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# Promoting Excellence™

March 2004

Volume 2 Issue 1

## THE KENNA COMPANY HELPING LEADERS SELECT & ENGAGE TOP PERFORMING TALENT

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### Selecting (and De-Selecting) the 'Right' People

Many clients seek help from The KENNA Company in order to ensure they select the 'right' candidate for their job openings. But we all know that some organizations aren't hiring these days - they're downsizing or merging. Do the same staffing principles, benchmarking, 'job-fit' assessment instruments used in selecting also have value for deciding which employees must be laid off? They certainly do!

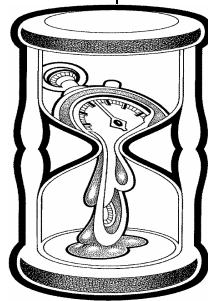
Surveys have shown that most managers believe the toughest responsibility they ever face is terminating employees - especially when the termination is due to business issues, not performance. So it is important to help managers experience the peace of mind that comes from knowing they've chosen the 'right' employees to let go, and the 'right' employees to keep.

In an ideal scenario, long before there is a need to downsize, organizations will have already benchmarked key positions so the managers making those tough staffing choices are clear about the skills, knowledge, attitudes and attributes truly essential for success in the job. By reviewing employees' profiles against pre-defined job benchmarks, managers are able to objectively decide which employees must be laid off and which employees to retain.

Even if benchmarking hasn't been done in advance - they must simply be used in an accelerated fashion.

For many positions, job benchmarks can be created quickly. Downsizing candidates can then be compared to the benchmark to determine who is the best fit for the current or new job and who isn't. This objective approach will lead to a stronger company.

Or, a somewhat less desirable approach would be to have all employees that are being considered take a series of assessments that will give the manager additional objective information about the employee's current strengths and potential fit for other positions in the organizations.



Note to \_\_\_\_\_:

I'm finished reading this latest issue of 'Promoting Excellence™' sent to us by The KENNA Company, so please route it now to:

- \_\_\_\_\_
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### Focus NOT on Managing Your Time, But On Achieving Your Goals

Are you using your time efficiently? Does your use of time support your goals and job priorities? It is possible to answer 'yes' to the first question but have the answer to the second, more important question, be 'no'.

Checking items off a 'to-do' list is less important than completing tasks that support your key goals. Doing 'a lot' is less effective and even less productive, than doing 'the right things'. In order to achieve the results you want to achieve, don't focus solely on managing your time. Focus on investing your time in ways that produce the highest return.

These tips can help you achieve more results, in less time, and with less stress.

- **Each week, review your goals and the activities planned for that week to ensure they align.** This habit will keep you on target.
- **Ask yourself if each activity is likely to help you achieve your goals.** Prioritize how you invest your time, so your activities contribute to the achievement of your goals. You probably don't waste money. Do not waste time, either.
- **Set deadlines for all critical activities; then meet the deadlines.** This boosts self-esteem and builds credibility.

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Continued from page one - *Focus on Goals*

- **Plan daily activities to support your goals.** Allow flexibility to handle "emergencies" by leaving unscheduled time to respond to unexpected obligations. Scheduling your day too full creates stress when plans must be juggled and balls related to important goals get dropped.
- **Schedule challenging activities in peak time.** For example, if you are most alert in the mornings, schedule negotiations at 8 a.m.; return routine phone calls at 3 p.m.
- **Do less but become more productive.** Invest your time only on the tasks and decisions that 1) require your personal involvement 2) directly align with your goals 3) develop others so they become better able to handle tasks and decisions you can delegate to them.

Eliminating all but these 3 types of tasks and decisions will reduce your stress and increase your effectiveness, while helping others become more effective as well. To delegate well, define expectations and offer guidance; then assure them you will support their handling of the tasks and decisions they've been delegated.

- **Take charge of interruptions.** When others interrupt you at a bad time, find out what they need, how urgent it is, and how long it will take to respond. If possible, agree upon a later time when you can address the situation together.
- **Batch your calls.** Make all outgoing phone calls at one time, noting in advance what you want the call to accomplish. If the person you call doesn't answer, provide a call-back window with your message. Don't allow yourself to be put on hold; or if you must, use the phone speaker function to do other tasks while waiting.
- **Organize for results.** Use a combination of technology tools, goal setting principles and organization skills to manage incoming paperwork. If workflow bottlenecks are truly hindering your success, hire an organizational consultant to help you identify and change workflow problems.

We all know it is easier to manage paper efficiently each day, than to let it accumulate and face the mountain of paper that piles up. And keeping up with paperwork is necessary because it frees up the time and energy you need in order to achieve your goals.

Source: Adapted from Patricia Haddock's Smart Business Supersite: [www.smartbiz.com](http://www.smartbiz.com).

## Think Before You Speak

Most managers realize they should use effective communication skills when giving presentations to their team or a group of customers. Not as many managers remember to use effective communication skills when speaking impromptu, or with one person at a time. And yet, clear communication is essential for ensuring your employees understand what is expected of them, are fully committed to the task at hand, and are motivated to contribute ideas because they know their ideas will be heard and respected. How can you practice effective communication skills every day, all day long? By taking a minute or two at the beginning of every conversation to consider these simple, yet important questions:

- Why would the people you're speaking to want to listen to what you're saying? Is what you're saying helpful or relevant to them?
- What behaviors (yours and theirs) help and hinder effective communication? Remind yourself, for example, to make eye contact, or refrain from interrupting, or paraphrase what the other person said to indicate you've heard their point.
- What do you know about the person you're speaking with - in particular, how they prefer to receive or share information? Some like to hear it, others want to see it, some prefer to digest it slowly and alone, others find discussion enlightening and helpful.
- Do you know what you want of them as listeners? Do they? Let them know up front whether you want their reactions or whether you're simply sharing information.

Remember the phrase "think before you speak"? Doing so will increase the effectiveness of your communication, and save time (your and others').

## Want to improve your company's results?

### The KENNA Company can help!

Our programs, products and services help our clients:

- Recruit, interview and select candidates that fit the job (↑ retention, productivity, satisfaction)
- Manage people and projects on time, within budget
- Develop leaders who challenge and inspire success

Interested?

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## Management Communication Food For Thought

You want your staff to focus on performance to the very best of their ability, right? Then figure out an effective way to let them know how the company is doing and how their efforts are contributing to the company's results.

Jay Johnson, a manager with Crest Microfilm Inc., in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, does so by having people's palates do the talking. Every month he holds a communication session for his 70 employees. If performance has been 'so-so' that month, he orders pizza and soft drinks. If the company has done very well, he lets the employees choose the cuisine.

*"In a bad month, we'll spend \$ 75-\$ 80," says Johnson, "and in a good month, \$ 250. At year end, we may spend \$ 450 if we've had as good a year as we'd intended."*



Johnson uses the occasions to talk about company performance. *"I give a summary of why we're eating what we're eating, and employees have an opportunity to bring up complaints and suggestions."*

*It's a way for me to share what I'm thinking. It's also a way for me to say 'Thanks.' When everyone works hard, they should eat prime rib rather than pizza."*

## Nag-Free Cooperation

Want to encourage co-worker cooperation without being a 'nag'?

- **Be Direct.** If you want something done, ask. Don't just make hints, which your co-workers can easily ignore or misunderstand or 'just not get'.
- **Ban Blaming.** If someone is blaming others, refocus their attention by saying *"Let's deal with the issue, and work together to solve it."*
- **Stay Focused.** Don't generalize by saying *"You never finish on time."* Address the specific issue and offer to help. For example, ask *"How can I help you meet the deadline next time?"*
- **Re-align Priorities.** When people don't cooperate, it may be because their priorities are different. Find common ground - showing how all involved will benefit by completing the task successfully. For example, you might say *"Once we finish, we can focus on that project you want to do."*

## DELIGHT YOUR CUSTOMERS

### Even (Especially) When You're Late With Their Order

Don't wait for customers to call your organization when their orders have been delayed. Proactive phone calls from you (or your staff) can prevent angry calls from customers, build customers' loyalty, and sometimes provide cross-selling opportunities.

How? Call the customers immediately upon realization their orders will be fulfilled late, and:

- Let them know the **order status**, explaining (without making excuses) why it's late
- Extend sincere **regret** for the inconvenience
- **Reconfirm** their order
- Convey **when** their order can be expected
- **Offer** a substitute - a similar product you currently have available that can meet the need
- **Follow up** the phone call with written notes (or emails if the orders were placed electronically) to once again confirm the new delivery date and to thank the customer for working with you to reach a satisfactory solution

Source: Communications Briefings, *Adapted from Target Marketing, 401 N. Broad St., Philadelphia, PA 19108.*

## Managing People

*"The founder of a business gets to a point where his or her personal growth is much more involved with allowing others in the company to grow, so that they can give meaning to their own lives."*

Paul Hawken, CEO, Smith & Hawken

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## Have you seen The KENNA Company's re-designed website?

Our website has recently been updated with the very latest technology and graphic design. It now offers more free resources, less text, faster navigation. Why? Because we're completely dedicated to

**Helping busy leaders (like you!) select and engage high impact performers.**

Plan to visit us soon at [www.kennacompany.com](http://www.kennacompany.com).

THE KENNA Company

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***Helping leaders select and engage high impact performers!***