

Leader Strategies

Issue Four

If You Want To Improve Personal Productivity, Stop Managing Time And Start Managing Energy

If you're like most effective leaders, you are a master at managing your time effectively; but what about your energy?

Time is finite. No matter what you do, there are only 24 hours in the day. Your energy, on the other hand, can be systematically expanded and regularly renewed. Think of your energy as a bank account. You are either making deposits and building it or making withdrawals and depleting it.

The study of energy – once the domain of physicists, Chinese medicine and new age philosophers – is now finding its way into the business world; and the findings are intriguing.

The Link Between Energy Management And Performance

According to a *Harvard Business Review* article, major corporations like Ernst & Young, Sony, ING Direct, and MasterCard are seeing strong benefits in teaching their executives and employees energy management skills.

The article cited an Energy Renewal Program that was tested in 12 regions of a major bank. On a measure called the "Big 3," which reflects revenues from three kinds of loans, program participants showed a year-over-year increase that was 13 percentage points greater than the control group. On "revenues from deposits," program participants showed a 20% increase.

The study provides compelling evidence that learning the skills of Energy Management increases people's capacity to get more done in less time with a higher level of engagement and more sustainability.

As the challenges of business accelerate in an increasingly difficult economy, energy management can be a valuable tool in increasing personal and organizational effectiveness.

Six Strategies For Managing Your Energy

- **Think beyond physical energy;** it's only one part of the equation. Your emotional and mental energy are equally important.
- **Know what gives you energy and what drains you.** The exact formula is different for everyone. Eliminate everything you can that drains your energy. Build time into your day for the things that energize you.
- **Take brief, but regular breaks throughout the day.** Our bodies go through 90 to 120-minute cycles during which we move from a high-energy state into a physiological trough. Towards the end of the cycle, our bodies begin to crave recovery time. Most of us ignore the signal and keep on working. This continues to drain your energy reservoir.
- **Be conscious of the energy around you.** Research shows that the average person's energy level is 2.4 – which is in the catabolic or negative

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Six Strategies For Managing Your Energy, Continued

range. At this level, people are dominated by worry, fear, doubt, and anger. In the business world, this frequently shows up as resistance to change, inertia, lack of initiative, indecision, in-fighting and an entitlement mindset. It is important to be aware of how powerful this energy is and how it can deplete you. Learn to recognize it and avoid being drawn in.

- **Listen closely to the stories you tell yourself.** Your energy level follows your thoughts. Negative thinking drains your energy. Positive thoughts build your energy.
- **Know the default tendencies that cost you energy.** Your default tendency is the way you tend to perceive and react to the world around you. It fires without your even being conscious of it. It is why we go on doing the same things we've always done, getting pretty much the same results. Our default tendency is our familiar way of dealing with a problem; but often times, it's not the most effective. For example, let's say a problem arises at the office, your default tendency is to get angry and start asking a lot of questions about what went wrong. This depletes your energy and everyone else's involved.

Can A New Approach To Work – Work?

Corporations that have tested the concept say "yes." At Sony, several hundred leaders have embraced the principles of energy management. Over the next year, each of their direct reports will go through the program. Ernst & Young launched their energy management program in their busiest time of year – tax season.

Most participants agreed it was their least stressful and most successful "busy season" ever.

You can learn more about personal and organizational management programs by contacting Kimberly Paterson at kpaterson@cim-co.com; or by calling 732.681.0700.

About CIM

CIM has 31 years' experience in working with insurance/financial organizations to strengthen performance. We work with companies to build the vision, strategy, customer insight and leadership skills to energize people and achieve outstanding results. Our value lies in our ability to quickly get to the heart of organizational issues and leverage opportunity.