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Use Your Time Efficiently (continued from page 3)

complete the project or task in a timely manner. It takes time up front but can reduce the time needed to complete the task every time you do it.

- ◆ Is the clutter on your desk slowing you down and increasing your stress level? Then throw things away. To determine if something can be thrown away, ask yourself three simple questions: 1) Does it have legal or financial importance? 2) Does it have importance regarding a customer? and 3) Would it be difficult to get another copy? If the answers are no, throw it away.
- ◆ If you seem to spend too much time on the phone, maybe you need to use a phone call agenda. Jot down the points you need to discuss *before* you call someone. This makes the call go quicker, reduces the likelihood you'll have to call back about something you forgot and keep you focused so you don't talk about items that are not important. ❖

REGISTER NOW!

MAKE YOUR SCHOOL DISTRICT SHINE!
WSPRA Annual Fall Conference • November 11-12, 2004
Heidel House Resort & Conference Center • Green Lake, Wisconsin

For more information or to register, watch your mail for details, go to
www.wspra.org/conference/index.htm or contact Patti Welch at WSPRA's office at
pwelch@wasb.org or 608-257-3220.



WISCONSIN SCHOOL PUBLIC RELATIONS ASSOCIATION

Fall Conference Focuses on Strategies to Keep School Districts Shining Amid

■ Lori Holly, School District of Menomonee Falls

Tight budgets, changes in the state legislature, NCLB and so many other factors are taking the shine off of school district communication plans statewide. Communications professionals are being asked to do more with less to market their schools, pass school referenda, and produce bright, lively publications.

Yet, if districts don't continue to market their districts in an increasingly competitive education environment, they risk getting lost in a sea of school choice options.

The Wisconsin School Public Relations Association, the state's leader in school community relations, will address these tough issues and more during its annual fall conference, Nov. 11-12 at the Heidel House Resort & Conference Center in Green Lake, Wisconsin.

Keynoting the conference are two public relations experts who will help school public relations professionals, school board members and administrators find ways to make their districts shine even in challenging times.



Barb Nicol, president of Barbara Nicol Public Relations, is a past president of the Minnesota School Public Relations Association (MinnSPRA) and has 20 years of experience in the communications field.

Barb will kick off the conference Thursday, Nov. 11. During her opening keynote address, she will share practical marketing strategies you can put to use in your district during her lively and interactive opening keynote address. Barb will share with you practical insights and creative ideas that you can try in your own schools.

Barb has worked with dozens of school districts and educational associations, and has presented at local, regional and national conferences on school marketing and communications strategies.



Judy Whalen, is president of Whalen & Associates, Inc., a 12-year-old consulting firm that helps organizations think and act in ways that enable them to be more innovative and competitive.

A WSPRA past president, Judy will show conference attendees how to keep their spirits shining

and soaring amidst the pressures of deadlines, referendums, board meetings, day-to-day activities and personal and family obligations.

Judy has over 22 years of experience helping organizations and individuals grow to their greatest potential. Prior to starting her own business, she worked in association management as an executive director of state and national associations, as a lobbyist, as a communications specialist and as an elementary school teacher. Judy also has firsthand experience as a board member.

The conference will also offer insights on how to get involved in legislative issues that will directly impact school districts. A diverse panel of experts moderated by Joe Quick, WSPRA's legislative liaison, will discuss ways school districts and stakeholders can influence legislators on the many key



issues facing the new Legislature, such as the Taxpayers Bill of Rights, proposed tax freezes, and No Child Left Behind legislation. **Senator-elect Luther Olson**, who has authored a number of education bills including legislation to reduce truancy and end social promotion, will be among the panelists.

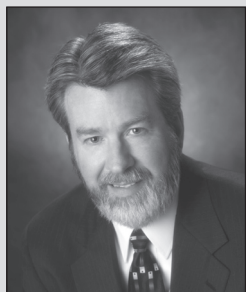
In addition, the conference will offer practical strategies for using your district's web site effectively, creating an image for your district, creating marketing plans,

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122 W. Washington Avenue, Suite 400, Madison, WI 53703
WISCONSIN SCHOOL PUBLIC RELATIONS ASSOCIATION



From the President . . .



Mark
McLaughlin

I had the opportunity to be an observer at an "Image Builders and Breakers" program last month. The presentation was an excellent reminder to me of why we must be aware of our behaviors' and attitudes' affect on everyone with whom we interact. Due to a number of events over the past month, I've been thinking a lot about "engagement"; engagement of different types with different audiences.

Recently, I was surprised to discover, shortly before a results presentation was due, that a client's entire database had been corrupted. While it was tempting to simply say we couldn't complete the project on schedule, we maintained positive engagement with the client by keeping them up-to-date and now have another satisfied client.

I have also been thinking about social engagement. I've found myself deciding not to call friends because "I've got so much office work to do" or "I need to catch up on things around the house and yard." I became concerned that my friends may perceive my lack of engagement as a lack of interest or concern about them. I am now making it a point to contact friends.

Finally, I realized I was ignoring my most important "engagement" responsibility when I heard a comment from my wife. While I was on the floor playing with our dog, she said just loud enough for me to hear, "What do I have to do to get attention from you?" She was joking but made her point. I realized that we can easily forget our most important "engagements." Maybe we all need to recognize our many levels of engagement and to keep them active and positive.

WSPRA Fall Conference (continued from page 1)

and one of the newest community engagement tools — performance-based budgeting.

Information on the conference and registration forms can be found at www.wspra.org/conference.htm or contact Patti Welch at WSPRA's office 608-257-3220. ❖

Strengthen the Harmony between Your Life, Family and Work: Resolving "Working Parent Guilt"

■ Judy Whalen, Whalen & Associates, Inc.

Editor's Note: Judy Whalen, president of Whalen & Associates, Inc., knows the demands and stress school officials experience daily as they try to do more with less funding. During her closing keynote address at the annual WSPRA fall conference in Green Lake, Wisconsin, Whalen will help attendees achieve work/life balance. Here is just a bit of what you will learn from Judy.

Here are four questions that can help you begin to address "working parent guilt." (Working moms are not the only ones in a family who need to resolve the issue of "guilt." Dads are just as prone to feeling guilty about not having enough time to spend with their children and spouse.) Often when we feel guilt, we know we feel it, but we can't specifically explain the reasons for feeling it. These four questions will help you pinpoint what is causing the guilt and develop an action plan to resolve the situation.

1. Are you living by your core values?

Designing your life to reflect your core values is the first step in resolving "working parent's guilt." If your life style is conflicting with your core values, the guilt you feel is your subconscious sending you a message. Here is an activity to help you "listen to the message."

- ◆ Make three columns on a piece of paper. In the first one, write down your core values. In the second one, for each value you listed, write an example of how that value manifests in your daily life. In the third column, write an example of how that value has been in conflict.
- ◆ Develop a plan to increase situations that result in harmony and decrease the conflict. Being aware of the times when you feel harmony or conflict will help you create more harmonious situations and prevent conflicting situations.

2. What aspects of your life are out of balance?

Achieving a sense of balance in your life will help reduce "working parent's guilt." (I know, many of you are saying, "Balance, I don't even have time to sleep! How can I achieve balance?") Here is an activity that can help you examine the balance in your life.

- ◆ Draw a circle. Divide it into six sections. Label the sections: Personal Relationships, Money & Finances, Business & Career, Health & Fitness, Training/Education/Mastery, and Spiritual. Then fill in the wedges to indicate your view of where you are now in each area. This will give you a picture of what area is out of balance. Then examine that area(s) more closely and develop simple action steps to gain more balance. Do you need

Stength and Harmony (continued from page 2)

more rest & relaxation? What can you do to get it? Is the relationship with your spouse the last thing that gets your time? Are finances dictating how you live your life? Are you working because you want to? Or because you have to? Is daycare costing more than the take-home check? What alternatives can you consider? Could you generate additional income in a more flexible manner?

3. Can you modify your working environment?

We often let ourselves believe that we can't change our situation. However, if eliminating guilt is significantly important to you, you will find a way to modify your work life to experience more balance and harmony. One way is to reassess your work environment — the reasons you are working, the organization, the job duties, your skill sets, your income, your potential, the environment, etc.

- ◆ Draw five columns on a sheet of paper. In the first column, list all your skills. In the second column, list how you can use these skills to generate income both in your current employment situation and in other ways. In the third column, list what you thoroughly enjoy about your present employment. In the fourth column, list all the things that you would like to change about your present employment situation. In the fifth column brainstorm how you could modify the situation. Be creative. Can you modify the environment by building on your strengths? Can you do things differently to create more time? Are there things you've taken on that you can let go of? Keep in mind that if finding more balance and harmony is significantly important, you will find a way to design your work environment so that it nurtures you and enables you to nurture the important people in your life.

4. What action can you take?

An action plan helps to restore balance and harmony to your life.

- ◆ Select one or two factors from the above exercises. Determine your goal and then develop a detailed set of action steps to achieve your goal. A spreadsheet format works well. Describe each action step, identify the resources you will need, who else needs to be involved, set a deadline for action and how you will know that you have completed the step.

Judy Whalen is president of Whalen & Associates, Inc. and IT STARTS WITH US™. She provides workshops and consulting services that help individuals, families, business and nonprofit leaders strengthen the harmony between their personal life, family life and business life. For more information about her strategic planning, market research, seminars, teleclasses and coaching services, e-mail judy@whalen.com or phone 608-455-2090 or visit www.whalen.com, www.strengthenstheharmony.com or www.shopliftingisstealing.com. ❖

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Silent Auction... Bidders Sought!

■ Mabel Shumacher, Ph.D., Fort Atkinson

WSPRA invites you to attend the 2004 Fall Conference on November 11 and 12 at the Heidel House in Green Lake. You are also invited to join in the fun (and competitive bidding) of the annual silent auction. This year the auction will be held as part of the pre-dinner social hour from 5:30 to 6:30 pm on Thursday evening.

You can participate in two ways: (1) you can bring a basket or other item to be auctioned off and (2) you can bring your wallet/checkbook so you can bid early and often for the always delightful items. Please bring your donated items to Mabel Schumacher in the Dansforth Lobby prior to the social hour.

Come prepared to support WSPRA's auction that funds a scholarship to the upcoming NSPRA convention to be held in Baltimore in July 2005. ❖

Use Your Time Efficiently

■ Mark McLaughlin, McLaughlin & Associates

Despite what the song says, do you think time is on your side? It seems that more and more people are commenting about how there just doesn't seem to be enough time to get everything done. Unfortunately, there is no plan being developed to lengthen the number of hours in the day. Therefore, we all have to work more efficiently. Maybe these ideas will help you.

- ◆ Keep two "to do" lists. One list should be your master list with everything you need to do. The other list should be your daily list. At the end of each day, review your master list and pull from it to make your "to do" list for the next day. This provides a sense of satisfaction by completing the daily list and reduces stress caused by that endless master list.
- ◆ When opening your mail each day, do it standing over your waste basket. If you receive something that isn't important, don't even put it on your desk. Throw it away immediately. And why stand? Studies have shown people are more likely to make a decision quickly when standing.
- ◆ Know what your boss wants you to do. When your "to do" list gets too long, it can be difficult focusing on the most important task. Be sure you know what your boss expects you do to. If you don't know for sure, ask! Then focus your time and energy on the tasks most important to your boss.
- ◆ If you have a responsibility that is relatively complex but has to be completed every year, it may be difficult to remember all the parts of the task. Consider writing a procedure manual. The manual should include "how to" information as well as samples, timelines or other items to help you

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