teamworks

Making the Workplace Work for You

Workplace Resets
Where Do We Go From Here?

I really like hitting the reset button on my laptop. It retrieves information previously lost, helps me refocus on my plan, and corrects my previous mistakes. It can literally catapult me out of a potentially messy situation.

Similarly speaking, the beginning of a new season at work offers a chance to have a different frame of mind for the workplace. One may argue that returning to work after so many forced changes will just be another day, same oh- same oh, and business as usual, but to me it seems like a good opportunity to adjust our attitude, come in with a renewed game plan and correct perceptions of us and others that need change. Much like a football team returning to the field after half time, we can go back on the field, so to speak, with renewed desire and strength to reach our personal and professional goals.

Psychologists have stated that there are three things everyone needs for their emotional health:

- Something to do
- Someone to love
- **Something to look forward to**
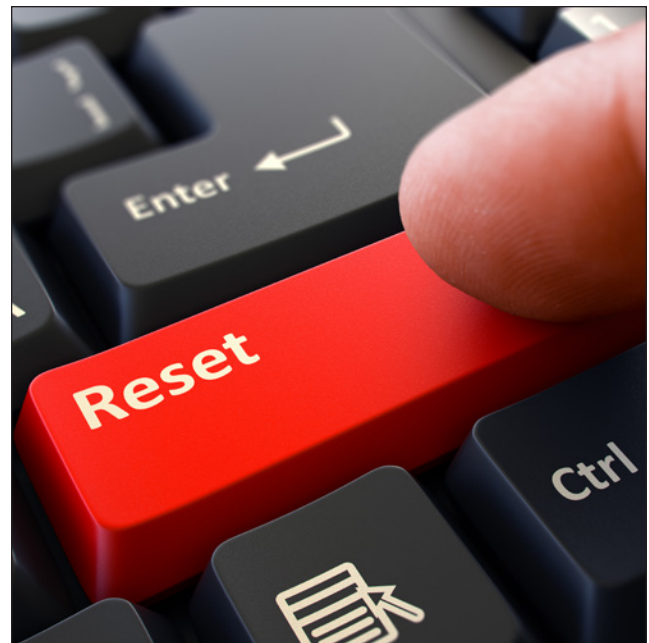
If you don't have a reset button for your job or nothing new <u>to look forward to</u> when you return to your position, work can be less than promising. The reality of a workplace crisis and the facing of a new day offers an opportunity to step back, take a deep breath and ask a few good questions. Another way to say it is by asking the question: *Where do we/I go from here?*

Strategic Planning

While working with an organization here in the Northwest, I was asked to facilitate a strategic planning day for management. Administration came up with three questions for the leadership team to discuss in order to stimulate ideas and encourage forward thinking. The questions were:

   1. **What is one thing we should continue doing?**

   2. **What is one thing we should stop doing?**

   3. **What is one thing we should start doing?**

First of all, I like the fact that they even cared to ask how they were doing as an organization. They weren't interested in status quo or making staff merely comfortable. They truly wanted to know the state of their company.

So let's look a bit closer at these questions to analyze where are going as we reset our professional future there.

1. What's One Thing We Should Continue Doing?

What project or responsibility has worked well this past year? Has it benefited you personally as well as the people you service or the company as a whole? Are there others who are buying in and participating or is it relegated by just a few? Has there been good feedback overall as to the success in this area? Is the morale strong in this area going forward? Are people on staff mobilized to share the load and operate in the areas of their strengths? Is there an overall sense of agreement that this should continue?

On a personal note, is there something about your work that has personal reward and leaves you feeling fulfilled at a deeper level? Do you have the flexibility to broaden the areas that are working well? Are you being challenged to get creative with where you go with these kinds of task? Do you look forward to the coming months to personally develop in other areas? What are the specifics benefits that have been a result of what you should continue to do?

2. What Is One Thing We Should Stop Doing?

This really shouldn't be hard to answer or take too long to figure to out. What project, activity, person or responsibilities are time wasters and completely ineffective to the morale of the organization?

Is there growing chaos in this particular area of concern? Is there a lot of busy work being done with little measurement of progress? Is staff burning out and losing their motivation and joy to work there? Has there been increased turnover specifically related to what should be stopped?

On a personal note, what is the area in your work life that is having the most negative impact on your position in the company or personal life? Do you feel that you are suited for the task that you have? Do you hate going to work every day? Are you being drained by the end of the day because of in fighting or because of a lack of trust in

someone you work with? Are you taking on more than you can personally handle in a day? Is your inability to say no or manage your time sabotaging your progress? What steps should you or the organization take to stop doing this?

3. What Is One Thing We Should Start Doing?

This is the best question as we ponder possibly resetting our responsibilities? As I alluded to earlier, if we don't have anything to look forward to (even in the workplace) something is missing? Are you able to advance in your position, create new responsibilities that you enjoy within your position, or get further training to enhance your position? Should you start delegating some of your workload to others that are better suited for it? Is it time to actually take your annual allotted vacation time?

Should you change your attitude and go with the flow of the organization? Should you finally embrace the changes that you might have resisted for so long? Are you suited for your position? Is there somewhere else in the company you can transfer to that's more in keeping with who you are? Do you need to hang around healthier people in the workplace who have a sense of loyalty within the company? What would be some practical steps or goals you or the company can take to initiate the new plan to be started?

On a personal note

Is your life with home and work in balance? Do you feel it's time for you to set more personal boundaries in your life, both at work and in the home? Are there classes you can take to better yourself personally? Are you physically feeling up to par? Should you talk to your supervisor about changing your responsibilities, hours or position? Is there any ongoing conflict that you should take steps to resolve at work? Should you start talking about other things with your family and friends other than the stresses of work?

I think you get the point. You probably have heard the phrase several times that "insanity is doing the same behavior and activity expecting different results".

Smart Goals for the New Workplace Plan

In speaking of resetting or recalibrating our goals and responsibilities for the workplace, it can be helpful to have a track to run on or a place to start. Below is an acronym I picked up from one author referring to setting new goals using the acronym **S-M-A-R-T**

S - Smart goals are Specific; the less vague the more achievable. Details are preferred.

M - Smart goals are Measurable; it helps to have a step by step process that can be evaluated.

A - Smart goals are Action-Oriented; they must be backed up with participation and action.

R - Smart goals are Realistic; they must be practical and attainable for the situation.

T - Smart goals are Time Framed; there is a targeted end to reach or shoot for, deadlines are essential.

On a final note anytime there is a huge change that hits any organization, leadership and staff are faced to ask and answer three more questions:

A Plan for Facing Change
1. Why was the Change Necessary?
   (**The Purpose for Change**).

Given the pandemic, this answer is obvious, however, I think what many organizations are already finding is that changes in some areas were necessary anyway. So this makes for stimulating conversations.

Always know "that a change imposed is a change opposed." So discussion and understanding are imperative if there is to be buy in from the entire team.

2. What will the New Change Look Like?
(The Plan in Change)

The first question that hits every employee when forced change happens is, will my job be secure and what will it look like now? Will I have the same responsibilities? Are there budget cuts and cross trainings necessary? Will I have a new supervisor? Does our office location move or will I even have the same desk or equipment to use?

What will the specifics of the reset workplace look like in detail for all who work there?

The quicker these questions and others are addressed and answered the more secure your staff will be and the faster all can embrace the new challenges.

3. Who will Implement the Change?
(The Participation with the Change)

Now that many are returning to a different "post-crisis" workplace, responsibilities make take on new expressions and shapes. Perhaps maybe whole new divisions need to be formed and others minimized.

The personnel who will help in the implementations of these changes are critical to the overall success in moving forward.

Conclusion

I personally believe that it's never too late to start over, unless your work is done there. It's all about choice and rising to level of your desires and potential. The worst thing you can do in an undesirable workplace situation is nothing. Nothing changes if nothing changes. So hit your reset button, take new opportunities by throat, and make it happen!

1532

Bill Gallagher has been counseling and working with professionals since 1980. His emphasis in the workplace is to help develop both relational skills and professional standards among administration and staff. He has worked in multiple organizational settings and of recent has spent most of his time addressing workplace issues in healthcare and city government.

Bill formed TeamWorks in 2001 to help organizations achieve their goals for establishing high morale and client satisfaction. TeamWorks currently specializes in offering one-on-one surveys and evaluations for management and staff to assess the current culture's needs and recommended trainings going forward.

In addition to conducting a variety of workshops and in-services on workplace issues, Bill mediates conflict among partnerships and staff relationships, speaks at conventions, facilitates management retreats, and offers personal consultation and counseling for staff.

Bill's strengths are in public speaking, mediation, and understanding the complexities of relational dynamics in the workplace. He lives in Medford, Oregon, with his wife Jenny, and enjoys spending time with their five children and five granddaughters.