

Hire Edge

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Heed Early Warning Signs!

From his lighthouse post in a southern Indian wildlife sanctuary, the lookout noticed something unusual. A herd of antelope was stampeding from the shoreline toward a nearby hilltop. When the tsunami struck 10 minutes later, the animals were safe.

At Yala National Park in Sri Lanka, the elephants, leopards, deer, and other animals were unharmed though 30,000 people living nearby were killed. The deputy director says animals managed to escape because they heeded a warning.

Whether the animals were able to hear the tsunami or

sense it through some unknown warning signal, they nonetheless responded to an early warning and survived.

According to Malcolm Gladwell, the author of Blink, the Power of Thinking Without Thinking, one tennis coach says he knows when a player is about to double fault. He is right 16 out of 17 times but he doesn't know why he knows. He thinks some set of unknown cues tips him off to the series of faults.

These examples make us aware that there are cues all around us. Is it possible that we can use this information

in our work?

Sometimes we get the feeling that something just isn't right on a project, with the way a machine sounds or with how your work is meshing with the work of others. When it happens, don't be afraid to rock the boat, because there are few situations that can't be improved. Ask yourself:

Is there something I can do? Should I present my ideas to the team? Would it be best to discuss it with the boss before talking to others?

A Strong Economy Is Good For Business, But It Doesn't Ensure A Free Ride

In spite of high energy prices and the effects of the hurricanes, consumers have kept on spending, though not quite as much as in previous quarters. They are still fueling strong economic growth in the U.S.

Business is playing an increasing role in driving economic growth. Nationwide, companies are feeling optimistic. Many are expanding their operations and adding to their work forces.

The positive figures presented by The Business Roundtable, however, bunch all business together and add up to something of a rosy

future. But the figures don't guarantee that all businesses are doing well now or that all businesses will do well in the future. They are just averages.

As always, it's up to individual companies to be able to take advantage of general economic growth. Those who sell excellent products that are wanted and needed have an opportunity to do well. Even more important, those with excellent products who control costs have an excellent chance to do well.

That's the category we want to be in as 2006 progresses.

While the winning combination of good products and cost control is easy to talk about, it's far more difficult to achieve.

To be among the winners of 2006, it will take an outstanding effort by everyone in our organization. We are competing with the whole world, so we have to be very good.

Though a lot of hard work is ahead of us, the payoff is within sight. If we do it right, every one of us will profit through job security and opportunities for a better future.



Search Finance Group

The L.A. Business Journal ranked Search Finance Group as the 5th largest search firm in Los Angeles County!

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When Someone Helps You, Return The Favor

It's nice to have a circle of friends, co-workers, and acquaintances that will help you out or give you advice. If you often go to the same person for help, however, they could get tired of your requests. They could stop returning your calls or start complaining about you.

In her books on the subject, author Susan RoAne says that you can recover from overuse. The first step is a humble apology. Then express gratitude for the contact's generous past support, maybe with a message tucked into a greeting card. When you do ask for help, be sure it's something within the advisor's realm of expertise.

If you can offer favors or introductions that would benefit your contact, you could create a two-way benefit. Always be aware of how much of a person's time you are taking. Be sure to update him on the results of his guidance.

When you are given any hint that you are overworking a contact, back off and go to someone else for advice, even if it is someone you have never met. Widen your network of contacts whenever possible.



"The worst part is he was on my fantasy management team."

Tax Season Is Coming! Are You Ready?

Your home may be brimming with tax advantages. How will you get all of the homeowner tax breaks you're entitled to? Consult a professional tax advisor for details, but here's a list of 5 deductions to consider:

1. Deductible Mortgage Interest

Interest on the loan for your primary residence is fully tax deductible, if you qualify. Our Tax Savings Calculator can help you figure the tax advantages of home ownership.

2. Home Improvements

Although you can't deduct the expenses associated with home improvements, keep in mind that making improvements to your home may increase the purchase price of your home. Keeping all of your receipts from home improvements may help you

prove your homes worth at

resale and reduce the potential taxable gain when selling your home.

3. Real Estate and Property Taxes

State and local property taxes can be deducted as an expense against income; however the real estate taxes are only deductible in the year they are actually paid to the government.

4. Home Office

If you have a qualified office in your home, you may be able to deduct costs associated with maintaining the portion of your home exclusively used for business. For example, 100% of your expenses related to the office such as painting and upkeep are deductible, as well as a portion of indirect expenses such as the cost of utilities and garbage pickup.

5. Health-Related Improvements

Any home improvements for medical purposes can be deducted entirely from your taxes as long as the improvements do not add to the overall value of the home and are for a chronically ill or disabled person. If you qualify, you may be able to deduct a portion of expenses such as a swimming pool for treating polio victims or an air conditioner to alleviate a specific medical condition.

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Recruiter's Corner: Handling Passive Aggression: Yours. Theirs

A passive aggressor is someone who appears to agree with you, but does things that undermine you and your program.

According to Jared Sandberg, writing in the Wall Street Journal, methods include intentional inefficiency, avoiding responsibility, claiming forgetfulness, complaining, and blaming others.

Bosses can be passive aggressors too. One way to defeat a person is to assign a project and say it will be easy, simple, and take no time at all. If the staffer does well on the task, he or she doesn't even look good. If not, the staffer blew something that was "simple."

Some bosses make their victims look stupid by indicating that they didn't understand clear instructions.

Other bosses, when they're in a conflict with a staffer, will say nothing at all. This leaves the person wondering all through the night about what happens next.

Acting overwhelmed can be a worker's avoidance tactic. One man was under so much stress at home that by the time he got to work, everyone was afraid he would crumble. When he was assigned a job, it took a very long time, but everyone felt sorry for him and forgave his

ineffectiveness.

The turncoat is every boss's problem. He doesn't object to anything you say or assign. Later, however, the turncoat makes subtle or direct criticisms of you, your plans, and how you want them to be executed. He won't complain to you, but will complain to anyone else who will listen.

There's not much you can do about the turncoat. But be aware that he or she is really not on your side.



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Quote of the Month

"The average person puts only 25% of his energy and ability into his work. The world takes off its hat to those who put in more than 50% of their capacity, and stands on its head for those few and far between souls who devote 100%."

~ Andrew Carnegie ~
American Industrialist
1835-1919

Smile, Smile, Smile!

Learn To See The Humor In Life & Work!

There must be something to laugh about when it comes to work and family. TV shows, books, and cartoon strips are poking big fun at people and how they handle home and career obligations.

Parents are letting go of the guilt they once felt about not spending more time with their kids. Mary C. Hickey, an editor at Parents magazine, says "Nobody has anything to prove any more. We all feel like we've made our choices."

Or maybe there are times when our efforts seem ridiculous. Interviewed by

Sue Shellenbarger of the Wall Street Journal, C.W. Metcalf, a trainer and consultant offers three tips on trying to laugh at ourselves.

*** Learn to see the absurdity in a situation...**
Metcalf, author of Lighten Up (Perseus), advises you to realize you're not the center of the universe. You can't control everything, which should allow you to laugh about the silly aspects of a problem.

*** Take yourself lightly...**
Look at yourself when you get out of the shower and know that you are not all-

powerful. Notice that even what God made is sort of funny.

*** Be glad you're alive...**
Cultivate a sense of joy. Metcalf carries a notebook for his "joy list" and writes down things that made him smile or laugh.

Spas Offer Hand Massages For 'Blackberry Ache'

In a sign of the times, resorts and spas find that guests getting massages are asking for more work on their hands, wrists, and arms. Resorts are responding with "Blackberry treatments" to relieve aches caused by overuse of the device.

The Hyatt Grand Champions Resort & Spa in Indian Wells, Calif., offers a treatment using balm with camphor oil, cloves, peppermint, and blackberry powder. It costs \$80. The treatment works, but doctors say aches will return when the device is used heavily again.

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Happy Saint Patrick's Day!

