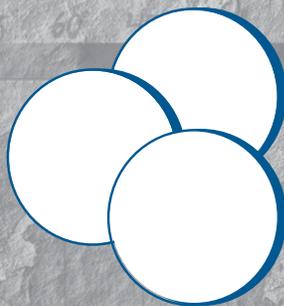




Spring 2017



Key Solutions

Employee Assistance Program



It's Important to Make Work Fun

By Mike Jacquart

In today's uncertain economic climate, you might think that humor and laughter in the workplace is an oxymoron. In reality, the need to use laughter and humor to reduce stress and lighten a tense mood has become more important than ever.

I've been told that I do some pretty good impressions: Milton from the cult classic *Office Space*, Forrest Gump, and Raymond Babbit (*Rain Man*), to name a few. In fact, at a former workplace it seemed if you weren't at least reasonably familiar with *Office Space*, you couldn't catch on to half of the jokes that were told! Milton's obsession with his Swingline stapler, in particular, was always good for a few laughs to ease the tension during a stressful period. I enjoyed having the gift of making people laugh...especially during tough times.

Humor has a lot of benefits. It's been proven helpful in combating stressful illnesses such as cancer, high blood pressure, stroke and scores of other diseases and conditions.

A study conducted by the State University of New York (SUNY) reported that employees who worked for bosses that utilized humor in the workplace had higher productivity and better job appraisals. Additional studies show that humor in the workplace can:

- Reduce the number of sick days
- Increase company loyalty
- Retain valuable employees
- Encourage creativity
- Improve morale

More Companies are Catching On

Most firms have become "leaner" in recent years and yet there is still constant pressure to do things faster, to assimilate more information, and to learn new skills. The need to "make do with less" amidst increased competition has triggered more job-related stress. Take the following examples:

- **It's almost inhumane if companies create a climate where people can't naturally have fun.** At least that's the prevailing view at Rosenbluth International, a Philadelphia-based travel company. "I know our company is doing well when I walk around and hear people laughing," states CEO Hal Rosenbluth.
- **Use humor, but not at the expense of others' feelings.** "Once you've established that you're good at what you do and that you're professional and take your work seriously, you'll find that humor and a lighter style will work for you, not against you," explains Paul McGhee, a motivational speaker. "The number one rule, of course, is to always be sensitive to when any kind of humor or laughter is, and is not appropriate."

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Healthy Recipe: Roasted Lemon Salmon Fillets



INGREDIENTS:

- 4 six-ounce salmon fillets
- 1 teaspoon kosher salt
- 1/4 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- Juice of one lemon
- 1-1/2 tablespoons olive oil

DIRECTIONS:

- Season salmon fillets with salt, pepper and lemon juice, then drizzle with olive oil.
- Preheat oven to 350 degrees F
- Place an oven-proof sauté pan large enough to accommodate all the fillets over the medium-high heat. Add salmon and sear the fillets for 3 minutes per side.
- Place in oven to finish cooking, about 5-10 minutes more, depending on the thickness of the fillet.

NUTRITIONAL VALUE:

Calories Per Serving: 244 Sodium: 585 mg.
Carbohydrates: 1 g. Saturated Fat: 2 g.
Protein: 34 g.

Courtesy of psychotherapist Margot Escott, the following are a few ideas for creating more humor in YOUR workplace:

- **Create humorous bulletin boards:** Bring in baby pictures of staff and let the fun begin as employees try to guess who's who.
- **Form a 'fun committee':** Use these to help continue to think up ways to create company-wide morale boosters.

The possibilities are endless, but whatever you do, remember that humor is an important coping skill in dealing with stress. It can even add a colorful dimension to your personality - whether it's impressions (like me) or something else.

Mike Jacquart is the editor of "employee Assistance Report" and a frequent blogger and LinkedIn contributor.

Saving for Retirement

Q: I just turned 50 and I recently started having money taken out of my paycheck for retirement. Any other tips?

A: First, I commend you for recognizing that need earlier than many people. You are also doing a good thing by having money withdrawn automatically from your checks. You can't spend money you never see! But you didn't say how much. At a minimum, save 1% of your earnings each payroll period. When you get a salary increase, add more to your savings while spending some. For instance, when you get a 3% increase at work, save 2% and spend the other 1%. If you receive a 5% raise, save 3% and spend 2%, and so on. Good luck.

Source: Bill Losey, author of "Retire in a Weekend! The Baby Boomer's Guide to Making Work Optional"

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You **do not** need to be enrolled in your employers insurance to utilize this benefit.

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Counseling Services: KeySolutions is here to **help you** and your family with any of **life's challenges**. During your appointment, you will meet with one of our experienced professionals and together decide on a **plan of action**.

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Employees and Family: KeySolutions is available to all **employees** and **dependent family members**.

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