

MEDICAL CALL CENTER NEWS

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Motivation Needed Now More Than Ever: Four Steps That Work

By Joe Takash

Question: How do you motivate employees in an economy that is highly unstable and perpetuates fear?

Answer: Encouragement, optimism, and honest communication.

This may seem counterintuitive to task-driven managers who focus on the news headlines and the bottom number in their ledger. Granted, the economy is shaky and companies in almost every industry are either feeling the tremors or getting hit head on by the financial power outage. Things have changed dramatically in a short period, leaving countless organization heads thinking, "I have no control over this."

On the contrary – the market will go up and down, but obsessing over it forces good businesses to make bad decisions. A prudent investment is to focus on building human capital, and this starts with influencing your people to perform at a higher level.

The need for leaders to manage relationships with staff and clients is greater than ever, but what are the specific actions required? The following four steps, if implemented, can help tremendously.

1) Practice emotional control: It's easy to lead when times are good and business is flowing like fine wine. However, when times are stressed, does your impersonal autopilot take over, putting business processes before the welfare of your people?

2) Provide frequent updates: Many executives create stress and resentment with those they manage because knowledge of company status is not shared. When people are uninformed, they work from a place that does little for building trust or morale.

A great way to keep teams and individuals informed is to designate time on your calendar to share your knowledge. These updates should be initiated by you, the leader. They must involve honest disclosures of what you do know, what you don't, what you can share, and what you cannot.

3) Become an exceptional listener: Getting people to perform in tough times requires understanding. Here's a checklist for this type of listening:

- Encourage staff and clients to talk openly
- When others speak, clarify for certainty
- Eliminate distractions

Many people believe that they are good listeners, but employee surveys often indicate that very few leaders are exceptional. Amid uncertainty, employees want information, but they also want ownership, value, and, yes, even a little bit of therapy. Listen at a deeper level and you're likely to create more committed and confident performers.

4) Lead with (realistic) optimism: Leading in turbulent times can bring the sobering reality of negativity, anxiety, and stress. Attitudes and the behaviors that go with them are contagious. Leaders need to paint pictures that are reflective of the truth, but they must also speak about possibilities. It's easy to be swept up in the bad news, but the mettle of our character is how we get off the deck when we've been knocked down.

Joe Takash, author of "Results Through Relationships: Building Trust, Performance and Profit through People," is a business consultant and keynote speaker. For more of information call 888-918-3999.

Decreasing the Fatigue and Anxiety Epidemic among Healthcare Workers

By Pat Heydlauff

For people in professions like nursing and healthcare, where workers report in on a 24/7 cycle or do lots of repetitive work, the fatigue and anxiety factor is widespread and quickly becoming an epidemic.

Results of Fatigue and Anxiety

- Decreased communication skills, concentration, and decision-making
- Reduced productivity and performance rather than absenteeism
- Increased errors in judgment and forgetfulness
- Increased sick time, absenteeism, rate of turnover, medical costs, and accidents
- Increased food cravings, insomnia, and headaches

Five Anti-Fatigue Habits

1. Simplify! Control and eliminate stress at home by simplifying your life, your personal environment, and the commitments on your calendar.

2. Get Ample Rest: If you are working more than one job and getting ample rest at night is a challenge, take shorter naps in between jobs.

3. Stop Watching Late-Night News: Instead, put on some relaxing music in your bedroom or take a warm shower before retiring.

4. Eat Nutritious Foods: Long work hours, inadequate downtime, and a nervous system on high alert often results in skipping meals, overeating, snacking, and food-cravings. Stick to a routine of eating a solid breakfast, a normal lunch, and a light dinner every day, along with healthy snacks.

5. Eliminate Negative Self-Talk: Stop the constant loop of negative self-talk in your head, and replace them with positive, affirming words instead.

By developing these habits, you too can live a balanced life!

See the [complete article at ArticleWeekly.com](http://ArticleWeekly.com).

Harvard Health Publications Launches New Health Blog

Harvard Health Publications, a division of Harvard Medical School, announced the launch of its new [Harvard Health Blog](#). It will feature posts from both Harvard Medical School physicians and Harvard Health Publications' newsletter editors.

"Blogging is an opportunity for us to disseminate credible health information and communicate with the public about important health issues," said Anthony Komaroff, MD, editor in chief of Harvard Health Publications. "It gives us an exciting new channel to fulfill our mission to provide trusted advice for a healthier life."

Michael C. Miller, MD, editor in chief of the *Harvard Mental Health Letter* and one of the regular bloggers, agrees, "It allows our physicians and editors to comment in a timely fashion on breaking news stories and medical breakthroughs. We'll be able to provide readers with perspective and analysis they may not find in mainstream media."

In addition to Dr. Miller, also contributing regular blog postings are P.J. Skerrett, Peter Wehrwein, and Ann MacDonald, all editors of the *Harvard Mental Health Letter*. Posts will cover a wide range of topics including heart disease, weight loss, exercise and fitness, mental health, and stress reduction.

ATA releases "A Blueprint for Telerehabilitation Guidelines"

ATA's (American Telemedicine Association) newest standards and guidelines document contains the key administrative, clinical, technical, and ethical principles that should be considered in the course of providing telerehabilitation services. These guidelines are based primarily on ATA's Core Standards for Telemedicine Operations, and they describe additional considerations that are present across applications within telerehabilitation and its related fields. This document is one of many telemedicine standards documents developed by the American Telemedicine Association and is [available on the ATA's Web site](#).

Egg Allergy: Not a Reason to Avoid Flu Vaccine After All

According to new recommendations by the American Academy of Allergy, Asthma & Immunology's Web site, anyone with a history of suspected egg allergy should first be evaluated by an allergist or immunologist for appropriate testing and diagnosis, but can probably receive the vaccination.

Matthew J. Greenhawt, MD, MBA, clinical lecturer at the University of Michigan Health System, and James T. Li, MD, PhD, chair of the Division of Allergic Diseases in the Department of Internal Medicine at Mayo Clinic, coauthored the guidelines based on recent studies – one conducted at the University of Michigan – that show that most egg-allergic individuals can receive the flu vaccine safely under the care of their allergist or immunologist.

In the past, people with an egg allergy were told not to get the influenza vaccine because the vaccine contained egg protein and could trigger an allergic reaction. Research in the past year, however, shows that influenza vaccines contain only tiny amounts of egg protein. Clinical studies have shown that the vast majority of persons with egg allergies did not experience a reaction when immunized with the influenza vaccine.

For more information, read the [complete announcement](#).

Physician Email with Patients Uncommon

Despite indications that patients want to communicate with their physicians via email, physicians' use of email with patients is the exception rather than the rule, according to a new national study recently released by the Center for Studying Health System Change (HSC).

Overall, only 6.7 percent of all office-based physicians nationally routinely emailed patients about clinical issues in 2008, according to the study funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF). About one-third of office-based physicians in 2008 reported that information technology for communicating with patients about clinical issues via email was available in their practice. Of physicians with access to email, about one in five (19.5 percent) routinely emailed patients.

Other research indicates that many patients want to communicate with their physicians via email. One survey sponsored by the California HealthCare Foundation that was conducted at the end of 2009 found that 50 to 70 percent of adults who did not use email to communicate with their doctors or nurses were interested in doing so. Only 8 percent of all of the adults surveyed reported ever sending or receiving emails from their doctor.

While the survey did not ascertain why physicians do not email patients, physician concerns about lack of reimbursement, the potential for increased workload, maintaining data privacy and security, avoiding increased medical liability, and the uncertain impact on care quality are commonly cited as reasons why physicians may be reluctant to use email.

Telehealth Market in Tight Competition

By Nicole Lewis, InformationWeek

Companies are fighting for their share of the electronic health monitoring business, which is expected to grow 55 percent annually over the next five years, indicates a recent report from medical research group InMedica.

"With the market for telehealth predicted to grow at a (compound annual growth rate) of over 55 percent in the next five years, more and more companies from outside the healthcare market are likely to get involved," said Neha Khandelwal, market research analyst at InMedica. "The competitive landscape will look quite different in two or three years."

As the competition to win contracts to supply healthcare providers with telehealth technology is increasing, more contracts involve high volumes of equipment and devices due to the increased number of patients enrolled in telehealth programs. Some well-established suppliers of home-use medical devices are likely to leverage their positions to capitalize on the increased interest in home monitoring.

For more information, [see the full article, provided by InformationWeek Healthcare.](#)

American Heart Association: New Order for CPR, spelled C-A-B

The American Heart Association is rearranging the ABCs of cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) in its "2010 American Heart Association Guidelines for Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation and Emergency Cardiovascular Care," published in *Circulation: Journal of the American Heart Association*.

Recommending that chest compressions be the first step for lay and professional rescuers to revive victims of sudden cardiac arrest, the association said the A-B-Cs (Airway-Breathing-Compressions) of CPR should now be changed to C-A-B (Compressions-Airway-Breathing). The change in the CPR sequence applies to adults, children, and infants, but excludes newborns.

"For more than forty years, CPR training has emphasized the ABCs of CPR, which instructed people to open a victim's airway by tilting their head back, pinching the nose, and breathing into the victim's mouth, and only then giving chest compressions," said Michael Sayre, MD, coauthor of the guidelines and chairman of the American Heart Association's Emergency Cardiovascular Care (ECC) Committee. "This approach was causing significant delays in starting chest compressions, which are essential for keeping oxygen-rich blood circulating through the body. Changing the sequence from A-B-C to C-A-B for adults and children allows all rescuers to begin chest compressions right away."

Research shows that rescuers who started CPR with opening the airway took thirty critical seconds longer to begin chest compressions than rescuers who began CPR with chest compressions.

Hunters Encouraged to Follow Health Safety Tips

It's that time of the year again – thousands of people will arise before dawn during firearm deer season and head for the woods. And every year, media reports include stories of hunters suffering heart attacks during this season. Those who are not prepared, haven't had a physical recently, and haven't exercised much since the last hunt, may be putting themselves at risk of a heart attack.

"A study compared the heart workload of an individual while deer hunting to that of the same individual while exercising on a treadmill on a different day," said Stacy Sawyer, director of communications for the American Heart Association Mid-Michigan area. "Deer hunting puts the heart under more strain. If you're planning to hunt, it makes sense to first see your doctor and have a checkup."

Other tips include avoiding a heavy breakfast before heading out into the woods and not hunting alone. Bring a cell phone to reach emergency services if needed, and tell friends or family your location and scheduled return. Also, make sensible plans for moving any game taken.

For more information, visit www.americanheart.org.