



Work to LIVE

Having Fun is the Key to Job Success

By: Steve Brainerd, Founder & President of Durham Group, Inc.

It was 13 years ago, and I was excited. I was presiding over my first board meeting as president of the Broadview Rotary Club, and this time, I wasn't going to let Bill Mugan steal the show. Bill was one of those individuals who was constantly effective at getting his ideas and points across. We differed, and in this instance, my idea prevailed among the group. How did Bill react to this rare defeat? He said, "Wait a minute guys, I have a bunch of extra ballots in my trunk I want to throw in." Then he laughed heartily, and we quickly moved on. Now there's a guy who can't lose.

Thinking of Bill serves as a reminder to me: We need to have more fun in our work. That's easier said than done. For 17 years, I managed for a lodging chain. In that time, I met and visited with people from all over the world. They were fascinated by our lifestyle and success stories. But when I asked them what they would change, the answer came back so consistently, it was almost spooky. As one Danish fellow put it, "You are so busy at being successful, you don't take time to enjoy."

So how do we have more fun in our lives and jobs?

There are no magic solutions, of course, because we are dealing with ingrained habits and attitudes. Also, we are distinct and unique individuals. Keeping these factors in mind, let's take a look at Bill Mugan and see if there are some common threads we can use:

He didn't criticize, condemn, or complain. He was positive and refrained from judging others. He was refreshing to be around. Can our clients always say that about us?

He smiled often. When you saw Bill, you couldn't help but smile back. It was infectious.

He used our names. Whenever Bill was engaged in conversation, he would make a point of using others' names. That added a touch of warmth and sincerity.

He focused on others. Even when we were at odds, I felt he was listening to understand what I said and wasn't just thinking of his next response.

He was candid. While Bill focused on others, we always could count on him to boldly express his viewpoints and back them up. He was an asset.

He made us feel important. No matter what the issue, Bill had a way of not putting himself above anyone. We walked away with a good feeling.

He found humor in almost everything and laughed often. His humor was laughing at life or himself and was seldom directed at another individual.

Now let's think about the prospect or client that we can't seem to get moving or interested. Next, we can look at some of the points above. Do we see a gap?

Hugh Downs, former co-host of ABC-TV's "20/20," claims that his career went nowhere until he decided, "The heck with it. I'm just going to have fun doing what I do." Why not challenge ourselves to put more fun in our lives? We will be more effective with less effort and inspire others to do the same.

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