

ADMINADVANTAGE

The Exclusive Online Magazine for Administrative Professionals

May 2017



Corporate Retreats

Six Essential Design Principles

FEATURES:

How to Write the Perfect LinkedIn Headline
How to Craft an Effective Out-of-Office Message
12 Work-Life Balance Tips for Administrative Professionals

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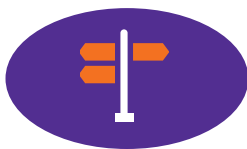
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TRAINING

Are You Wasting Your Time?

By Ursula Jorch

5 Turnarounds to Change Time Drains Into Time Well Spent



One of the resources that you have available to you that can't be recaptured, can't be built up again, is time. Once spent, it is lost to you. After that sobering beginning, let's focus on what we can do with our time and our energy. ▶▶

Let's look at how you may be wasting your time and how you can turn that around. It's often not that hard to make a shift that preserves your time for what's important.

TIME DRAIN #1: MEETINGS ▼

Even with the value that social media brings, there is nothing that replaces meeting with someone in person. That said, we're often not using that time with other people well.

We've all been to those poorly facilitated meetings where people go off on tangents, and generally waste time for all of us.

Even when you meet with people one-on-one, it's not necessarily a good use of your time.

Time turnaround for meetings:

Don't go. If you know a meeting will largely be a waste of your time, decline to attend. Choose

meetings where stuff gets done, and you leave feeling energized to take action.

Step in. Not everyone knows how to run a meeting well. Develop your skills so that you can do a great job. Volunteer to lead the meeting. Step in when things start to drag to redirect it. Gentle words like, "I'm mindful of our time, so getting back to our agenda item... ", are often effective. Those at the meeting who want to get things done will love you for it.

Make conscious choices about who you spend time with. You don't have to accept every one-on-one meeting invitation. If you feel it's going to be an energy drain, graciously decline.

- **Set intentions.** If you do decide to go to a meeting, spend a few minutes beforehand to consciously set your intentions for:
- **How you plan to show up, energetically.** Will you be a source of light or a drain?
- **What you hope to achieve**
- **What you hope to learn.**

TIME DRAIN #2: PRIORITIES ▼

Ever start your day just reacting to whatever is in front of you first, and after that, whatever pops into your awareness? Yup, me too.

And on those days, I never make real progress. On top of that, I have an unease, a lack of fulfillment, because I know I haven't used my time well. And that unease often carries into my evening.

TRAINING

Time turnaround for priorities:

Separate the important from the urgent. It's so easy to be reactive. And it can feel really important in the moment, when the phone's ringing or you see an email with an urgent request.

It takes awareness to pull yourself away from the natural desire to respond. If you're feeling yourself getting pumped up by someone else's request, pause for a moment. Ask yourself, is this important or just urgent? If it's just urgent, figure out how it fits into your most important activities. Do what's most impactful first. Imagine if, every day, you did at least one thing that was impactful for your business. That would add up to a lot of good impact, right? This practice more than any other has helped me be more effective. You won't be drawn away by other things, and your satisfaction with your day will soar.

You choose. No one else sets your priorities. You do that. Define your priorities in advance, at the end of the previous day's work or the evening before. You can even sit down each morning and establish your priorities before opening email or addressing anything on your desk, though it's harder not to be distracted.

Time drain #3: The wrong clients ▼

Clients that are the wrong fit for you and your business are draining. You'll never feel that you've done a good job, and the client won't be happy either. You'll always feel off track, trying to catch up and never quite succeeding.

Time turnaround for the wrong clients:

Get clear on who your ideal clients are. Spend time describing them. Write your description down. Include not just demographics or their business. Include how they are to deal with, and how well your ways of showing up in the world mesh.

Decline clients that are not right for you. This is really tough, especially when you're having a cash flow issue. One way to think about it is to consider that you're leaving space and energy available for the right client when you turn down the wrong one. Plus, you won't have a dissatisfied client talking about your business.

Find the right clients. Increase your opportunities for meeting the right clients by researching them. Where do they go, physically and online? How can you meet them in the most effective way? What can you offer them right away to be helpful?

Time drain #4: Not letting go ▼

When you're committed to a project, it's hard to let it go if it's not working. You've invested so much time, energy, and resources. Surely it'll pay off. Soon.

Team members who aren't a good fit are really tough to let go too. Firing is never fun. Even when you know you're not providing real value, bidding clients adios can be difficult.

Time turnaround for not letting go:

Knowing when to let go is an art. It's not always clear when to do so.

Look for signs. Despite ongoing and persistent effort, it's not working out. What does your intuition say? Evaluate how much more you'll need to invest before it starts to pay off. Figure out your return on investment at this point. Whether it's a client or team member that's the wrong fit, better to move on sooner rather than later, hard as it is, for both your sakes.

Time drain #5: Social media ▼

How many hours have you spent scrolling through Facebook or checking out Instagram or Pinterest? Hmm, how many hours have I spent? Umm, well... more than I like to admit.

It's easy to get drawn in under the cover of checking out trends or making connections. It's so enticing, the ease of apparent connection. It's also exhausting trying to stay on top of every social media platform. And they just keep creating new ones!

Time turnaround for social media:

Focus on one platform and go deep. Do what you're doing well instead of trying to hit every platform out there.

Set limits on the amount of time you'll spend there.

All kinds of apps are now available to help you stay on track. Or go old school and set a timer.

Make your connections count. Flitting in and out of connection isn't a good way to build trust and a relationship, on social media or anywhere else.

Instead, have fewer interactions and make them more substantial.

When it comes to your precious time, figure out what's important to you, and spend your time that way. Sure, we all spend some time gazing off into the distance or trolling social media. And we need that down time too.

But when you're actively engaged, make your time count. Use it to have impact in your business and beyond.

Ursula Jorch, MSc, MEd, mentors entrepreneurs starting their businesses and seasoned entrepreneurs in transition to create the business of their dreams. Her coaching programs provide knowledge, support, clarity, inspiration, and a community of like-minded entrepreneurs to empower you to reach your goals.

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How to Write the Perfect LinkedIn Headline

By Noelle Gross

THE 2 MOST IMPORTANT PROFILE PARTS ▼

The first thing people see when browsing their list of returned search results on LinkedIn is your photo & headline. These two profile pieces make up your first impression to the outside world, so they're worth spending time on. While fairly easy to set-up, the photo and headline can just as easily be overlooked so take some time to carefully craft both. This message you are communicating is your professional brand and will determine how you are perceived by hiring managers and recruiters throughout your career.

YOUR HEADLINE STRATEGY ▼

Most people tend to think of the LinkedIn headline as the perfect place for a job title but this is not

entirely correct. Since job titles vary from one company/industry to the next, they tend to tell the reader very little in terms of what you actually do, making for a potentially confusing brand. As I mentioned, your goal with the headline is to communicate immediately what you do and what you're all about so avoid sticking just to titles if you don't want to leave your reader confused. You should also incorporate a description with your title that paints a picture for the reader of exactly what you do.

THE BASICS: CHARACTERS, SENTENCES, PHRASES & THAT SLEEK SEPARATOR LINE ▼

LinkedIn allows 120 characters for the headline

and places specific importance on the keywords in your headline in terms of how you'll be returned in search results. Therefore, you'll want to max out the character limit so that you are taking full advantage of your strategic keywords. Don't worry about forcing complete sentences if they don't fit. It's perfectly fine to use short phrases or words using the separator line "|" to create a more high-impact easy-to-scan headline. (The separator line is located below the delete key on your keyboard using Shift + backslash).

WHAT TO WRITE ▼

Think of the headline as a condensed version of your elevator pitch. In less characters than a tweet you want to communicate: who you are, what you do, results you've produced & credibility or proof. This may seem near impossible but it's actually quite simple if you're focused on who you're trying to attract to your profile. One way to do this is by putting yourself in the hiring manager's shoes. If you were trying to hire the best person for the job, what would they do and what results/credentials would stand out as being impressive at first glance? For example, if you're hoping to be hired as a social media marketer in the non-profit space, your hiring manager is looking for strong social media results and thinking of their limited budget.

Your headline might look something like this: "Social Media & Digital Marketer driving successful campaigns on a tight budget. 500% increase in ROI in the past 6 months."

If you're hoping to be noticed as an executive assistant, your target hiring manager is likely looking for someone who can multi-task, maintain order in a busy office and understands what it means to support an executive. You might consider a headline like this:

"Executive Assistant | Right Hand to CEO & VPs | Flawless Office Organization & Administrative Duties | Complex Scheduling"

Notice how these headlines immediately communicate value? I'll break these headlines down further to explain each part.

WHO YOU ARE ▼

"Social Media & Digital Marketer" speaks to who this person is as a professional. The easiest way to communicate this is your job title or a broader industry/profession title. For example, if your title is "Social Media Marketer," adding "Digital" into the mix will help to ensure that you are picked up in the right category searches. Research other common titles for what you do and try incorporating several so that you are catering to a wider variety of search terms. For example: Executive Assistant | Coordinator | Administrative Assistant

WHAT YOU DO ▼

While some titles may be more than obvious in telling someone what you do, you still want to share specifics to guide the reader in the direction of your professional value. For example, "Social Media Marketer" doesn't offer insight into the day to day value this person brings to the

WORKSMART

organization, but “driving successful campaigns on a tight budget,” gives me a very clear picture of what this person is working on. Think about your tasks as well as big picture vision for your role and what makes you valuable to your manager (or future manager).

RESULTS YOU'VE PRODUCED ▼

Leading with your results is always the best move when it comes to your professional marketing materials (resume, cover letter). The best way to communicate results is through numbers or metrics. In the Social Media Marketer example, “driving successful campaigns” is backed up by the fact that this Marketer increased ROI by 500% over several months. Results are important because they tell the reader that you not only can do the job but you are actually quite good at what you do. (There’s a big difference between doing something and doing something well). If you’re not sure about your results or haven’t produced any yet, try to incorporate language that speaks to your skill around various tasks. The Executive Assistant example is what you want to aim for in this case.

PROOF OF CREDIBILITY ▼

If you’re looking for ways to stand out and speak to proof of your credibility around a certain skill or industry, be sure to include certifications, specialized degrees (i.e.. MBA, CPA) and recognizable awards or accolades. For example, if you’re a blogger who’s been featured on a major website or publication, work that into

your headline. Your first impression and level of credibility is vastly different when you go from “Blogger” to “Blogger featured on Mashable.”
Keep it Fresh

Professional branding is one of those career management activities that can take relatively little time but does require ongoing maintenance in order to keep your brand current, relevant and aligned to your end goal. It’s important that your branding not be left to go stale. Don’t be afraid to try out new headlines and continually tweak as your career goals change. This way you will always be appearing in the right places and more likely to be considered for the right opportunities.

Knowledge is power when it comes to your career and Noelle wants to share all her secrets to career success, starting today! For more great tips, tricks and career advice, be sure to check out <http://www.ngcareerstrategy.com/blog/>

You're also invited to access 2 FREE hiring-manager approved resumes.

Sign up now: <http://bit.ly/1Qp0P2h>

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Able

Absolute

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Accomplishment

Accountability

Accuracy

Accurate

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Action

Active

Active

Adaptability

Admire

Advantage

Affirm

Agreeable

Alert

Amaze

Appreciate

Attentive

Authentic

Aware

Awe

Awesome



How to Craft an Effective Out-of-Office Message

By Brandi Britton, OfficeTeam

Summertime is almost here. Spring is in the air, flowers are blooming and you're getting restless at the office. The beach or mountain is calling your name, and you're more than ready for your summer vacation. ▶▶

Planning and anticipating is half the fun of an upcoming getaway, but don't forget to take care of business at work before leaving. In addition to wrapping up projects, organizing your desk and taming your inbox, take some time to create a solid out-of-office message so coworkers and clients know what to expect and have someone

to turn to while you're gone. Here are some basic do's and don'ts:

Do include the dates. This is perhaps the most important piece of information you need. Mention the days of the week as well as the actual dates, such as I will be unavailable from Monday, June 26, until Wednesday, July 5.

Don't try too hard to be funny. It's fine to include a cute quip or a witty sentence about your vacation destination, but avoid weak vacation jokes or attempts to provoke envy from colleagues. Be careful not to get carried away with emojis, photos, animated GIFs or exclamation points.

Do inform recipients why you're out of the office.

Is this TMI? Not usually. Letting people know whether you're away for work or personal purposes helps the sender decide whether to wait until you return or contact your backup. Just keep things generic, such as I'm traveling for company business and may be delayed in responding or I'm on vacation and will not be checking email until Wednesday, July 5.

Don't overshare. Professional contacts don't care to read an essay, so don't bog down your message with irrelevant details. Also, there's no place in a workplace email for links that send a colleague or customer to your personal blog and vacation photos. Save such personal information for individual emails.

Do include contact information. It's impolite and unprofessional to leave senders or callers with no alternatives, especially if you'll be away for several days. List the email and phone number of one or more colleagues who will be covering for you during your absence. Whenever possible, be specific. For example, if you assist more than one executive or oversee several projects, let people know whom they should contact for which area.

Don't assume your coworkers will cover for you. Before giving out anyone's name, email address or phone number, get their permission first. Do this even if you've covered for them and they've covered for you in the past. Getting their consent is basic office etiquette. Besides, you want to make sure they are free to handle additional

emails and phone calls during your absence.

OUT-OF-OFFICE MESSAGE HALL OF SHAME ▼

To give you an even better idea of what not to do, here are some examples of terrible, horrible, no good, very bad OOO messages.

- **Gone from the office. Will get back to you when I can.**

Short and sweet is one thing, but providing no useful information whatsoever is another. Besides, this one might even cause undue alarm.

- **I've run away to join a different circus and will reply if I don't get the position. (wink)**

Humor in an auto reply is fine if it's on topic and truly funny. However, some jokes send the wrong message and are simply inappropriate. This is one of them.

- **If you're reading this message, that means I'm finally taking a much-deserved vacation. My friends and I are in Cancun, working on our tan while chugging mojitos and practicing our Español with the locals. In the evenings, our favorite thing to do is to go clubbing until sunrise. Follow me on Instagram to see how much fun we're having. Oh, if you need anything while I'm having the ****ing time of my life, feel free to contact my boss directly. See ya when I get back!!!!!!!!!!**

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Just no. This message contains way too much information, much of which is cringeworthy and ill-advised. It's also a good way to lose your job.

OUT-OF-OFFICE MESSAGE HALL OF FAME ▼

Having a template is a good way to get started with your OOO paragraph. Here are two ideas:

- **Hi. I'm on vacation now and will return to the office on Monday, July 10. Though I won't be checking work messages while away, I will respond to your email as soon as I can when I return. For immediate assistance, please contact my colleague, Jon Snow, at jsnow@castleblack.com. If you have a question about the Valyrian account, call Dany Targaryen at (555) 555-5555. Thank you!**

This is your standard out-of-office message. It's friendly and professional, and has all the information a coworker, client, vendor or customer would need. A straightforward approach like this is appropriate anywhere, but especially if you work in a more buttoned-up environment like a law firm or financial services company.

- **Greetings from Chicago, I'm in the Windy Cindy on business and won't be back in the office until Monday, August 7. Most of my talented colleagues, however, are available to help you with any questions or problems. For billing issues or the Arryn account, contact Petyr Baelish at littlefinger@eyrie.com.**

For an appointment with Cersei Lannister, contact thehand@kingslanding.com.

For a question concerning travel, contact Bran Stark at bstark@weirwood.com.

This out-of-office message has all the basics plus a nice human touch.

Creating an auto reply for incoming emails may seem small and inconsequential, but it is actually an important item for your pre-vacation to-do list. So take the time to do it right — and double-check for typos. Then you can head out the door for a week or two with a clear conscience. 🚪

Brandi Britton is a district president for 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 roberthalf.com/officeteam. Connect with us on Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, Google+, Pinterest and the OfficeTeam blog.

3 Easy and Healthy Grilled Side Dishes to Pair With Your Steak

By Adrian T. Cheng



What you need:

- 3 pieces small zucchini, halved lengthwise
- 1/2 cup shredded parmesan cheese
- 1/2 cup tomato and basil cooking cream
- 1 tablespoon minced fresh parsley

Fruit and vegetable side dishes complement any grilled meat well - they're light, healthy and appetizing plus they add color to your menu. Fresh produce are also generally easy to prepare because they cook fast on the grill. So the next time you plan to grill a steak, add nutrition to your meal with these delicious vegetable side dishes! ▶▶

Parmesan Zucchini Boats

Scoop out the insides of each zucchini half, leaving only 1/2-inch thick shells. Set the pulp aside for another use. Place on a baking sheet, cut side up. Spoon cooking cream into each zucchini equally then cook on a pre-heated grill over medium-high heat until zucchini halves are tender, about 10 minutes. Top with parmesan cheese then grill for a few more minutes until cheese is melted. Remove from heat then sprinkle with parsley. Serve immediately.



Cheesy Butter Barbecued Potatoes

What you need:

- 6 medium potatoes, peeled then thinly sliced
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 large white onion, sliced
- 1 cup shredded Cheddar cheese
- 3 tablespoons butter, sliced
- 1 teaspoon chopped fresh parsley

Salt and ground black pepper to taste

On a large piece of heavy duty foil, arrange potato slices with butter and onions in between. Top with minced garlic then season with parsley, salt and pepper. Seal tightly with the foil. Cook on a pre-heated grill over medium-high heat, turning once, until potatoes are tender, about 15-20 minutes.


When ready, carefully open the packet then sprinkle with Cheddar cheese. Re-seal packet then cook for another 5 minutes until cheese is melted. Allow to cool for a few minutes before serving.

Butter and Bacon Grilled Cabbag

What you need:
 1 head cabbage,
 cored 1/2 kg.
 cooked bacon slices
 1 tablespoon butter



Salt and ground black pepper to taste
 In a small bowl, combine butter, salt and pepper. Mix until ingredients are well-combined. Fill the hole in the cabbage (from coring) with the butter mixture. Roll bacon slices and place inside the hole. Place the remaining bacon slices on top of the cabbage before wrapping it with heavy duty aluminum foil. Cook the cabbage on a pre-heated grill over medium-high heat for 40-50 minutes or until cabbage is tender. Remove the bacon slices on top of the cabbage and cook on the grill until crisp, about 6-8 minutes. Remove both cabbage and bacon slices from heat. Crumble bacon slices then sprinkle on top of the cabbage. Serve immediately.

Give these healthy and delicious grilled side dishes a try the next time you cook steak for a more fulfilling and enjoyable meal! 

Adrian T. Cheng is a food blogger and a BBQ expert. Through years of barbecuing experience, reviewing various grill gadgets and trying delicious and unique recipes, he is sharing his knowledge with everyone through his blog. For more grilling secrets, tips, recipes and more, head over to Adrian's page.



Corporate Retreats

Six Essential Design Principles

Corporate retreats or off-sites provide the opportunity for team building, planning, reflection and strategizing.

They can elicit the response “Oh, no! Not another waste of time!” to “Wow! I’m really looking forward to it.”.

This article puts forth six design principles to make your next corporate retreat hit the mark ▶▶

1. Be Strategic on What You Want to Accomplish:

One of the common pitfalls for corporate retreats is that either too many or too few objectives are set. Be strategic on what you want to accomplish.

Ask yourself: What do you want to achieve during the retreat? As a result of the retreat? What do you want staff to take away? What are your largest priorities? What foundation do you want to create for the staff team?

Be as specific as possible, making your objectives measurable. As the old adage says, “What doesn’t get measured, doesn’t get done.”

2. Get Employees involved in the design of a retreat:

Many times retreats fail because employees are not involved in the design of the retreat. What would employees like to see covered?. Find a balance between the corporate objectives and what employees really want covered. Is it a 80/20 mix? A 50/50 mix?

The retreat facilitator can survey employees to assess what they would like to have included, and to gather their expectations of the retreat process and outcomes. This can be done at staff meetings, if teams are small enough through one-on-one discussion, or via an email or web based survey tool.

3. Less Is More - Ensure You Schedule Enough Time:

A common pitfall with retreat design is that everything tends to get thrown in. In your design work, ensure that all stakeholders are clear on what really needs to be covered versus what they would like to have covered. It may be useful to categorize the possible topics into What's essential, What would be nice, and What can wait to another time or forum.

Less is truly more in terms of impact. Allow sufficient time during the retreat for participants to discuss the topics of relevance and to reflect. It is also important to leave time for participants to create an action plan, linking the retreat discussions back to the workplace. If not all your topics can fit into the retreat you have scheduled, look at adding an additional day to

the retreat or scheduling another offsite later in the year.

4. Choose a Facilitator Wisely

Who will be facilitating your retreat? An external facilitator brings the benefits of neutrality and complete focus and dedication throughout the retreat process. When looking at the external facilitator option, choose a facilitator who is committed to partnering with your organization for the long term, at least for several retreat processes. This will foster stronger trust with your team, enabling subsequent retreats to start from a higher level. The external facilitator will also develop a better sense of your corporate priorities, culture and vision with time. When using a new external facilitator, ensure that sufficient time is spent on briefing, including discussions on expectations, outcomes and your past experience with retreats - what's worked and what has not.

Given that corporate priorities can shift with time, ensure that you leave sufficient planning time, and that the facilitator can adapt the program to meet the rapidly changing needs. To ensure success with an external facilitator, create an internal retreat planning team who can serve as the liaison throughout the whole process, ensuring a seamless fit.

Internal retreat leaders also play an important role within the retreat process, and bring "insider" knowledge as to what the organization



is all about, the culture and the priorities. If an internal retreat leader is used, ensure that they are given sufficient authority and scope to undertake their role. You may also want to consider pairing an internal facilitator with an external facilitator.

5. Make it Regular!

To gain the same “traction” you have on retreat, make retreats regular and not just once a year. Schedule half to full days out of the office several times a year for departments and if possible the entire organization. Virtual Retreats

can also be utilized to provide mini-retreat processes throughout the year, without the added expense of time and money to an offsite.


6. Follow Up:

Create the Learning Link Back to the Office - Many times learning is left at the retreat location and sadly does not transfer back to the office. Throughout the retreat process ask yourself: What can we do to bring this learning back to the office? What systems do we already have in place which can be leveraged to discuss our retreat learning? What systems should we create?

To strengthen the learning link back to the office, schedule time during the retreat to create action plans, at the individual, team, department and/or corporate level. Action Plans should identify time frames, resources needed, who is accountable. Action plans should be as specific as possible. Action plans need to be followed up on, either as part of regular team meetings, through one-on-ones with managers, or through other internal systems.

To keep the learning alive, consider holding group or team coaching sessions after the retreat with smaller teams or individual employees. Monthly or bi-monthly sessions can support the transfer of the learning back to the workplace.

With these six design principles in mind,

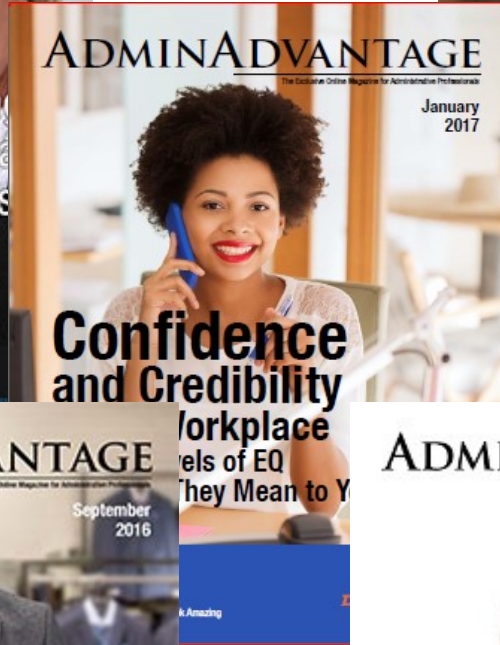
your next retreat should be meaningful, engaging and sustainable, leaving your employees asking “When are we going to do this again?”. 

Jennifer J. Britton is the founder of Potentials Realized and a co-founder of Integra Leadership Inc.

Jennifer works with corporate clients and business owners to achieve the success and impact they desire in teamwork, business, balance and performance issues, through the provision of coaching, consulting and training services.

She regularly facilitates teambuilding sessions and retreats (virtual, on and offsite) with governmental, nonprofit and corporate clients. As a performance improvement specialist, she works with leading edge organizations across North America and the Caribbean.

She is a Certified Professional Co-Active Coach, a Certified Performance Technologist and a Certified Human Resource Professional. Jennifer provides team, group and executive coaching programs. Jennifer is known for her engaging, results-oriented, customized collaborations.



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