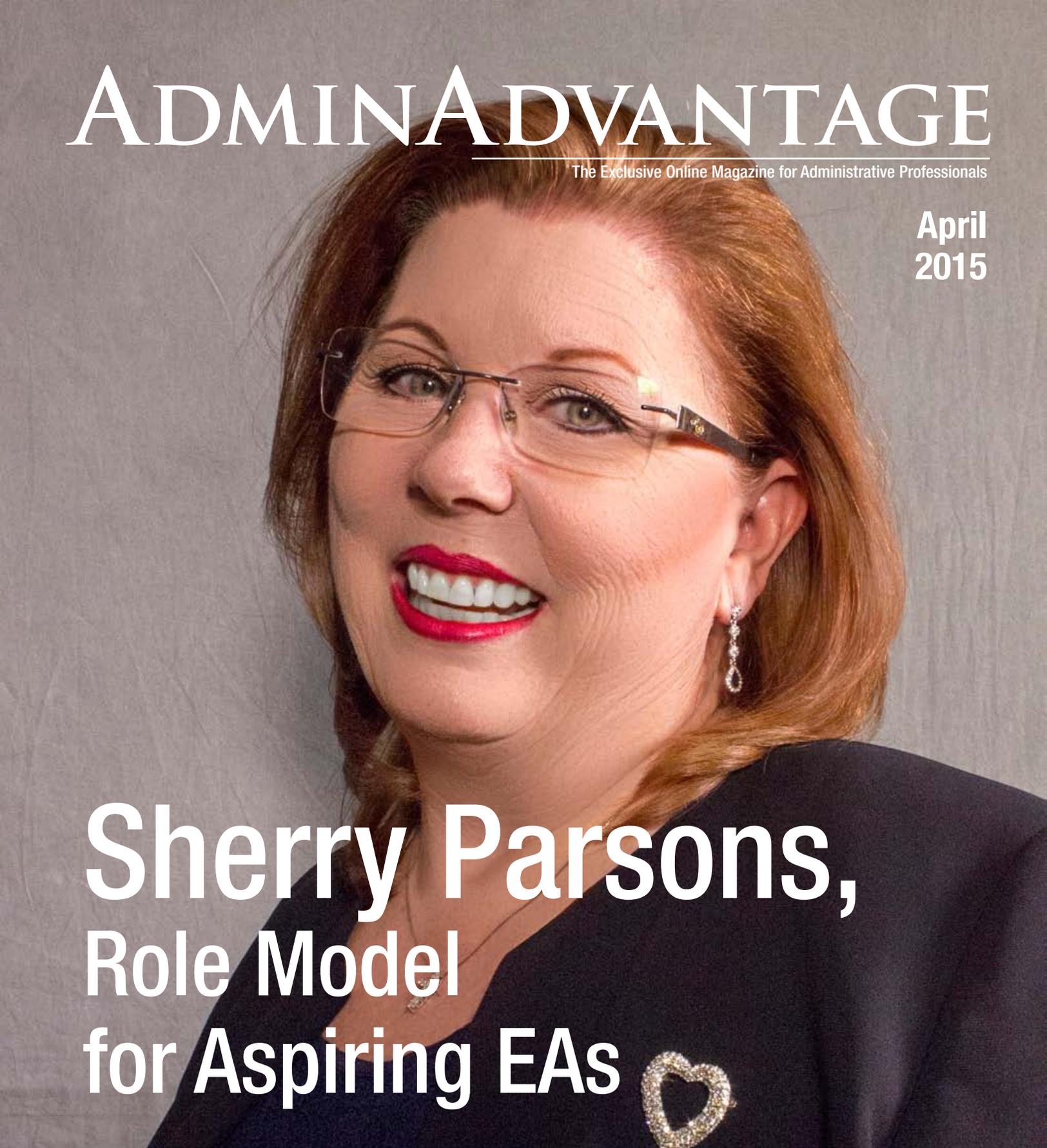


# ADMIN ADVANTAGE

The Exclusive Online Magazine for Administrative Professionals

April  
2015

A portrait of Sherry Parsons, a woman with reddish-brown hair, wearing glasses and a dark blue top with a heart-shaped brooch. She is smiling and looking slightly to the right.

## Sherry Parsons, Role Model for Aspiring EAs

### FEATURES:

Boss from hell

7 Tips for Emailing Busy Professionals

Quitting a Job Gracefully: How to Resign Without Burning Bridges

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# ADMINADVANTAGE

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# CONTENTS

## of April '15

---

6 Boss from hell

10 Sherry Parsons,  
Role Model for Aspiring EAs

16 7 Tips for Emailing Busy Professionals

20 The 4 Most Common Causes  
of Computer Overheating

23 Quitting a Job Gracefully:  
How to Resign Without Burning Bridges

26 Top 6 Keys in Team Building

10



16



20



23



26



6



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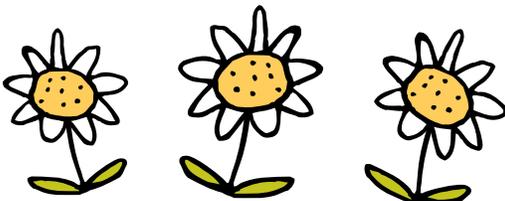
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# Boss from hell

by Sheri Staak

**W**e've all had them... bosses from hell. Power-hungry, greedy, egotistical personalities who would rank among the worst bosses you'd ever meet. They may be persuasive and charismatic, but such charm often masks a self-serving, one-sided quest to attain power and personal success—even if it comes at the expense of the team. ▶▶

Although everyone loves to hate the bad guy on TV, most of us would despise working for the likes of money-hungry Mr. Krabs (SpongeBob SquarePants), ego-inflated Michael Scott (The Office), or self-righteous and socially inept Dr. Gregory House (House). Nor would we want to be compared to any of these DUDs, as I like to call them.



Unfortunately, however, real life is chock full of manipulative, ladder-climbing bosses who'll trample over anyone to get ahead.

Their bottom-line goals of money, power, and prestige trump any positive leadership attributes. They don't care about what's right, only what's best for them. In any given industry or office around the country, I guarantee you'll find DUDs in positions of power.

Contrary to an exceptional or WOW leader, DUDs cast negative shadows on those around them. Where WOWs lift and motivate, DUDs suppress and alienate—they often are defined as bully bosses as well. Like WOWs, DUDs may

possess a certain presence that elevates them in the eyes of those they lead. But they use their charismatic ways to their own advantage, not for the betterment of the group, team, or company.

### **Bully Bosses or DUD leaders are:**

- **Narcissistic and egotistical**
- **Dishonest**
- **Manipulative**
- **Self-serving**
- **Closed-off; inaccessible**
- **Quick to pass blame**
- **Hostile fear-mongers**
- **Bullies**
- **Inconsistent**
- **Unable to connect with people**
- **Uninspired**
- **Negative and demeaning**
- **Quirky or odd**

Dealing with a DUD leader or bully boss can be tricky, if not dangerous to your career health. While many people have left jobs due to poor management or outright bad leadership, you may have no choice but to work with a boss who has sketchy morals, questionable strategies, and awkward or absent communication practices. Learning to maintain your own integrity and stay on the path to becoming a WOW is the challenge when you encounter a DUD, like trying to resist the powers of the devil himself.

# WORKSMART

Even though we all have had to deal with negative, unlikable, and downright mean individuals at one time or another. On TV, evil and morally incomprehensible behavior can be quite entertaining. In real life, however, it's quite another story. People who find themselves influenced by DUD leaders in the workplace must be able to maneuver around the negativity and triumph in the end—which isn't always easy. The following are ways to survive a DUD leader or boss from hell:

**1. Recognize.** Recognize that you are being bullied and that you are NOT the source of the problem. Don't let the DUD boss shatter your confidence or detract you from your goals. The nasty leadership style of a bully has nothing to do with your performance or abilities—it's a character flaw that surfaces regardless of what those around the leader say or do.

**2. Record.** If the bully is bold or arrogant enough to intimidate or strong-arm you via a text, email, or voice mail, don't hit delete—save it! In addition, keep a journal or log of all the bullying statements or incidents. Keep detailed records that include time, location, and specific details surrounding each altercation. Also make note of anyone else that may have been involved or may have witnessed the bullying. Gathering this body of evidence will come in handy later.

**3. Report.** Don't let a pattern of bullying become a way of life in the workplace. Seek help from a higher-ranking leader or HR to expose the bully.



Present the body of evidence you've gathered that illustrates the basis for your claims. It takes courage and evidence to report your boss—especially when his or her modus operandi is to instill fear in those being led. Use your own WOW leadership skills to be strong, honest, and confident in your decision to do the right thing. That also applies to protecting others from bullying behavior. Even if you're not the victim of bullying, but you notice a colleague being subjected to a DUD boss, it's your duty to act. Don't give bullies the power to keep bullying!

Once you recognize, record, and report bullying tactics by a DUD leader, you've made a commitment to wake up from the workplace nightmare and not remain trapped in a recurring anti-dream. It may take some time, but eventually things will get better. The best poetic justice is that eventually the bully boss gets fired or is forced to resign. Sometimes bullies move on to other companies and repeat the process—but that's out of your hands. Hopefully, if you (and others) were diligent with gathering and reporting factual evidence against the offender, their reputation will become tarnished within the industry, making it difficult for them to resume their bullying ways elsewhere.

The best way to deal with a bully boss is by NOT allowing them to break you. Be confident and secure enough to call them out and report their offenses. There's no place for bullies in a progressive, forward-thinking company—deal with the DUDs to make room for the WOWs! 

*Sheri Staak has been a corporate powerhouse for close to 30 years, with an impressive trophy case of sales awards and recognitions. She has worked with and managed more than 1,000 sales representatives in highly aggressive and competitive marketplaces in the U.S. while in key leadership roles at both large privately held and publicly traded global companies. Having led businesses with more than \$1 billion in revenue, and working with successful start-ups and managing turnarounds, Staak's broad range of experience in both the small business and corporate workplace has provided her with a wealth of knowledge that she shares regularly in her blog, *The STAAK Report*.*

*Staak has a BS in Marketing from the University of Central Florida and has participated in programs at Thunderbird School of Global Management at the University of Michigan, the Ross School of Business and the Kellogg Graduate School of Management. Her affiliations include the Healthcare Business Women's Association (HBA), Life Science Professionals, U.S. Biotechnology Professionals and the UpJohn/Pharmacia/Pfizer Network. Staak is married and has two children.*

*Her new book *Tune In to WOW Leadership* is available on Amazon.com (January 6, 2015) as well as at other fine booksellers. To learn more visit: [www.thestaakreport.com](http://www.thestaakreport.com), or visit her Facebook at [www.facebook.com/TheStaakReport.com](http://www.facebook.com/TheStaakReport.com)*

# Sherry Parsons, Role Model for Aspiring EAs

by DeskDemon

*Hi Sherry, Can you please tell us a little about the company/organization you work for, including what it does, the size, sector and your location?*

Avaya is a leading global provider of next-generation business collaboration and communications solutions, providing unified communications, real-time video collaboration, contact center, networking and related services to companies of all sizes around the world.

With an employee worldwide population of

approximately 13,000 employees, Avaya is a company of Futuremakers, headquartered in Santa Clara, California. Our clients rely on us to see into the future on how they will engage with customers, with employees, with partners. We rely on our employees to make that future happen through bold action, innovative thinking, customer focus and teamwork. We are a unique combination of heritage – over 100 years of innovation - and a start-up mentality. Our status as a private company has allowed Avaya to transition very quickly from a product company to a software/services outfit to a cloud-based solutions



## INTERVIEW

### *Who is the person who has influenced you most in your life and why?*

My father was my inspiration and he gave me a passion for many things, business being one of them. I miss him!

provider as the market has shifted.

### *How long have you been with company and in this role?*

I have been with Avaya for 3 years.

### *What is your role within the organization and who do you work for?*

I am the Senior Executive Assistant to Marc Randal, SVP & GM, Avaya Networking. Additionally, I assist in leading the administrative team, providing coaching, mentoring and training both locally and worldwide.

### *How the position as an EA evolved and changed over the years?*

It is a very exciting time in the evolution of the Executive Assistant. The role continues to be a supportive role yet the game has changed. We are no longer sitting and waiting for tasks to be assigned, rather we are business

### *What is your proudest moment?*

My children and grandchildren continue to be the greatest gift one could ever receive! There is a proud moment almost every day as I watch them grow and succeed in life.

## INTERVIEW

partners who understand the goals of the executives we support and how that ties into the strategic plans for the business unit and to the company. We use this information to make decisions on who/what has the top priority to provide our executives what they need at the appropriate time. When our executives travel we reach out to secure additional meetings so they are maximizing their time and costs. Executive Assistants are integral in the daily operations of our companies as well by improving processes and technologies.

### *What would you say are the most important skills you use at work and why?*

Communication skills are on the top of my list for important skills at work. This includes active listening, exceptional writing skills, and the ability to read beyond the words to receive the full message. Communications includes my personal branding, how I dress, talk, and confidently present myself in and out of the office. Effective communication is what I use to provide business partner support to my executive, to Avaya, and to the students at UCSC-Extension Silicon Valley's Administrative & Executive Assistant Certificate Program.

### *You are involved with the UC Santa Cruz Extension's Administrative/Executive Assistant Certificate program. How did you get started and what is your role*

### *If you were invisible for the day – where would you go and what would you do?*

Invisible – wow – a nice concept for me. I would go to a tropical island and bask in the glorious sunshine, swim in the warm water and prayerfully reflect on my life and refresh my passion. The reason that this would be special to me is because I have a son in a coma from a car accident 12 years ago. It is a long road of love, devotion and commitment to care for him in our home. This invisibility for me would be like soaring on the wings of an eagle for a brief moment while I catch the hand of God to renew my spirit and soul.

### *within the program?*

Approximately 12 years ago Bonnie Savage, then CEO Assistant at Aspect Communications and now at Avaya assembled a group of women to meet with UCSC-extension, Silicon Valley to answer questions on what courses they could put together to offer a brand new Administrative & Executive Assistant Certificate Program (AEA). As the new AEA Advisory Board we helped them outline the coursework. When UCSC-extension approached their teaching staff they discovered that there were no instructors who possessed the knowledge to develop the courses.

Bonnie received a call from UCSC-extension and informed us of the situation and asked us to develop and deliver the required courses. The team agreed and we each took a class or two. I started out with one class in Communications and one in Project Management. What I discovered is that

## INTERVIEW

teaching is a passion and with the years of experience in the profession, it was a natural evolution. I am now the Master Instructor for Communications, Project Management and Practicum. I teach multiple classes in each of these courses, remain a founding member and Advisory Board Member.

### *You have helped contribute to the success of upcoming inspiring EAs, what has teaching the course actually taught you?*

The best part of teaching other assistants is seeing them succeed, go beyond where they thought they could go and develop confidence to be the best! I have seen junior administrators come into class trying to hide themselves go on to be leaders of teams, get promotions, raises and elevate their skills to business partnership. Their job satisfaction and personal growth are key drivers for me to continue to bring the best, most current executive assistant coursework and help them see the possibilities. When the light goes on and they move from the back of the room to the front, participate with passion and take that back to their jobs, my heart sails!

Teaching others has taught me to be humble and appreciate the struggles of other assistants. I have a broad understanding of the lack of training and high demands this position requires, shared with me from others who are in the trenches. Over all I find that administrators

they love supporting their executives and want to do their best always! It is my honor to help teach and promote our profession!

### *If you have any personal achievements/ passion projects/ or just something you are just?*

### *Tell us about a humorous event/moment at work – maybe you've been asked to do a strange task?*

The business relationship and trust between executive and assistant can be so strong that there are few if any questions when a request is received and this goes both ways! I had a moment where I tried to see how far that trust goes. I prepared a "fake visa kit" complete with a DNA sample and went in his office. We did finger prints, he signed paperwork and then I handed him the swab for DNA which he quickly swabbed his mouth and handed it back to me. He never even blinked, just did what I asked. When he handed it to me I burst out laughing and he looked at me puzzled. I said there is no DNA test, but thanks for having complete trust in me! It still makes me laugh to this day, but it is also a great example of the importance of a trusting relationship. It is up to us as administrative professionals to honor and never abuse it!

## INTERVIEW



Teaching has become my passion and I am now working on my own skills and taking a 9 month course from the National Speakers Academy. I will graduate in May with the hope of speaking on administrative topics and also on overcoming adversity.

### *What would you still like to achieve?*

I am a lifelong learner and learn something every day. As noted above, I would like to become a key note speaker to share the passion I have for the profession, to help elevate the passion in others and to help those who have adversity of any type in their lives. It is important for others to know that they can survive and thrive in the face of adversity – I know because I have live it!

What key nuggets of advice would you offer to Admins wishing to get into this sector?

For those who are seeking a fulfilling career, have a service attitude and want to be close to the inner circle of a company, this role can provide it along with excellent salary and career growth. My advice to anyone who wants this career is to sign up at UCSC-extension, Silicon Valley, AEA Certificate Program for the best accredited training in the area. Our students are our best testimonial and their accomplishments are outstanding! 🏆



**“ SURE,  
AT FIRST I WAS A LITTLE TAKEN ABACK  
BY THE WHOLE PEEING STANDING UP THING.  
BUT I TAUGHT HIM TO THROW A STICK  
AND NOW HANGING OUT WITH HIM  
IS THE BEST PART OF MY DAY.”**

**— EINSTEIN  
adopted 12-09-10**

**A PERSON  
IS THE BEST  
THING TO HAPPEN  
TO A SHELTER PET**



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# 7 Tips for Emailing Busy Professionals

by Denise Dukette

**W**ant a very busy person to take note when they receive an email from you? Of course! Email is the modern man's bane of existence. You receive a great deal of email and send off even more. When sending an important email, you hope for a speedy reply or action. ▶▶

Do the math. If you multiply the number of emails in your inbox by the time that would be required to read through it and respond to those who expect a reply, it would be astonishing and feel basically unmanageable.

However, there are straight-forward techniques that can be of enormous help to improve the amount of action you receive on your vital emails. In addition, your recipients will also appreciate it.. as much as anyone loves email. Here are some tips on emailing purposefully to grab his or her attention.

## **1. Write short and snappy.**

Don't ramble on in your emails. Concentrate to spend as much time to figure out what to cut as on writing your important emails. Two old sayings in writing definitely apply here: that less is more and to leave it out when in doubt.

## **2. State upfront about what you're asking.**

From the first sentence your reader should be very sure what kind of action you require from them or what the reason is for the email. State it clearly and if you don't require any action, say that the email is only informative and that no action is necessary.

Sometimes a lot of background information is needed to explain a complex matter. Still make sure that the expected action is listed near the email's introduction. A good idea is to put key information like a date in bold and red, especially if you want the reader to save the relevant date and location. Do this with the date by which you would want a reply. Put it in red near the intro.

## **3. Rather break an email with multiple parts into segments.**

When necessary background information makes an email longer, break it up in segments. The reader will find it easier to read and scan for the relevant information when guided by segments. When receiving any email that is just a grey block of text, most people will file it unread and go on to the next email. For more tips on how to create email that will entice busy people to read

it, see the second part of this article.

## **4. Address people one by one.**

This is critical, particularly when asking for help. Every sociologist would be able to tell you that if a CEO writes a group email to a board that says: "Who can help with an introduction to XYZ?" or "Please look at the list of possible new investors and give feedback," people might not respond - even if they are well-intentioned.

Some people might refer to it as being a "thing." If an email addresses you personally and asks for your help specifically, it will have more appeal and you will be more likely to reply. If you don't you will be letting down the writer who seems to be asking you individually, personally and solely. Sending out a group email that says: "I wondered if anyone can help me with...," every recipient will think that someone else will help. Some might help, but not as many as when each one of them had received an individual email.

The easiest way to get this done is to write the biggest part of the email in a general way and then to create numerous versions of it. Then add each individual's name in the beginning with a short personal message.

Make sure important emails are created individually, although this might take a little longer than just an email to the group.

## **5. The subject line matters most.**

Like the headline for a news story or the text of a

# WORKSMART

tweet, subject lines matter a lot. People scan their email and therefore subject lines to work out which one we should open first. If, after a few days you send out a reminder about your email, it might be found in email purgatory, if the subject line didn't grab enough attention. Make it matter. Write something like "short request: time sensitive"; "key intro: Firm A or Firm B"; "Jan 23rd: discussion on TV roundtable, RSVP before tomorrow, almost full" or "swift question: need your help."

Usually it doesn't have to be perfect, but with a really important email it is your lifeline.

## 6. Choose the time of day carefully.

Don't send important emails Friday afternoon.. ever! Rather write them during the weekend and then send them early on a Monday morning, to be among the first emails in an inbox, not down at the bottom. Although experts on productivity believe that the opening of emails should not be the first thing you do every morning, most people still do.

If you're using Gmail, Baydin's Boomerang is your handy helper. If you're using Outlook, click on the Options >> Delay Delivery feature.

## 7. Clean up and resend.

Some people are extremely busy and can't read each and every one of the emails in their inbox. The demands get even higher the more high-ranking they get and the more responsibilities they have on they will most likely not be up until

early hours to read and respond to their emails. Just resend the email. Use REPLY ALL so that they can see that you had sent the email before. Not to put them on a guilt trip, but to get their attention. Write that you know that they are busy and that you hope they didn't mind you resending the email, but that you only wanted to get it at in their inbox again. Then repeat your request.

On your third attempt, include something in the way of you hating to sending email and really not wanting to be a stalker or a pest but that you were only hoping for 2 minutes of their time... a little humor can go a long way.

Remember, not every professional has a zero inbox policy. Some, in fact, keep everything in their inbox. As unique as we are, we all process email differently and no set of rules will always be the answer, however if you use these tips in conjunction with some perseverance, good things will happen. 

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TECHNOLOGY

# The 4 Most Common Causes of Computer Overheating

by D. Waldron

**(1) In first place... DUST** - They say there are two certainties in life, death and tax. We'd like to make the case for a third, dust, it's inescapable. Dust is the most common cause of computer overheating in industrial environments because it accumulates, blocking vents and disabling fans.

Dust systematically disables your computer by clogging the vents, then smothering all the components of the computer that generate heat. With no extraction point for excess heat the fan is put into overdrive, overcompensating to cool your PC. Your computer is then left with no defense against heat accumulation.

Then, just when you think that dust has done enough damage, all that excess heat causes your computer to set alight ending any hope of salvaging it.

According to worldwide government reports, it's estimated that there is up to 50 times more dust present in the air in industrial workplaces. That's an excess of dust that the common computer is not designed to cope with. Out of the 4 most common causes for computer overheating, dust is the only one that can prove fatal.

The majority of 'how to' articles will give you the 'quick fix' solution, advising that you clean your computer. But, how many businesses do you know have the time to clean their computers, every day, to the standard needed to rid them of all dust in an environment that produces 50 times

more of it than the average home? Our guess is you don't know many...

Trying to clean away dust in an industrial environment is impractical, counterproductive and costly. Here's why:

- **Impractical** - To clean a computer properly means they have to be powered down and opened up, hardly practical when trying to run a business that depends on fully operational PCs
- **Counterproductive** - A DIY computer cleaning campaign means personnel are not doing the job they're paid to do
- **Costly** - For the duration of PC downtime your production line may be forced to grind to a halt, resulting in financial losses for every minute you're out of operation

**(2) In second place... A HOT ROOM** - Add more heat to equipment that produces heat equals a computer meltdown. It's recommended that computers operate within the 50 - 60 degree range, but industrial environments exist where temperatures can exceed this range.

Surely this is more deadly than dust! If left exposed to a heat source for an unlimited amount of time, then yes the life of the computer would be ended much quicker. However, dust is an immovable entity; it cannot be removed from the equation. However, a PC in a hot environment

# TECHNOLOGY

can simply be moved to a cooler room.

Problem solved, right? In terms of keeping your computer alive, yes. But now there's a question of convenience. Firstly, if moving your PC to a cooler room means traipsing halfway across the facility to access it that's not good for productivity.

Secondly, if you have an entire PC network operating in a hot room there's the inconvenience of relocating, a solution that's costly in terms of downtime and it's time consuming.

### **(3) Third place finisher... POOR POSITIONING -**

Does your PC sit under a desk? Or, does it rest against a wall in some out of the way place? Computers need space to breathe. If they're already being choked by dust, or exposed to temperatures more suited to the Caribbean, don't cut off the respiratory system.

Again, relocation may solve the problem, but there's obviously a reason that you put your PC in that uncompromising position in the first place. Our guess is convenience...

**(4) In fourth... OVERUSE** - Putting a computer in an industrial environment, where dust and heat add to the strain, and using it all day constitutes overuse. Computers are not designed to withstand this kind of punishment without protection.



Should your computer survive the demands of the day, it's not uncommon for the factory to shutdown leaving multiple PCs left on. Running continuously for 24 hours, without respite, there's no doubt that those computers would be feeling the heat. 🇺🇸

*Daniel Waldron serves as a copywriter for Armagard, manufacturer of protective enclosures for computer, printers, digital signage and other AV hardware. To learn more visit - <http://www.armagard.com>*

# Quitting a Job Gracefully: How to Resign Without Burning Bridges

by Robert Hosking, OfficeTeam

**S**o you're quitting your job. Whether you've gotten a better offer from another company or you're leaving for another reason, one of the tasks ahead is to break the news to your boss. There's a right way to do it, but not everyone knows how to quit a job properly. In fact, some employees have an impressive knack for burning bridges. ▶▶

A large majority (86 percent) of human resources managers polled for a recent OfficeTeam survey (<http://officeteam.rhi.mediaroom.com/2015-02-10-The-Worst-Ways-To-Quit-A-Job>) said the manner in which someone departs an organization can affect that person's future career opportunities. They also listed some rather unusual ways employees have quit a job. Here are some examples of what not to do when resigning, and some best practices for leaving gracefully that will keep your good reputation intact.

*"The worker threw a brick through the window with the words 'I quit' written on it."*

# CAREER

Most people quitting a job wouldn't be delivering the message by brick or other heavy object, but the point is, petty revenge of any sort may feel good at the moment, but it could come back to haunt you for years.

*“The individual sent an email blast to all staff.”*

Who should be the first people to know you're quitting? Definitely not the entire workplace. Before you hit “send” on that all-company email, consider who really needs to know and why you want to tell them. Ideally, you would ask your boss for an in-person meeting, let him or her know that you're leaving and give a brief explanation. Then share the news with a few close colleagues.

*“One person quit via Facebook.”*

Just like a personal breakup, quitting a job is something that should be done in person. Using social media to resign is unprofessional, and even email or a phone call is less than ideal. Before you let your Facebook community or Twitter followers know, inform your boss. He shouldn't have to find out through social media why you've stopped coming in to work.

*“One woman created a music video to explain she was leaving.”*

Such theatrics are unnecessary, even if you happen to work in the TV or movie business. While viral videos of employees quitting, often

set to music, can make for great water cooler fodder, in reality you want to be remembered for your administrative skills — not your flair for the dramatic.

*“One worker packed up her belongings and walked out without a word.”*

Leaving your boss hanging, wondering where you went and whether you're coming back, may be a great plot driver in a movie. But in real life, walking out on a job burns all sorts of bridges and is a surefire way to ruin your career. When quitting a job, you should always give at least two weeks' notice. Some exempt positions require a minimum of a month. This transition period allows your employer — and you — enough time to wrap up loose ends and prepare for the handover.

*“An employee left a sticky note explaining he was quitting.”*

Yes, a sticky note is technically a written notice and is better than nothing at all. But no, it's not a resignation letter, and it's hardly considered giving proper notice. After telling your boss in person that you're leaving, human resources will often ask for a formal letter as part of the official exit procedure. Complying professionally with this request and possibly an exit interview in addition will allow you to leave in good stead.

More advice for how to quit a job gracefully

No matter how much you disliked your job or boss, you owe it to yourself to quit like a pro. You never know when you might encounter a former colleague down the road in your career. What's more, your departure should lay the groundwork for a return, even if you think that's out of the realm of possibility today. It's not uncommon for an employee to leave a job, do something else for a few years — travel, finish a degree or work for another company — and come back to the same employer in a different role.

Leaving on good terms, even if you can't wait to get out of there, may not seem important when you have another job lined up. However, the more bridges you burn, the fewer options you will have later in your career. When you know how to quit a job with grace and maturity, you will be remembered as the professional that you are. 

*Robert Hosking is executive director of OfficeTeam, the nation's leading staffing service specializing in the temporary placement of highly skilled administrative and office support professionals. OfficeTeam has more than 300 locations worldwide and offers online job search services at [www.officeteam.com](http://www.officeteam.com). Connect with us on Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, Google+, Pinterest and the OfficeTeam blog.*

Here are some tips for leaving a positive lasting impression and making sure you're not burning bridges.

- Be courteous and positive in your resignation letter. You may one day need to obtain a recommendation from your former boss, and you could even wind up working together again in the future.
- Finish as many projects as possible before your last day. Depending on your position, it may also be helpful to outline your daily duties and to indicate where important files are located.
- If your schedule is flexible, offer to stay on board longer to help train your replacement. While you may want to be remembered as indispensable, the professional way to quit a job is to make it as painless and seamless as possible for your boss and coworkers.
- An exit interview or questionnaire is an important part of the off-boarding process. If you had real issues with your boss or employer, determine how you will communicate these grievances without burning bridges or coming across like a complainer.
- Take the time to say goodbye and thank you to colleagues. Provide your contact information and reach out to those with whom you'd like to keep in touch.



TRAINING

# Top 6 Keys in Team Building

by Chris Doe Ford

**G**rowing up in rural Mississippi was awesome. I wouldn't trade those lifetime experiences for anything. As a child growing up all the way through young adulthood, I was always involved in team activities. Team sports mainly, but also team school activities in different clubs or organizations. ▶▶

I'll always remember a former coach's words so eloquently expressed during a halftime speech as we were trailing by 14 points. It goes something like this, and I paraphrase, "This game is not about you, it's about the TEAM." I omitted a few expletives to keep it readable, that coach was very passionate and overly dramatic. You get the picture.

Learning to build a strong, dynamic team takes work. As you grow, you learn what works in team building and what doesn't work. Sometimes we



learn the hard way. My top 5 keys in building a strong team are listed below.

### **1. Know your role.**

As a team member, we can't all be superstars. There are key role players that make up each and every successful team. For instance, everyone has heard of Peyton Manning, right? The longtime Colt quarterback now with the Broncos. Do you know who his favorite receiver is? Do you know who his favorite receiver was? Do you know the center's name that snaps him the ball? Do you know the

names of any of the offensive lineman on his current team? Probably not. However, without those role players there is no team.

Do you know your role on your team? At the office, do you now what is expected of you?

### **2. Communicate.**

Communication, in my opinion, is the single most important factor in team building. Why? Are you a mind-reader? Can you assume what your manager or employee is thinking regarding that

# TRAINING

all important task or deadline? You know what happens when we ASSUME, right? You make an A\_\_ out of U and ME.

Have you ever been involved in a personal relationship and there was a communication breakdown? We all have at some point. When we get off track it's always due to a lack of communication.

After all, if you have no desire to communicate with your team members or loved one, it's time to find a new team.

### **3. Know your destination.**

All too often I hear co-workers, team members, employees and even managers say something like "I don't know why we are even doing this, it's not going to help". Does your team even know why they come to the office early everyday? Do they even know why they stay late?

Knowing your destination includes short-term objectives as well as the long-term goals. Keep those in front of everyone concerned. If everyone knows the WHY, they will figure out the HOW.

### **4. Re-evaluate periodically.**

Just like my former coach at halftime who said, "The great teams are the ones that can adjust midway through the game." Being able to adjust and make modifications on the fly is crucial. I'm a firm believer in adaptability. When your team faces an unexpected obstacle or deadline, how will you react? After all, life will definitely throw you a

curveball. It's how we react that counts.

### **5. Put the Team first.**

Putting the team first means putting ourselves second. If it will benefit the team more by doing a certain task then that need to be the guideline. You may not see the personal benefits initially, but if you put the team's best interests before your own, the team will go a lot further, faster.

### **6. Don't Quit.**

Have you ever quit anything in your life? We all have. Here's what I have learned. Once you succumb to quitting, it becomes easier and easier. Success works the same way. Once you learn how to make it work, it becomes habit.

Adopt the attitude that if you don't first succeed, try, try again. It's an old adage but will serve you well in developing your team.

Surrounding yourself with a highly functional team will take you to new levels. Use these 5 keys to explode your team. 

*Chris Doe Ford - how is your team performing? Need to improve your bottom line? Try these top 6 keys for a better performing team. For more information on team building please visit my website at <http://rchriford.com>*





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