

LifeMapSM



"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."

November 2012

This Month's Message:

Have Some Fun At Work.

Paths Forward

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

Resources

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Have Some Fun At Work.

No, I'm not crazy. Yes, I know the purpose of work is to get work done. Yes, I know work is demanding, sometimes frustrating and often stressful but that's no reason to completely give up on having some fun. Teams that smile, enjoy each others company and share an occasional laugh together deal more effectively with difficult tasks and tight deadlines, have fewer interpersonal conflicts and more easily resolve those conflicts that do arise.

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The job of setting the cultural norms in any organization belongs to the leaders. They, via their directives to senior staff, set the tone and climate. If the leaders want an organizational climate that is grim and humorless then it will be so - and you shouldn't go out on a limb to fight it. If it's *that* bad you can always quietly start to look for employment elsewhere. But if you are fortunate enough to work for an organization that favors positive human relations and makes real efforts to support them then I heartily suggest you join in.

My purpose is not for you to become the office jokester or the shop comedian but, rather, to contribute to an environment that is conducive to productivity, camaraderie and esprit de corps. It will make your job and that of your colleagues easier and more enjoyable.

This month's Paths Forward section is broken out into two categories: General Ideas and Specific Ideas (many of which I've actually seen and enjoyed). But please remember - before trying *anything* new check with your team leader, supervisor or human resources to determine its appropriateness in your environment.

Paths Forward

* General Ideas To Get More Fun Into Work.

- Smile. It costs you nothing and it gives you a lift as well as to everyone around you.
- Greet people in the hallways with a hello or even just a smile, a nod or a small wave if you're already in conversation with somebody else.
- Get some fresh air / stretch your legs. For one on one meetings take a walk around the building. 10 minutes without stale office air can mean a world of difference to your attitude. For small group meetings see if you can use a picnic table outside of the cafeteria. Maybe sit on the steps or loading dock if necessary.
- Say something positive. Compliment a new outfit, haircut, tie, a new picture on the wall. Comment on a job well done. Have a few positive responses ready when asked how you are. Try those like "glad to see you", "great", "super", "ready to rock" or "full steam ahead". Avoid those like "another day / another dollar", "hanging in there", or "don't ask".
- For short meetings or project updates try meeting standing up and keep it as short as possible. People love it when a meeting takes less time than they expected.
- Post a funny cartoon where folks will see it like at the coffee machine. Change it from time to time. Avoid political cartoons which have the potential to offend half of your colleagues. The same thing goes for Dilbert cartoons which I enjoy but, when viewed at work, some may think are focused at a specific person or department.
- Develop a light attitude. Keep your perspective. You don't need to yuk it up but try to remember that in a hundred years it won't matter all that much what you crammed into your "out" box today.

*** Specific Ideas I've Seen.**

- Meeting leaders who use proven and enjoyable ice-breakers.
- Have a fun dress up or dress down day, a funny hat day or make up your own funny "holiday" to celebrate (e.g. International Talk Like A Pirate Day is September 19. (www.talklikeapirate.com) One group I worked with celebrated Elvis's birthday (January 8th) by making and wearing fake mutton-chop style sideburns. On the men it was amusing, on the women it was hysterical
- One IT / telecomm department replaced boring "on hold" music with a recorded comedy routine. Many folks calling in commented positively on it. If you try this be sure to keep it well within the bounds of good taste.
- Trading A Colleague. Some departments seem to just naturally come into conflict. Examples: Sales versus sales support, marketing versus engineering, headquarters staff versus division or satellite staff and so on. A fun way to tackle these predictable conflicts is for both groups to trade a key employee for a few days or a week. It can start with a welcome lunch and end with an after-work goodbye. This helps one group to better understand the challenges and frustrations of the other and generates practical ideas about how to work together more productively. It creates a key contact or ambassador of sorts in each group. One small but growing high-tech company tried this and it worked not only in the short term but months later each group "drafted" for their softball team the employee who had earlier been "traded" to them. This demonstrates the long-lasting effect something like this can have.
- Buzzword Bingo. Every organization has their share of buzz words, catch phrases and acronyms such as "touching base", "at the end of the day", "reach out to . . .", "It is what it is", "EBIT", "ASAP", "SOP", "out of the box". Use them to come up with a bingo card distributed at meetings where the first person to cross off 5 yells bingo and wins a small prize.
- Have a fun, low-impact competition for coffee breaks or lunch. This can run from trivia contests to darts to hallway swivel chair Olympics.
- Here's one of my real faves. A hospital north of Boston had a problem with people speeding into the parking lots just before shift changes which was especially dangerous right after a snowstorm. A couple of memos went out on the topic but shortly thereafter the problem would start again. Some suggested issuing tickets with fines. The president and I thought we could fix the problem with humor. The president bought a Smokey the Bear hat and mirrored sunglasses and then sat in his car pointing a hair dryer (which sort of looked like a radar gun) out the window at offenders. Almost immediately everybody was talking about it and enjoying a good laugh. He only did that twice before the problem was solved. That story became part of the informal history of that organization and more than once I heard it being told to new potential new employees as an example of the positive organizational climate.

Additional resource: [301 More Ways to Have Fun at Work](#), by Dave Hemsath (Paperback - Mar 30, 2001)

LifeMap is about helping you to add good humor and fun into your life - and that includes your work life too.

· Need Career Coaching?

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

email 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.

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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!

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

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Sincerely,

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