



SAIMAS NEWSLETTER

ISSUE 1/2022 – MARCH 2022

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FROM THE EDITOR

The new year started with a steady pace with the hope of better prospects for the new year. Just when we thought things are going to be normal again, we are faced with a new crisis in the Ukraine. The word **normal** made me wonder, what is the meaning of normal? According to the Oxford Dictionary the term normal implies "conforming to standard," or regular or usual or typical. Therefore, conclusion is we are not back to normal! But how do we get back to the conforming standard after two years of upheaval with 50% of the workforce working from home? Were we even productive these past two years and how do we improve productivity again? Too many questions that need answers. Therefore, we went scratching around in the archives and found an article on productivity and hopefully it will inspire some of us to conform to the standard again! We also feature the information on the last Webinar that was presented by Dr John Eliastam.

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FROM THE EXECUTIVE PRESIDENT

Dear fellow SAIMAS Members,

Trust this year will be prosperous year for you. 2022 brought with it hope that this year might be the last of severe Covid with less serious

effect on people who become infected. For now, SAIMAS's activities and events will mostly be presented virtually, adapting as we move into the year.

The last Webinar for the 2021/22 financial year was held on 27 January 2022. Dr John Eliastam from Smart Choices presented on the 'Transactional Analysis as a tool for improving communication and interpersonal effectiveness.' Of all the three ego states, namely Parent, Adult and Child, the more one can embrace the adult ego state, the more one can choose the response to any situation faced with – assisting in building a motivated, responsible, and fulfilled workforce within an organisation.

We are planning to present a number of webinars for the 2022/23 financial year. I want to appeal to our members to join these webinars as valuable information and tools are shared by the various presenters. Arrangements for these webinars, as well as for the Annual General Meeting planned for 20 May 2022 and the Annual Conference planned for October 2022 of the year, will be communicated in due course, closer to the events.

Stay safe and resilient in your endeavours.

SAIMAS greetings

Ria Loubser

TRANSACTIONAL ANALYSIS

By Dr John Eliastam from Smart Choices

Eric Berne – a Canadian psychoanalyst – developed an approach for analysing people called Transactional Analysis. It considers that every human being has three parts to their personality: Parent, Adult and Child. These are called 'ego states' and are systems of feelings, thought and attitudes.

The Parent Ego State (taught)

In the first 5 years of our lives, we absorb all the behaviours that our parents (or parental substitutes) exhibit and we store all this data as 'tapes' in our mind.

When we operate from our 'parent' ego state we are actually embodying the behaviours and attitudes that we learned from our own parents. This is our 'taught' way of operating.

The parent state can either be nurturing e.g., "let me take care of you" or critical, "do what I say or else." In both cases the parent is assuming responsibility and controls/directs proceedings.

Typical parent behaviours include frowning, finger pointing, raised eyebrows, use of words like ought, should, must, need to, always and never. Often the parent will become reactive, closed, and resistant to other people's ideas or inputs.

The Child Ego State (felt)

As with the Parent state, in our child state we also record data but this time it is related to our inner feelings.

When we operate from our child state, we are operating from the feelings that we have experienced as a very young person e.g., vulnerable, inept, unable to communicate etc. we are seeking reassurance and/ or approval.

In our child state, our primary thoughts are for ourselves. We may become self obsessed and concerned only with our needs. We are likely to assign responsibility and control to others.

The child state can either be 'adapted' or 'free' e.g., 'adapted' means that we adapt our behaviour in order to gain approval or reward from others. 'Free' means that we access creativity, curiosity, our desire to explore and seek out new experiences.

Typical child behaviours include tears, pouting, head tilted to the side, giggling, high pitch voice, whining voice, etc.

The Adult Ego State (thought)

The adult ego state first appears at about 10 months of age when we start to get mobile and experience the world.

The adult state takes longer to develop than the other two – we may continue to develop our adult ego state throughout the whole of our lives. It is a state that we choose (unlike the parent and child, which are automatic/ reactive states). In the adult state we take data from our parent and our child states, and we check it out, interpret it and come to a rational conclusion.

Typical adult behaviours include being open to the input of others, reflecting on data and testing out ideas, being objective, rational and responsible. The adult seeks to share responsibility and control with others.

Summary

Each of our ego states has a value to us and we are not trying to suggest that you should stop being a child or a parent, however the more we can all embrace the adult ego state, the more we can behave and respond from a position of rational choice: this is the ultimate in taking personal responsibility e.g., having the ability to choose our response to any situation with which we are faced.

The principle of having adult-to-adult relationships with staff is the way that most organisations are encouraging their managers to behave as it creates a more motivated, responsible, and fulfilled workforce.

PRODUCTIVITY



In various papers and research documents the issue about productivity is mentioned or even the lack of productivity. John Bersin indicated in a paper published in December 2018, “that while the GDP was growing in many companies, **productivity and earnings** were not”. He further stated “Employees around the world are working more hours, GDP is going up, but productivity (output per hour worked) is barely growing. Why is this?

What my research shows is that digital technologies have not yet really improved our ability to get work done.”



Distractions caused by digital technologies

John Bersin, a Global Industrial Analyst, conducted a study with LinkedIn during 2017 and they found that 27% of employees believed that they were spending an entire day per week to deal with emails which were not relevant to their job. It was further found in the study that on average people spend more than 4 hours a day on their phones.

It was also found that average company has seven different systems for communications. John Bersin states that most companies are in a “digital overload” and staff are “glued to their computers” all day.

It was further found that workers are 26% more productive without their smartphones, based on an experiment by the Universities of Würzburg and Nottingham Trent in 2016. Participants were randomly assigned to one of four conditions and asked to complete a concentration test. Their phones were either removed from the room, locked in a nearby container, placed in view close by, or left as is (in the participants’ pockets or bags). It was found that the further away the smartphone was, the better the results in the concentration test.



How to manage

Tony Schwartz, an energy management expert, wrote about the body’s natural cyclical progression from high to low energy throughout the day.

In the New York Times bestseller, “The power of full engagement: Managing energy, not time, is the key to

performance, health and happiness,” Tony Schwartz and Dr Jim Loehr wrote “we wear our willingness to put in long hours as a badge of honour” while “the need for recovery is often viewed as evidence of weakness.”

For optimal productivity, the go-go-go mindset is a no-no.

“Sustained high performance is best served by assuming the mentality of a sprinter not a marathoner,” they wrote. They further stated, “Performance is optimised by scheduling work into 90- to 120-minute periods of intensive effort followed by shorter periods of recovery and renewal”.

Tony Schwartz developed a unique framework for increasing productivity through energy management. He explains that you should tap into your potential by regularly renewing your four-core energy needs which are, physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual. By learning how to skilfully manage each dimension of energy, you can strengthen your own productivity and enhance your success.



How about multitasking?

Multitasking “undermines productivity,” according to Tony Schwartz and Catherine McCarthy in their Harvard Business Review article ‘Manage Your Energy, Not Your Time.’ They indicated that; “A temporary shift in attention from one task to another ... increases the amount of time necessary to finish the primary task by as much as 25 per cent,”

To achieve productivity during the day, try the following: Put your cell phone on vibrate while working and turn email alerts off. Your concentration should improve and only check for urgent emails or messages which requires your attention every 30-45 minutes. You should notice that you are able to finish tasks a bit quicker this way!



Listen to music

I know a number of people who cannot work without their radio being on and it seems that Dr Anneli Haake, a music psychologist from the UK, with a PhD research degree in music psychology, indicated that she has looked at how and why people listen to music in the office environment. She found that music could be relaxing and help concentration when employees chose to listen, but some people can find music annoying and distracting if they are forced to listen. Listening to music while working can also be considered a form of problematic multitasking. The big question is what kinds of music boost productivity? She indicates that it is tempting to try and simplify

arguments and to find quick explanations, such as 'instrumental/classical music is better for concentration than vocal/pop music.

She further indicates that one should not make a quick analysis but should look at the whole context in which the listening takes place. This could include:

- Task difficulty – the more unfamiliar and complex a task, the more likely the music can be distracting.
- Listening habits – if someone is used to working to music, they are less likely to be distracted as indicated above.
- Musical structure – simple musical structures are less distracting.
- Lyrics – some lyrics hijack your attention.
- Choice – music is more likely to help performance when you have the power to control the type and whether you would like to listen to it.

References:

www.healthinsite.net: *Productivity Hacks* by Kate Cross

Productivity What HR can do to help: Published on December 31, 2018, Author Josh Bersin Influencer

LinkedIn: Tony Schwartz: CEO and Founder, The Energy Project; Co Author

"The power of full engagement: Managing energy, not time, is the key to performance, health and happiness,"
Tony Schwartz and Dr Jim Loehr

<https://bilingualbymusic.com/interview-with-music-psychologist-dr-anneli-haake/>

7 Habits of Highly Effective People Summary

The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People by Stephen R. Covey is a self-improvement book. It is written on Covey's belief that the way we see the world is entirely based on our own perceptions. In order to change a given situation, we must change ourselves, and in order to change ourselves, we must be able to change our perceptions.

1. Be Proactive
2. Begin with the End in Mind
3. Put First Things First
4. Think Win-Win
5. Seek First to Understand, Then to Be Understood
6. Synergize
7. Sharpen the Saw

“It's incredibly easy to get caught up in an activity trap, in the busyness of life, to work harder and harder at climbing the ladder of success only to discover that it's leaning against the wrong wall.

—
Stephen Covey, author