Hello!
We hope you enjoy our July issue.

Go for it! Quote

"When you become a leader, success is all about growing others."
- Jack Welch

Pass it on

Know anyone who might be interested in our newsletter? Invite them to visit our website at **ffgroupconsulting.com**

The lure of summer: What leaders and workers can do to create a balanced workplace culture

After many years of studying successful workplace environments and successful business leaders, I've found the vast majority of those who are successful for the long haul are those who recognize that planned time off is a valuable investment in their business and in their people.

The reward of "time off" for ourselves and our team members recognizes our effort throughout the year and makes it possible to have a life beyond the four walls of the office.

If you've been a subscriber for a while, you might recognize that paragraph from our August 2008 article, The Great Balancing Act.

I'm accustomed to hearing about stress from my clients, but lately I'm noticing it even more. Troubles in the economy have people worrying about prices, retirement funds, and whether or not they or their spouse will keep their job, etc. I believe that in times like this time off is more important and valuable than ever.

What's more important to the overall culture of a company is whether the leadership is tuned in to the stress of their workforce. It can be frustrating when organizational leaders, managers, business owners and company officers talk about workplace culture as something that happens beyond their control.

In those situations, I work with my clients to really focus on what they're doing to create and maintain the "culture" they desire. For example, if attrition levels are climbing, it's time to look at what they are doing to instill a sense of loyalty. Are they rewarding their best people? Are they encouraging them to take time off and balance their lives? Do they make them feel welcome, like family?

During these slower months of July and August, organizational leaders can take stock of how they're doing and perhaps put their hands back on the steering wheel of their workplace culture. If it's off course, it's not too late to work to correct it.

Leaders, summer is a great time to help your employees to feel appreciated, rewarded and trusted. Here are just a few ideas, but I'm

sure you can think of some of your own:

- *Weekly BBQ* – The leadership of a larger company I worked with hosted a BBQ Lunch every Friday during the summer months. The CEO, company officers and the top VPs flipped burgers for two or two-and-a-half hours so that they could accommodate all staff lunch shifts.

- *Team Lunch* - In one of my first positions as a manager, I organized a team lunch outside of the office every Friday. This really helped with team building, and helped us get to know each other as real people. We heard things like whose kids were playing sports, whose spouse was getting a new job, or who had an interesting hobby. What was most valuable was that we learned about the whole person on our work team.

- *Summer Hours* – Many companies and organizations institute summer hours, such as an early "closure" on Friday afternoons. Even seemingly small efforts like the occasional long weekend or dress-down days can go a long way.

Workers, it's equally important for you to take advantage of these opportunities. Don't cave into fear by overworking. Invest in your well-being with these ideas:

- *Say Yes* - Don't skip the BBQ to work at your desk - get out there!
- *Get Creative* - Find your own workday oasis by taking your lunch to the park or starting a lunchtime book group.
- *Down Time* - Don't forget that it's summer! Take in an evening outdoor concert during the week, or organize a family trip for the weekend.

Don't wait for the company to find ways to build team spirit and loyalty. Take care of the people around you - get to know them and support them. It will personalize the environment for all of you. If you know someone is having a hard time dealing with workplace stress or personal issues - take them to lunch. Mother Teresa said, "If you can't feed a hundred people, feed just one."

If you have the opportunity to take some vacation time, be responsible about closing out your projects before you go and cover all your bases. Then you can let go of it all and get the rest and relaxation that you need. When you come back, refreshed, you will rejuvenate the whole team in return.

Take the next step
Would you like to sit down with me for a few minutes and get started on your daily, weekly and monthly actions? Visit my website today to send me a message and we'll coordinate a time that works best for both of us to focus on what's best for you.

Keep the Main Thing the Main Thing. Go For It!

For over 15 years, Mark Ford has been assisting top level executives and business leaders increase individual and organizational performance, as well as improve communication, leadership and motivation.

As a successful coach, speaker, trainer and consultant, Mark empowers his clients to be the heroes of their own lives, find their true path, define their own success, live with passion, and make this life count.

Executive and Leader Coaching • Management Development • Marketing • Business Planning • Team Building • Customer Service Training • Communications Training • Sales Force Development • Project Management • Media Relations

FFG Consulting LLC
PO Box 529, Glenwood, IA 51534
712.527.0787