

Summer/Winter
2005

**PROACTIVE
RESOLUTIONS**
CONFLICT MANAGEMENT



WE CUT THE COSTS OF CONFLICT

ProActive ReSolutions Inc. NEWSLETTER

In the Media

Many workplaces tolerate poor behavior for some time, and then seem to say, "Enough is enough!" and come down heavily on "offenders".

In other common situations, a so-called "big incident" is the result of a long period of inappropriate behavior resulting in the person "going too far".

In the May 5-11, 2005, issue of Business Review Weekly, Emily Ross interviewed ProActive ReSolutions' director, Joe Moore, about handling misconduct in the workplace.

Although following company procedures is important, ProActive ReSolutions believes that managers can rely too much on policy. Other skills need to be brought to the situation.

"We expect managers to deal with misconduct problems as if they were easy, when most are not well trained in knowing what to do when things go wrong between people at work."

About ProActive ReSolutions

ProActive ReSolutions Inc. specializes in helping organizations prevent and manage discord between people at work.

As experts in identifying and managing conflict, we conduct detailed assessments of how exposed your business is to conflict.

The conflict may involve the Board or governance level, management, employees and your customers. The direct costs of conflict amount to at least 5% of your organization's annual salaries and wages bill. We can help you identify where you are wasting your money and help you minimize the loss.

Intervention:

- When serious conflict affects a system of relationships
- When organizational culture is impeding constructive change

Prevention Education programs and resource materials:

Emotions at Work – Helping people to understand and manage their own emotions and respond constructively to those of others

Dialogue for Solutions – Helping work groups to resolve poor communication and decision-making processes

Respectful Workplace – Helping participants to create and maintain a respectful workplace

Workplace Violence – Helping participants to identify and respond to incidents of workplace violence

Specialized services –

- Ensuring your organization's policies and procedures are compliant with statutory and regulatory requirements
- Helping your organization assess, evaluate and respond to violence risk
- Assisting counsel dealing with legal problems relating to conflict and violence

In this issue...

In this issue, we continue our case of the medical practice as we illustrate the fact that conflict between people at work simply worsens until something is done about it. Our case study features one of our most popular products, the TJA Conference, which is used whenever you want to resolve conflict between people at work.

The ProActive ReSolutions' team keeps you up to date with current trends in the key issues affecting people at work. Some of the research we reviewed for this issue tells us more about the link between pressures of work and our health. Again, presenting us with compelling reasons to alert you to our combined service of ProActive ReSolutions and BodyLogic Health Management.

Feelings, Mind and Body – choose all three.

Recent Australian research shows that employees exposed to strain and insecurity seemed to experience wide-ranging health problems such as cardiovascular disease, hypertension, angina and being overweight.

The cumulative load put on a variety of biological systems could possibly be responsible. Significant strain at work was associated with depression, anxiety and poor health.

With UK managers reporting a 46% increase in the amount of conflict experienced at work it is timely to let you know more about our education program called **Emotions at Work**.

Many participants in workshops around the world have asked us how to let others know about our frustrations, how to express how we feel without causing resentment. **Emotions at Work** gives us a practical explanation of how our emotions work which gives us a better chance of choosing our responses when we feel the pressure.

Again thank you to all of our clients this quarter.

Judy Brooks, Managing Director

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Interested in reducing the cost of workplace injuries?

Do this quick quiz and get back to us with the results.

- Do your senior managers visit the front line regularly and reward safety just like they encourage cost reduction and productivity?
- What did your organization spend on workplace injury last financial year?
- What are you doing to manage your injuries?
- Do you have a current injury prevention program?
- Does it meet the standards of a successful program?
- Are your results measurable, both statistically and by way of employee feedback?
- Does it have consistency and longevity?
- Is it practical in its implementation?
- Do your employees respond positively to the training?
- People generally want to do the right thing. But what if they don't know what the right thing is?
- Have you given your employees the information they need to know to prevent and manage their injuries?

BodyLogic Health Management is a leader in the industry of on-site Injury Prevention programs, for help in making your site a leader in managing workplace injuries, contact us at www.backlogic.com or email us at info@backlogic.com.

Conflict – The Gift That Keeps on Giving

Conflict is a state of negative feelings between people. It is often accompanied by specific, conflict related behaviors. The story we introduced last issue featured the medical practice where relationships between people had deteriorated to suspicion, mistrust, negative gossip, poor communication and the inaction of the medical practice partners in the face of employee distress.

Last issue we discussed the case of a theft in a medical practice. The partners were not sure who was responsible for the theft although there was strong circumstantial evidence that one of the receptionist staff had been stealing from patients and colleagues.

Conflict between people at work does not get better without some intervention. Conflict does not go away of its own accord – it deepens ill feeling between people.

The partners of the medical practice decided to arrange for a TJA Conference. Regardless of who was responsible for theft of property, the partners recognized that they had been treating staff with suspicion, staff generally had begun to mistrust each other and the reputation of the practice had begun to suffer.

The ProActive ReSolutions' facilitator interviewed the partners and staff of the medical practice. The receptionist chose to have her partner attend the interview. During the interview, the receptionist admitted she had been stealing from patients and colleagues. She agreed to talk about what she had done in a preliminary TJA Conference with the partners.

In this conference, the receptionist talked about the problem she had been having, apologized for what she had done, agreed to leave her employment and signed a "deed of release" stating that neither party would talk further about the situation. The receptionist and her partner, together with the practice partners agreed this course of action.

The remaining medical practice staff and the partners got together for a TJA Conference. The departure of a staff member after some difficult experiences had a significant impact on relationships in this workplace. Staff used the conference to clear the air and talked about their experience. During the conference people talked about how they had been affected

by what had been going on, how each of them had begun to trust the others less and how difficult it had become to maintain the reputation of the practice as patients reported items had gone missing while they attended the medical center.

People apologized for having wrongly suspected others and the partners apologized for failing to develop better systems of communicating and for ignoring staff concerns. The TJA Conference Agreement included actions to improve accountability and safety for staff, patients and the practice partners.

The TJA Conference

The TJA Conference brings together the network of relationships affected by what has been or is happening in the workplace.

Prior to the TJA Conference, the ProActive ReSolutions' facilitator:

- interviews those caught up in the conflict
- determines how the conflict developed
- persuades people to talk about how they have contributed to the conflict and how they could have acted differently

The ProActive ReSolutions facilitator then leads the group through a three-stage process:

- they talk about what has been happening
- they hear how it has affected people personally and affected their ability to work together
- they determine what needs to happen to make things better (this forms a written, signed, accountable agreement)

ProActive ReSolutions provides ongoing support to the participants after the TJA Conference to ensure that they implement their agreement. We also provide a written comprehensive report back to the client on ideas for sustaining the agreement and minimizing future conflict within that workplace.

To find out more about the TJA Conference and the other ProActive ReSolutions' products and services please contact us at info@proactive-resolutions.com or visit our website www.proactive-resolutions.com

We have continued to work with clients who have been with us for some years.

We welcome you back and extend our appreciation and thanks to those with whom we have worked for the first time.

British Columbia Institute – BC, Canada

Government of Canada – Canada Agri-Food Canada – Ottawa, ON
Canada

Canfor – Fort Nelson, BC, Canada

City of White Rock – White Rock, BC, Canada

Correctional Services of Canada – Victoria, BC, Canada

EV Logistics – Langley, BC, Canada

Greater Vancouver Regional District – Burnaby, BC, Canada

Hay River Health & Safety Board – Hay River, NWT, Canada

Northern Networking – Glasgow, United Kingdom

City of Prince George – Prince George, BC, Canada

Australian Tax Office – Canberra, ACT, Australia

Alcatel – Alexandria, NSW, Australia

AMP Capital – Sydney, NSW, Australia

Attorney General's Office – Sydney, NSW, Australia

Centrelink – Canberra, ACT, Australia

Department of Family and Community Services – Canberra,
Australia

Fairfield City Leisure – Prairiewood, NSW, Australia

MIA Group Ltd. – Sydney, NSW, Australia

PAR, Inc. – Lutz, FL, USA

State of Iowa – Des Moines, IA, USA

University of Massachusetts – Shrewsbury, MA, USA

Saint Gobain Containers Corp. – Muncie, IN, USA

Emotions at Work

For decades employees were encouraged to leave their brains at the company gate – with companies staffed with leading hands, overseers, supervisors, deputy managers and managers – employees did not need to think.

Business is different now. Most organizations get that brains are needed at work. Mention emotions and feelings at work however and many organizations still do not get it, “Emotions at work?”

If you have been in any of the following situations you will know that work is highly emotional!

You come to work on your birthday and find balloons, flowers and a card signed by all your colleagues on your desk.

A customer calls and insists that the salesperson who answered his call be fired for incompetence.

Your boss calls you into her office and shouts “If you want to continue working here, you.....”

A customer writes to you saying how much they appreciated your help and service.

You talk to your boss about his behavior of saying that people are important while always running late for meetings.

Some of the previous experiences make us feel good. We’ll smile, feel better about ourselves.

Other experiences have a different effect on our body. Adrenalin pumps in, blood pressure increases, maybe our voice rises. We end up saying things we regret, or regret not saying anything.

Our emotions are contagious. They let others know how we’re feeling and they let us know as well. It’s impossible to be around another human being and not be affected by how they’re feeling.

We like being around people who are interested in what they are doing.

We feel good around them and usually want to engage with them. Their interest is contagious. The same can be said of people who are happy. It’s less stressful being around someone happy. As we know, their happiness rubs off on us. Happiness is contagious, like all the emotions.

When someone is angry, it is difficult to know what to do. Most of us tend to want to avoid people when they’re angry, because it makes us upset or afraid, or angry ourselves. Anger is contagious.

The same goes for being around people who are distressed, as they tend to make us feel distressed. They often want us to sympathize

with them or help them change their circumstances. Their distress is contagious.

Can we choose our emotions? How do we respond when the behavior of our work colleagues does not meet our expectations? Is it important to make others feel good? How do we respond when others let us know that our behavior is not meeting their expectations?

The ProActive ReSolutions’ education resource **Emotions at Work** gives a simple explanation of our emotions and how they affect us. It also suggests some ideas for getting on with each other at work in order to reduce conflict and increase cooperation.

Emotions at Work training is designed to enhance our understanding of emotions, how they work, how they affect our interactions with other people, and how to manage them in difficult situations.

To find out more about **Emotions at Work** and the other ProActive ReSolutions’ products and services please contact us at info@proactive-resolutions.com or visit our website www.proactive-resolutions.com.

Quarterly Quote

Life is curly, don’t try to straighten it out.

Is This You?

Are you having trouble preventing minor disagreements from escalating into greater conflict and violence?

- **Have you experienced trouble intervening or responding to incidents of serious conflict and violence? If not, the chances of further risk increase and your people may not be working cooperatively.**
- **Do you have poor performance and/or poor behavior from employees and managers who focus on their intention for good results rather than the outcome of their behavior?**
- **Do you have a problem repairing the harm done to workplace relations because of serious conflict? Are good work practices and appropriate behavior the norm in your business?**
- **If this is you then contact us because proven, cost-effective solutions are available.**

Proactive ReSolutions has an international track record in delivering specific, measurable results that will reduce the financial and human costs of conflict.

If you want to discuss how we can help your organization prevent and manage discord at work please contact us at info@proactive-resolutions.com or visit our website www.proactive-resolutions.com.



FACES OF PROACTIVE RESOLUTIONS INC.

Amira Merhi

Best decision? I have two good decisions. When I first got my licence I insisted on learning on a manual car instead of an automatic. I can now drive any car, and at any speed too! My second best decision was moving the rug (the very ugly rug) from the office. I can now move around the entire office on my chair. No exercise is necessary.

What do you spend most of your time doing? I love to sew. Anything I can make out of fabric—I make: clothes, toys, bags, quilts, books. Anything! I’m yet to master making shoes which will save me around 97% of my income.

What kind of leader are you?: Laissez Faire. I prefer to go with the flow. Tell me your idea and why you think it will work, or make things better and it’s done. I don’t like to “boss” people around or claim status, let everyone make their own mistakes and learn their own lessons.

What phrases do you use most often? “go nuts”, “whatever you like”, “don’t get emotional”, and “no problem”

What drives you? Most days, my car drives me. My biggest push in life is my family, friends, and my religion. My family compels me to be what I can and my religion shows me how to get there. And when it all fails, my friends are there to listen and get me back up again.

What inspires you? Passionate people. I am motivated by someone that is knowledgeable and emotional about a topic. I am also inspired through strength. People that have the courage and patience to do something I could never have thought, or say something I couldn’t even think. That’s fascinating and commendable.

The Back Page

A HEALTH AND WELLNESS NEWSLETTER

The Industrial Athlete

Recent evidence suggests that the key lessons learned about recovery from injuries in sport also apply to the workplace.

Every week the sports segments of the major media report the return to sport of world-class athletes after seemingly crippling injuries or surgery. Broken limb – return to the sport in record time; shoulder or knee reconstruction, back in time for the finals!

As the time taken for injured athletes to return to sport dramatically shrinks, what is happening at the office or factory? Just the opposite – average time off work from injury caused by a slip or a fall? 9 weeks. Some difference!

There are similarities though between the business and athlete population. Considerable percentages of injury for sport and work are caused by the repetitive nature of both jobs. Stressors are part of sport and work too. A recent UK study of 8000 workers showed that both the physical and psychological aspects of work are directly involved in the development of musculo-skeletal disorders.

Athletes and employees perform their sport or their job using their musculo-skeletal system. When an athlete is injured, the objective of the team owner and manager is to return the athlete to the sport as quickly as possible while reducing the risk of additional injury. Employees contribute to the performance of the business in as valuable a way as the athlete contributes to the team or individual sport. After injury at work, the objective should be the same – return to work as quickly as possible while reducing the risk of additional injury. It is the Industrial Athlete approach.

Writing in Occupational and Environmental Medicine (OEM online) Thomas Sevier identifies five key lessons that business can learn from sport about injury management.

- **Prevention:** Use of preventive education and protective equipment while working or performing the event. The least expensive injury is the one you never have to treat.
- **Conditioning:** Training that strengthens potential areas of weakness and enhances performance at work. Better adaptation to handle the demands of the job or activity.
- **Early intervention or identification:** Diagnose the injury as quickly as possible and initiate measures to decrease the severity of disability.
- **Progressive treatment:** Rehabilitation that improves flexibility, muscular balance, and other factors that may have contributed to the injury and may prevent future injury.
- **Comprehensive treatment:** Provide guidance in safety practices, appropriate prevention, and conditioning practices, as well as facilitating

access to innovative approaches to treatment that carry the greatest opportunity to yield positive outcomes.

The experiences of an Australian manufacturer of wine casks point to the financial benefits of a re-injury prevention program, reported in WorkplaceOHS.

Mary Pagac of Scholle Industries reported that the manufacturing process work is often highly repetitious and strenuous, and before the program was introduced workers were experiencing high rates of muscle strain, fatigue and injury and re-injury.

Pagac said workers on compensation claims would often receive intensive rehabilitation treatment for problems such as shoulder strain, often including physiotherapy, hydrotherapy and exercise regimes. But when they returned to work and their normal duties they would often re-injure themselves after a few months.

Pagac said that after talking to workers – many of whom had small children and other family responsibilities – Scholle found that they were often “too busy” outside of work, to maintain their exercise and fitness regimes for long periods.

The exercise regimes were therefore incorporated into the workday. Everyone in the company does a “pre-shift exercise program prior to commencing duties”, Pagac said, and workers are also encouraged to stretch and release throughout the day.

All workers are also now required to fill out daily work sheets, detailing their start and finish times and any pains or twinges they are feeling. Pagac said Scholle then uses this information to identify “early warning signs” that a worker is at risk of an injury, and needs to be moved off particular types of equipment, or work that puts strain on particular muscle groups.

The financial results of the program include a 75% reduction in lost time injury frequency and a 97% reduction in total claim costs.

The BodyLogic Health Management range of services compliments the Industrial Athlete approach while making some crucial distinctions. As Susan Rock, Health Management expert with BodyLogic says, “Work is performed by people with a wide range of physical abilities and fitness habits so part of the solution to effective injury and re-injury prevention is to focus on the crucial areas that can make a difference to everyone.”

These crucial areas are:

BackLogic: This program introduces ‘healthy back’ concepts and promotes a well-rounded Injury Prevention philosophy.

WorkLogic: On-site, job specific exercise stations.

ErgoLogic: Practical workplace ergonomics.

Core Stability Training: Preventing slips, trip and falls through functional stability training.

Key Moving Positions: Essential patterns for job function, introducing strength concepts.

Carpal Tunnel: A logical way for individuals to avoid Carpal Tunnel Syndrome by implementing simple principles and prevention tools.

To join the list of BodyLogic Health Management clients in preventing injuries and saving money, contact us at www.backlogic.com or by email at info@backlogic.com

“The most well-received back prevention/education program I have seen. The instructors are energetic and really ‘know their stuff.’ Our back injury rate was 30% of our total camp claims. We have had NO back injuries in the past 12 months!”

Dr. Michael DeLitta

Director, Medical Services

ARCO Pipeline Company

Houston, Texas; Long Beach, California

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