TEN YEARS OF SERVICE

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EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE REPORT

supporting EAP professionals

NO a Better Word than Yes? ...Well, Yes

By Jim Camp

Since employee assistance professionals are responsible for balancing the needs of employees *and* employers, they are probably more familiar with the art of negotiation than a lot of people. Probably overlooked, however, is the power of the word "no."

Wait a minute — did I read that right? Isn't "yes" the best word in the English language? After all, when you say "yes," you please the other person, satisfy a request, get something done, or you make a deal. "Yes" makes everyone happy.

Likewise, the worst word must be "no." It rubs people the wrong way. It implies rejection and unwillingness to compromise. It stops a deal dead in its tracks.

Or so people in this compromise-and-assumption-based world want to believe. In truth, this thinking should be flipped on its head. In negotiation, "yes" is the *worst* word. It betrays a fear of failure, and a fear of losing the deal. It entices you to rush ahead, to compromise early, and to come to a deal, any deal. Consequently "no" is actually the *best* word. It's the word you need to be prepared to say *and to hear.*

No is the START of Negotiation

Every child understands that "no" is the *start* of the negotiation, not

the *end* of it. However, as adults we've been conditioned and trained to fear this word. As a result, when I address audiences or work with clients, I have to carefully go about proving that politely saying "no," calmly hearing "no," or just plain inviting a "no" response has a beneficial impact on *any* negotiation.

I emphasize the power of "no" to stress that good negotiation involves *making good decisions*. I want to be clear: Saying "no" is *not* about being hard-nosed. Rather, saying "no" stops everyone in their tracks, as it clears the air and allows you to get at the real issues. It is a proven and amazingly effective way to avoid unwarranted assumptions, needless compromises, and wild guesses.

If you're still having a hard time believing that "no" brings down barriers, do me a favor. Try it. Someone is bound to ask you to do something to come to an agreement on an issue — or else ask someone to do something to agree with you. Either way, create some harmless banter about it at the water cooler. *"Gee, Jane. I can't do that, but tell me..."* Or, *"Now Jane, if my suggestion doesn't work for you, please tell me no. You won't hurt my feelings. Really, I can handle it. Just tell me no."*

A polite "no" doesn't offend people. On the contrary, it puts them at ease. It opens the door to good decisions. Moreover, negotiation is negotiation, whether it's:

- Hammering out a new union

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FEATURED INSIDE

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- deal between hourly workers and management;
- Working on a complex deal that could make or break a business;
- Landing a great new job; or even
- Getting your child to agree to go to bed.

Don't Worry about Rejection

Many people live in fear of rejection. This fear usually revolves around the need to be liked. If you don't need to be liked, you have no fear of rejection. If you have no fear of rejection, you can say no when it's appropriate. When you negotiate, it's imperative to understand just what rejection is, who can reject you, and who can't.

The people on the other side of the table *cannot* reject you. Why? Because you don't need anything from them. Nothing. So how can they reject you? It's impossible. A parent can reject a child, because the child certainly needs the parent. A spouse can reject the other spouse. But can the adults on the other side of the table in a negotiation *really* reject you? No, they don't have any such power. Never, ever allow them to believe that they do.

You must understand that spending emotional energy in an effort to be liked, to be smart, to be important, is wasteful and dangerous. And it's usually because of a fear of being rejected. You want to be recognized as being effective and businesslike — but that's all. Spend your energy on business-related tasks. You have no need for the rest of it. But I've seen many negotiators fall into this "neediness" trap!

Labor-Management Disputes

The failure of "neediness" occurs all the time during labor-management disputes. In fact, a common management tactic involves finding employees who want some ego-boosting and making them feel critically important to a successful conclusion. These employees are itching for the chance to say (or imply) to their fellow union members: *"If it wasn't for me this contract would not have happened. I saved this contract and this union."*

This occurs because what matters to these workers is their importance in the negotiation — their need for this feeling. However, such employees are easy pickings for management. They can be manipulated until they are double agents, often acting as messengers for management.

Let's say that union members are balking over a proposed pay cut. They don't believe it's truly necessary or that management will hang tough on the issue. Management uses a delegate who needs to feel important and plants a false message, which the delegate then takes back to his/her members: *"Our committee is getting us 'killed.' I've got buddies in management. What they're telling me is that they might shut this plant down if we keep on like this."*

I can't begin to count the times I've seen negotiating team members undermine their own team in a number of ways, almost always because of neediness. They leak valuable information; they break their team's discipline by discussing important points that all had agreed not to discuss; they urge unnecessary financial terms and compromises — all because clever negotiators on the other side of the table manipulate their need to be smart, liked, and important.

I've even seen a company lose a deal because its neediness led it to compromise *in every way imaginable*: on terms, on price, and in scores of other ways. I recommended they break off negotiations, regroup, and come back at full price. The quality of their product justified it. Full price was a fair price. I recommended they admit that with the terms and pricing as they were.

Top management didn't agree with me. One executive complained that this was, at worst, a break-even deal, and any change from the current track of "being a good partner" would damage the "relationship" with the other company. They would lose all credibility as a viable supplier.

OK, I said, if you don't want to

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work toward a profitable outcome, what's the plan? It was simple — secure the relationship at any cost. My clients stayed their course. Then they got the shock of their lives — the beneficiary of this need-induced negotiation *walked away* from this steal of a deal.

In the post-mortem, they candidly explained that they sensed something was wrong. There was no push back. Whatever they asked for, they got. *Why did they give in so easily on price and everything else? What are they hiding? If they're selling their product at cost, barely, will they have the resources to build a next-generation product to take us into the future?*

And those inquiring executives were right. An always capitulating company would never have been able to make good on the commitments negotiated in that deal. The negotiators had been ridiculously, unnecessarily needy. Unfortunately, negotiations based on neediness take place all the time — in both small and large companies.

Summary

The "no" negotiating system makes you understand the dangers of neediness. Simply put, you don't need the deal, because neediness leads to unnecessary compromise. Which sounds better to you, good decisions or rampaging emotions? Confidence or neediness? Good questions or unwarranted assumptions and expectations? Concentrating on actions you *can* control or chasing results you can't control? Getting what you want is as easy as saying no. ■

This article is excerpted with permission from "NO: The Only Negotiating System You Need for Work and Home," by Jim Camp, $23 hardcover, Crown Publishing (www.crownpublishing.com). Camp is the president and CEO of Coach2100, Inc. He has coached people through thousands of negotiations at more than 500 organizations. For more information, visit www.startwithno.com. ***Editor's note:*** *See this month's Brown Bagger insert for more on this topic.*

Resources

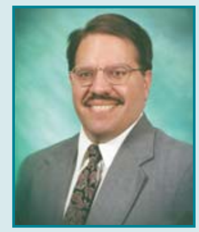
📖 ***The Brand Who Cried Wolf: Deliver on Your Company's Promise and Create Customers for Life***, by Scott Deming, $24.95, Wiley, ISBN-10: 0-4701271-2-0, ISBN-13: 978-0-4701271-2-4. Great customer experiences happen when companies keep their word. The author provides examples from both ends of the spectrum — those who create excellent customer experiences, and those who claim they do, but actually don't.

📖 ***Treating the Aching Heart: A Guide to Depression, Stress, and Heart Disease***, by Lawson R. Wulsin, M.D., $22.95, Vanderbilt University Press, ISBN: 978-0-8265-1561-2. The author explains the complex relationship between heart disease and depression — offering practical advice to patients, families, and health care providers about successfully managing the two conditions.

📖 ***Strategic Benchmarking Reloaded with Six Sigma: Improving Your Company's Performance Using Global Best Practice***, by Gregory Watson, $45, Wiley, ISBN: 978-0-470-06908-0. The author provides readers with a "blueprint" for implementing significant quality improvements. He brings the same experience he employed guiding programs at competitors such as Xerox and Hewlett-Packard.

📖 ***Email Marketing by the Numbers: How to Use the World's Greatest Marketing Tool to Take Any Organization to the Next Level***, by Chris Baggott, $24.95, Wiley, ISBN-10: 0-4701224-5-5, ISBN-13: 978-0-4701224-5-7. The author explains how you can use email marketing to its full money-making potential. ■

Editor's Notebook



This month, I'd like to point out that November is Family Caregivers Month, a perfect time to make local media aware of the challenges faced by employees with kids who are also caring for their elderly parents — sometimes referred to as the "Sandwich Generation." And don't forget to point out to media what a tremendous resource EAP can be in this area.

Also, don't forget to mail us a completed reader survey. (They were included with the October newsletter.) We recognize that *EAR* readers are busy people, that's why each respondent is entitled to receive 25 **free** full-color posters. Just send us the survey, and we will mail you a catalog and coupon to choose which posters you want.

This is a **$50** value in return for just a few minutes of your time. Posters are also a great way to increase awareness of your EAP! Until next month. ■

Mike Jacquart

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Workplace Survey

Work and Humor DO Mix

According to a new survey, the workplace loves a leader who can laugh, and most bosses seem ready to deliver the punch line.

Ninety-seven percent of professionals polled feel it is important for managers to have a sense of humor. Employers appear to have received the message — 87% of workers said their supervisors do indeed have a funny bone.

"Levity can be used to build rapport among staff and ease stressful situations," said Max Messmer, chairman and CEO of Robert Half International and author of *Human Resources Kit For Dummies*®, 2nd Edition (John Wiley & Sons, Inc.).

Messmer cautioned that while people enjoy working for someone who has a good sense of humor, too much clowning around can have the opposite effect.

"To be taken seriously, supervisors must balance their desire to keep the mood light with the need to accomplish business objectives, inspire great performance, and maintain professionalism," Messmer said.

Source: Survey developed by Robert Half International (www.rhi.com). ■

Clinical Perspective

AMA Asked to Include Internet/Video Game Addiction in *DSM-V*

A committee of physicians is urging the American Medical Association (AMA) to include Internet and video game addiction as a formally described disorder in its upcoming revision to the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*-IV.

The recommendation is based on a comprehensive study of over 50 articles on gaming addiction from 1985 to 2007. Internet and video game addiction are perhaps the most widely recognized negative psychosocial terms associated with gaming. Pathological gambling is the *DSM*-IV disorder most similar to the behaviors observed with overuse of video games.

Although video game overuse can be associated with any type of video game, it is most commonly seen among heavy users, defined as those who play more than two hours per day.

This population may represent approximately 9% of all gamers. However, some research suggests that as much as 10% to 15% of all players may be affected.

Research suggests that heavy users are somewhat marginalized socially, perhaps experiencing high levels of loneliness and/or difficulty with social life interactions. The current theory is that these individuals achieve more success in the virtual reality realm than in real relationships.

Symptoms of time usage and social dysfunction appear in patterns similar to that of other addictive disorders. Dependence-like behaviors can occur in minors — including preoccupation and family/school disruption. It isn't clear whether withdrawal symptoms are associated with video game overuse — some excessive users do not exhibit "cravings" for the games if they aren't available, while other users insist they cannot reduce the time they spend on the games.

While some video game use is positive, the largest and most lucrative use of video games lies in entertainment. Moreover, the industry's predisposition toward age-inappropriate imaging and marketing has led to concerns about side effects, ranging from physical symptoms such as seizures and tendonitis, to socially maladaptive behaviors, such as increased short-term aggression. However, more research is needed in this area. ■

Source: Excerpted from "Emotional and Behavioral Effects, Including Addictive Potential, of Video Games," by Mohamed Khan, Report of the Council on Science and Public Health, used with permission of the Employee Assistance Professionals Association (EAPA, www.eapassn.org). The complete report is available at www.eapassn.org/public/pages/index.cfm?pageid=800.

Are Your Clients 'Employers of Choice'?

By Deanne DeMarco

Do your company clients have cultures in which people actually *want* to work? If not, they need to learn how to become an "employer of choice." Numerous studies have discovered that corporations that are viewed as great places to work outshine their competitors in retaining talent, in behavioral success, and in the "bottom line."

Good benefits alone do not create an employer of choice. Baby Boomers have often tolerated "cold" climate organizations as "just the way it is." Generation X workers, however, are putting their foot down: either the company's climate changes, or the Gen-Xers change companies.

What influences a company's cultural climate? Basically, the attitude from the top filters down into the entire organization. It includes the organizational structure, and the communication and leadership skills of certain managers and team leaders.

That's why you can have a company with a "cold" climate in one area, but pockets within the company in which people think it's a great place to work. Everyone wants to work in a department where a manager created a "warm" climate. But how can an organization *as a whole* create a "warm" climate? The following are some suggestions.

Key # 1: Be Descriptive

When someone comes up with an idea that you don't like or think won't work, the cold and natural response is, *"No. That'll never work."* Such responses breed defensiveness and resentment. A better response would be something like, *"Let's talk more about that idea. What do you think the impact of your suggestion would be on our sales department?"*

When you're descriptive and specific, you're encouraging a conversation about the idea and not shooting someone down. And if the idea really won't work, your conversation will bring that to light in a non-confrontational way.

Key # 2: Engage 'the Help'

Many companies claim to solve problems as a team, but in reality the manager proposes a solution, and no one challenges the manager, often because the manager doesn't ask for feedback in an open way. Rather, he or she states the solution and then asks, *"Does anyone have a problem with that?"* Of course, no one raises a hand. Employees are not actively encouraged to submit ideas, offer suggestions, or speak honestly.

But when leaders hear them out, you'll likely have a better solution and will foster a warmer climate in your group.

Key # 3: Collaborative Style

Similarly, even when a team collaborates and comes up with a great idea, the manager may end up getting the entire credit for the proposal. In this case employees will feel manipulated.

Conversely, when managers act spontaneously and collaboratively *without* hidden agendas and motivations, employees develop feelings of ownership, pride, and enthusiasm for corporate goals.

Key # 4: Take Heart

Employees want managers who have empathy for their situation. Recognize that many Gen-Xers are marrying and having kids a decade later than Boomers typically did. Gen-Xers are in the workforce in high-profile jobs, and they have the added responsibility of a baby at home, or aging parents who need their help.

Additionally, since most Gen-X families are two-income households, when a family emergency comes up, there's often no one at home to take care of it. The employee needs the time off. When managers convey a lack of concern or respond to time-off requests in an angry manner, they create resentment in their employees.

Remember, Gen-Xers value productivity more than hours spent on a job. Certainly, you need assurance that deadlines *will* be met, but then let them attend to their affairs.

Key # 5: Fairness Rules

Fairness is a fundamental building block, which sends the message that each employee is important. In a truly "warm" work environment, managers do not have "status" or "favoritism" practices.

Key # 6: Be a Facilitator

Facilitation involves more than simply running a meeting. It's about asking the right questions. One of the most powerful questions in the facilitative approach is the "what" question. "What" questions help identify issues and probe for details.

Instead of asking, *"Why did you do that?"* ask, *"What are the reasons behind your actions?"* Using a facilitative approach can help solve problems and improve work processes.

Summary

As these changes are made to improve the corporate climate, you'll quickly notice a marked improvement in the workforce. And remember, regardless of age or generational identification, a "warm" climate is what *any* organization needs to improve profits and long-term growth. ■

Deanne DeMarco, RCCI, is an author, speaker, and certified business coach.She is the author of "Speaking of Success" and "Pocket Resource: Coaching Tips." Visit www.DeanneDeMarco.com or call (866) 91-COACH.

Quick Ideas

De-stress with These Travel Tips!

By Barbara J. Butler

Traveling can be fun, but it can be stressful, too — especially this time of year when many of us take to the skies or roads more often. Since many employee assistance professionals travel from time to time, or even more often than that, let's take a look at some tips to help de-stress traveling.

First, both domestic and international travel are challenging since carry-on rules can change from airport to airport. I learned this firsthand when I re-entered Newark, New Jersey, from a 2-1/2-month visit to Peru.

Internet cafes abounded in Peru, even in the small pueblo of Juli, where I spent six weeks. It was easy to access www.tsa.com to find the current requirements for my return trip home to Colorado. I wanted to be sure my carry-on items would be problem free. You can imagine my amazement when I went through customs and not one thing was checked!

The good news is that through the preparation process I have created many checklists. The following inventory is an excellent jumping-off point for people who fly domestically on business:

- All travel documents on your person (airline ticket, driver's license, passport/ID, ATM card, major credit card, traveler checks and cash). All

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On the Job

Aligning Employee Performance with Business Strategy

By James McCoy

Today more than ever, organizations must differentiate themselves through their intangible assets: talent, leadership, culture, and especially strategic vision, mission, and plans.

Each year, executive teams spend weeks and even months fine-tuning business strategies to align with changing markets and secure competitve advantages. At the end of the process, they usually feel they have a clear picture of where their organization is heading.

However, all too often there is a critical disconnect between corporate leaders and employees when it comes time to implement this strategy. Employees frequently don't fully understand how their performance supports the organization's business strategy. The following are some ideas that can help:

• **Identify the measurement criteria that are relevant to corporate strategy.** Some ways to do this include holding focus groups, and reviewing exit survey data to learn how employees perceive organizational goals relative to their jobs.

Quite often, because employees are the closest to the customer and the inner workings of the company, they can provide valuable feedback about what customers really want. Listen carefully to employees, they may tell you where there is a disconnect between business strategy and everyday reality.

• **Continually re-evaluate performance criteria to meet changing business environments.** As an organization's business evolves, employees must change their understanding of success. For example, if a customer service call center needs to be changed into a sales organization, employees will need substantially different skills.

To help them reach this level, you must embed new objectives into communications, training, and measurement programs.

• **Communicate performance goals and key behaviors throughout the organization.** Once key metrics and incentives are in place, an ongoing communications plan is essential so that employees know what is expected of them. This plan should become an ongoing element of corporate culture, rather than something reserved for annual reviews.

The bottom line — when employees know what is expected, and they have both the tools and incentives to accomplish these goals, it's a winning situation for the entire organization. ■

James McCoy is senior vice president, consulting services with Veritude (www.veritude.com), a provider of strategic human resources. This article is condensed from one that appeared in Workforce Insights, an online resource center about emerging labor trends and issues produced by Veritude — a wholly-owned subsidiary of Fidelity Investments, which serves clients throughout the U.S. and Canada. ©2007 Veritude, LLC.

Parenting Challenging Children — Without Breaking their Spirits

By Michael Popkin, Ph.D.

To paraphrase Forrest Gump, *"kids are like a box of chocolates...you never know what you are going to get."* Some children have a peaceful disposition while others seem to rant and rave 24/7.

Whether you are a biological parent, stepparent, or another adult caregiver, there isn't a lot you can do about genetics. But *how* a parent handles a child's natural-born tendencies matters. It can mean the difference of whether the child winds up in the principal's office or gets a corner office; whether he/she finds the limelight or a police line-up; or whether you look forward to, or dread the parent-teacher conferences that often occur this time of year.

Do You have a Spirited Child?

Spirited children can drive us crazy, but once "tamed" so to speak, they can succeed.The methods for doing this can be likened to an eight-sided corral; much like a gifted wrangler will use to tame a wild horse. Each of the eight planks that form the corral represents an area of parenting essential for success with spirited children:

Plank 1. LEADERSHIP

Establish yourself as a firm, yet friendly leader in the family. Show respect to your children and expect them to show respect in return. Use a firm and friendly tone of voice; allow input, within limits; allow freedom, within certain limitations. Be confident while recognizing that all parents make mistakes, and so will you.

Plank 2. PREVENTION

Anticipate and prevent problems. Learn to redirect your child to use curiosity and other traits in positive ways. Understand the dynamics of anger and how to handle this primary emotion.

Plank 3. RELATIONSHIP

Establish a positive relationship with your child, building on the friendlier aspects of parenting. Make time and develop the skills to establish ties with your child. Provide sincere and realistic encouragement on a regular basis.

Plank 4. POWER

Understand the principles of power and learn how to sidestep power struggles. Your spirited child can sometimes seem power happy, so learn how to teach him/her to manage this powerful quality and use it for motivation and not intimidation. Learn the same lessons for yourself if necessary.

Plank 5. STRUCTURE

Provide structure for your child to help him/her learn to live within limits. These structures act like the corral that helps wild horses learn to accept limits to their freedom as the handler works to tame them. Understand that spirited children need a flexible structure.

Plank 6. DISCIPLINE

Avoid discipline that is too harsh but do not fail to discipline when it's needed. Teach your child to live within limits while allowing his/her needs to be met at the same time.

Plank 7. PROBLEMS

Teach your child to solve problems. Help him/her identify alternative solutions and anticipate consequences. Provide opportunities that teach the child about empathy.

Plank 8. RESOURCES

Recognize that sometimes you need help to tame a spirited child. Find out where help is available in your community. Possibilities include school, church, recreational leagues, health professionals, EAP, family, friends, etc.

Summary

It takes time to tame a spirited child. It can't be done overnight, and it can't be done without committing effort and energy to the process. But the payoff comes in knowing that you have made a huge contribution to your child — and to every person that child will come into contact with throughout the rest of his/her life! ■

Dr. Popkin is the pioneer of the video-based Active Parenting Discussion Program. His newest book, "Taming the Spirited Child: Strategies for Parenting Challenging Children Without Breaking Their Spirits" is available from Simon and Schuster. Visit his website at www.activeparenting.com.

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TEN YEARS OF SERVICE

From Our Files

Dementia, Eldercare an Increasing Concern

By age 65, one out of 10 persons will have some form of dementia. With the well-publicized "graying" of America as Baby Boomers age, this trend can be expected to continue, if not worsen.

However, with medication and treatment, dementia symptoms can be slowed down by two-to-five years. Seeking early help can save families a lot of heartache, employers a lot of money, and save society the burden of caring for so many elderly people who decline sooner than they should. The Alzheimer's Association reports that delaying the onset of dementia for five years could save $50 billion a year in health care costs.

Other Caregiving Issues

However, this isn't to say that Alzheimer's is the only eldercare issue. Caregivers may also face complicated issues, such as transportation, insurance, legal matters, and personal care. For example, is the elderly person able to manage his or her own medications, and perform other day-to-day functions independently? Does the individual fall frequently? Is chronic pain a problem?

Employees dealing with eldercare issues may call an EAP to get much-needed information, leaving them better able to focus on work rather than fitting additional phone calls into their work schedule — or taking time off. The following are just a few of the areas in which an EAP may be able to help:

- Refer a credentialed geriatric care manager for in-home or phone consultations. (See the July 2007 *EAR* for more on this topic.)
- Is there a plan in place if the employee cannot avoid being off work for an extended time?
- Can workers be cross-trained to cover for each other?
- Would job-sharing be appropriate, and would the individual be willing to job share?
- What non-essential tasks could someone else do so the time and talents of the employee are maximized?
- Ask the caregiver if he/she has had family discussions so the responsibility of caregiving doesn't fall entirely on one family member.

Summary

Co-workers can chip in and help out, too. While you're running your own errands, ask the caregiver if you can help by picking up or dropping off a few things for him or her. You might also consider taking the caregiving employee out for coffee or lunch. Sometimes a break is all that's necessary on a particularly stressful day.

While there are no quick fixes to caregiving crises, caring for an elderly person doesn't have to be a constantly stressful, around-the-clock situation either. What eldercare *does* mean, however, is doing things differently. It means managers and employees working together to meet each of their needs and goals. ■

Condensed from the May 2005 Brown Bagger. Sources: Katherine Carol, president of Tango Consulting; Carolyn Meador, senior associate manager with PacifiCare Behavioral Health; and Jacqueline Marcell, author of "Elder Rage."
Editor's note: *November is Family Caregivers Month and Alzheimer's Disease Month.*

Travel

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should be placed in a plastic baggie or document folder and carried in a neck or waist pouch that can be accessed easily. (And leave copies of all documents at home.)

- Carry all other airline phone numbers (or program into cell phone) with frequent flyer numbers. If your flight is cancelled you are able to call ahead to different airlines to book another flight.
- Arrival contact information.
- Nearby hotel contact information with toll-free numbers and any frequent guest program numbers for an unplanned overnight stay.
- Laptop computer, PDA, BlackBerry®, cell phone, etc. (with necessary adapters for recharging).
- Medications/vitamins in their own plastic baggie.
- A 1-quart size clear baggie with 3 oz or less of liquids/gels. (Check for updates at www.tsa.com.)
- Small cosmetic bag/shaving kit.
- Partial change of clothing.
- Earplugs, travel pillow, and sleeping mask.
- Important work papers and business cards.
- Munchies, energy bars, cough drops and tea bags.
- 3 x 5 writing notebook with pens/highlighter.
- Glasses and sunglasses.
- Flashlight, travel alarm (with extra batteries) and a book and/or magazine. ■

Barbara J. Butler, 1st North American Serial Rights 6/17/2007. Barbara provides inspirational keynotes and seminars, and is the author of books and articles, including "Thinking Out of the Box — Strategies for Handling Change." For more information on Barbara's trainings, visit www.barbarajbutler.com.