

# LifeMap<sup>SM</sup>



"LifeMap is a navigational tool to help you on your path towards personal and professional success. Our belief is that you can achieve a more rewarding career, a more productive organization and a more enjoyable and abundant life."

June 2013

## This Month's Message:

**How To Take A Break From Work.**

**Paths Forward**

- **Need Career Coaching?**
- **Tired of boring meetings??**

**Resources**

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## How To Take A Break From Work.

Do you remember the saying "All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy." From reading a study from the Families and Work Institute it would seem that many do not.

It found that:

- 26% of employees work on the weekend,
- 46% of employees talk to colleagues after hours,
- 32% of employees bring work on vacation.

## Quick Links

**LifeMap Archive**

Do you see yourself in these numbers? I'm not asking about the occasional instance when something out of the ordinary pops up; I'm asking if you do this regularly. If so, then I

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suggest that you have not managed the boundary between your work and non-work life very well. (You *do* have a non-work life - right?)

I have devoted a significant part of my life consulting to and speaking to employers and employees. I sure hope it's obvious that I believe work is an essential part of a meaningful life. But like any powerful influence work must be kept in proper perspective. To help folks determine if they are doing this I often ask "Are you working to live or living to work?"

Every year around this time I hear people of all ranks pondering how to take a vacation and still keep up with the work flow, not be buried when they return, still maintain visibility, continue to look essential and preferably indispensable. Let's tackle each of these in this month's Paths Forward.

## Paths Forward

\* **Quit The Race To The Bottom.** Recessions and touch economic times breed fears that linger long after the economy rebounds. Fear causes people to do some smart things and some dumb things. One dumb thing is to buy into the one-upmanship I've observed where some employees start off regularly coming in earlier and earlier, staying later and later, and working more nights and weekends. Again, I'm not talking about the occasional emergency or predictable crunch times like year-end or seasonal inventory or tax season. Focusing others' attention on how many hours you've worked suggests inefficiency and a time-clock mentality. Further, it distracts them from focusing on what it is that you actually accomplish. Your productivity and accomplishments are the things that will get you ahead and those are the things you need to be reinforcing in the minds of others - especially your supervisor.

\* **Less Time Can Be More.** In years of assessing and coaching high achievers I have observed that if you want to depend on something getting done you should give it to a busy person. There are many reasons for this including schedule management, avoiding interruptions, not obsessing about unimportant details. Have you ever noticed that you can manage to get a report out or a project completed regardless if you have two days or four days allotted to it? If you use your calendar to concretely schedule in a soccer game, an exercise class or a well-deserved quiet dinner at home you'll find yourself working more efficiently to get out the door in time to make it happen.

### Resource:

[Now What?: 90 Days to a New Life Direction](#) by Laura Berman Fortgang

\* **Unplug.** If you are a regular LifeMap reader you have heard me say this before - *the 24/7 electronic collar is not your friend*. If you have allowed technology to communicate to others that you are available 24/7 then you have done

yourself (and them) a disservice. You - because you need time away from work to be able to arrive at work refreshed and ready to give it your all and them - because you have reinforced their inefficiency, lack of scheduling and time management and not to mention that you are modeling behavior that is as unproductive for them as it is for you. Use your outgoing voice and e-mail to let others know when you will and will not be available. Be fastidious in responding as you've indicated. When others learn that your responses are predictable and timely they will be less apt to ask for stuff ASAP. (By the way, the only person who gets to ask for something "as soon as possible" is your boss. Otherwise that person is, in essence, saying "I'm more important than anything else you are doing." Always get specific and realistic dates and times for deliverables.)

**Resource:**

[Time Off for Good Behavior](#) by Lani Diane Rich (Oct 1, 2004)

**\* Conscientious Telecommuting.** Telecommuting is a great way to improve your work/life balance. If you are among the fortunate minority of folks who are allowed to telecommute you have a couple of responsibilities that are perhaps not so obvious. The first is to prove to management that not only can you do your job but that you can do your job better. Management has made this accommodation for you and, being realistic, telecommuting sometimes is a bit of a hassle for the employer. Thus, your telecommuting arrangement will more likely be continued if you can show that it *adds to* productivity. The other responsibility is to those folks who hope to become telecommuters. By raising your performance standards and not fudging on your time worked you are further reinforcing to management that extending this kind of flexibility to others can be good for improving productivity and organizational climate as well as employee morale, recruiting, and retention . (You will note I am refraining for now on commenting on Yahoo's \$36.6 million a year CEO dictate that all employees now need to be in the building!! I'm hoping the marketplace squares this away.)

**Resource:**

[Telecommuting Success: A Practical Guide for Staying in the Loop While Working Away from the Office](#) by Michael J. Dziak

**\*Take Your Darn Vacation.** Your employer pays for your earned vacation time not because it is a philanthropic institution (even if it actually is one) but because it is in it's best interest. Taking your vacation time is also in your best interest. It is also in your family's best interest. Heck -it's even in the best interest of the country's economy. I've made this case strongly before and I believe it more strongly than ever. I read some research that indicates that those who take two vacations a year are less likely to develop heart disease (30% for men, 50% for women) than those who vacation rarely or never. If you need further convincing go to [www.drpaulpowers.com](http://www.drpaulpowers.com), click on LifeMap Archive and scroll to 7/15/08 *Get Outa Town*.

**\* Get Over Yourself.** - Yes, you could have tons of e-mails

when you return - if you don't let people know in advance where their projects are, who will be covering for you while you're away and what to expect from you before you leave and when you return. Leaving people in the dark makes them anxious.

- No, you will not lose your job, your credibility, your status or your future by taking some time off - if those things were not already at risk. If so, you've got bigger problems than learning to take some time off. I have seen instances where getting away and getting some needed perspective on one's work has produced renewed commitment to a job, refreshed energy for the job and, in some cases, facilitated a difficult decision to leave a job that no longer fits.

- No, the company (or division, or department or project) will not collapse without you. Let those who *really* depend on you know your vacation plans well in advance (weeks ahead, not days ahead). Asking them what they need from you during that time will prod them to do some advance thinking - not a bad management skill to reinforce. Ask yourself "Honestly, am I really *that* indispensable?" If you passed away tonight would the company dry up and blow away? I doubt it. On the other hand maybe you *are* a truly indispensable person; I'm told the cemeteries are full of them.

**LifeMap** is about encouraging you to do the productive, healthful and right thing for your employer, your family and yourself by keeping work and career (as important as they are) in proper perspective.

### · Need Career Coaching?

The best investment you can make is in your career, your future and yourself.

email [drpaul@drpaulpowers.com](mailto:drpaul@drpaulpowers.com)

### · Tired of boring meetings??

Have Dr. Paul speak at your next off-site meeting or conference. Fast-moving, practical, motivating presentations from an acknowledged leader in the field of career and personal success.

**<http://www.drpaulpowers.com/speakingschedule.html>**

### Resources

· Are you or someone you know job hunting or thinking about it?

The best, concise, all-round job changing guide available. Revised Edition [Winning Job Interviews](#) by Dr. Paul Powers.

In this easy-to-follow, step-by-step book, Dr. Paul Powers demystifies job interviewing, explains why the process actually favors the job hunter, and shows how you can dramatically improve your interview skills. Packed with solid, practical information and laced with both

humor and "kick in the pants" motivation, *Winning Job Interviews* is the book you wished you had before your last interview... and is mandatory preparation for your next one!

· Stalled at work? Still struggling to find your true vocation?

Or know someone who is? Order your copy of [Love Your Job!](#) *Loving the Job You Have, Finding A Job You Love* by Dr. Paul.

**<http://www.drpaulpowers.com/booksandarticles.html>**

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**Sincerely,**

Dr. Paul

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