

Advice for Young Professionals – Part II

By Josh Bersin

During the first 5-10 years of your working life you have much to learn: *How do I get things done? What will satisfy my boss? How do I compare with other people?* And so on and so on.

Early in your career this is all very stressful. Of course you want to succeed – but a young person starting out isn't always sure *how*.

My advice is to be yourself. But in the meantime, success often comes down to having a great boss. I had a great boss named Bob, and here are more tips on what he did.

❖ **He took us with him.** Bob was the type of manager who would always take someone with him on a big customer call. We'd throw on our suit coat, grab our briefcases, and we'd head out to see the customer. I often just sat and listened, but I learned so much by just watching him in action, taking follow-up notes, and then taking the next call by myself.

❖ **He took care of us.** Bob was the kind of guy who always worried if someone wasn't in the office or had a problem with a client. He wasn't all that interested in our personal lives, but he sure cared if we had any *problems*. When one of our teammates developed cancer, Bob spent the better part of his remaining life taking care of him and helping his family.

❖ **He was fun.** Bob really was a fun-loving guy, and even though he intimidated almost everyone (he always had his coat on and he looked you right in the eye), he

always told a joke at just the right time. He took work very seriously, but he also knew it was only a job.

❖ **He went home on time, usually.** Believe it or not, in those days we worked incredibly hard but we rarely stayed in the office past 6. We had an enormous job but we got it done in 50-55 hours a week and Bob would just "disappear" around 6 p.m. It set the tempo that we were all expected to get work done but *without* staying all night.

❖ **He made sure we all had a role.** One of Bob's strengths was his ability to value every single member of the team. He made sure we shifted work around so people did things we were good at.

Summary

I worked for IBM for 10 years in the 1980s and we accom-

plished many amazing things. But for me personally, having the opportunity to work for Bob is the one thing that stuck with me for the rest of my life. And when he died (about 10 years ago), his wife came up to me and said, "He always loved you young people, he thought about you like his own kids."

If you can find a "Bob" early in your career, you're very lucky. Do whatever you can to find this kind of manager early in your career.

If you're a manager, remember you can "be Bob." Consider it an awesome responsibility. You could impact someone for the rest of their life. ■

Josh Bersin is the founder and Principal of Bersin by Deloitte, Deloitte Consulting LLP (home.bersin.com), a leading research and advisory firm.

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EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE REPORT

EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE REPORT

supporting EAP professionals

November 11 is Veterans Day!

Volume 17, No. 11
November 2014

17 years of service!

Creating a Veterans-friendly EAP

By Sally Hartman, EAP Counselor, FEI Behavioral Health

With the President's recent announcement to bring U.S. troops home from Afghanistan by 2016, employers should anticipate an influx of military veterans entering the workforce. In addition to providing jobs for these returning vets, employers must also provide an employee assistance program that includes veterans-specific services in order to help cultivate a veterans-friendly workplace environment.

Information from the Bureau of Labor Statistics indicates veterans unemployment for the Gulf War-era

(September 2001-present) demographic alone was more than 9% in February 2014— which was two percent greater than overall unemployment. Since the beginning of the year, almost 600,000 veterans have been unemployed and looking for work.

Notable efforts have been made by the federal government to create awareness of joblessness among veterans populations, including the Joining Forces veteran issues initiative, supported by First Lady Michelle Obama and Dr. Jill Biden, and President Obama's effort to offer tax credits to those businesses that hire veterans. Yet, only a small percentage of employers are familiar with resources for veterans.

Transition to Civilian Life

While most veterans exhibit resilience when reintegrating into civilian life, some have more difficulty. It's important for employers to be aware of issues facing veterans in both their personal lives and the workplace.

An EAP can be an invaluable tool when addressing the needs of veterans in the workplace. Counseling can help manage mental health conditions or substance abuse, and an EAP coun-

selor can connect veterans to other resources that are available locally. According to the U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs' 2013 Veterans in the Workplace study, a veteran-friendly EAP will exhibit the following:

- An intake, assessment and referral process in which confidentiality is emphasized.

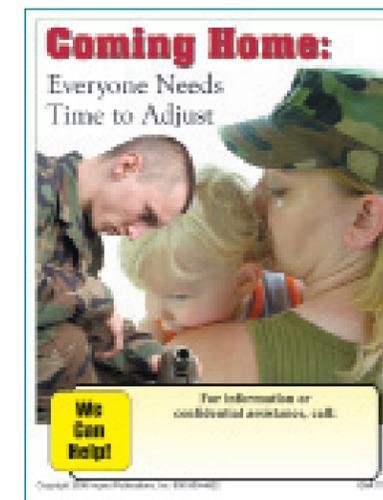
continued on Page 2

FEATURED INSIDE

- ▶ Stress at Home Linked to Alcohol Problems in National Guard
- ▶ Resources
- ▶ Childhood Trauma More Common in Military
- ▶ EAPA Updates Bibliography
- ▶ Text Messaging Seen as Possible Addiction Tool
- ▶ Performance Reviews Don't Have to Be Feared
- ▶ Gaining Freedom from Micromanagers
- ▶ Time is On Their Side
- ▶ Advice for Young Professionals – Part II

INSERTS

- ▶ *Brown Bagger: The Workplace Warrior*
- ▶ *Payroll Stuffers*
- ▶ *LifestyleTIPS®*



Posters, like the one shown here, available for purchase at www.impact-publications.com, can help EA professionals enhance awareness of veterans' issues in the workplace.

- EA counselors trained in knowledge of military culture and who know how and when to assess for PTSD, suicide, substance abuse, depression and anxiety. Counselors must be trained to recognize when to refer to another provider or connect the veteran with treatment resources.
- The ability to provide education on VA resources for veterans and their families.

“An EAP counselor who has knowledge of military culture and the unique characteristics of these issues in veterans can provide a thorough assessment and counseling tailored specifically to the veteran.”

- Management and supervisor consultation regarding military transition issues, appropriate responses to employees who exhibit behavior issues, and how to encourage and de-stigmatize the use of EAP services by veteran employees.
- Training programs for employees, supervisors, managers and EAP providers.

Let's look in greater detail at some key challenges faced by veterans returning to the workforce and how an EAP can help: <http://www.bls.gov/news.release/empsit.t05.htm>

❖ **Education and training:** Veterans face a competitive job market in which job postings express a required minimum of a bachelor's degree and at least three years' experience. A veteran may have difficulty translating his or her military experience into skills needed for civilian jobs. The EAP can help employers understand how those frontline skills can transfer to the business. For example, a former platoon leader could be a potential project manager, or a military technology specialist might be perfect for the IT department.

Common readjustment challenges in the workplace include becoming used to a less rigid chain of command, a work environment that may be less team-work oriented, feeling that co-workers and supervisors don't understand the military experience, and work that may seem pointless or trivial. An employer might rely on the EAP for that context and may, for example, develop a program that provides mentors who are other veterans to assist with readjustment of new veteran employees.

❖ **PTSD, mental health, and substance abuse:** Vets may experience a wide range of mental and emotional injuries, including Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and Traumatic Brain Injuries (TBI). Veterans also have a suicide rate almost twice that of the general public.

Substance abuse by veterans and members of the military has been on the rise for the past ten years and also is higher than the norm. An EAP counselor who has knowledge of military culture and the unique characteristics of these issues in veterans

EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE REPORT

Editor - Mike Jacquart
 Publisher - Scott Kolpien
 Designer - Laura J. Miller
 Circulation - Kim Bartel

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can provide a thorough assessment and counseling tailored specifically to the veteran.

❖ **Physical challenges:** It's not uncommon for returning veterans to have physical challenges ranging from partial deafness to lost limbs. An EAP can help the employer anticipate veterans' needs and develop a physical environment that is

continued on Page 3

Workplace Survey

Gaining Freedom from Micromanagers

Do you — or do any of your corporate clients — constantly check in on employees? Is it hard for them to relinquish control? They may have good intentions but they might be micromanagers.

In a recent Accountemps survey, a majority of workers polled said they have firsthand experience with an overbearing boss. Fifty-nine percent of employees interviewed reported working for a micromanager at some point in their careers. The survey also found the constant scrutiny has a negative impact on most workers. Of those who felt they'd been micromanaged, 68% said it decreased their morale and 55% said it hurt their productivity.

Accountemps offers this six-step plan to help micromanagers learn to loosen the reins:

1. **Recognize that you may be the problem.** Does the word delegate make this person wince? Does the boss feel he/she has to do it all and keep a controlling hand on everything at all times? This is a sign of a micromanager.

2. **Let it go.** The boss needs to start practicing restraint by dropping the red pen. The boss doesn't need to put his/her personal stamp on every single item that passes his/her desk. Making changes to an employee's work simply for the sake of making changes is a habit worth breaking.

3. **Keep the check-ins in check.** Constantly inquiring about routine assignments rarely helps employees get them done any faster or more

efficiently. The micromanager needs to provide clear directions upfront, check in *once* if need be and then trust team members to do their jobs.

4. **Stop sweating the small stuff.** When a boss allows himself/herself to get bogged down by the little things, the boss is taking away time and energy from bigger-picture organizational objectives that could have a far greater impact on the bottom line.

5. **Get to the point (person).** Identify a few tasks you currently handle that can be easily delegated to someone. Think about the time

and skills needed for the job and then assign accordingly.

6. **Empower employees.** When they're managing projects, give team members the freedom to make decisions — and, yes, mistakes. The micromanager might encounter some initial hiccups, but in the long run, offering autonomy will help employees build their problem-solving and leadership skills.

Whether it's *you* or a corporate client, the traits of micromanagers need to be curbed before good employees leave! ■

Workplace Survey

Time is On Their Side

The Rolling Stones once sang, “*Time is on my side*” and when it comes to managing their time, executives have their favorite strategies. **Thirty-five percent** of chief financial officers (CFOs) interviewed said they find that working efficiently comes from taking greater advantage of technology; another **35 percent** said delegating more responsibilities is the secret to maximizing work hours.

Paul McDonald, senior executive director for Robert Half, said CFOs can tap technology both to help with their individual time management and to enhance organizational efficiencies.

“Technology, tools, such as smartphones and tablets, can help professionals save time and provide them added flexibility,” McDonald stated. “However, executives also should prioritize keeping their company's information technology and financial systems current to help their organizations become faster and more productive.”

The survey was developed by Robert Half Management Resources, the world's premier provider of senior-level finance, accounting and business systems professionals on a project and interim basis. For more information, visit <http://www.roberthalf.com> ■

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Text Messaging Seen as Possible Addiction Tool

Young adults who screened positive for a history of hazardous or binge drinking reduced their binge drinking by more than 50% after receiving mobile phone text messages following a visit to the emergency department, according to a study published online in the *Annals of Emergency Medicine*.

Researchers enrolled 765 young adult emergency patients with a history of hazardous drinking in the study. Hazardous drinking is defined as five or more drinks per day for men and four or more drinks per day for women.

For 12 weeks, one-third received text messages prompting

them to respond to drinking-related queries and received text messages in return offering feedback on their answers. The feedback – according to *Depression on My Mind* via Psych Central – was tailored to strengthen their low-risk drinking plan or goal or to promote reflection on either their drinking plan or their decision not to set a low-risk goal.

One-third received only text message queries about their drinking and one-third received no text messages.

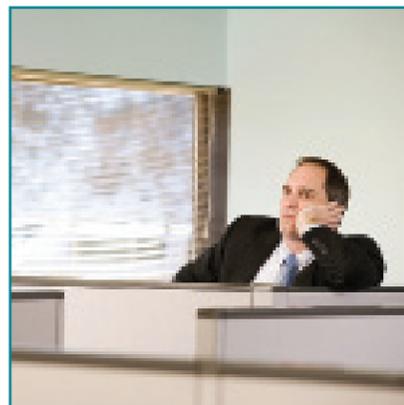
The group receiving both text message queries and feedback decreased their self-reported binge drinking days by 51% and

decreased the number of self-reported drinks per day by 31%. The groups that received only text messages or no text messages increased the number of binge drinking days. ■



Quick Ideas

Performance Reviews Don't Have to be Feared



Performance reviews, often held toward the end of the year, are dreaded by many

employees and employers alike. But it doesn't have to be that way. OfficeTeam offers tips for employees to make the most out of workplace evaluations:

❖ **Prepare for the meeting.** Get ready for the discussion by asking your supervisor for a copy of the assessment form that will be used.

❖ **Showcase accomplishments.** Highlight any awards you've received since the last formal work review. This will show the supervisor how your efforts have helped the company.

❖ **Make it a two-way conversation.** The supervisor will inform you about any areas where you need to improve and areas where you are doing well. Don't hesitate to ask questions about the assessment, or to request support or guidance.

❖ **Share your ideas.** Discuss what you hope to achieve with the company in the future, and be sure to set goals.

❖ **Follow through.** Regularly review the goals and keep your supervisor informed of progress. ■

Source: OfficeTeam (www.officeteam.com).

Creating... cont'd from Page 2

conducive to workers with physical challenges.

Employers should have a clear understanding of the *Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)* and be able to determine effective accommodations and apply them to veterans' disabilities. For example, allowing a flexible work schedule for a disabled veteran to address health concerns or attend doctor or physical therapy appointments may be an appropriate accommodation.

❖ **Access to veterans' services:** Despite assistance available through the VA, many veterans express frustration with an inability to both access and maneuver the current system. EAP counselors familiar with the needs of military veterans and the VA can help veterans navigate through the system to get the help they need.

Even though navigating community resources or services available through the local VA office can feel overwhelming, employers need to emphasize as well as understand the benefits of such services. The company that hires or is considering hiring veterans should be familiar with community resources, the VA and online resources, and plan to provide flexibility to veteran employees who require assistance.

❖ **Training, education, and consultation:** An EAP can provide training, education, and management consultation to employers to assist them in better understanding the veteran's experience as they transition back into the workplace and deal with any workplace issues that arise. These resources can also be of value in helping to



Editor's Notebook

With veterans reintegrating back into their communities and workplaces in numbers the likes of which our country hasn't seen since the Vietnam War ended in the 1970s, if you haven't been dealing with this issue in your practice, chances are you *will be*. It's a myth that military organizations alone can meet the vast needs of returning service members as they return to work and civilian life. Fortunately, the EAP is in a perfect position to help.

But assisting veterans isn't easy. RaeAnn Thomas pointed out in the May *EAR* that a comprehensive resource that considers the needs of not only veterans and their families – but also *non-military* employees and managers is crucial.

Understanding as much as possible about military culture and returning soldiers will also help. Resources include Military 101 (www.military101.com), the

Citizen Soldier Support Program (www.citizensoldiersupport.org) and the Wounded Warrior Project (www.woundedwarriorproject.org).

In addition, as noted in this month's *Brown Bagger* insert, it may also be useful for the EAP to help provide mentoring programs that link returning soldiers with veterans already in the workforce. The common bond of military experience can support the successful reintegration of returning service men and women.

Many thanks to Sally Hartman for reminding us about the importance of supporting our veterans in this month's cover story. Lastly, don't forget that November 11 is Veterans Day. Until next time.

Mike Jacquart

Mike Jacquart, Editor
(715) 258-2448

mike.jacquart@impacttrainingcenter.net

de-stigmatize issues common to veterans and prepare for veterans in the workplace.

Summary

It's important to note that the majority of veterans make a successful transition to civilian work and life, but the transition process takes time and can pose a variety of challenges for the transitioning service member, and his or her family and co-workers. Employers who provide an EAP that offers military-focused services are taking a step in the right direction to become more aware of common challenges veterans face and see the strengths and benefits veterans bring to the workplace. ■

Sally Hartman is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker specializing in developing and implementing programs to meet the unique needs of military members, veterans, and their family members. She is currently focusing on EAP services to meet the needs of military members, veterans, and family members affected by the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, as well as services to help employers develop practices to support veterans returning to the workplace.

FEI Behavioral Health is committed to providing employers with a full spectrum of services and training to ensure that the transition of returning veterans to the work place is productive and beneficial to employers, veterans and their families. Partnering with a wide range of corporations, government entities and non-profits, FEI is a social enterprise wholly owned by the Alliance for Children and Families, a national network of nearly 500 organizations. For more information, visit www.feinet.com.

Stress at Home Linked to Alcohol Problems in National Guard

A team of researchers from Columbia University has found that civilian life stresses – divorce, job loss, legal problems – are more likely to lead to alcohol abuse in returning National Guard soldiers than members of the general public, regardless of whether they had experienced traumatic events on the battlefield or not.

While the effect of traumatic experiences on the battlefield has been well documented with regard to alcoholism, less attention has been paid to the link between civilian stressors and post-deployment alcohol use disorders.

Considering that problems such as divorce, job loss, legal problems and serious financial problems are commonplace within military families, civilian stressors may particularly affect National Guard soldiers who return from deployment to return to civilian communities and other employment.

In 2012, 6.8% of the US population either depended upon or abused alcohol, but within the population of reserve-component soldiers, this figure was 14%, which was nearly double that of the general public. The statistic represents a public health concern that the study, published in the *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*, aims to investigate.

The researchers examined a group of 1,095 soldiers from the Ohio National Guard. These soldiers had primarily served on tours in either Iraq or Afghanistan in 2008 and 2009.

They followed the soldiers for three years after their service, interviewing them three times via telephone to ask about their alcohol use, traumatic events and stressors related to their military deployment, and any stressors related to their civilian life since returning home.

The researchers found that 60% of the responding soldiers had

experienced trauma related to combat, 36% had experienced civilian stressors since returning home and 17% had been sexually harassed during their deployment.

The authors of the study found that the experience of at least one civilian stressor and sexual harassment were associated with higher odds of alcohol abuse and dependence. By contrast, combat-related and post-battle traumatic events were only marginally associated with alcohol use disorders.

The authors write that the findings of their study must be taken within the context of its limitations: the risk of recall bias, interviews being carried out too soon for mental health problems to manifest following military service, potential misclassification of alcohol use disorders and the fact that the sample of soldiers may not be representative of all National Guard. ■

Additional source: Medical News Today (www.medicalnewstoday.com).

Childhood Trauma More Common in Military

People who served in the military tend to have experienced more traumatic childhood events, such as being abused or living with an alcohol-dependent parent, than people who are not veterans, according to a new study.

In particular, men who volunteered for the military were more than twice as likely as men without military experience to report at least one adverse event in childhood, which supports a theory that people may use the military to escape from dysfunctional home lives, the researchers write in *JAMA Psychiatry*.

To get a sense of how common adverse childhood experiences are among people who served in the military, the researchers analyzed responses to a survey conducted in 10 U.S. states and the District of

Columbia by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in 2010.

The survey included questions about 11 adverse childhood experiences, including living with a person with a mental illness, living with a person abusing alcohol or drugs, living with someone who was in jail, going through parental divorce, being physically or verbally abused and being sexually abused.

Over 60,000 people, including more than 7,500 with a military history, took the survey and were included in the analysis. The study team distinguished between those who served in the all-volunteer military after 1973 and those who served before 1973, during the draft.

Overall, men who served in the army during the all-volunteer era had more adverse experiences in all 11 categories than those without a history of military service.



Having had an increasing number of adverse experiences is important, the researchers write, because the number is tied to the severity of poor health outcomes later on.

It's impossible to know whether those who reported more adverse childhood experiences joined the military because of them or had poorer health as adults because the survey didn't ask those questions. ■

Additional source: Reuters Health.

Resources

📖 *Shutting Up*, by Eric Wagner, www.shuttingup.com. This resource is a quick-start guide that rapidly and accessibly covers the essential skills that good managers need to lead their teams effectively.

🏠 The *Kaiser Family Foundation* recently released its 2013 employer health benefits survey, a comprehensive report that includes specifics on wellness programs, including EAP. Visit: <http://kff.org/private-insurance/report/2013-employer-health-benefits/>. ■

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In the News

EAPA Updates Bibliography

The Employee Assistance Professionals Association (EAPA) has published the 2014 update of its comprehensive Annotated Bibliography of EAP Statistics and Research Articles. The bibliography, which includes hundreds of EAP-related research articles published in the U.S. and other countries from 2000 through

June 2014, is a unique EAPA member benefit. Articles in the bibliography address EAP return-on-investment studies, program effectiveness research and other important topics.

A brief summary of each article is included in the bibliography, along with the publication reference. EA professionals, HR decision-makers, benefits bro-

kers and others will find the bibliography to be a valuable resource in making evidence-based decisions affecting individual programs and even the profession.

To access the bibliography, members will need their login (last name) and password (EAPA member number). ■