner Daily*, July 20, 2007

Copies of all past E-zines are archived on my website. Feel free to pass this E-zine on.

To subscribe, click on <mailto:randy@randyblock.com>

To unsubscribe, hit the reply button and type REMOVE in the subject line.

This month's topics:

- 1. The Entitlement Epidemic: Who's Really to Blame?**
- 2. Four Signs Your Job Is In Jeopardy**
- 3. Boomer Corner: Boomers find obstacles to volunteer success**
- 4. Success Story**
- 5. Humor Department Performance Reviews**
- 6. Words that Inspire**

### **1. The Entitlement Epidemic: Who's Really to Blame?**

By Jeffrey Zaslow

From The Wall Street Journal

Why do so many young people today have an inflated sense of entitlement? And who's to blame?

The list of suspects is long, and includes the state of California, Burger King, FedEx, MTV -- and parents, especially parents.

I compiled the list this month, after more than 1,000 psychologists, educators and observant readers contacted me in response to my recent column headlined "Blame It on Mr. Rogers." That column included a premise some found too provocative: Did TV icon Fred Rogers contribute to our entitlement epidemic by telling children they were "special"?

Many readers appreciated the arguments. But others felt the column was unfair to target Mr. Rogers, who was such a positive influence. I hadn't expected that column to be taken so literally, and I should have articulated the fact that Mr. Rogers also encouraged hard work and mutual respect. It's not his fault if others now misinterpret the "special" language he popularized.

The truth is, our entitlement problem has many roots:

- Indulgent parenting. Several readers argued that our kids are more capable than we think. Why do we make their beds and pour their juice long after they could do it themselves? Other readers asked why we give kids so many choices, from what's for dinner to the station on the car radio. And why do we do so much trouble-shooting for them, which leaves them dependent as young adults?

Susan Lewis, who teaches at University of Maryland Eastern Shore, calls the cellphone "the world's longest umbilical cord." At her school, when students don't like their grades, some come up after class, hand over their cellphones and say, "My mom wants to talk to you."

Psychologist David Walsh says entitled parents and kids suffer from DDD -- "discipline deficit disorder" -- with symptoms such as impatience and inflated expectations. His book "No: Why Kids of All Ages Need to Hear It and Ways Parents Can Say It" has led to a movement in his home state. Minnesota Say Yes to No is a coalition of parents and educators working to counteract the culture of "more, fast, easy and fun."

Some colleges are also combating young people's sense of entitlement. At Loyola University Chicago's Graduate School of Business, Mary Burns teaches a course modeled after her book "Entitled to What? A Reality Check for the Generation Entering Corporate America."

- Consumer culture. TV shows such as MTV's "My Super Sweet 16" celebrate acquisitive lifestyles. Meanwhile, advertising fosters entitlement. Consider Burger King's slogan "Have it your way." Tim Curran of Omaha, Neb., believes it encouraged rudeness and selfishness, leading people to become "unglued over minutiae," such as burgers that arrive with unwanted pickles.

FedEx began as a service for packages that "absolutely, positively" have to get there overnight. The slogan helped cement the idea that everyone is entitled to instant gratification, argues Jonathan Spira, CEO of Basex Inc., a business research firm.

- The self-esteem movement. In 1986, California created a state task force on self-esteem. Schools nationwide later adopted "everybody's a winner" philosophies. One teacher told me that her superiors advised her to tell students that she liked their smiles, or the way they sat up straight, rather than focusing on, say, their failed spelling tests.

Yes, it's important for kids to like themselves. But many readers long for some balance. One California woman wrote that her grandchildren are being raised on "self-esteem babble." This year, her grandson wanted to play trumpet in the school talent show, but hardly practiced. Every note he played was wrong, yet he thought he was "awesome."

At the show, so many acts were horrible, though the kids seemed proud, the grandmother wrote. "One child had real talent, but my grandchildren couldn't see past their own self-absorption to even recognize it."

There are remedies, if adults are willing to model good behavior. Syd Corbett, a teacher in Ocala, Fla., says he keeps reminding students: "Self-esteem comes from the self doing something worthy of esteem."

## **2. Four signs your job is in jeopardy**

By Marshall Loeb, MarketWatch

Jul 16, 2007

NEW YORK (MarketWatch) -- Is your job on the chopping block? It's a very real possibility. Americans under the age of 30 stand a 90% chance of getting canned at least once over the next 20 years, reports CareerBuilder.com, a Web site for job hunters.

But how do you know when your time has come? Robert Graber, founder of WallStJobs.com, a recruitment resource for financial professionals, says there are four signs that the axe is about to fall:

1. Your workload becomes much lighter. If you just finished a large project and nothing else appears to be

coming down the pike, it may be time to worry, says Graber, particularly if your bosses begin assigning you duties typically considered below your pay grade. "If you're being assigned to jobs that are administrative in nature," Graber warns, "a light bulb should go on in your head."

2. You're getting the cold shoulder from management. Having trouble getting your boss on the phone? Did you get left out of the office football pool? Watch out, warns Graber -- it's natural for people to distance themselves from employees who are on their way out the door.

3. Your professional memberships and subscriptions have lapsed. If your boss fails to renew your subscription to a trade magazine or re-up your Blackberry contract, there's a good chance your days are numbered, cautions Graber. You should also be wary if the company unexpectedly changes your passwords.

4. You're asked to train a new employee with duties similar to yours. Keep an ear out for buzzwords like "knowledge transfer" if you're unexpectedly tasked with training a new recruit whose job description sounds suspiciously like your own, says Graber: You could be training your replacement.

Convinced that your job is in danger? Confront the problem, Graber says. Sit down with your superior and ask for a mini review. Find out how you performed on your last project and pointedly ask what comes next. If your boss has trouble answering the question, it's time to update your résumé

### **3. Boomer Corner: Boomers find obstacles to volunteer success**

Nonprofits urged to harness demographic wave through Internet, flexibility

By Kristen Gerencher, MarketWatch

Jul 17, 2007

More than half of adults 55 and older express some interest in volunteering, but many have trouble finding a good fit, according to a new report.

Professionals and women ages 55 to 64 are especially keen on donating their time and skills to one or more charitable organizations, but finding the right opportunity has proved difficult for many, according to a five-part study from VolunteerMatch, a free, San Francisco-based nonprofit online service showcasing national volunteer opportunities.

Many baby boomers, the 77 million Americans born between 1946 and 1964 who are part of a large demographic shift, are defying the stereotype of being the "me" generation, said Greg Baldwin, president of VolunteerMatch.

"Boomers are far more interested in volunteering than they're given credit for," Baldwin said. "They're far more interested in using their career and non-career-related skills. They have higher expectations for their volunteer experiences than some of the younger users we're sampling."

But many can't find an outfit that engages the full range of their interests, skills and life experience, he said. As more boomers enter retirement age that could bode poorly for nonprofits unless they learn how to provide opportunities that pay off in high volunteer satisfaction.

Among VolunteerMatch users, those 55 and older volunteered more hours than any other age group, putting in an average 226 hours a year, the study found. "There's a tremendous reservoir of skill and talent out there, and we want to empower the nonprofit world to take advantage of this tremendous opportunity," Baldwin said.

Of older nonvolunteers who were very or fairly interested in pursuing volunteer work, 39% said they hadn't found the right opportunity. Excluding lack of time, health and physical limitations made up the second most common obstacle, with 36% reporting health concerns as their major barrier.

More than one in four said they didn't find anything well suited to their skills and 22% cited a preference for giving back in other ways. Financial resources proved another sticking point; with 17% saying they couldn't afford to volunteer. Thirteen percent didn't know where to begin and 8% said they'd had a previous volunteer experience that was less than positive.

Only 11% of nonvolunteers age 55 to 75 said they tried to find a volunteer role in the past year.

*Making the connection*

The majority of nonprofits surveyed said they're actively seeking more information about potential volunteer recruits. Seven in 10 said they'd like to have more skilled volunteers at their disposal.

Volunteering is the latest arena to benefit from an explosion of choices and information delivered online, said Baldwin of VolunteerMatch. "We're trying to do for volunteering what eBay did for garage sales -- make it easier to find what you're looking for."

All nonprofits surveyed in the report used VolunteerMatch to locate volunteers, but some also tapped local volunteer centers' Web sites. About 13% of nonprofits said Craigslist.org was useful in their recruiting efforts, and 10% named Idealist.org. Smaller portions cited 1-800-Volunteer.org, VolunteerSolutions.org, HandsOn Network and ServeNet.org.

The study, conducted by Peter D. Hart Research Associates, included 2,316 registered VolunteerMatch volunteer users, 1,024 staff of nonprofit organizations and a telephone survey of 507 older adults not currently volunteering. It was sponsored by the Atlantic Philanthropies with additional funding from the MetLife Foundation

#### **4. Success Story**

When Vera Davison packs up her household to move to Greece from Washington, D.C., next week for her husband's job, she'll be taking along a hard-won new asset: her language-translation business.

While moving five times throughout Asia and South America for her husband's career as a foreign-service officer, Ms. Davison gave up her own career as an attorney to create a portable job for herself. Her clients, she says, stick with her via the Internet.

#### **5. Humor Department**

The following quotes are from actual performance reviews:

- \* "Since my last report, this employee has reached rock bottom and has started to dig."
- \* "This associate is really not so much of a has-been, but more of a definitely won't be."
- \* "He would be out of the depth in a parking lot puddle."
- \* "He sets low personal standards and consistently fails to achieve them."
- \* "A room temperature IQ."
- \* "Not the sharpest knife in the drawer."
- \* "This employee is depriving a village somewhere of an idiot."
- \* "A photographic memory, but with the lens cap glued on."
- \* "He has a full 6-pack, but he lacks the plastic thingy to hold it all together."
- \* "Fell out of the family tree."
- \* "Gates are down, lights are flashing, but the train isn't coming."
- \* "He is so dense, that light bends around him."
- \* "Wheels are turning, but the hamster is dead."
- \* "Some drink from the fountain of knowledge; he only gargled."
- \* "He has two brains; one is lost, the other is looking for it."
- \* "Works well only when under constant supervision and cornered like a rat in a trap."

#### **6. Words that Inspire**

"The problem is not whether business will survive in competition with business, but whether business will survive at all in the face of social change."

--Laurence J. McGinley, educator

\*\*\*\*\*

Your comments and feedback on this E-zine are welcome!

To unsubscribe from this monthly newsletter, hit the reply button and type REMOVE in the subject line.

Privacy Policy: We will not sell, lend or give access to our email/subscriber lists for any reason. Any information collected is kept strictly confidential and is not shared with or sold to any third parties or affiliates.

---

**Randy Block** . Staffing Consultant & Executive Coach

[ p. 415-383-6471 (vm only) f. 415-383-7369 e. [randy@randyblock.com](mailto:randy@randyblock.com)  
w. [www.randyblock.com](http://www.randyblock.com) ]

**Helping professionals maximize their careers and job search**

**CCMC** (Certified Career Management Coach), **CPRC** (Certified Professional Retirement Coach)

**IJCTC** (International Job and Career Transition Coach), **Now What? Life Blueprint™ Training**

**Staffing Consultant**

**Member: Career Masters Institute, The Network, The National Career Development Association, Parachute Associates, American Society On Aging**

#### **CONFIDENTIALITY NOTE**

*The information transmitted, including attachments, is intended only for the person or entity to which it is addressed and may contain confidential and/or privileged material. Any review, retransmission, dissemination or other use of, or taking of any action in reliance upon, this information by persons or entities other than the intended recipient is prohibited. If you received this in error, please contact the sender and destroy any copies of this document.*