Building Emotional Capital

RocheMartin® WhitePaper

Seven Secrets To Health, Wealth And Wisdom In 2010

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In addition to financial security, our most enduring wealth is still to be found in our emotional and spiritual health. Last year in an article '*Why happiness is good for business'* I wrote about the impact that a happy workplace culture can have on the bottomline in business. This year I'd like to continue that theme and provide seven key strategies for helping employees sustain greater health, wealth and wisdom at work.

RELATIONSHIPS – GET CONNECTED

According to studies reported in the Scientific American Mind, it turns out that belonging to social groups and networks seems to be just as important a predictor of health as diet and exercise. Studies at Mellon University showed that a diverse social network made people less susceptible to the common cold compared to less sociable people who, it appears, are twice as likely to get colds.

Action: Three tips for building high quality relationships include treating those you work with as your equals and finding common ground; second, looking for ways you can help colleagues achieve wins at work; third, giving people an opportunity to make decisions and contribute directly to your relationship.

COMPASSION - TRY A LITTLE KINDNESS

Of all the skills that contribute to your health, wealth and wisdom at work, your capacity for empathy is fundamental. Empathy involves recognising the emotions that influence people's behaviour, understanding what drives them and being compassionate.

Action: Listening is absolutely essential to empathy. Try to understand the tasks that people are trying to perform. Listen and be curious about people's experiences, and ask considered questions about their plans, hopes and dreams. By listening carefully, and learning to recognise the emotions that direct the behaviour of people, you will learn a lot about different levels of engagement, expression and getting the most out of your working and personal relationships .

GO WITH THE FLOW

If you've ever been totally absorbed in what you're doing, then you will have experienced 'the flow' of being completely engaged and temporarily forgetting about your worries. Being 'present' or totally absorbed in the activity you're doing is a skill that requires focus and discipline, as well as honesty about your abilities, desires and need for reinforcement.

Action: To 'go with the flow' you should aim to:

- Ensure that the challenge of your job matches your skills and provides you with the opportunity to stretch your abilities.
- Establish clear goals of what you're trying to achieve, and regularly take time to reflect on your achievements.
- Minimize your need to be admired by others and instead cultivate a genuine self-awareness that is open to receiving feedback.
- Focus your attention regularly on expressing your creativity, and taking charge of the development of your talent.
- Learn something valuable from every experience

CULTIVATE OPTIMISM - LOOK ON THE BRIGHT SIDE

Choosing to look on the brighter side of life and sensing opportunities even in the face of adversity is imperative to a sense of positivity and well being. Treating yourself kindly, or simply trusting that you can eventually achieve your goals are all optimism strategies.

Action: Ways to become more optimistic include:

- When faced with a challenging situation, look for the benefit. Step back from the perceived crisis and recast it not as a catastrophe and a threat but as a challenge and an opportunity.
- Seek the valuable lesson in every problem or difficulty.
- Let go of the negative emotion that events cause and, instead, focus on the task to be accomplished

SMILE AND THE WORLD SMILES WITH YOU

Aristotle viewed laughter as "a bodily exercise precious to health" and recent research has documented that humour is not only psychologically beneficial, but that it can have significant effects of overall wellness, including lowering our risk of disease. Laughter also relaxes us and improves our mood.

Action: The first step in becoming more cheerful is recognising how much time each day you spend focusing on your problems

and frustrations. Rather than fight against life, look for the things you are grateful for.

ALL WORK AND NO PLAY…

Psychologists have known for a long time that spontaneous, imaginative play is vital for normal social, emotional and cognitive development - it makes us more balanced, smarter and decreases stress. Finding time to do something you enjoy each day has the dual effects of providing you with 'time-out' from your stressful day and boosting your creativity.

Action:

- Get your hands dirty and create something.
- Personalise your surroundings.
- Leave your work space and get involved with other people regularly throughout the day - share a coffee, find a reason to laugh, celebrate someone's success.

FIT BODY, FIT MIND

Physical activity and exercise lead to positive feelings from three points of view. First, it provides you with a feeling of success and being in control. The second benefit that it has a positive effect on your brain and lastly not only does it make us smarter, but also works as an antidepressant by stimulating hormones related to positive emotions.

Action: Make time to be active, no matter what you feel is stopping you.

TO SUM UP

The quest for greater happiness is not about looking at life through rose-coloured glasses or ignoring disappointments. It is about investing in your greatest asset - your emotional capital. This means learning how to put things in perspective and recognising that external conditions determine well-being much less that we think. The seven skills described here are a great place to start investing in the small daily changes that lead to big returns for you and your work.

Discover Your Emotional Capital – Take the Test for Yourself

Measure and benchmark your EQ – Emotional Capital. You can simply measure your own emotional capital with the ECR or select the ECR 360 and include feedback from a large range of people who know you.

Have you already taken the ECR? Why not see if you have made any improvements.

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