

Directions

Newsletter of E. C. Davis & Associates

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This article appeared in our June 2009 email newsletter. We welcome your comments on any of our articles. Send an email to info@ecdavis.com.

The Power of a Cartoon

by Lynn R. Miller

"A picture is worth a thousand words." Since our childhoods, and in practically every culture, we have valued comic strips, cartoons, and animation for entertainment and sometimes for snippets of wisdom. A message conveyed visually reaches us all on some level. Humorous visuals can be used advantageously to lighten the seriousness of the work environment. Humor can also be effective in reducing stress, improving communication, and building camaraderie.

A popular satirical comic strip about a micromanaged office is "Dilbert," first introduced in 1989. We've all read and shared the Dilbert strips. Sometimes they just make a point – or highlight an area where a team or company might have a weakness. Nothing is sacred in the Dilbert strips. Communication is satirized as easily as management techniques. For years Dilbert has been providing an interesting perspective on everything from HR policies to social skills (or lack of!) to project management. (Note: You can receive the daily Dilbert cartoon in your inbox by subscribing at www.dilbert.com.)

Searching on the web, we ran across a website that has quite a catalog of cartoons on a variety of workplace subjects: time management, meetings, creative problem solving, safety, stress management, among others. We've selected a few that we liked; we hope they will give you a chuckle too. (Note: You can read the daily cartoon at www.glasbergen.com.)

How does your team work?

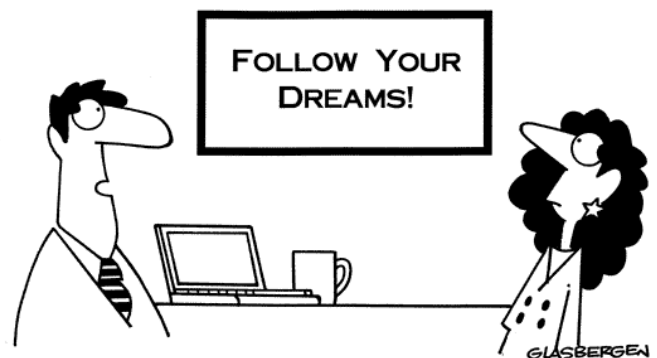
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"I want everyone at the meeting to dress up like Lego blocks. Then we can see exactly how each team member interlocks with the other team members in the project."

Are you encouraging creative thinking?

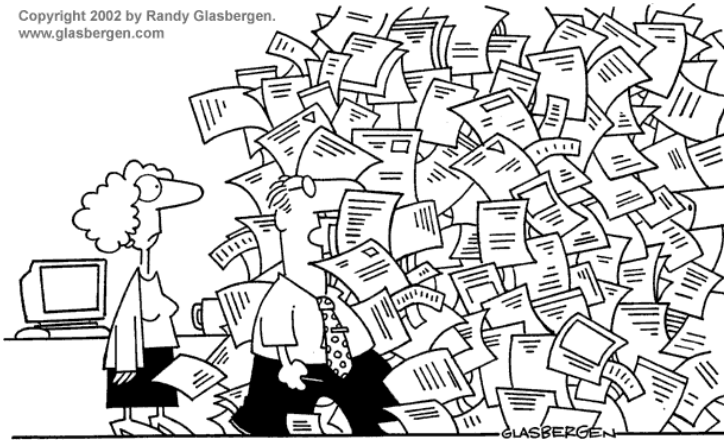
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"It's supposed to inspire, but most employees see it as permission to take a nap."

Is priority setting and organization a concern?

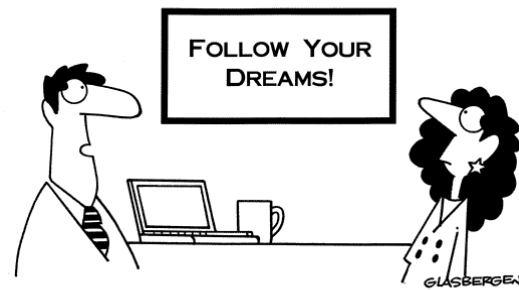
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"I have some paperwork to catch up. If I'm not back in two days, organize a search and rescue team!"

Are your employees imaginative?

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"It's supposed to inspire, but most employees see it as permission to take a nap."

The important thing to remember when using humor in the workplace is to use it appropriately and wisely. Consider your audience. Be sensitive. Then share and enjoy the laugh!