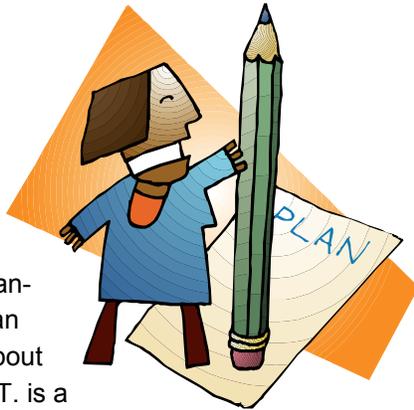




April 2012

www.ohio.gov/eap

What's a S.M.A.R.T. Goal?



Even if you are not a management expert, you can benefit from learning about S.M.A.R.T. goals. S.M.A.R.T. is a memory jogger to help a goal setter remember to set goals and objectives that are (S) specific (defined and clear), (M) measurable (determine if proceeding toward the goal), (A) attainable (realistic), (R) relevant (important to the goal), and (T) time-limited (an end point exists in the future when the goal should be realized). Applying the S.M.A.R.T. criteria can help ensure that your personal and professional goals are achieved, and it can help you accomplish more goals more quickly. S.M.A.R.T. is easy to remember and easy to learn, not only for employees but also for young people at a point in their lives where goal planning should be learned as an important life skill.

Benefits of Composting



Wait! Don't throw those vegetable pieces, table scraps, and coffee grounds in the garbage. Instead, compost them for your summer garden. If you get started now, you'll have some awesome compost by midsummer to supercharge your plantings. Composting transforms organic waste into a soil amendment chock-full of nutrients and is a great way to recycle kitchen waste, save money, and go green. You can learn more about composting from your state university agricultural extension service. Find a recommended list of items to compost at bitly.com/compost-now.

Create a Positive Mood with Office Plants



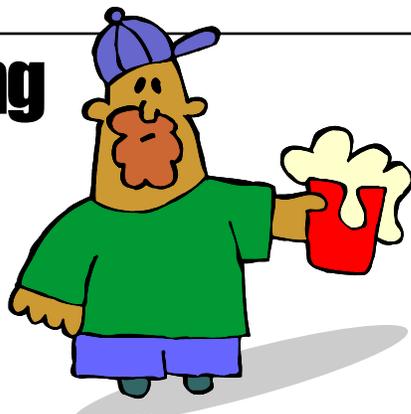
It's spring, so why not freshen up your office or work-space with plants? Plants reduce stress, and research shows that having these small symbols of work-life balance keeping you company can improve your mood and your productivity. It also seems that the more demanding your work, the more plants can help! If your office has little or no daylight, try shade-loving plants or visit a nursery to learn more. Source: bitly.com/try-plants.

"Cyber Loafing": A Productivity Zapper



Get ahead of the curve and curb cyber loafing, which is a new term to describe surfing the Internet when you should be working. Cyber loafing includes watching YouTube videos, Facebooking, shopping online, and more. Remember computer solitaire before the Internet? Cyber loafing is now the No. 1-reported way employees waste time, according to a survey of 10,000 employees conducted by Salary.com and America Online. Of the more than 10,000 people polled, 44.7% cited cyber loafing as their No. 1 distraction at work. What if you try to ignore checking the Internet and the distractions it presents, but can't break the habit? Talk to your organization's employee assistance program about help. Source: www.bitly.com/loafing.

Binge Drinking Big Impact Big Problem



The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has begun an effort

to educate consumers about the dangers and huge economic cost of binge drinking—over \$225 billion per year. It is a growing problem that they admit has been studied less than alcoholism. There are about 18 million alcoholics and regular alcohol abusers in the United States, but there are 38 million *binge drinkers*. That's about 15% of the population. Most are *not* alcoholics. Binge drinking means drinking five or more alcoholic drinks within a short period of time for men and drinking four or more drinks within a short period of time for women. Binge drinkers consume alcohol on average four times per month. The highest average number of drinks consumed during at least one of those drinking sessions is eight. Auto crashes, accidents, violence, and suicide are the key risks for binge drinkers. People between the ages of 18 and 34 do the most binge drinking, and the income group with the highest number of binge drinkers is those making over \$75,000 a year. What can be done to reduce binge drinking? Becoming aware of your binge drinking is the first step and evaluating your own drinking pattern is next. Helping make others aware of the problem follows, but the CDC has other recommendations too. Learn more from the CDC at <http://1.usa.gov/binge-not>.

Employee Theft Without Thinking



It's been estimated that the average business loses 6% of its revenues to employee theft, but almost no employees intend to steal when they are hired. A great deal of employee theft begins by taking pens and removing pads of lined paper, and this problem can grow bigger when facilitated by employee conflicts or a work culture that does not promote cohesiveness, loyalty, or respect among employees. A casual attitude toward rules and regulations then follows. Experts cite this pattern as a key to explaining why theft happens. You probably do not warn your houseguests not to steal things when they visit, and most employers feel the same way about their work environments—they trust employees. This means you have a powerful role to play in theft prevention by being an ethical role model for your peers and practicing restraint. Source: Association of Certified Fraud Examiners.

Starting a Team Off on the Right Foot



If you are part of a new work team, be sure to invest time-sharing among members to determine each person's strengths, limitations, and interests before assigning roles and tasks. This exercise reduces communication problems and conflicts that can arise later from a lack of cohesion. Team problems often start at the beginning. Unfortunately, many teams perceive struggles with conflict as originating with the organization—the boss, politics, or other factors. Avoid these member pitfalls: 1) Believing your skills and experience demand that you do a disproportionate amount of work. 2) Assuming a team member's underperformance is due to a lack of personal organization, motivation, or skill. (Often team issues explain individual performance shortcomings. Always start with the team first when searching for solutions.) 3) Failing to intervene early when there are indicators that one or two people are doing most of the team's work.

Free Family Activities Around Town



You may be living on a tight budget, but the world can't stop turning, so it's time to find free and cheap recreational opportunities in your town or area that can still offer your family a lot of fun. Here are two key resources or tactics to fill your fun coffers: 1) Check out bitly.com/cheap-fun. On the site, type "cheap things to do, (your city, town)" in the search bar at the top of the screen. If you have over 10,000 residents in your area, chances are that free activities will be displayed. 2) Collect and store relevant websites for your library, county recreation center, tourism association, nearby colleges, high schools, and museums. Before the weekend or your day off arrives, check your list.

For confidential counseling with a personal, work, or family problem, please call your Ohio Employee Assistance Program at 1-800-221-6327 or 614-644-8545