

National Institute  
of Restoration, Inc.  
nir-inc.com



2008

# OnSite

Volume 10 • Issue 9 September 2008

## MANAGEMENT ISSUES

### Managing the newest generation of workers

They're called the Millennials or Generation Y and they're known for their technological savvy and their independent thinking. Those who have entered the workforce

since 2000 are different in their approach toward work and the way they solve problems.

Wise managers should be aware of the general characteristics of this group such as

**Millennials tend to value education.**

Their parents, mostly two-income households, stressed the importance of academic achievement as a key to success. Consequently they are well trained and optimistic, but also tend to have a sense of entitlement and inability to cope with everyday work-related stress.

**Millennials are comfortable with technology.**

They have no problems adapting new technology into their personal lives as well as their work.

In the *Virginia Employment Law Letter*, Stephen Stine offers these tips for managing millennials:

- **Encourage them to work in teams.** They have been educated to collaborate and enjoy working

in a group to accomplish challenging tasks.

- **Give them work that is challenging.** Millennials want to make a meaningful contribution and tend to bore easily so challenge them early and often. They don't buy into the mindset of "paying their dues" and will go elsewhere if they lose interest in their job.
- **Listen to them.** Millennials are creative at solving problems and want honest feedback for their opinions. They are used to being listened to and have been taught that their opinions are valuable – a trait that may annoy older, more experienced workers.
- **Be appreciative of their ability to multi-task** and their talents with technology. Find way to take advantage of the fact that they can easily talk on the phone while checking email or answering instant messages.



- **Help them understand company rules.** One of the more common complaints about Millennials is that they will show up a little late or leave a little early each day. Let them understand that they are supposed to keep regular business hours in order to be available to others in the company even if they have completed their assigned responsibilities.

With the right motivation, Stein notes that millennials can become great assets to your company.

## MARKETING MATTERS

### Keeping the job sold

One of the topics at last May's NIR Executive



Leadership Conference in PHoenix was how to keep a job sold when your competitors are out there trying to lure your clients away. Walter Lupp of Consolidated Construction Services in Roanoke led the session and advised restoration contractors that they cannot take anything for granted, especially on major jobs.

Those sentiments are echoed by sales coach Kelley Robertson who cautions that many factors can unglue a job that you thought was closed and ready for action.:

- Your contact in the company leaves.
- The client decides to change vendors.
- The company is bought or buys another company.
- A competitor may come with a better offer.

Robertson reminds sales people that there are simple steps you can take to keep a job sold.

**Send a message that is a personal thank-you or acknowledgement.** Don't be one of those salespeople who check off a job as sold and move on. Let your customer know you value that business by writing a thank-you note.

**Keep your customer informed.** Let customers know timelines, delivery schedules or delays that come up. Know whether or not your client is detail-oriented or a big-picture type person. Ask how often he or she would like updates.

**Send them additional information that is helpful as a way to keep in touch.** This could be articles of interest from a magazine, a newspaper clipping

## HIGHLIGHTS

- Nuts & bolts
- Working smarter

### NIR helps you boost your business

From networking to education to marketing assistance, the NIR supports restoration specialists. **434.973.4200**

about their company or their family, or some information you've found on the internet.

**Send testimonials from your satisfied customers.** That is one of the best ways to reinforce the buying decision.

Don't be guilty of taking your customers for granted and assuming that once a job is sold, it is yours. Because change is a constant in everyone's life, you have to be on-guard to keep the changes your customer experiences from impacting that agreement he or she made to work with you. Be available and be memorable by finding creative ways to make contact so they won't be plucked by your competition.

## Working Smarter

### You are what you think.

In his book about the power of concentration, the late Theron Dumont wrote that the power of your own thoughts will

determine your success.

While Dumont may be guilty of oversimplifying a complex process, he is on target when he says that your ability to drive out unproductive thoughts and cultivate thoughts that move you toward your goals will ultimately determine how successful you are.



As Dumont surmised, your thoughts are what create your environment and the environment you creates ultimately impacts the people you attract as friends. As you change your thoughts, you will eventually change your environment, friends and everything else in your world.

### Construction jobs lost

The sagging economy is taking its toll on the construction industry. According to the U.S. Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics, the industry lost 522,000 jobs since the beginning of 2007. During the month of July alone, 22,000 construction jobs disappeared.

Labor unions have called for an aggressive economic stimulus program focused on building and correcting America's infrastructure problems.



It's hard to argue with his main conclusion: good thoughts are constructive; evil thoughts are destructive.

While wondering what you'll eat for dinner or worrying how you'll finish a project are not "evil" thoughts in the usual sense, they certainly distract you from productive work.

The American Society of Civil Engineers has estimated that the country needs to spend \$1.6 trillion over the next five years to make up for years of neglect in maintaining basic infrastructure and expanding facilities to keep up with growth.

## NUTS AND BOLTS

### California retailers face new ADA interpretation

A California appeals court has ruled that retailers must either remove architectural barriers that keep disabled individuals from

accessing merchandise or make the merchandise available through other means.

The ruling stems from a lawsuit against Mervyn's department stores for narrow pathways between display racks that limit those in wheelchairs or with other handicaps from reaching the items for sale.

The court ruled that the chain does not have to widen all its aisles to 32 inches in existing stores but it must accommodate disabled customers through customer service that is attentive to their special needs.

In making the decision, the appeals court considered a plea from Mervyn's that rearranging their stores to accommodate the wider aisles between clothing racks would result in substantial losses. The chain conducted a test of seven stores and found that profits dropped by more than 30 percent in those stores redesigned to handle larger aisles because of the loss of display space.

The decision could establish a precedent for how future cases are settled. Californians for Disability Rights has also sued Macy's department stores citing the same issues.



### Golf balls turn dangerous and costly in landscaper's equipment

Landscapers would do well to look for golf balls before they begin mowing. Failure to do that cost insurers of a New Jersey firm \$725,000 when a mover hurled a golf ball through Thomas Guhl's windshield as he was driving near a golf course.

The broken glass cut Guhl's cornea, causing him some loss of vision.

The Monmouth County man argued that the landscaping firm should have checked for golf balls before mowing. Canfield Lawn and Landscaping firm agreed to a settlement with Guhl.

### Think before you speak when asked for discount

Just because a customer asks for a discount does not mean that you have to comply. That advice comes from the National Association of Independent

Businesses. A better response, says NFIB, might be to flinch.

Often people routinely ask for discounts without really expecting to receive them. They may be just fishing and are usually not comfortable pressing the issue.

Also, your customers talk to one another and word gets around so that if you give one a discount, you can expect the question will come up again.

Sometimes the discount may be less than you image so you could ask how much they had in mind.

But if you flinch in response to their question, you are communicating your discomfort over the customer's request. NFIB advises to repeat their question with a touch of disbelief. You should practice your "You want a discount?" question until it becomes second nature and you can respond quickly.

## Let NIR Open Doors For You

Keep in touch with your clients by giving them information they can use.

Send NIR's popular newsletter on the insurance industry including business tips to all of your agents and adjusters.



Contact NIR to learn more:  
434.973.4200  
nir@nir-inc.com