

# Strategic Trends™

Managing the Human Side of Business<sup>SM</sup>

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## Are You Serving Your Customers?

The other day I listened to a group of people discuss the deterioration of customer service at one of the major national electronic stores just as the holiday season was about to start. There were a lot of reasons given, but the end result was that many of the people refused to shop there or have vowed not to shop there again.

Many organizations believe that customer service is a result of training their employees

to be “customer friendly” and that they will then be friendly. What we are finding is that it takes much more than just training on what good customer service looks like.

Organizations that are the best at customer service are those who have employees who are highly engaged and understand that what they do in serving the customer is important to them and the

organization. They understand that the things that they do actually have a purpose.

As a result, their organizations seem to have better financial returns.

In his article “Are You Being Served,” Keith Ayers discusses what it takes to get employees who are motivated to really serving your customers. Please visit our web site to access this article with our compliments.

[www.ResourceDevelopmentSystems.com/articles.htm](http://www.ResourceDevelopmentSystems.com/articles.htm)

## Communication: Impact on the Bottom Line

Recent research by Watson Wyatt Worldwide ([www.watsonwyatt.com](http://www.watsonwyatt.com)) reveals that communication effectiveness has a direct impact on the bottom-line performance of an organization. The better an organization communicates with its employees, the better your return on investment will be. Watson Wyatt found that the organizations that communicated effectively dramatically outpaced organizations that don't.

They found that a significant improvement in communication effectiveness is associated with a 29.5 percent increase in market value. Those companies with the highest levels of effective communication experienced a 26 percent total return to shareholders from 1998 to 2002.

They also found that organizations that communicate effectively were more likely to have turnover rates below or significantly below those of their industry peers. Employee retention is a

clear advantage, both in retaining highly qualified employees, and in reduction of costs associated in replacing employees.

It all boils down to creating a connection between the organization, its purpose, culture, and goals directly with the employee. Employees understand how their actions can support the organization, and see how their performance impacts the overall performance of the organization.

As new employees are brought on-board the

*(Continued on page 3)*

### Special points of interest:

- Learn how communication can impact your organization's bottom-line
- Learn about how to effectively manage your time without stress
- Learn about the importance of customer service to your profit margins

## RDS' CEO Receives Award at International Conference

For the seventh year in a row, Resource Development Systems has received an award from the Inscape Publishing international network of consultants at their annual International Business Conference. This year Gary Lear, President and CEO, received an award for his sponsorship and mentoring of fellow consultants.

Gary is often involved in sharing ideas, techniques, and information on current research with other consultants in the network. He also directly sponsors new consultants, offering to provide guidance and mentoring to them to help set up their businesses and get off the ground.

The Inscape Business Conference is the largest gathering of independent business consultants in the world. Inscape Publishing, the sponsoring organization, is devoted to providing some of the highest quality tools and assessments for helping organizations and individuals learn more about themselves and those in the organization. This drives performance improvement at both the individual level as well as for teams and workgroups, and results the ultimate success for all concerned.

Resource Development Systems, LLC is proud to be an authorized distributor of Inscape's products,

and uses many of them in our consulting practice. They provide the core tools in helping us to create positive change.

We are also proud of Gary and his unselfish sharing with others! Congratulations!

**Impact Individual**

**Performance...Get the**

***EPIC Edge* for your**

**organization today!**

## Inscape's New Electronic Profile System

The new Electronic Profile Information Center (EPIC) by Inscape is increasing in popularity by leaps and bounds. This new internet-based platform allows you to efficiently deliver electronic versions of Inscape's most popular profiles to your staff via the internet, all with just a simple click of a mouse. Or you can just have

participants take the profile and you can then print them out for review later in a course. You make the decision.

But what's really sets the EPIC profiles apart from their paper versions are the enhancements, such as personalized information and skills gap analyses. These profiles go far beyond the paper

versions.

For a limited time, get your own EPIC platform free. That's right. Contact us to learn more about how you can bring the EPIC Edge to your organization.

## Time Mastery Profile®

The new online version of the Time Mastery Profile® by Inscape Publishing and delivered on our new EPIC system is a giant leap forward in helping people become better at mastering time management. Not only does it still measure how well you do on 12 key important areas, but

it also now provides you with an analysis about how important each area is to your success, and then gives you an overall skills gap, allowing you to work on those areas that will give you the most significant impact on performance by making improvements in that area. Just another reason why the EPIC Edge can make a real difference.

**Areas Measured:**

**Attitude about time Management; Goals; Priority Setting; Analyzing; Planning; Scheduling; Interruptions; Meetings; Paperwork; Delegation; Procrastination; and Time Teamwork.**

## Communication (continued from page 1)

organization, they begin to immediately see that connection and begin to relate to the culture of the organization.

Goals are continuously discussed, as well as the values that guide the organization in reaching those goals. This helps keep the culture focused, as well as the employees.

Superior communication effectiveness also allows for flexibility in the organization as it competes in an ever changing marketplace. As opportunities arise, or challenges are faced, everyone in the organization can understand the changes that are needed to keep the organization moving forward. Change at every level is easier and quicker.

Communicating effectively also allows managers to more effectively

connect with employees, creating relationships that are so important for building trust and creating employee engagement. Not only does this have a significant impact on organizational performance, but it also helps employees more effectively deal with organizational change and keeps them connected to their leadership.

So how do you build effective communication? Don't rely on chance! Begin by building some very strong formal communication structures and processes. Make sure you include employee feedback because the most effective communication methods are those with two-way processes. Use technology, where available, to accomplish this.

Deal directly with all of your major business processes, including strategic issues of change, continuous improvement, and business strategy integration and alignment. Get the word out about your important issues, such as purpose and goals, and keep talking about it all the time.

Finally, create line of sight between employees and customers, leaders, and the organization's financial performance. Drive behavioral change by sharing this information and keeping everyone focused on the things that really matter to the organization.

The bottom-line is that communication and sharing of information in the organization is not a "soft function." It has real impact on the performance of your organization, and is a key contributor of organizational

## Mastering Time Your Way™

Setting priorities and managing time are basic to enhancing individual and organizational performance. The pressure to find innovative ways to achieve goals, stay ahead of the competition, respond quickly to customer needs, and enjoy life outside of work is increasingly intense in today's less structured, information-driven workplace.

If you could reduce your staff's wasted time by just five minutes every hour, productivity would jump 8.3 percent. Efficiency levels would also rise as employees began to devote more time to completing critical tasks. The advantages of effective time management include:

- the ability to accomplish more each day
- the ability for departments and teams to meet project deadlines

- the ability to serve more customers without added staff, equipment, or office space
- the ability of managers to spend more time pursuing opportunities and less time doing paperwork and attending meetings.

Just about everyone knows that time management is an important function, but so often people feel that they do a lousy job of it. The fact is, most people aren't lousy in all areas of time management, just one or two out of a dozen key areas.

There are a whole host of time management training programs out there, touting their particular way to become better at managing time with a one-size-fits-all approach. But people are different and have their own strengths and weaknesses. Any approach that doesn't take this into account

usually just leaves the participant feeling frustrated when they can't do what the programs says they should do.

A better approach is to look at what key areas of time management you are or aren't good at **and** look at how important those areas are to your effectiveness in your job. If you are doing well in those areas that are critical to your job performance, then you can decide just how important those areas are that you aren't so good at.

But if you have areas that are important or crucial to your performance and you aren't doing so well, now you can map out a plan to improve, one or two areas at a time, rather than all areas at once. This approach makes it much easier to make improvements, as the work no

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## Newsletter

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### Managing the Human Side of Business SM

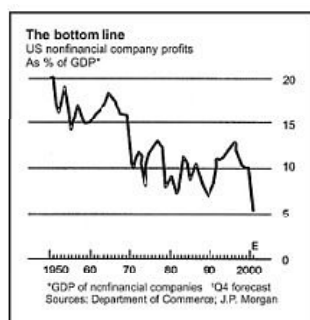
Resource Development Systems, LLC helps organizations create and implement strategic plans for dealing with the change and innovation that is needed for them to be successful, including the tools to help them to manage the human side of their business: shareholders, customers, management, and employees.

**We offer**

**Uncommon Results to  
Common Problems!**

## Future Trends

A few issues ago we showed the following graph from the book **Follow This Path** published by the Gallup Organization. It originally



*The Economist*, December 8, 2001, p. 65.

appeared in **The Economist** in December 2001. As we've shared in the past, profit margins are continuing to plummet.

Organizations send jobs off-shore in an attempt to keep from having their profit margins cut even more.

But the focus is always on the "cost" side, not on the investment side of the financial equation. Too often organizations look at revenue growth as indicators of performance in the organization, rather than the real bottom line—the money that the shareholders can put in their pockets.

We've talked before that one way to overcome this profit margin downturn is to provide value to your customers. Part of that value is making an emotional connection with them. But most organizations do a lousy job of creating that kind of connection. Why? Their employees.

Most organizations have

employees that don't understand the connection between "wowing" the customer and the paycheck that they get each payday. These employees do an ok job, but they don't understand the importance of delighting the customer to get that customer to continue to return and spend their money, which is then converted to the employee's paycheck.

Those organizations that can help their employees see this connection by sharing information and financial numbers, and who take steps to make their own connection between leadership and employees will see an increase in customer connections, and as a result, the bottom-line. It will mean the difference between struggling for survival and having significant performance over the next decade.