



Bridges A monthly eZine from Meridian Consulting, Inc.

Building Bridges to Success -- November 2003

In this issue:

- Coaches Corner: *The Sands of Time*
 - Spotlight on Conflict: *Create Alternatives for Resolving Workplace Conflict*
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Thought for the Month:

*"The truth of the matter is that you always know the right thing to do.
The hard part is doing it."*

General H. Norman Schwarzkopf

Coaches Corner: *The Sands of Time*

In our professional and personal lives we often focus on "time" as a commodity to be managed. Our lives revolve around schedules, planners, calendars, and "To Do" lists. We believe that if we can learn to control time better, we can get more done and if we get more done, we will somehow be happier. Thus, the *management* of *time* becomes yet another task to accomplish in our already busy lives. So how do you manage time without creating yet another task?

There are two approaches to *Time Management*:

- How to **DO** more—the focus is on accomplishment and what is *urgent*.
- How to **BE** more—the focus is on balance and what is *important*.

Each of these *Time Management* approaches is predicated on our personal perception of time. There are three basic perceptions of time, the first focuses on *doing* more, and last two focus on *being* more:

1. **Time is linear in nature.** One second precedes another; there is a past and a future, but in linear time, there is rarely a "now." We concentrate on what has happened in the past, rehashing what happened or how we should have responded, or we concentrate on the future, preparing for what is to be. *Time* is a thing or a commodity to be used wisely or squandered.
2. **Time is qualitative and is focused on the "now."** The focus is on attaining balance with the physical world and places an emphasis on being in the moment. Many of us have experienced this sensation when a single moment in time can take on dimensions much larger than a mere second or two, and they are the moments that we carry with us for a lifetime.

3. **Time is circular in nature.** Morning precedes night, which precedes morning. In this view, all things that have happened before will happen again, and the past, present and future are all one. They do not exist separate from the others.

Each of us makes a choice on how we perceive time, which affects how we live our lives. That choice occurs somewhere on this continuum between DOING and BEING, and the choices we make, create a rhythm in our lives.

Each of us has a rhythm that is influenced by the rhythms that surround us. For most of us, our daily rhythm is a driving beat that often leaves us feeling exhausted and tense. We often look to weekends and vacations as a hopeful time of recovery, but instead, the weekend is an extension of the rhythm of our life.

The rhythm of our life is so powerful that we search for tools, systems, and programs that can be applied to regulate the tempo and maintain control. Our secret hope is that by controlling the events that now seem out of control, we can find the time to DO even more or DO it all. The myth of "having it all" is pervasive and seductive.

In Western Society, we embrace the idea that *time is linear in nature*. Thus, traditional *time management* makes us think in terms of *time spent*, *time saved*, or *time borrowed*. However, feeling as if we are constantly losing something, does not lend itself to living a life with options and choices. It only drives us in a direction of feeling as though we have to maximize our use of this thing called *time*, because if we waste it—it is lost to us forever.

The reality is that we don't actually lose time, we lose the *balance* in our lives. The lack of balance causes stress, which affects the choices we make. Each of us has the opportunity to affect our *perception of time*, which affects our personal rhythm. Recognizing our own rhythm gives us the opportunity to establish balance, and that is the essence of true *time management*.

Balance is achieved when we are able to concentrate on what has value. What has value is what is important to us and it defines who we are. The importance of being *all that we are* at any given moment causes us to focus on balancing those things that define us.

There is no time like the present to begin to focus on what is important. Despite the stress and the anxiety the holiday season can bring, it is a time for reflection on where you have been, where you are going, and thus, on what is important.

No matter what your *time management* approach has been in the past, you can elect to make choices in your life that provide the balance to focus on what is important—the result may be the best gift you could give to anyone.

*"We can make our lives sublime,
and departing leave behind us, footprints on the sands of time."*

Hymn to the Night, by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

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**Business Coaching Services:** *Success Strategies for Working With Others*

Meridian specializes in working with business people to develop and enhance leadership competencies in *networking, influence building, decision-making & problem solving, effective delegation, constructive relationship management, and self-management*. Coaching benefits a range of individuals:

- The person who has just been promoted or has stepped up to a new level that requires different skill sets.
- The promising individual who is being held back by one or two challenges.
- The person who wants to re-engage a career or transition to a new one.
- The focused person who needs accelerated development in a specific area.

Our business coaches provide *objective, confidential, and knowledgeable* support for our clients. Our coaches have extensive experience in helping business people acquire new skill sets, see things in a new way, internalize new behaviors, and overcome the obstacles that prevent them from achieving the desired results.

*Contact us today for a free consultation to discuss  
how Meridian coaching services can benefit you.*

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**Spotlight on Conflict:** *Create Alternatives to Resolve Workplace Conflict*

Conflict in the workplace is inevitable. Avoiding it is impossible and ignoring can be expensive. The best approach to managing conflict in the workplace is the deployment of a comprehensive system of *Intervention* and *Prevention* that is designed to build interpersonal skills and resolve disputes early. These are commonly known as Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) systems, and they focus on developing balanced programs of:

- **Prevention:** Training is a powerful tool for building interpersonal skills and will provide a solid return on investment. The Carnegie Foundation found that 85% of a person's success is based upon their ability to manage themselves effectively and their ability to manage their relationships with others. At the same time, only 15% of a person's success is based upon their functional skills. These findings were later duplicated by a study conducted by the Stanford Research Institute.
- **Intervention:** There are many intervention programs available to businesses, offering cost effective alternatives to litigation. Mediation is one such alternative. It is a process that employs a neutral third-party who facilitates negotiations between the parties to a dispute in an effort to develop a mutually acceptable solution. Mediation offers a cost effective and time saving alternative to litigation. In addition, parties to mediation are reporting a higher level of satisfaction with both the process and the results.

A recent study conducted by the American Arbitration Association (July 2003) found that 35% of the Fortune 1,000 companies have begun to develop Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) systems. ADR is an effective approach to managing workplace conflict that saves both time and money. In addition, ADR initiatives make good business sense because they can increase job satisfaction, reduce turnover, and improve productivity.

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**Conflict Services:** *Unresolved conflict in the workplace is costly. When issues and differences are not appropriately addressed, they will escalate, and so will the associated costs.*

Meridian can help your business improve its ability to reduce workplace conflict and limit its negative impact through proactive programs of *Intervention* and *Prevention*.

- **Intervention:** Meridian works to reduce and resolve internal conflict situations between individuals, teams and business units, and works with external parties to ensure disputes in important business relationships are resolved in a positive manner through *Mediation* and *Integrated Conflict Management Programs*.
- **Prevention:** Meridian works with clients to develop ongoing, proactive programs that help build awareness of underlying issues that contribute to conflict, and build skill sets to help people effectively deal with conflict situations through *Training* and *Business Coaching*.

Meridian consultants provide targeted solutions and best practices, from multiple industries, to increase your organization's ability apply appropriate *intervention*, and develop *prevention* programs that are tailored to your business needs.

*Contact us today for a free consultation to discuss how Meridian conflict intervention and prevention services can benefit you.*

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