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## Smart Strategies Solutions for Workplace Challenges



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### Quick Links

Dear Alan,

Happy New Year!! I hope you had a great holiday season. On to a new year and new challenges! Let us know what people challenges you face and we'll offer some suggestions.

This issue we'll continue our discussions of coaching and time management.

I hope you enjoy!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Alan'.

Alan Krieger

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## Coaching as a Supervisory Strategy

In our last issue we discussed the value of a coaching approach to supervision and the challenge

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## Effective Coaching

For more on how to be an effective coach, keep an eye out for our 2013 leadership webinar series - we'll be announcing it in the next few months.

\* For a short video clip on developing SMART expectations, [click here](#).

of taking on a coaching strategy. You still have to deal with all the brush fires that pop up while you work to build relationships that prevent any future flare ups. We said that coaching is worth the effort because it builds strong, committed work teams and high individual performers.

Here are a couple of tips on how to build coaching into your supervisory approach.

- When you set performance expectations, be clear about the expected outcome.
- Allow flexibility on how the employee achieves the outcome.
- Outcomes need to be measurable and behavioral. (\* see side bar)
- Ask questions to engage your staff... and really listen to what they have to say!
- Prove you are listening (paraphrase).
- Don't give the answers; let your staff explore and search a bit for them. Ask questions to encourage them to explore.
- Be open to different answers than you'd expect... as long as they'll get the job done.
- When a problem arises, don't propose a solution. Ask questions and let your staff develop a solution... again, be clear about the desired outcomes and any restrictions or limitations (time, money, policies, etc.).
- Follow up all coaching discussions with feedback - catch people doing something well and let them know! If they aren't doing it well, let them know that as well, using constructive feedback. We'll discuss feedback in our next issue.

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**Time Management Tip: Prioritizing**

## Share this Newsletter



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You may also reprint any of these articles as long as you include the following in the reprint and send a copy to me at [alan@krsol.com](mailto:alan@krsol.com):

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Last issue we mentioned the need to prioritize but we talked mostly about how to develop a plan to implement your priorities.... We skipped over how to prioritize.

Here are a couple of quick tips for prioritizing:

- Brainstorm a complete list of all the things you have to do and then go back and add a few more. (I'm not trying to overwhelm you here, just do a complete "brain dump" so stray thoughts rattle around to distract you.)
- Write all ideas down no matter how wacky or unrealistic they are. (This promotes creativity and expansive thinking.)
- Then go back and cross off the wacky tasks and any others that seem unrealistic or unnecessary.
- Move any that can be done in one sitting to a separate list and prioritize those separately. We're going to focus on the more complex tasks here.

If the list is still long (more than 4 or 5), group them into three categories: A, B, and C.

- "A" tasks are definitely important; there will be a valuable payoff if you complete the task or a significant penalty if you don't complete it.
- "B" means that it's somewhat important; there will be a payoff if you complete the task or a penalty if you don't complete it, but neither the payoff nor penalty is significant.
- "C" means it's not very important, there is very little payoff or penalty, or no payoff or penalty for this task... it's just something you feel you should do. (If you're honest with your assessment, you'll see some of these - some meetings, many emails, and some minor tasks actually have no tangible payoff... so don't do them!)

If you're busy, drop the "C" tasks completely, put the B tasks on a short hold and focus on the "A" tasks first.

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FREE newsletter.**

### **A Couple of Laughs:**

We all survived the end of the Mayan calendar. Here's some wisdom that helped me get through: Don't worry about the world coming to an end today. It is already tomorrow in Australia.

~ *Charles Schulz*

Can we actually "know" the universe? My God, it's hard enough finding your way around in Chinatown.

~ *Woody Allen*  
*Getting Even, 1971*

I used to eat a lot of natural foods until I learned that most people die of natural causes.

~ *Author Unknown*

There are three stages of a man's life: When he believes in Santa Claus, when he doesn't believe in Santa Claus, and when he is Santa Claus."

~ *Author Unknown*

There shouldn't be more than 4 or 5 "A" tasks, but if there are, the following strategy will help you narrow down your list.

1. Write each task on a small post-it note.
2. Choose any item from your list and compare it to a second item - which is more important? Which has the bigger payoff? Put them in priority order.
3. Now take a 3rd item and compare it to the highest ranked item - is it more or less important? If more, move it to the top of the list. If less important, compare it to the second ranked item and move as needed to reflect your priority.
4. Then continue with all the other A items comparing them one by one and finding their "place" in the list.
5. Choose the top 3-5 tasks that you can actually get done and move the rest to the B list for now.

It's a relatively easy process. It can be time consuming with a large list, but it can go fairly quickly if you stick to it. This gets the job done without a lot of hemming and hawing. The key is to trust each decision as you make it and quickly move on without revisiting each step.

What about the "B" tasks? If you ignore them long enough, they will either fade away and reveal themselves to be "C" tasks, or their importance will increase and they'll join the A list.

One last point - from Steven Covey - beware the tyranny of the urgent! Covey separated "urgent" tasks from "important" ones.

- Important tasks as described above have a large payoff.
- Urgent tasks have a close deadline.

Because it's -- DUE TOMORROW!!! -- It suddenly

"A hen is only an egg's way  
of making another egg."  
~ *Samuel Butler*

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looks important. But a "C" task that has a short deadline is still a C task - it's unimportant and still not worth doing when you've got a long A list.

The short deadline makes it "urgent" and the urgency gives it the feel of importance, but if you look closely... there is still little payoff for getting it done.

## UPCOMING WORKSHOPS

We are holding two open enrollment training programs in January in the Capital Region:

### **Fiscal Management:**

Our January 10th workshop - *Financial Governance of Non-Profits: A Board Perspective* - is sold out. We may hold another one in the spring. Let us know if you'd like to be notified.

Email [Pam Fenoff](#), our Office Manager, or [visit our website for more information](#).

### **Leadership:**

I will be presenting a 5 session program on leadership skills in partnership with the Center for Economic Growth in Albany on January 17 and the following 4 Thursdays. The focus will be on manufacturing, but the skills presented translate to any organization. The cost is \$895 and includes lunch. For more information or to register, [click here](#). If you have questions, feel free to email me: [alan@kriegersolutions.com](mailto:alan@kriegersolutions.com)