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Dear Reader,

Cricket is keeping the national spirit alive, with the English as worthy adversaries visiting our soaked soil at a time of existential crisis for Pakistan. The action in the middle is fast and furious as also is the action in the far flung flooded outfields that have borne the brunt of Nature's fury. Pakistan, once again, is squarely in the crosshairs of global concern as its displaced and destitute millions suffer the ravages of global warming and climate change for no fault of their own. Once again, we are banking on the resilience of our people and the Grace of the Almighty to see us through these ultra-tough times, emerging stronger and wiser, Insha'Allah.

This issue we carry three pieces that examine the way our attitudes towards work are changing. It is true that change is the only constant, and one hopes for that change to be incremental so that it can be managed without too much disruption. No such luck, it transpires, with paradigm change being the term in vogue when describing the period that began with the pandemic. It gave people around the world time to pause, and think, and reevaluate the pros and cons of the rat race, that unyielding matrix of work, work and more work, with burnout and breakdown clear and present dangers.

Trey Williams writes about Millennials wanting to live a 'soft life' which calls for a rejection of the struggle, stress, and anxiety that come with working a traditional nine-to-five career and spinning away your days on life's hamster wheel. Instead, living the soft life is about throwing yourself into joy, and prioritizing the richness of experiences.

The accompanying pieces by **Juliana Kaplan** and the **Images Staff Desk** expand upon the 'soft life' and its derivatives 'acting your wage' and 'quiet quitting', and makes for essential reading for HR managers across the board trying to make sense of what motivates Gen Z and Millennials who are spearheading a counterculture to "hustle-culture" and the mentality of working long hours and going above and beyond for your job.

Back of the Book we have our regularly scheduled column that focuses on Nature and this time celebrates the UN's Special Envoy for Children and Women, **Angelina Jolie**, who has been on a whirlwind tour of the flood affected regions. In JJ's selection of Lifelong Learning Tips we have invaluable advice on advancing your interpersonal skills and on-the-job productivity, like how to deal with fast talkers over the phone.

Thank you for reading, and may Allah keep us all in His protection, ameen 🙏🙏

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Lifelong Learning Tips

JJ's Selection

Millennials want to live a 'soft life,' and it's changing how they work



Dar LaBeach (center left) used his time during the pandemic to build community and commit to living a "soft life" rooted in ease and joy.
Courtesy of Dar LaBeach

By Trey Williams | 6 min read

There are some people who live to work. They relish being a hustler, grinding it out. They chortle at your nine-to-five regimen, and they can't understand [why anyone would be attracted to "quiet quitting."](#)

Then there are those who work only to live the life [Instagram](#) fabricates. They collect their paycheck and take it to Lisbon or Paris or Madrid, where they flood social media with images of all the experiences their hard-earned cash bought them.

But Dar LaBeach is part of a new ilk, who are out here just living to live.

Life has changed a lot in the last two years, and many people are embracing a so-called soft life—a rejection of the struggle,

stress, and anxiety that come with working a traditional nine-to-five career and spinning away your days on life's hamster wheel. Instead, living the soft life is about throwing yourself into joy, and prioritizing the richness of experiences.

In the midst of the pandemic, LaBeach was at a crossroads and decided it was time to make a dramatic change. After being laid off from his marketing job in New York City in spring 2021, he went to Mexico. He had been earning between \$100,000 and \$150,000 a year but was stressed, disenchanted, and tired of living for something other than himself.

"It was very much, 'F- all this,'" LaBeach tells Fortune.

He lost his job on a Tuesday, booked a flight on Wednesday, and by the end of the week he was sitting on a beach in Oaxaca, Mexico. He needed a break, to breathe.

“It was while I was there that I realized I can really do this in a sustainable way,” LaBeach says. Do what? Be on a beach, frolic, just live. “I realized, ‘Wow, I don’t need to be in New York.’ I really leaned into the idea that if I need it, I’ll figure it out.”

LaBeach, 31, splits his time between New York and Mexico nowadays. He’s able to do so without spending more than \$1,000 a month for rent in either city. When in Mexico he primarily rents places via [Airbnb](#), and he shares an apartment with a roommate in Brooklyn.

He had some savings set aside when he opted to shift his focus away from work, and he received a severance package when he lost his job, though he says it was pretty insignificant. LaBeach says he doesn’t worry about money, and he admits that he’s only fortunate enough to live this way now because he opted in to capitalism for so long.

“Money comes and money goes, and when I need money, I’m able to book projects, work, et cetera, so I don’t let it stress me,” LaBeach says. Since losing his job in 2021, he’s developed a sort of work-at-will freelance career doing marketing and strategy consulting. “There are plenty of ways to make money, and I give myself credit for developing a diverse enough set of skills over the years in business, strategy, entertainment, service, travel, and more to make that happen.”

A shift away from traditional success

It takes having “an existential conversation” with yourself before reaching the point of pursuing a soft

life, says New York University sociology professor Deirdre Royster. The pandemic fast-tracked a lot of those conversations, but life and what people value was shifting even before everything shut down.

The script for a “good American life,” for “the American Dream,” has been completely flipped, Royster says. No longer is it simply a family of four settling down in the suburbs with the tidy home and a white picket fence. Royster herself, a tenured professor at NYU, found herself pursuing a whim during the pandemic to follow her passion for interior design. She applied to the Pratt Institute and was granted a partial scholarship.

“In the ’80s people asked ‘How do we maximize?’ But now people are asking, ‘What’s the minimal amount I need to live a sustainable life?’ I love that idea,” Royster says.

LeBeach’s experience in those first months in Mexico, while he recovered from burnout and a life in service to his career, made a few things very clear to him: “Never again would I not take the trip, book the flight, eat the thing, because of money... Needing money is not going to interrupt my need to live life,” he says.

He’s like many Americans who used the pandemic as an opportunity to disrupt their lives. The collective trauma of this worldwide tragedy allowed some to pump the brakes, turn into the skid, and realize that perhaps there was something more important in their lives than the stressing over whether they were living for their job hard enough.

“Quiet quitting”—the internet’s favorite workforce term of the moment—its distant cousin, “lying flat,” and “soft life” have all popped up as symptoms of a shift away from the traditional expectations of what it looks like to be successful in America. Living a soft life doesn’t necessarily mean

you don't have a job, it just means your job is not your whole world.

For LaBeach, embracing the soft life has meant becoming a staunch anticapitalist, he says. When he moved to Mexico City, he got involved in local mutual aid. He says in connecting with his community there, he's come to understand that "a lot of Black people are moving to Mexico City without realizing we're gentrifiers."

As the world initiates the pandemic's soft closing, and people are finding new ways to return to life, Mexico City has become a haven for some Americans looking for a change while they take full advantage of the work-from-anywhere era. The Mexican government recorded more than 5.3 million Americans flying into Mexican airports from January to May 2022, [CNN recently reported](#). That's nearly a million more than the same period in 2019.

LaBeach looked around at all the people coming to Mexico from the U.S., Canada, the U.K., Brazil, and so on, and set out to form a new community of like-minded people. He and his friend and roommate Raven Rodriguez hosted dinners for Black and brown expats and immigrants. He helped to amplify protests and the voices of local activists advocating for women's rights. Even if it was just his small community, he wanted to be sure they were getting involved.

The rise of the soft life

The term "soft life" really picked up some steam among Black women earlier this year. The cottage industry of advice, lifestyle hacks, and femininity within the YouTube vlogosphere is littered with videos like "How to live your best soft life," "How I created a softer life for myself," and "The truth about the 'soft' life." All are geared toward Black women.

"I feel like I've stepped into my era of

living a soft life," creator Courtney Daniella Boateng says in a video about the hard work that goes into living a soft life. "I've really invested in slowing down and detaching my self-worth or my productivity from these ideas of high levels of stress and just struggle."

But many of these creators are painting a very opulent picture of the #softlife: more a Sofia Coppola Marie Antoinette-era version.

"Soft life, in the way that it's portrayed online, can often look like luxury and true levels of enjoyment," says Boateng in the video. "However, there is a reality to living a soft life, which everyone in the real world needs to be exposed to, such as, you need to work, you need to make money. Life is not always roses."

Friends and family often ask LaBeach how he affords to live the way he is. It's not like he has a nest egg funding his life. He's taken a "\$10 in; \$20 out" approach, he says, and it works for him. He's booked commercials while living in Mexico—last year he appeared in a commercial FanDuel run during NFL games, and he even has a line—and that provides some extra income doing work he enjoys. He does his freelance while chilling on the beach, or even sitting in the stands at the U.S. Open.

"I have zero regrets," he says. "Maybe I'll go back [to a full-time job], and the only way I could at this point is because I know what it means to me to be in that space. I know I'm not there because I have to be... There are now stipulations and boundaries in place that allow me to live the life I want to live■"

Source:

https://fortune.com/2022/09/11/the-soft-life-of-dar/?utm_source=email&utm_medium=newsletter&utm_campaign=ceo-daily&utm_content=2022091210am

How to ‘act your wage,’ according to 2 millennials who did it: ‘If a company is paying you, let’s say minimum wage, you’re gonna put in minimum effort’



Juliana Kaplan | 6 min read

Sarai Soto. Courtesy of Sarai Soto

A boss tries to give her employee, Veronica, a stack of papers to work on overnight.

“Respectfully, Susan, I’d rather spend time with my family,” Veronica replies. Then, she declines a 6:30 pm Zoom meeting; it’s outside of her working hours.

Veronica and Susan aren’t real. They’re characters played by 30-year-old content creator Sarai Soto, whose TikToks on quiet quitting, acting your wage, and asserting boundaries at work have racked up millions of likes and views.

“People just really feel seen, they feel heard, they feel like someone’s standing up for them,” Soto told Insider. “I can’t tell you how many

messages I receive of people being like, okay, I know your content is funny and provides this comedic relief, but I’m telling you, although it’s exaggerated, I’ve been through those exact same scenarios.”

Soto herself is no stranger to quiet quitting, the act of doing your job and nothing above and beyond. She’s done it before to preserve her mental health in a “terrible job” she was miserable at, which she ultimately left.

It’s also become a fundamental part of her success on TikTok. When Soto tipped her toes into content creating, workplace videos were the ones that went viral. She discovered there was an audience of people who feel stuck at

work, can't quit, and crave the scenarios she's acting out.

Here's how Soto's characters and other workers are quiet quitting, or, as some workers have rebranded it, "acting your wage."

Put in the amount of effort that matches your salary

The trends of quiet quitting and acting your wage have set the internet ablaze, with managers threatening that quiet quitters could be the first to go when layoffs come around.

It's also crucial to exert control where you can at work, and make it work for you.

But the pushback to quiet quitting reveals more about managers than workers — showing they have always expected overwork. Employees are no longer onboard with that, especially as prices rise, wages don't keep up, and going above and beyond just results in more work. That's where acting your wage comes in.

"If a company is paying you, let's say minimum wage, you're gonna put in minimum effort," Soto said. "If you're acting your wage, that means that the amount of labor that you're putting in reflects the amount that you're getting paid. So you're not going to go above and beyond and do the job of two to three people and do all this extra work if you're really not even making a livable wage."

Soto said that quiet quitting doesn't necessarily mean you do a bad job, or you're no longer invested in your work.

"It just simply means make sure that you go to work and you set those boundaries when you feel burnt out," she said.

Make changes to your environment that you can control

For Billy, a warehouse worker in Ireland in his mid 30s, it's all about making work work for you. As he performed his night shifts, Billy didn't want to let his mind stay idle — and substituted ambient radio listening for listening to audiobooks. He powered through Karl Marx's "Das Kapital" in just four weeks.

"The only thing I did is I changed what was playing on the radio. That's the only thing I did," Billy, whose last name is known to Insider but withheld for privacy, said. "There was no material change. I wasn't doing any more or any less work otherwise."

That type of little thing — exerting control over something you're able to influence at work — is key, Billy said. It doesn't have to be audiobooks; maybe you're just simply changing the TV channel at the bar where you work.

"When you're put into a workplace, you're put into a box. It's somebody else's box," Billy said.

Two workers who have quiet quit and acted their wage said it's about setting boundaries.

But, even so, "there are ways that we can control our workplaces," he said, even if they're small. And those victories of making work work for you — and acting your wage — can push towards something even greater.

"Employees have a lot of power right now to negotiate. They have choices with the Great Resignation," Soto said. "So I'm hoping that people will just continue to rise up and continue to raise awareness about this ■"

Source:

<https://www.businessinsider.com/how-act-your-wage-quiet-quit-work-less-get-paid-2022-9>

What is quiet quitting and why is it so controversial?

There's a new term on everyone's minds and social media feeds these days — quiet quitting. But quiet quitting means different things to different people. Its definition may vary from generation to generation but quiet quitting has become a trend, perhaps even an argument, and we wanted to understand what it is and how it's applied to the workplace.

Images Staff Desk Report | 5 min read

The commonly accepted definition of quiet quitting is doing the bare minimum at work to get by. A lot of people on social media have argued that people do it for one of two reasons — to “act their wage” or only do things they are being paid to do or to use it as a means of self preservation.

In most cases, it can be an employee refusing to put in extra work hours after their shift ends or doing something that is not part of the initial contract they signed. It's being used by people who believe they are not being compensated or appreciated for the extra effort they put in, which takes up a lot of time and energy, leaving them with little downtime. The alternate, is quiet quitting and employees doing exactly what they're asked to do, within their stipulated work hours.

What Millennials and Gen Z think

The idea of quiet quitting has existed for a while but hasn't had a specific term to call it by. The topic is growing in popularity on TikTok where Gen Z and Millennials are pushing back against the expectations of going above and beyond at their workplaces



for the same salary.

According to BBC, the term was popularised by a TikTok user named zaidleppelin in July. “You're not outright quitting your job, but you're quitting the idea of going above and beyond,” he explained in the video. “You're still performing your duties, but you're no longer subscribing to the hustle-culture mentality that work has to be your life; the reality is it's not, and your worth as a person is not defined by your labour.”

The idea behind quiet quitting is a counterculture to “hustle-culture” and the mentality of working long hours and going above and beyond for your job with the expectation that eventually, you will be compensated for it but not knowing when that eventually will actually arrive. The trend has picked up in the last few months and has gotten 83.7 million views on TikTok where both employees and employers have argued about what this attitude means for the workplace.

To comedian and TV host for The Daily Show Trevor Noah, quiet quitting literally means just doing your job as per description but nothing more in order to keep your work-life balance intact. He said that people are obsessed with work in the US and that it doesn't need to be the most important part of your existence.

“If your job is from 9 to 5, that means the work messages should stop at 5. Anything after that is a booty call,” he joked. But the truth is, that’s no joke.

What the Baby Boomers think

Another side of the argument has been presented by Kevin O’Leary, a Canadian businessman and TV personality, who opposed quiet quitting and said this practice doesn’t allow a business to grow.

“Quiet quitting is a really bad idea. Creativity is very much honoured in the work environment. People that go beyond to try to solve problems for the organisation, their teams, their managers, their bosses, those are the ones succeed in life. If all of a sudden you try and define your work ethos by some kind of definition of your job, then you’re going to fail,” Leary said.

He argued that the whole point is that you’re there, as an employee, to make the business work and how you have to go beyond not because you’re forced to or have to but you want to. For him, this was the definition of success where individuals are not doing it for the greed of making money but because of their work ethos. “People that shut down their laptops at 5 want that balance in life, want to go to the soccer game, 9 to 5 only, they don’t work for me, I can tell you that. I hope they work for my competitors,” he said.

A lot of work habits have come into question ever since pandemic forced us into working from home. Those two plus years gave people the time to reflect and question why they were doing work that was never theirs to begin with, which is how quiet quitting came into being. People just want to do their own jobs, not anyone else’s.

People are also using quiet quitting to protest lack of recognition and compensation at work and they’re well within their rights to say they will only do the work they are being paid to do. After all, invisible labour was

never part of the contract they were made to sign. Therefore, going the extra mile (or 10) should not be expected unless they are being appreciated, recognised and paid for their hard work.

We have to take issue with the term itself. Why is it called quitting when the employee is literally doing what they signed up to do. Doing your job is not quitting. Doing what you’re being paid to do is not quitting.

It is not unheard of for employers to take advantage of eager or loyal employees and exploit their efforts for the sake of “growing their business”. And a lot of employees are finally realising something they should have come to terms with long ago — your workplace is your workplace, not your family. Throw aside your notions of your work family because at the end of the day, employees are dispensable, and no amount of overtime will make you indispensable.

At a time when [there’s inflation](#) and rising costs of living, the older generation needs to understand that it isn’t 1950 anymore. Everything is more expensive and this generation is struggling to make ends meet, let alone invest their salaries and secure their future. So if not getting compensated for work that takes a toll on your mental health and overall wellbeing means people are quiet quitting, then we need to cut this generation some slack.

It’s about time things change and we do away with the mentality that extra labour is a form of personal growth requiring no compensation. Everyone should be appropriately compensated for all the work they do that is outside their job description and if they aren’t, well, then it’s time to quietly just sit back and do their jobs and nothing else — there’s no quitting about it ■

Source:

<https://images.dawn.com/news/1190806/what-is-quiet-quitting-and-why-is-it-so-controversial>

NATURE Calling For ACTION STATIONS!

Jolie, a Mighty Heart

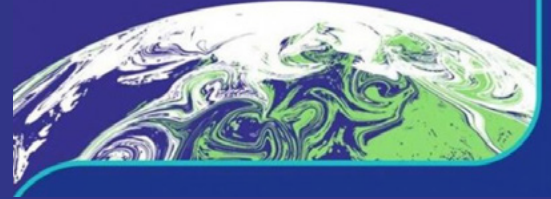


Photo Courtesy by DAWN

Angelic Angelina has been on a whirlwind tour of the flood affected, dating the destitute little darlings of Dadu who are marooned in a seemingly endless expanse of water that has sprung up literally overnight. Her trip was arranged by the International Rescue Committee (IRC), a relief organization whose Country Director Shabnam Baloch has warned that the climate crisis is destroying lives in Pakistan, with severe consequences especially for women and children.

UN's Special Envoy for Children and Women

Jolie had previously visited Pakistan during the Afghan refugees crisis, and then after the 2005 earthquake and 2010 floods. As the UN's Special Envoy for Children and Women, Angelina Jolie has visited populations in crisis in Sierra Leone, Darfur, Thailand, Ecuador, Pakistan and elsewhere, but she says she has



never witnessed such devastation in her life and has vowed to visit Pakistan again and again to extend assistance to the flood victims.

She arrived by helicopter at the relief camp in Khair Mohammad Mughiri village and comforted women and children, saying that she could feel their pain (Dawn 21-9-22). She then caught a boat to the flood hit villages of Mohabbat Lund and Hyder Kingrani in Johi

"You can fight forever opening a tiny shop or vocational training center, and that's fantastic, but if the trade laws stay as they are, it's not really going to help" — Jolie

taluka. Jolie got airborne once again and did an aerial inspection of flood hit areas around Main Nara Valley (MNV) drain and Chandan in Dadu where she was briefed by officials of the Pakistan Army, district administration and the irrigation department.

“She is an unprecedented 21st century entity, a tabloid star with international credibility, a “soft news” icon commanding respect in a hard-news world” — Sean Smith/Newsweek

In Islamabad Jolie visited the National Flood Response Coordination Centre (NFRCC) and learnt of the scale of the devastation – nearly 1600 killed, several million displaced, 13,074 kilometers of roads and 392 bridges damaged and the cash strapped government estimating losses in the region of \$30 billion and rising.

Changing the trade laws

Jolie says she is in the field as much as possible, but spending more time in Washington. “You can fight forever opening a tiny shop or vocational training center, and that’s fantastic, but if the trade laws stay as they are, it’s not really going to help.” Washington is where Pakistan will need her advocacy, seeking as it is a deferment of its bilateral debt of nearly \$10 billion for a few years which, if approved by the wealthy Paris Club creditors, will save \$1.1 billion in loan repayments this fiscal year.

Also on a ‘solidarity visit’ was the UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres urging the world to give aid to Pakistan ‘as a matter of justice rather than sympathy’. The response from the global comity of nations has been sluggish, to put it mildly, burdened as it is under an economic downturn that has made for donor fatigue. It will need all of Jolie’s persuasive advocacy to turn the trickle of resources into a flood, but that clearly appears as wishful thinking even to hardened optimists.

Ardent fan

Angelina Jolie is a mega Hollywood superstar with an Oscar in “Girl, Interrupted”. Her performances in “Lara Croft: Tomb Raider” and “Mr. & Mrs. Smith”, and then “A Mighty Heart”, made me her ardent fan for life, a relationship that got further strengthened as I learnt more and more about her charity work worldwide.

So it came as a somewhat rude shock when she filed for divorce in 2016 and finally gave Brad Pitt his marching orders in 2019. Good riddance, I thought, surprised that the two alphas had cohabited for as long as they had. Then on the 10th of September this year the Express Tribune dredged up the unfortunate past which refused to go away with the news that Jolie had filed a \$250 million law suit against ex-husband Brad Pitt accusing him of waging a vindictive war against her and hijacking control of Chateau Miraval, a country estate and winery in southern France purchased by the couple in 2012. Hell hath no fury like a woman scorned, I thought, feeling just a little bit sorry for Mister Pitt.

Extraordinary human being

About the same time, on a trawl of my archives, I came across Jolie on the cover of Newsweek dated June 25, 2007 with the headline “Woman on a Mission” and an incisive cover story penned by Sean Smith that revealed the heart and mind of this extraordinary human being. It was almost as if some mystical power was nudging me to refresh the memory of people, including

“Jolie has a gift for intimacy. She smiles frequently and her body language is relaxed and open. She seems like a woman who feels safe in the world, and safe in herself” — Sean Smith/Newsweek

myself, as to who it was that we were dealing with here.

She is an unprecedented 21st century entity, a tabloid star with international credibility, a “soft news” icon commanding respect in a hard-news world is how Sean Smith described her. She attends the World Economic Forum. She donates one third of her salary to charity. She has funded the Global Action for

“Her work with refugees is not something to decorate herself. She studies the issues. There is no sanctimony about her. For her it’s not about saving the world, it’s about saving kids. She doesn’t need this. This needed her” — Colin Powell, former US Secretary of State

Children, a Washington lobby that advocates for funding education for children in refugee camps. She’s been invited to join the Council on Foreign Relations, the elite club for the American foreign policy establishment.

She has evolved in her understanding of where she can make the biggest impact, says her philanthropic adviser Trevor Neilson. “Her strategies have become extremely sophisticated, and it is clear that she is now a serious player on international issues.”

Doing something worthwhile

Years ago Angelina Jolie decided that if the media were going to follow her no matter what she did, she might as well do something worthwhile. “When I was famous for being just an actress, my life felt very shallow; you’ve done nothing of any social relevance and yet you have all these people interviewing you. You don’t even know what you’re talking about and you’re just trying to find yourself. Travelling really did save me. I was just happier. It was feeling that I was doing the right things with my life.”

Hers is truly a global village at heart and her kids bear testimony to that. Jolie adopted Maddox from Cambodia and Zahara from Ethiopia. Pax she adopted from Vietnam. Does Jolie really understand complex global issues, or does she just show up for a photo-op wherever the UNHCR sends her? “She is absolutely serious, absolutely informed. Her work with refugees is not something to decorate herself. She studies the issues. There is no sanctimony about her. For her it’s not about saving the world, it’s about saving kids. She doesn’t need this. This needed her” says Colin Powell, former US Secretary of State.

Extreme wealth next to extreme poverty

Talking about ‘A Mighty Heart’, the story of Mariane Pearl’s unquenchable spirit, she says it’s probably the most difficult character that she’s ever played. “The emotion is so raw and so constant. Mariane was so calm, focused and organized. But I would have been hysterical, driving the streets of Karachi like a crazy person.” Driving the streets of Mumbai during the film shoot wasn’t easy either. When going from the location to her rooms at the Taj Mahal Palace Hotel she says that she has never been around such extreme wealth next to such extreme poverty, and so much of it. “It is hard to understand how it has gotten so bad.”

Jolie has a gift for intimacy. She smiles frequently and her body language is relaxed and open. There is nothing guarded about Jolie. She does not evade questions or speak cautiously. She expresses how she feels honestly and expects the same of everyone around her. She seems like a woman who feels safe in the world, and safe in herself; essential attributes for the UN’s Special Envoy for Children and Women. Salute ■

Lifelong Learning Tips

Selection by JJ

• Appease disappointed customers

by adding a solution to your apology. Saying “I’m sorry” is important, but customers want to hear how you’re planning to help them.

• When a

customer makes a special request, don’t say, “I’ll have to ask my supervisor.” Instead, say, “I’ll be glad to ask my supervisor.” Reason: “Glad” makes a subtle difference that leaves customers with a more positive view of your service.

• After you

identify your organization when you answer the office phone, don’t come across as too abrupt by just saying your name. Example: “Marketing Magic. Barney Burgundy.” Instead, include a verb as in “Marketing Magic. This is Barney Burgundy.

• Color code

your calendar so you or assignments. Examples: Red ink for high priority items that day; blue for anticipated project deadlines; green for following up other people’s work; black for daily scheduled work.

• Keep the pressure off high achievers:

When you praise them for work done well, don’t add that you expect even more in the future.

• Having a

hard time keeping up with fast talkers over the phone? Try saying, “Excuse me. I’m having some difficulty understanding you. Could you slow down just a bit so I’ll be able to get all the correct information?” Never say, “I can’t understand a word you’re saying” “Stop talking so fast.

• When meeting discussions turn heated

try a “walking meeting.” Have groups of two or three employees—preferably those with different views on the meeting topic—take a 15- to 20-minute walk. Ask all groups to come back to the “sitting meeting” with solutions in mind.

• Stay productive

despite being interrupted by jotting down what you’ll need to do when you return to the task. Example: If your boss asks you to drop everything and help with an emergency, write “Finish calling vendors and complete two file reviews” before you rush out.

• Avoid putting too many numbers

or statistics into a sentence or paragraph. Example: “During 2003, we visited 75 businesses in 59 cities and conducted 188 customer satisfaction surveys.” Instead, use a box, graph or chart to display complex statistics.

Extracted from Communication Briefings

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