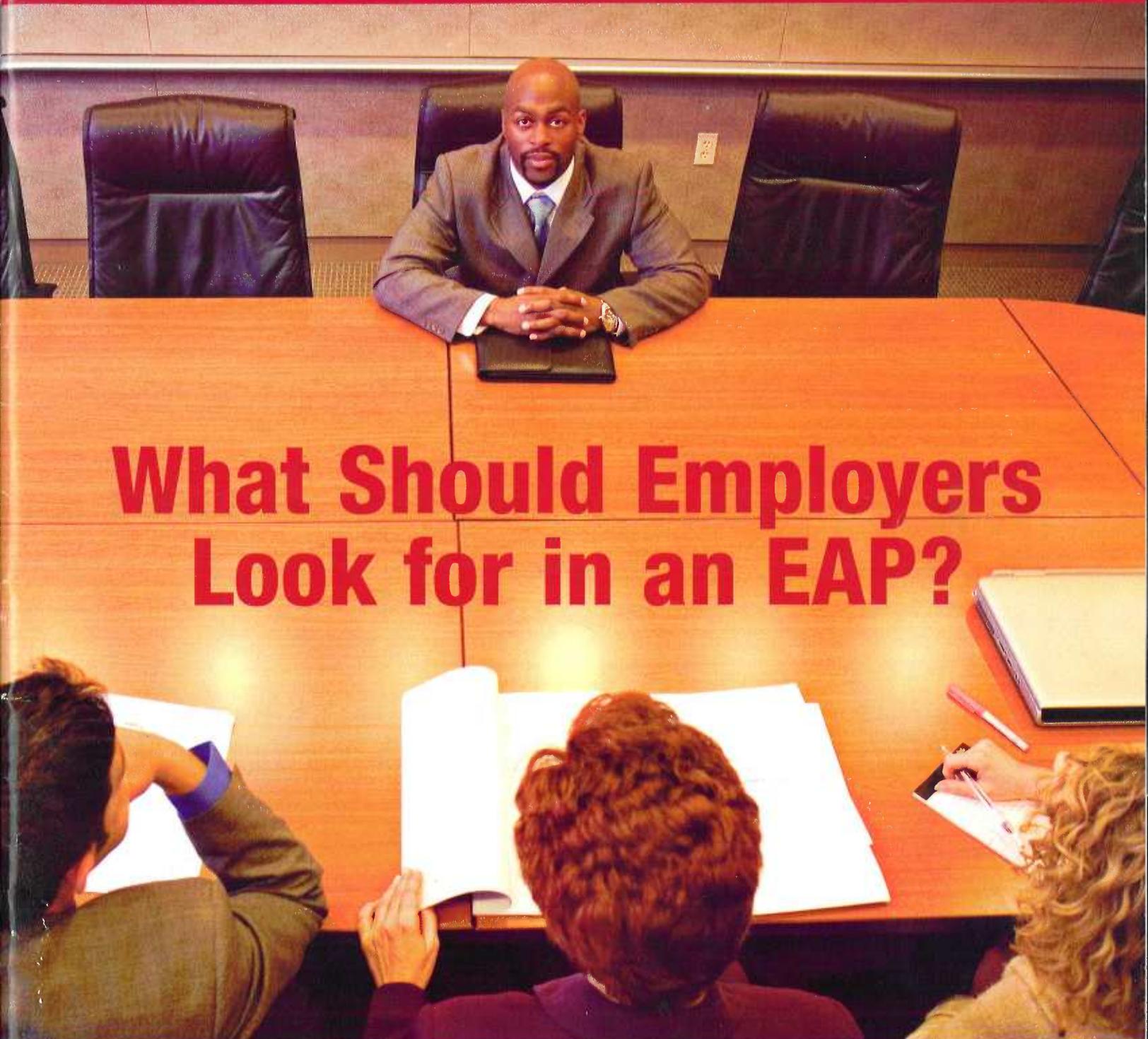


# *Journal of* **Employee Assistance**

The magazine of the Employee Assistance Professionals Association

VOL. 36 NO. 4 • 4TH QUARTER 2006

A photograph of a man in a grey suit and blue tie sitting at a large wooden conference table. He is looking towards the camera with his hands clasped. In front of him are several other people, seen from behind, sitting at the table. They appear to be in a meeting or conference. The table is large and polished wood. There are papers and a pen on the table in front of the people.

## **What Should Employers Look for in an EAP?**

Also Inside:  
Crises Facing the EAP Industry  
Ensuring Civil Workplace Discussions about Politics  
Preparing for Disasters in the 21st Century



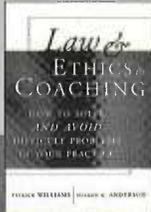
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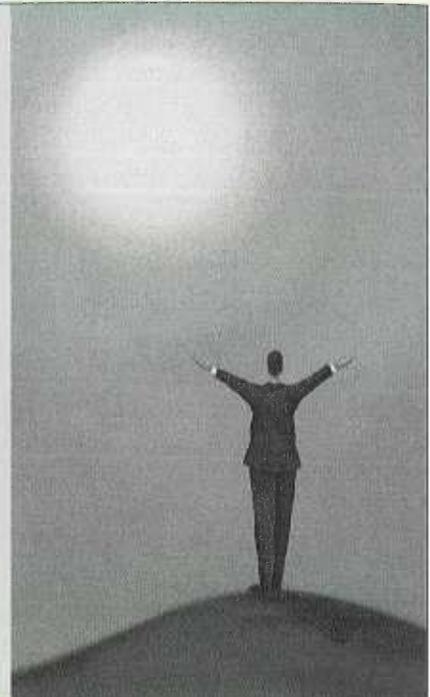
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# Journal of Employee Assistance

The magazine of the Employee Assistance Professionals Association

VOL. 36 NO. 4 • 4TH QUARTER 2006

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*"It is no longer good enough for an EAP, or any other vendor, to demonstrate its effectiveness by counting employees who participate in only its services or by conducting satisfaction surveys that address only the services it provides."*

Ron Goetzel and  
Ron Ozminkowski  
"Integrating to Improve  
Productivity"

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### EAPA Mission Statement

To promote the highest standards of practice and the continuing development of employee assistance professionals and programs.

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# Providing Us with Direction

by Maria Hartley, LEAP



Maria Hartley

**W**e in the employee assistance field spend a lot of time talking about what employers do (and don't) look for in an EAP. Some of these discussions represent efforts by EA professionals to align programs with employers' needs so they deliver maximum impact. Other discussions focus on how market pressures have led EAPs across the globe to grow in divergent ways, thereby weakening the industry.

Sometimes we talk about what EAPs *should* look for in employers. We want employers that see EAPs as productivity tools that cut costs by reducing organizational risk and improving workforce performance. We want employers that treat us as partners and give us a seat at the table in developing strategies to enhance morale, increase retention, and improve overall functioning. Simply stated, we want employers that appreciate the value of what John Maynard has described as the "essence" of employee assistance—the application of knowledge about behavior and behavioral health to make accurate assessments, followed by appropriate action, to improve productivity and the healthy functioning of the workplace.

This issue of the *Journal* discusses the value proposition of EAPs from three perspectives: (1) the individual perspective, as represented by the value that earning the CEAP credential adds to an EA professional and, by extension, to his or her EAP; (2) the program perspective, as represented by the value that an EAP can add to the workplace by tackling three "EAP conditions," namely alcohol abuse, depression, and anxiety disorders; and (3) the organizational perspective, as represented by the value that derives from EAPs integrating their serv-

ices with those of absence management, disease management, wellness, and other benefits programs to improve the health and productivity of the entire organization.

Each of these perspectives provides us with direction in understanding what employers are looking for in EAPs and how we can add value. For example, it is important not only to apply the "essence" of employee assistance in what we do, but to apply it in a manner that is consistent with the Core Technology and that utilizes our special expertise and skills. Earning the CEAP credential (and keeping the requirements for professional training robust) helps us do just that. Likewise, participating in an integrated approach to improving the health and productivity of the workforce can highlight our assessment and referral services and the value they add to the EAP-employer relationship.

Complementing these perspectives are insights from colleagues in Germany, New Zealand, and India about what employers are and should be looking for in EAPs in those countries. In addition, this issue takes a look at some of the biggest challenges facing our industry, such as "free" EAPs, and suggests how we might address them. It also suggests how EAPs can help work organizations survive the coming elections without suppressing employees' discussions about politics or allowing them to become overly heated. Articles about workplace disaster preparedness and teaching and using skills to survive large-scale disasters round out the mix.

I am comforted by the knowledge that our field continues to look for new ways to provide services in a marketplace fraught with challenges. Our passion for what we do, what we've learned

in our history as EA professionals, and what we can offer employers and workers, paired with creative applications of our "essence" and Core Technology, creates a formula for continued success. Our value and the strength of our industry hinge on our freedom to adapt and grow in a changing market while staying grounded in our roots.

As this issue hits the mail, many of you will be traveling to Nashville, Tennessee, for the EAPA Annual Conference. I look forward to seeing you there and hope you will share with me and the other members of the Communications Advisory Subcommittee your thoughts about the *Journal* and how it can better serve you. ■

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