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Strategies & Solutions for Your Career Success

A Note From Dave

Listening is such an important leadership skill, but perhaps not one that enough leaders effectively demonstrate. They certainly have plenty of constituents who should be listened to, from employees to customers who can provide valuable information from the trenches.



Editors of the *Harvard Business Review* recently interviewed Cisco CEO John Chambers, a conversation in which he reveals some of the secrets of his success over the years.

Chambers reveals how his company separates itself from the competition by listening to what its customers say and then putting that knowledge into action. He says the strategy is simple: “listening to our customers, who tell us what the market transitions are and then capturing those market transitions.”

It sounds logical enough. And Chambers provides a pretty strong example of how powerful and effective this strategy really is. He tells the story of a customer who told him that he wouldn't give Chambers a \$10 million order unless he bought a company the customer recommended. Chambers left the meeting with the \$10 million and a plan to acquire the company, Crescendo. “We paid \$92 million for a company with less than \$10 million in revenue in 1993, and a lot of analysts thought we were crazy,” Chambers relates in the article. “But that turned into a \$7 billion a year business for our switching unit.”

That is certainly a solid example of how truly listening to your most valued supporters can truly pay off. Open a dialogue with your constituents. Imagine what the resulting collaboration could achieve.

Sincerely,



Dave Opton
ExecuNet Founder & CEO
www.execunet.com/davesblog

Negotiating Your Severance Package

By Marji McClure

During these tough economic times, many executives are concerned about their careers and making plans to ensure financial stability. For working executives, it could be a time to review employment contracts to determine provisions should there be a separation from the company, and those in transition are likely thinking about what they can negotiate when they land their next role.

A lapse in compensation can be incredibly stressful, and severance packages can act as a financial stabilizer while also minimizing the inclination to take any job just for the paycheck. According to data from ExecuNet's *Executive Job Market Intelligence Report* (EJMIR), it took executives an average of 9.7 months to find a new position. Couple that with the fact that just 44 percent of senior-level executive respondents said they received a guaranteed severance in their 2007 compensation package, and there is certainly cause for concern.

Standard Severance Facts

For the 44 percent of executives who received a severance package, the average length of the term was 9.8 months. But for the majority of respondents, a severance package was not included in their total compensation package and isn't based on terms specific to each executive. If these executives become separated from their companies, they may instead receive a standard severance that their organization offers to all exiting employees.

Some companies have established policies for severance pay, and there are some basic facts about the packages that apply in most cases. Severance can be offered in either a lump sum or as a salary continuation, according to Dave Bisson, senior consultant for San Francisco-based Presidio Pay Advisors Inc.

Sometimes executives can keep their benefits, which might include three to six months of COBRA payments and outplacement services, notes Linda Konstan, senior consultant of Sensible Human Resources Consulting.

Bisson adds that the formula for severance can look something like this: two weeks of severance for every year of employment for all employees and one month for vice presidents.

“An old rule of thumb was that it took one month of search for each

Continued on page 4

| | |
|--|---|
| Books Worth Your Time: Building Conflict Competent Teams | 2 |
| Leadership Briefing Case in Point: Tata Group Expands Connecting Culture with Communities | 6 |
| Your Career Advisor Get Engaged: Give and Take 100 Percent from Your Job | 7 |

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12/19 — **Detroit Sr. Executive Roundtable** — Marge Larsen

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Books Worth Your Time: Q&A with Authors Craig E. Runde and Tim A. Flanagan

Building Conflict Competent Teams

As disagreements abound, expecting employees to always agree and work in complete harmony is unrealistic. However, skilled leaders have the ability to see the opportunity to transform spirited debates into a platform for new ideas. In *Building Conflict Competent Teams* [Wiley, 2008], authors Craig E. Runde and Tim A. Flanagan extend the messages from their previous book, *Becoming a Conflict Competent Leader* [Wiley, 2006] so that executives can strengthen corporate foundations.

The authors answered some questions designed to help ExecuNet members develop strong competency in conflict management.

Q. Why is it so important for an executive to possess conflict management skills?

A. Conflict is inevitable, but it doesn't have to be bad. In organizations that place a high value on innovation and creativity, conflict is bound to occur; the only question is whether the executive and his or her organization get something good out of it or something bad. In some ways, it's not just inevitable, but necessary. In fact, some leaders' best ideas come from conflict (as well as some of their worst failures). Developing and using effective approaches to conflict management makes the difference in what results will be achieved. Executives don't want people who think alike; they need people who think differently. When people are thinking differently, innovations arise and so does conflict.

Q. Are there certain characteristics an executive must possess to excel at conflict management?

A. Conflict competent leaders need to

understand the importance of dealing with conflict effectively (both in terms of cost savings as well as in terms of using conflict to generate more creativity and better decision-making). They also need to understand how they currently respond to conflict so that they can leverage areas of strength and work to improve ineffective responses.

We use the Conflict Dynamics Profile assessment instrument as one means of developing this self-awareness. Leaders need to be able to manage their emotional responses to conflict. They need to be able to cool down and slow down so that their emotions don't cause them to react and use destructive behaviors that enflame the conflict. Rather, they need to use constructive responses (like trying to understand the other person's perspective, collaborating to develop creative solutions to the problem, etc.).

Ultimately, leaders who develop these personal skills can become more credible champions for cultural change that helps the organization become more conflict competent. One of our research studies demonstrated a clear correlation between the use of constructive conflict behaviors and perceived leadership effectiveness.

Q. Do executives need special training or coaching to develop conflict management skills? How can they learn conflict management skills?

A. Executives as well as other people generally don't respond effectively to conflict. They often respond with fight or flight behaviors fueled by negative emotions stirred up by the conflict.

In order to change that, they need to

Continued on page 3

Books Worth Your Time Continued from page 2

understand how they currently respond (the self-awareness process we described). They can then leverage their current strengths and look at improving behaviors that are not serving them so well. Changing behaviors is not easy, so we recommend that training include opportunities to practice new behaviors in safe contexts. These new responses take time to mature, so often on-going executive coaching can be an important follow up to any training.

Q. Under what circumstances are such skills most valuable?

A. While these new skills can be valuable in a wide variety of situations, both at work and at home, the biggest opportunity comes when executives are able to stimulate creative debate around important issues where people have clear differences about how to approach the matter. By using constructive conflict behaviors, the executive can help promote robust discussion, and at the same time, keep it from going negative. When this happens, new ideas are generated and good decisions are made because various approaches are adequately vetted. When executives enable open, honest, robust debate, previously unimaginable suggestions and solutions become possible. Participants in such discussions stay focused on the substance of the ideas instead of the distractions related to criticism, blame or cynicism.

Q. What positive actions/events in an organization can come from effectively dealing with conflict? When is this a win-win situation?

A. As mentioned above, perhaps the biggest win-win is that constructive conflict can generate better creativity and innovation. It also can result in better decisions and more buy-in because people have been encouraged to share their ideas and feel that they had a chance to be heard. This helps in implementing whatever decision is made. Long term, the less people in organizations fear conflict, the more willing they will be to participate in



challenging discussions. Differences that lead to avoidance or retaliation can just as easily lead to curiosity and wonder. Leaders who foster a climate of trust and safety, provide opportunities to learn constructive conflict skills, support collaboration and establish processes for conflict management will reap the benefits of “good” conflict.

As a collateral benefit, these same approaches to conflict help lessen the harmful results of poorly managed conflict, which include finger pointing, bruised relationships and poorer team productivity.

Q. When is it a bad idea for executives to just avoid conflict? What are the repercussions?

A. When executives (or others) avoid conflict it doesn't go away — it festers. Whatever good can come from discussing differences is lost or, at least, postponed. At the same time, the bad things that can come from conflict are brewing under the surface and will eventually emerge.

In general, leaders are like most people when it comes to conflict: They prefer to avoid it because they are concerned that it will get out of hand, are uncomfortable with the emotional aspects of it and have never learned how to deal with it. How many leaders learned to effectively deal with conflict at school? Once they have developed skills, they are much more able to address it effectively. It still may not be fun, but because it is so important to handle it rather than let it fester, they will be willing to address it.

Q. How can executives help their colleagues, direct reports (essentially their entire organization) more effectively manage conflict? How can leaders create such a culture within their organization?

A. As leaders become personally conflict competent, they are in a position to help others by first modeling effective behaviors. This not only shows others how it can be done, but provides them with implicit (or even explicit) permission to use these same behaviors.

They can also mentor or coach others in the organization about these responses. Finally, they have credibility to champion organization culture change because they are “walking the talk.” They can also support tangible processes like training to help improve others skills. One aspect that can be particularly important is assuring alignment among an organization's mission, policies, performance measures and reward structures — and the way it wants people to respond to conflict. It doesn't do much good to preach effective conflict management skills and then reward people who don't follow them.

Q. How can being a conflict competent leader benefit an executive's career? Why is there such a strong need for these kinds of leaders?

A. We've spoken to many leaders who have indicated they would have loved to learn these skills earlier in their careers. They routinely say they would have been more successful and have risen higher if they had known how to deal with conflict. From an organizational effectiveness standpoint, we strongly believe that organizations won't effectively deal with conflict unless the leaders develop their personal conflict competence and champion organization-wide competence.

Since conflict is such an inevitable part of organizational life and since it can be the source of either good or bad outcomes, we believe it is essential to effectively deal with it. The costs are too high to just ignore it — although many do at their own peril. The opportunities are great for those who learn effective skills to address it. ■

Severance

Continued from page 1

\$10,000 in annual salary,” explains Bisson. “It’s probably more like \$15,000 to \$20,000 now. For C-level executives, severance pay is often a multiple of salary and bonus (such as 1.5 times base plus target bonus).”

Regardless of the formula used, you will most likely receive something. There are two main reasons, according to John B. Phillips, a partner at the law firm of Miller & Martin PLLC. “One is that it sends an important and good message to the employees who are left behind — that they work for a company that is trying to be fair,” explains Phillips. “The second reason is to prevent a lawsuit. If you accept the severance pay, the company gets a release against legal claims.”

Negotiating Your Exit Package

If your compensation agreement doesn’t include a provision for severance and your organization doesn’t have strict policies in place, there is a strong chance that you can negotiate a severance package upon your exit. But negotiation experts agree that you need to do plenty of homework before you initiate any type of agreement with the company to ensure that you get what you really need.

It’s important to know where your company stands on the severance issue before you begin to negotiate your

William Ury’s Keys to Successful Negotiation

1. Preparation.
2. Power of the positive “No.”
3. Power is subjective.
4. Use the balcony.
5. Bully never wins.
6. Know all participants’ BATNA.
7. Help them prepare their victory speech.
8. Keep your eyes on the prize.
9. Beware of making a deal for the deal’s sake.
10. Build your allies well before the meeting.

The BATNA is the *Best Alternative to a Negotiated Agreement*. “The BATNA means you will know what your alternative is if you can’t reach agreement,” explains William Ury, co-founder of Harvard’s Program on Negotiation and author of *The Power of a Positive No: How to Say No and Still Get to Yes*. “In effect, a plan B. If you have to walk away, you know you will have a back-up plan.”

Source: An exclusive interview with William Ury by ExecuNet Executive Editor Lauryn Franzoni.

package. “In any negotiation, preparation is critical to the success of the deal,” says Jim Camp, author of *NO: The Only Negotiating System You Need for Work and Home*. “Find out if this company has drawn up severance agreements in the past and what terms they’ve agreed to with other former executives in positions similar to yours.”

Camp says that the preparation for severance negotiation must also include learning all you can about your dismissal. “If it was a financially based decision, what is the current state of the company’s finances? How many others were laid off? If you were wrongfully fired, in your estimation, then you may need legal help to dig up more information about the company’s past practices and current liability,” says Camp.

Pat Schuler, president of The Gemini Resources Group, suggests revisiting the

standard formula for determining the terms of a severance agreement as you prepare to negotiate your package.

“From a negotiation standpoint, we’ve all heard the estimation of one month in transition for each \$10,000 in salary,” Schuler says. “You never really expect that it will take that long, and the odds of you securing this level of severance could be fairly low. It is however, a great place for you to begin your negotiations.”

Before having a formal meeting to discuss severance, write down your private agenda, suggests Camp, which should include:

- The problem: You’re being let go and you don’t know what severance the company is willing to pay.
- Your baggage: You’re afraid of being left high and dry in an unstable job market.
- Their baggage: They probably don’t want to shell out financial and other benefits right now for an executive who is leaving.
- What happens next: Find out how giving you a generous severance package can be beneficial to this company.

When you’ve done all of your homework, the next step is to have that negotiation with the decision-maker, your boss.

Discussing Severance Before and After Being Hired

If you’re interviewing for a new position, experts agree that it’s not a bad thing to want to discuss severance with potential employers. However, hiring managers

Continued on page 5

A Severance Checklist

A severance package can contain more than just the money that an executive will receive from a former employer — either as a lump sum or over time. There are many other services an executive can request from that employer, and Chuck Csizmar of CMC Compensation Group suggests that executives ask for the following:

- Benefit coverage to last until the severance ends.
- Professional outplacement services for six months or longer.
- A letter of reference (prepared by the employee) and signed by the senior executive of his or her choosing.
- A written agreement that states exactly what the company will give as the reason the executive has left the company.
- Office space and administrative support to last during the severance period — dependent on the level and circumstances.
- While the employee is on severance, the company should not say that the person is no longer with them.
- If the executive is an overseas expatriate, fully funded repatriation — as provided by the company’s international assignment policy.

Severance

Continued from page 4

may have a different view on the subject.

“Some companies will feel that broaching this topic is an insult and a sign that you’re already thinking of leaving. Others will feel it’s just business as usual, a standard business practice,” says Schuler. “This is a very delicate topic in salary negotiation. This is an area where your personal research and intelligence gathered through your networking can pay huge dividends.”

Use that knowledge as a framework for figuring out a fair severance package. “The type of package you ask for should be determined by research, what the industry standards are, what you think you’re worth and any problems you see that might be standing between you and getting what you want,” says Camp.

If you don’t have all of this information entering the discussion, Schuler suggests waiting until later in the compensation negotiation to mention it. “I would recommend an open-ended question, with a very low-key tone of voice and body language. You don’t want to telegraph that you’re putting too much weight or emphasis on the issue,” says Schuler. “It’s almost an afterthought. The wording might sound like, ‘I’ve been reading about...’ or ‘I heard in a workshop that more and more executives are negotiating severance issues as part of the up-front compensation discussion. I understand that each company is different. How do you typically approach it here?’”

Chuck Csizmar, of Florida-based CMC Compensation Group agrees that negotiating a severance agreement before

Developing a Strong Negotiation Competency

William Ury, co-founder of Harvard’s Program on Negotiation, says that negotiation skill may be the most important core competency needed during such challenging economic times. It’s certainly an important skill to possess as executives negotiate employment-related deals, such as compensation and severance. So where does an executive need to begin to become a strong negotiator?

“The metaphor I use to describe the tactic that is the foundation of skilled negotiation is the ability to ‘go to the balcony,’” says Ury, the author of *The Power of a Positive No: How to Say No and Still Get to Yes*. “Think of yourself as negotiating on a stage. You should always be observing yourself and the other party as from an audience. When the situation becomes tense, you need to be able to go to a virtual or a real balcony.”

Ury also suggests individuals take these steps as they strive to become stronger negotiators:

- Take a coffee break to create actual physical space and time or create a space in your mind where you look in and observe yourself in the interaction.
- Take time out; slow it down. You need to check yourself against your goal. Really make sure your decisions are considered.
- In salary negotiations, for example, this can be a very emotional time and you will be very personally involved. You need to keep your mind on the prize.

Source: An exclusive interview with William Ury by ExecuNet Executive Editor Lauryn Franzoni.

accepting the job is necessary if a new position comes with higher than normal risk. “If you’re dealing with a new business venture, a spin-off or new product lines, the executive should be aware of the risks and whether a safety net is available,” says Csizmar. Susan Schaecher, an employment/labor attorney with Denver-based Stettner Miller PC, adds that executives could actually seek a severance provision as a preventative measure.

But when you’re negotiating salary and other benefits for a new position may truly be the perfect time to approach the subject of adding severance provisions to the deal. “At [negotiations for] employment, the executive should attempt to negotiate all aspect of the employment arrangement, including severance benefits,” says S. Gary Snodgrass, retired EVP and chief human resources officer

for Exelon Corp. “That is the moment of greatest leverage, and each party is usually at their best. Leave nothing to chance. It’s business. Nail it down at the beginning so there is no confusion, no misunderstanding, no disappointment, no bitter feelings at the end.”

Like other terms of an employment deal, make sure that the terms of your severance package are official. “Get employer commitments in writing with specific arrangements detailed,” advises Snodgrass. “Accept no vague assurances of future potential benefits.”

Carol Goodman, an employment attorney with New York-based law firm Herrick, Feinstein suggests that if an executive has a change in status, such as promotion or division change, he or she should suggest the renegotiation of the employment contract. However, Goodman advises that the executive consult with an attorney before renegotiating. “A possible downside occurs if the existing contract is pro-employee — drafted at a time, perhaps, when the company did not include non-competition clauses,” explains Goodman. “If an employee has a contract that has employee-favorable clauses — or lacks employee-unfriendly clauses — he or she may not want to wake the company up by requesting a new contract, which might turn out to be more pro-employer.” ■

Expert Resources:

- Dave Bisson, Presidio Pay Advisors (PresidioPay.com)
- Jim Camp, Camp Negotiation Systems (StartWithNo.com)
- Chuck Csizmar, CMC Compensation Group (CMCcompensationgroup.com)
- Carol Goodman, Herrick, Feinstein (Herrick.com)
- Linda Konstan, Sensible Human Resources Consulting (lkonstan@juno.com)
- John B. Phillips, Miller & Martin PLLC (MillerMartin.com)
- Susan Schaecher, Stettner Miller PC (Worklaw.com)
- Pat Schuler, The Gemini Resources Group (GeminiPro.com)
- S. Gary Snodgrass (SGarySnodgrass.com)
- William Ury (WilliamUry.com)

Leadership Briefing

Case in Point: Tata Group Expands Connecting Culture with Communities

By Lauryn Franzoni

With the backdrop of the discussions swirling about the financial crisis on Wall Street and pending government actions (during the week of September 22, 2008), much of the conversation from the stage and around the World Business Forum centered on one question: How can I lead my company to success in a global business community?

“Whatever the lessons for the banking industry and its regulation, for me, the sub-prime crisis underscores two realities of the world we have created,” noted Alan Rosling, director of the India-based Tata Sons Ltd. “First, the pace of change (economic, technological and political) continues to accelerate. Secondly, that the world today is interconnected and interdependent in ways we have only begun to understand.”

Tata Sons is generally known in India as the country’s most respected and diversified industrial group. The group is based in Bombay and last year posted aggregate revenues of \$63 billion. Of the diversified holdings, three businesses, Tata Steel, Tata Motors and Tata Consultancy Services account for almost 80 percent of total revenues and 90 percent of the group’s profit.

On the world stage, Tata Group has been the poster image for the rise of new multinational companies from what has been known as BRIC. With its emergence, it is bringing to the more established global business community some fresh learnings about market focus, global interconnectedness, corporate responsibility and dealing with accelerated change.

“These factors make life challenging and uncomfortable, yet exciting,” Rosling explained recently. “While we are at a competitive disadvantage in many ways to our more established multinational peers based in the US, Europe or Japan, not having legacy issues and costs can be a real advantage in coping with the rapid

change of today.”

Rosling believes corporate leaders should embrace the pace of change around the globe and seek to maximize their teams’ ability to move swiftly and in concert with the marketplace.

“

You have to constantly be listening to the market to determine how to deliver a meaningful experience.

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The venerable brand, Eight O’Clock Coffee, is one example of Tata’s US operation that has moved quickly with changing consumer tastes. That pace of change has been met with new brands, including Good Earth Teas and Good Earth Coffee. “The important factor in keeping a brand relevant is to stay market-focused,” advised Barbara Roth, CEO of Eight O’Clock Coffee and president of Tata Beverage’s American division. As a brand, “you may be saying the same thing, but differently or meeting the same consumer need with a difference. You have to constantly be listening to the market to determine how to deliver a meaningful experience.”

In the US, listening to the market has meant a return to focusing on the fundamentals of creating positive consumer experiences with the brand, Roth explained. “If you are listening to the customer feedback, there is always something — always small — but meaningful, ways that you can make a product much better.”

At the World Business Forum, Tata hosted a leadership luncheon for its executives and interested attendees that featured an address by former secretary

of state, General Colin Powell. “General Powell has symbolized for us,” Rosling said, “all of the best qualities of global leadership. He is known for his sincere professionalism and for standing up for what he believes in. They call him the ‘reluctant warrior,’ and faced with troubled times as we are, perhaps that is what we would want every warrior to be.”

In his talk, Powell outlined the top three challenges facing global business leaders today: managing the effects of new multinational wealth creation; how to lead and make decisions with integrity; and how to then return that wealth back into the communities.

Part of that challenge, Powell and others noted that day, is how the US will handle immigration and work visas for foreign nationals. “The American economy is traditionally an open one,” said David P. Good, Tata Sons’ chief representative in North America. After 9/11, US immigration controls tightened, and the subsequent impact was apparent; Good explained how Tata’s business model may help provide other organizations some clues on how to cope with stringent immigration policies in the near term.

“For Tata, the US is a new business market, one where we would have liked to bring our Indian colleagues to work with our new US teams,” said Good. “We are setting down roots here and as our tradition requires, seeking ways to integrate our business into the communities we serve.” Explaining that Tata would normally pair both global and indigenous talents, Good noted that in this case, the teams were forming and using telecommunications and the resources back in India to supplement the talent based in the US. “It’s a matter of providing access to talent and access to capacity,” Good said.

Talent development must begin in local markets, explains David Jackson, president of the American division of Tata

Continued on page 7

Leadership Briefing Continued from page 6

Steel's subsidiary, Corus International. Corus is Europe's largest steel maker, with operations in the UK and mainland Europe. Formed in 1999 through the merger of British Steel and Koninklijke Hoogovens, Corus was acquired by Tata Steel in January 2007.

"Operating responsibly in the areas of education and the environment are critical for us," Jackson said. "The world is always going to need steel. It's up to us to determine how we can limit our carbon footprint while producing it and how we can strategically share what we are learning with our community."

Acknowledging that the steel industry has a challenging job to do in regards to sustainable operations, Jackson suggests that these standards now are simply part of operating the business, and a real commitment to sustainability provides a big assist to recruitment and retention of talent. "While it's a generalization for sure," Jackson explained, "the awareness of the needs of the environment and our commitment to sustainability make a big difference to the 20- or 30-year-old entering the industry today. They expect this

commitment from Corus. Our leadership expects it, and Tata shareholders expect it. It's the right thing to be doing."

Providing safe workplaces, respecting the environment, caring for local communities and demonstrating high ethical standards are examples of the values of corporate citizenship that company founder Jamssetji Tata espoused at the firm's launch in 1868; his focus was how to funnel the profits of his enterprises back into the local economy to provide education and community growth.

In today's rapidly changing global business environment, the successful organization must achieve business success in multiple markets. It must, in Tata's culture, also contribute to the growth of the communities in which it operates. Since group ownership is centralized into philanthropic trusts, achieving this goal is as important today as it was at its founding. "Each company has the obligation of seeking how it can operate on the same philosophy and to generate the same values in the community," Rosling explained. "We've done this in India. We've done this in the UK. The US is new for us, but this is an exportable model. The important thing for us is not to talk about it, but to do it," Rosling

said. "And then, to become known for it."

Tata believes the emerging multinational organization will be different from multinationals of today and will offer more value in more locations. Teams of people working together will no longer need to be co-located, Rosling explained in a later talk to Indian business leaders. Teams will be welded together by a common culture and purpose, by rapid communication and technology. Increasingly, Tata's leadership team believes, the multinational will need to "earn the license to operate" in communities by the way they interact with society and contribute to economic and social development. "It is good for the community," Rosling said, "and it is good for business." ■

ExecuNet was invited by global executive education organization HSM to create a series of articles based on the presentations at their World Business Forum in New York City in September 2008. HSM delivered the articles to the senior business leaders who attended the two-day forum of innovative thinking, and ExecuNet's Executive Editor Lauryn Franzoni and Editor-in-Chief Robyn Greenspan will continue to share the insights from this exclusive event in upcoming member programs and reports.

Your Career Advisor

Get Engaged: Give and Take 100 Percent from Your Job

By Milo Sindell and Thuy Sindell,
PhD

According to Gallup, 71 percent of employees are not engaged. Ironically, research over the last 60 years has confirmed that more than 70 percent of the population would still work even if they "won the lottery." Isn't it interesting that people want to work but are torn between their needs and the needs of their employer? Imagine the potential if what you wanted from your job was exactly what you got? Imagine what your company could achieve if every employee in your company was engaged?

The answer to engagement woes is a "Job Spa." Although light and humorous in name, taking a Job Spa is serious business, solidifying the balance between what you give and take from your job. Regardless of work experience or how long you've been in your job, to get what you deserve from your job requires commitment to your success and defining the balance between what you give and what you take from your job.

Attitude: 100 Percent Commitment

The first step to maximum engagement is to make the choice and set the goal to get engaged with your job. Engagement

means you walk down the corporate hallways with the following attitude: "I am 100 percent committed to my success." When you make this attitude shift, you start to see your work, and the opportunities within it, differently. You are intentionally crossing a threshold by making this commitment. Please keep in mind, we are not asking you to commit 100 percent to your company; we are asking you to commit to your success. This is different. Here's what this new attitude (commitment to your success) means:

- You hold yourself to a standard of personal accountability. Don't blame

Continued on page 8

CareerSmart Advisor | 7

Your Career Advisor

Continued from page 7

others and make excuses.

- You think big and allow yourself to imagine the possibilities. Don't limit yourself. Don't let history — the recording in your head — or what others say, stop you.

Assess your attitude in the above two areas. In what ways does your attitude need to shift in order to commit to your success? No more looking back. Starting from this point, you are the role model for 100 percent commitment to your success.

Behaviors: Give and Take 100 Percent

The right attitude is the foundation for the right behaviors. Now that your old attitude has been exfoliated, revealing a fresh commitment, let's make sure your behaviors reinforce your new glow.

Giving 100 percent to your job means that you are committed to giving as much as you can to your job. The behaviors that embody giving 100 percent can take many forms, including making your current projects an even bigger success, taking extra initiative, reaching out to co-workers, looking for opportunities to improve your performance or initiating new projects. Identify what giving 100 percent means to you.

Taking 100 percent from your job requires that you are clear on what you need in return for what you give. Beyond a paycheck and benefits, define what you need in return for your hard work.

An Exercise in Give-and-Take

Listed in the chart below are examples of what you give and receive from your job. Consider how much you currently give and what you currently take. Determine what you need to do to create equity between the two.

Give 100 Percent

- Your attention (be present).
- Your strategic thinking skills.
- Your knowledge and perspective.
- Your insights on what can be improved or new opportunities.
- Positive and constructive attitude toward co-workers and the company (even if you may not agree with them).
- Take initiative and look for opportunities to change or role model what you don't like about your company or environment (as opposed to complain).
- Follow through on commitments.
- Execute work on time and with top quality.
- Give the appropriate amount of time to your job.

Take 100 Percent

- Appropriate salary and benefits.
- Appropriate job title.
- Career development opportunities.
- Stimulating work or projects.
- Opportunities to learn new skills.
- Opportunities to learn from co-workers.
- Build relationships.
- Opportunities to travel.
- Opportunities to try a new role.
- Your specific needs.

This might include building new skills, establishing greater work/life balance or perhaps a promotion. What kinds of projects would you like to work on? What kind of relationships do you want to have with co-workers? What opportunities would be fun and stimulating if you were to partner with another function in your company? Do you need more flexible work hours? Identify what taking 100 percent means to you.

Your engagement level is a large determinant to your happiness and fulfillment with your professional career. It's not something you want to leave to chance. Otherwise, time will pass, and

one day you'll look back on your job or career and wonder where it all went. Take the initiative and determine how you want to give and take 100 percent. ■

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CareerSmart Advisor

Strategies & Solutions for Your Career Success

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Layout/Design: 5050Design.com

A biweekly publication of ExecuNet, the premier executive job, career and networking organization for senior level executives with salaries in excess of \$100,000.

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