

FEBRUARY 2017

HGCAA

Houston Gulf Coast Alarm Association



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President's Message

John C. Helweg

Where did January go? We had a great meeting at Automated Outlet. Jerry took good care of us as always. In my opinion they are the best kept secret on that side of town. You should make sure your crews know that they are there. They have a very diverse product selection and it's all out in the open so you can look it over. Stop in and thank them for hosting our meetings.

JD Wix from Honeywell was our guest speaker. He did a great job speaking with us about future security technologies.

Mitch Reitman will be the guest speaker at our upcoming meeting. He'll be discussing the latest tax updates. If you don't know who he is, you're missing one of the most knowledgeable Tax Prep/CPA resources in the state. He knows our industry inside and out and has substantial experience with alarm companies.

I had a meeting at the Mayor's Office this past month. I was joined by Van and Penny Mayorga and another friend of mine Chris Lawson. We were there to cuss and discuss the City of Houston's permitting, inspection and violations follow up procedures. We had a wealth of talent in the room and the meeting went very well. Be on the lookout for more information to come soon.

The March meeting is going to be huge! We are doing the Fire Marshal's Q/A Forum again at Dave & Buster's (I-10/610). The Mayor's Office assured me that the City of Houston Fire Marshal's Office will be well represented this year. Register early, seating will go fast.

Treasurer's Report

Penny Mayorga

Accounts	Balance
Chase Checking	\$5,329.36
Chase Savings	\$18,975.51
PayPal	\$1,061.56
Cash	\$171.00
Undeposited Funds	\$0.00
COMBINED ACCTS	\$25,537.43
Accts Receivable	\$2,135.00
YTD PAC Donations	\$71.00
Paid Memberships	55



Houston Gulf Coast Alarm Association
Minutes of HGCAA Meeting & Luncheon 1/12/2017
Held at Automated Outlet, Houston, TX

Meeting called to order at 11:45

2016-2017 HGCAA Officers / Directors:

President – John Helweg
Vice President – Van Mayorga
Secretary – Amanda Jackson
Treasurer – Penny Mayorga
Sergeant at Arms – James Pratt

Membership Director – Mary Edmonson
Associate Director – Jerry Davis
General / Regional Director – Dennis White

Standard Business:

Benediction/Pledge – led by Van Mayorga
Roll call of Officers, established quorum, Secretary absent
Recognized associate members in attendance
Recognized guests & 1st Responders
Thanked Automated Outlet for hosting and food, Jerry Davis spoke about current offerings at Automated Outlet
Round Table Introductions
Meeting Minutes – reviewed and approved – motion to approve Clint Faag, 2nd’d by Steve Carr
Treasurer’s Report – reviewed and approved – motion to approve Mary Edmonson, 2nd’d by Clint Faag

Director’s Reports, Committee Reports, & Old Business:

- Mary Edmonson – speaking to member about coming to meetings. Sending survey to update information. Delivered donations to Camp Hope in December – very enlightening.
- Kelly Ryan – San Antonio very active. Need activation certificate for all alarms; want it for fire alarm too. TBFAA legislation is in December’s newsletter
- Debi Ulmer – PSB has dedicated email for business owners with licensing problems. Next PSB meeting is 1/24.
- Region 3 Dennis White – no report
- Fire Marshal – Van Mayorga – Update license numbers on everything by March 1. Fire Marshal round table is 3/9.
- ASSIST – Susan Griswold – PV Wireless was a guest speaker for ASSIST could be a resource for HGCAA members as well. Light turnout for the ASSIST Christmas party.
- TLA – no report

New Business:

- Training Director – CEU’s will be emailed.
- Montgomery County is enforcing alarm ordinance – must get permit and report alarm systems
- Turn in activations of all alarm systems.

Guest Speaker: JD Wix, The Future of Technology.

Sell and focus on the features you would want to use

Use the tools you are selling

Drivers changing the industry – broadband, connected devices, Cloud (embrace it), Apps

Raffles: Larger prize first except the PAC Fund:

- \$25 Amazon (HGCAA) – Laura Pemberton
- \$25 Buffalo Wild Wings (HGCAA) – Calvin Stewart
- \$25 Lowes (HGCAA) – Fred Helweg
- \$25 Pappas (HGCAA) – Steven Carr
- \$25 Academy with Notebook & Pen (Affiliated Monitoring) – Rick Strickland
- Chromecast by Google (DMP) – Kelly Ryan
- PAC \$95 \$47/\$48 (PGP) – Rick Strickland – accepted half

Meeting Adjourned 1:22

Next meeting is February 9, 2017 at Tri-Ed on Pinemont



Texas Online Private Security (TOPS) Update

On January 24, 2017 the following improvements and updates were made to the Texas Online Private Security (TOPS) system. Additional updates and improvements are scheduled for February. Upon initiation of the February updates, the division will send out a subsequent advisement.

Thanks,

RenEarl Bowie

Please take a moment and review the latest changes to TOPS:

- Applicants/Licensees will be able to access TOPS using Safari
- Added verbiage to landing page regarding supported browsers: "This service supports the last two versions of major desktop browsers (Internet Explorer, Microsoft Edge, Safari, Chrome, and Firefox). We highly recommend updating to the most current version of your preferred browser. Your browser will notify you if there is a new version available."
- My Applications section of the online profile includes the following columns sorted by Application Date:
 - Registration Type
 - Application Type (Original, Renewal, Update)
 - Received – Date application received
 - Status Date
 - Status

- Employee Payments section of the online profile includes the following sortable columns:
 - Name (first and last)
 - Registration Type
 - Application Type
 - Expiration – Date
 - Application Fee
- Employee Verification section of the online profile includes the following columns sorted by Application Date:
 - Registration Type
 - Application Type (Original, Renewal, Update)
 - Received On
 - Address (City, State)
- Legal Disclaimer text regarding company name added to all business applications including originals, renewals, and updates
- Allow registrants with Peace Officer/Military history in TOPS to submit EIU
- Fixed the unreadable RED error message on the external self-service application. Error messages should be human readable

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FM Notice: Reminder on registration/license numbers

In March 2012, the State Fire Marshal's Office began the conversion to a new licensing software program. For many companies and licensees, this resulted in being issued a new unique number. To lessen the impact of the changes, the State Fire Marshal's Office agreed that there would be a transition period of five years to allow companies to deplete their stock of service tags and business forms bearing the old numbers.

As 2017 approaches, the State Fire Marshal's Office is reminding that all items should now be displaying only your currently issued registration and license numbers. This includes service tags, labels, vehicles, signs and business forms. After March 1, 2017, the old numbers must not be used or displayed.

The State Fire Marshal's Office wants to thank everyone for your patience and cooperation through this process. Based on comments received over the last four years, we believe the new system has proven to be worthwhile and resulted in better customer service.

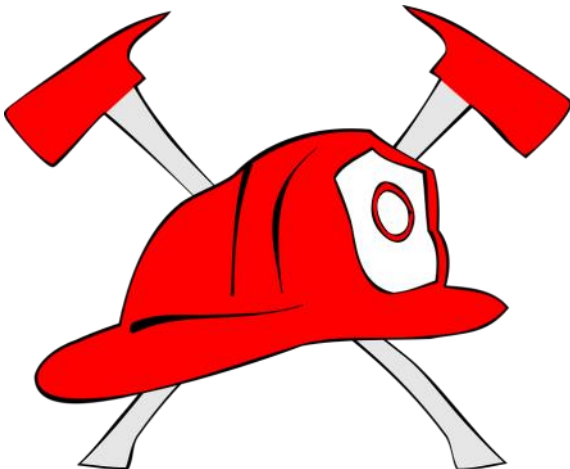
You may view this [FM Notice on the SFMO website](#).



HGCAA Fire Marshal's Forum

Thursday, March 9, 2017
11:00am-3:00pm
Dave & Buster's
7620 Katy Freeway #100
Houston, TX 77024

Register early, seating will go fast.



The delicate balance of HR: Employees

This is the second article in a three-part series about human resources:

Leadership | Employees | Inside

From an employee perspective, HR can be anything from the team who coordinates the holiday party to the person who is telling us our benefits will cost more and we will not get a raise.

In this series, we will look at the department from different perspectives to illustrate the delicate balance required to grow and maintain a functional department that contributes positively to the organization and its culture. In the first article, we examined HR from the leadership perspective. In this article, we will look at the employee perspective.

With or against

As employees, we can follow a few simple steps to get what we need from HR. The first step is to figure out the department. Is it one person who just grew into the position? Is it a director, a recruiter and a receptionist? Do they always seem overworked, behind schedule or bogged down with payroll?

The department may be tasked with too many things, in which case no matter how nice they are or how much they want to help, they may not have the time, resources or bandwidth. Their support may be nonexistent or inconsistent. If that is the case, our second step will be to figure out how to align what we want with what they can give us.

For example, if we want a raise and we feel like HR is a roadblock, we need to change our approach. Find out from HR what needs to happen for them to process a raise.

Does it require a performance review and a form signed off from a VP? Whatever it is, once we get that information we can figure out what steps we may be able to take to facilitate the process.

The key is to work in line with HR but relieve some of their administrative burden. Yes, it may feel like we are doing their job, but if they cannot and we do not, then who will? Once we recognize their resources may be limited, we can better prepare to address the gaps.

Delicate balance

In other cases, the HR department may be fully in control of the processes, resources and information we need, yet not supporting us in our goals. In those situations, it may be helpful to understand a little more about HR.

Specifically, it is often the case that HR knows a lot more than the average employee about what is happening in the organization, like pending layoffs, disciplinary investigations, staff salaries and more. Their success depends upon keeping this information confidential.

For many people, this can create a lot of additional stress that may challenge their interpersonal communication skills. If we can find a way to understand and work with those challenges, we will likely get a lot more support for our own projects.

Bottom line

Understanding the limits of the HR department is the key to getting the most out of it.

If HR is one or two employees stretched to the max covering every aspect of the function, then regardless of how much they might want to helping build a winning

culture, they are fighting an uphill battle. In such cases, the most fruitful way to work with the department will require a little initiative.

On the contrary, if HR holds the keys to the kingdom and just does not want to open the door, we must find a way to address the gaps in their seemingly challenged communication skills with enhanced efforts of our own.

In either case, we need to recognize the limits of the team and align our efforts with the work they do to advance our own goals.

In the third and final article in this series, we will look at the department from the inside perspective.

SOURCE: Multibriefs - <http://exclusive.multibriefs.com/content/the-delicate-balance-of-hr-employees/business-management-services-risk-management>

by Catherine Iste, December 6, 2016

Sure. Most accountants
know...



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10 Unique Perspectives On What Makes A Great Leader (Part 2)

As an entrepreneur and motivational leadership speaker, I am passionate about exploring varying perspectives on how we define leadership and the developmental challenges faced in today's complex business environment. While doing research for my new book, I have been interviewing senior executives and business leaders from all types of organizations across many different industries. In a previous article, I shared ten perspectives on what makes a great business leader. Due to the popularity of that piece, I decided to share ten more. Here they are!

1 - Love What They Do

"First, you must love what you do and who you do it with. As the CEO of a fast growing company, this is something I am still learning. In order to be a great leader you must be good at empowering others. Being a leader is a privilege, and being able to communicate and inspire a team takes passion, focus and transparency."

Kristy Dickerson, CEO of STARTplanner

2 - Don't Take all the Credit

"Leaders excel when they give credit to their team for successful results. When the team gets the credit, the team is naturally motivated to continue to do good work. A great leader will also acknowledge each team member individually for their contributions. A poor leader takes all of the credit for themselves."

Stephan Popov, CEO of UnlockBoot

3 - Driven by Vision

"Great leaders are driven by a vision that is bigger than their own self interests. They are able to communicate their vision with passion and intensity and in doing so inspire others to take action to help bring that vision to life. Importantly, great leaders do not lead from a place of fear, but from a place of love and unity, certain in the knowledge that we are stronger together."

Lisa Fitzgerald, Chief Editor at Groomandstyle.com, working on the best beard trimmer

4 - Filled with Passion and Enthusiasm

"For me a great leader in business is someone who inspires by being passionate and enthusiastic about their subject and has the ability to communicate their requirements clearly and fully. Delegating properly is essential. The leader is the person with the whole view of the business and should be focused on delivering the business goals not becoming consumed with day-to-day tasks. Fully briefed and motivated team members should be empowered and trusted to perform the tasks required, not micro-managed. Feedback from team members is extremely important and a great leader should be open to new ideas and ways to improve individual tasks or the business as a whole; although it is important the leader considers this feedback with the history of the business and the future business plan in mind, not allowing themselves to be swayed or distracted from the business goals."

Dave Chester, owner of Custom Controls, providing Smart Home Automation

5 - Understand Themselves

"A great leader truly understands themselves. They understand what their strengths are and what their weaknesses are. This allows them to clearly see what type of tasks they need to delegate, and what tasks they should assume responsibility for. When they do decide to delegate certain tasks, they also trust their team to get the job done.

Mark Wilson VP, Corporate Communications, Dissertation Writing Services

6 - Cultivate an Environment for Growth

"A great leader is a generous mentor who guides others to transform their life experiences into a foundation for success. Seeing the potential for greatness and knowing the right tools, techniques and tips necessary; they cultivate an environment filled with a web of learning pathways to allow for the growth and development of their entire organization. Focusing on the skills of critical thinking, problem solving, strategic planning and innovation, they advance their companies by identifying and training multiple champions to set the tone for their corporate culture. Understanding that their greatest achievement will come from their ability to leave behind a legacy filled with opportunity for many rising leaders."

Diane Bleck, CEO Innovation Think Pad, Inspiring Innovation

7 - Extract the Best from Their Team

"Great leaders are three things; Someone who gets the absolute best from their team by remembering that it is less important to have the best idea, than getting to the best idea with their team. Creators of white space for creatively and elegantly addressing challenges and opportunities without mandating solutions. Examples of discipline, effort, creativity, intelligence, and innovation to their teams, inspiring them to achieve their very best."

Steve Murray, SVP Retail, TicketLiquidator

8 - Lead by Example

"A leader sets the pace for the team, and this does not only apply to the speed of getting a job done but also the drive, focus and commitment. This is done by creating a culture and then getting everyone to follow it and believe in it. A leader must be visible and be involved to set an example and should be communicating the culture to customers, employees and shareholders. Creating an environment of respect and honesty inside as well as outside the organization strengthens a company's reputation which will ultimately lead to success."

Randy Shaw, President/CEO of Assemblies Unlimited, Inc.

9 - Inspires Without Intimidation

"A great leader is someone who inspires without the need to intimidate and who has an open mind to ideas from his or her employees. Communication and delegating are also great qualities of being a great leader."

Christopher Prasad CEO of Jooksms

10 - Doesn't Dwell on the Present

"When you lead, you have to focus entirely on the future. You have to have a clear vision of where you're going, and what obstacles are headed your way. Many times, your vision will require sacrifice. You'll have no choice but to make tough decisions, while accepting full responsibility for the outcome. But a great leader will have confidence in their vision, and will never compromise it in order to save face. Ultimately, a leader needs to be the one to see what others aren't willing to."

Robbie Sunday, CEO of Scores and odds

All great perspectives. Now, the question is about the appropriate methodologies to use in developing great leaders. One of a leader's most important roles is to create more leaders. But a new approach to leadership development is desperately needed, yet most organizations still use the same methods, if any at all.

Why? Mainly because a new way of thinking is required and few have the answers for what the future of leadership development programs should look like. Most are not scalable nor effective due to the time and costs associated with most courses and mentoring opportunities.

True development is not an event but rather an ongoing evolution where the individual must take ownership over the process. The challenge ahead is designing the appropriate development strategy best suited for the company. The only thing I know for sure is that existing methods are great, but those methods alone will not address that needs of current and future business environments.

Brent Gleeson is a Navy SEAL motivational keynote speaker and leadership consultant. Follow Brent on Twitter at @BrentGleeson or view his website at www.brentgleeson.com.

SOURCE: Forbes - <http://www.forbes.com/sites/brentgleeson/2016/11/23/10-unique-perspectives-on-what-makes-a-great-leader-part-2/>
by Brent Gleeson

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Webroot Research Identifies the Top 10 Most Infected US Cities

BROOMFIELD, Colo., Jan. 25, 2017 /PRNewswire/ -- Webroot, the market leader in next-generation endpoint security and threat intelligence, today revealed the top 10 most malware-infected U.S. cities. According to Webroot's data, Houston is the most infected U.S. city with 60,801 infected devices. Chicago was found to be the second most infected city with 49,147 infected devices, followed by Phoenix with 42,983 infected devices. The research reflects the number of PCs, laptops, tablets and smartphones that have been infected with malware. Surprisingly, each infected device has, on average, between six and 24 pieces of malware installed.

Webroot's top 10 most infected cities and number of infected devices include:

1. Houston – 60,801
2. Chicago – 49,147
3. Phoenix – 42,983
4. Denver – 39,711
5. San Antonio – 39,646
6. Dallas – 37,630
7. Los Angeles – 34,050
8. Las Vegas – 31,836
9. Minneapolis, Minn. – 28,517
10. Charlotte, N.C. – 27,092

The 10 most population-dense cities, according to [The United States Census Bureau](#) and in order of decreasing population density, are New York City, San Francisco, Boston, Miami, Chicago, Philadelphia, Washington, D.C., Long Beach, Calif., Los Angeles and Seattle. Webroot data, however, revealed very little correlation between population density and the number of infected devices in the city. In fact, only one of the most infected cities, Los Angeles, is among the most population-dense cities. "Our most infected cities list shows that cybercriminals have no geographical bias," said David Dufour, senior director of engineering at Webroot. "Whether you live in a big city or small town, from east coast to west coast and everywhere in between, you are susceptible to being a victim of malware. It is in

everyone's best interest to run a security solution on their personal device, and to make sure that all security software subscriptions are current."

What Can You Do to Stay Secure?

To ensure personal devices and data remain secure, Webroot recommends that consumers adopt the following simple yet effective security strategies:

- **Purchase and deploy a top-rated security solution.** Look for cybersecurity solutions that continuously protect personal information without taking up disk space or otherwise affecting user experience by making devices unavailable during scans.
- **Keep your security software up-to-date.** Make sure that all security software subscriptions are current.
- **Avoid free public Wi-Fi.** Cybercriminals are known to create ad-hoc networks that look like free internet, but actually launch a "man in the middle" attack. It's best to stick to secure networks when on-the-go.
- **Use a password.** Lock mobile devices to ensure data remains secure.
- **Use good judgement.** Be extra vigilant about the websites visited, the URLs followed and the applications and mobile apps used.
- **Store sensitive data in the cloud.** Generally, encrypting ransomware only has the means to encrypt files stored locally on a user's system. Because of that, data stored in the cloud can often be more secure than storing on a home network.

For More Information

- To learn more about the Webroot study, check out:
 - Webroot's [infographic](#) on the most infected U.S. states
 - Blog post from LeVar Battle: "[Top 10 Most Infected States](#)"
- Protect all of your personal devices with award-winning cybersecurity, such as the [Webroot SecureAnywhere](#) line of products, which are compatible with the latest major PC, Mac and mobile operating systems.

Research Methodology

The figures presented on the most infected U.S. cities are based on 2016 data collected, tracked and analyzed by the Webroot Threat Intelligence Platform, the BrightCloud Real-Time Anti-Phishing Service, and other Webroot capabilities.

About Webroot

Webroot delivers next-generation endpoint security and threat intelligence services to protect businesses and individuals around the globe. Our smarter approach harnesses the power of cloud-based collective threat intelligence derived from millions of operational devices to stop threats in real time and help secure the connected world. Our award-winning SecureAnywhere endpoint solutions and BrightCloud Threat Intelligence Services protect tens of millions of devices across businesses, home users, and the Internet of Things. Trusted and integrated by market-leading companies, including Cisco, F5 Networks, Aruba, Palo Alto Networks, A10 Networks, and more, Webroot is headquartered in Colorado and operates globally across North America, Europe, and Asia. Discover Smarter Cybersecurity solutions at www.webroot.com.

SOURCE: PRNewswire - <http://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/webroot-research-identifies-the-top-10-most-infected-us-cities-300395929.html>
by Webroot, January 25, 2017

Calendar of Events

HGCAA meetings are held the second Thursday of each month from 11:30-1pm. See below for the locations.

Dates and locations may change as needed.

February 2017

2/9 - HGCAA meeting @ Tri-Ed (Pinemont)

2/20 - AES training (Southwest Dispatch) @ Automated Outlet

2/23 - TBFAA Level 1 Training @ Tri-Ed (North)

2/23 - DSC Neo Training Class @ Tri-Ed (Pinemont)

March 2017

3/2 - Texas Independence Day

**3/9 - HGCAA Fire Marshal's Forum @ Dave & Buster's
(11:00am-3:00pm)**

3/16 - TBFAA Fire Prep Training @ ADI (North)

April 2017

4/13 - HGCAA meeting @ Tri-Ed (North)

May 2017

5/5 - TBFAA Household Fire Training @ Automated Outlet

5/11 - HGCAA meeting @ Bass Computers

June 2017

6/8 - HGCAA meeting @ ADI (North)

July 2017

7/4 - Independence Day

7/13 - HGCAA meeting @ Automated Outlet

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BY PURCHASING THEIR PRODUCTS**



Membership Application

Houston Gulf Coast Alarm Association (HGCAA)

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Company Information

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Physical Address:					
City:		State:		Zip:	
Mailing Address:					
City:		State:		Zip:	
Phone:		Fax:			
Web Site:					
Date of application:		In Business Since (date):			
Burglar Alarm License #		Fire Alarm License #			
Has applicant previously been a member of HGCAA?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No		Number of Employees:		

Products and Services Offered

<input type="checkbox"/> Access Control	<input type="checkbox"/> Structured Wiring	<input type="checkbox"/> Own a Central Station	<input type="checkbox"/> Provide Contract Monitoring
<input type="checkbox"/> Burglar Alarms	<input type="checkbox"/> Home Automation	<input type="checkbox"/> IQ Certified	<input type="checkbox"/> Alarm Response
<input type="checkbox"/> Fire Alarms	<input type="checkbox"/> Audio & Video	<input type="checkbox"/> UL Listed	<input type="checkbox"/> Security Guards
<input type="checkbox"/> CCTV	<input type="checkbox"/> Telephone Systems	<input type="checkbox"/> FRMC Approved	<input type="checkbox"/> Central Vacuum
<input type="checkbox"/> Other Products or Services			

Official Primary Voting Representative

Name		Title	
Email		Direct Phone or Extension	
Signature*			

Official Alternate Voting Representative

Name		Title	
Email		Direct Phone or Extension	
Signature*			

* By signing you certify that all information contained in this application is true and accurate and acknowledge that false information can result in the denial of acceptance of this application and agree to abide by and subscribe to the bylaws, code of ethics and antitrust statement of the HGCAA as well as support and participate in all the activities of the Association(s) to the best of your abilities.

* **Fax and e-mail authorization:** I hereby authorize HGCAA to send me pertinent documents via fax at the above listed number, and/or e-mail at the above listed address. I recognize that such documents include but are not limited to billing statements, registration forms, HGCAA member communications, and official letters. I understand that granting this permission is a necessary component of my membership.

Annual Dues Owed

Check One	Member Type	Amount
<input type="checkbox"/>	Regular Membership: Requires that members are licensed by the Texas Private Security Board and/or the State Board of Insurance Office of the Fire Marshall, and pay annual dues that are detailed herein. Full member benefits.	\$125
<input type="checkbox"/>	Associate Membership: Requires that members are manufacturers, suppliers, or distributors of products relating to security equipment or systems, and pay annual dues that are detailed herein. Full member benefits.	\$125

Please forward application with check or money order (made out to HGCAA) to:

HGCAA
P.O. Box 19484
Houston, TX 77224
membership@hgcaa.org

www.HGCAA.org

7 Secrets To Stop Employees From Quitting

Managers can use these 7 secrets to keep employees happy

70% of employees feel disengaged at work

Being strong, having open communication and being transparent are all key

At a time when employers are struggling to prevent attrition, these 7 secrets can boost employees' morale and motivate them.

Employee retention is the name of the game today, with a recent Gallup poll revealing that a whopping 70 per cent of employees are unhappy and disengaged at work. The same research reveals that a major part of employees' motivation is influenced by their managers.

(Find out why [7 out of 10 employees quit their jobs](#))

Here's what managers can use to reverse the trend.

The platinum rule

Managers usually follow what's called 'The Golden Rule': treat others the same way you'd like to be treated. But this has a major flaw: everyone does not want to be treated the same way. To keep employees happy, managers need to treat each person the way that person wants to be treated. This is the Platinum Rule.

Strength without harshness

People like to see that their manager is a strong leader, but a manager who is always harsh and critical, though strong, does not motivate. So, bosses need to lead by example, and show courage without being harsh and critical.

Two-way communication

It's a common misconception in the workplace that good communication is only from managers to teams. It works the other way around too and a good manager is one who inspires open communication both ways: to the employees and, equally important, from the employees to the managers too.

Don't preach

Many times, managers get bogged down with just giving advice. While this may start off great, if it is not paired with action, it will soon pall. Good managers must always match their actions to their words.

(20,000 employees' data leaked: [Are you one?](#))

Transparency

The benefits of being transparent need hardly be overstated. A good boss must always be open with his or her team about the company's objectives and plans.

Humility

Having a boss who's arrogant and rude is a surefire way of increasing attrition. A good manager never acts holier-than-thou and never makes their team feel like the boss is better than the employees.

Work-life balance

Having a good balance between work and personal life is not just for Monday morning pep talks. A good manager should take interest in their teams work-life balance. Employees always want to know that their boss cares for their well-being and not just the company's bottom line, and showing interest in how they balance work and personal life is one sure way of ensuring that they feel comfortable and cared for.

SOURCE: AMEinfo - <http://ameinfo.com/money/smes/7-secrets-keeping-employees-happy-without-raise/>
by AMEinfo Staff, November 14, 2016

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TBFAA Report

Kelly Ryan, President

Happy New Year! 2017 has arrived, and as we say goodbye to 2016, we optimistically look forward to the coming year with new opportunities as well as new challenges. Many companies use this time of the year to set new sales goals, reorganize operations, and sharpen their focus on productivity, but let us not forget some of the basics that can be easily overlooked...

Did your security or fire alarm company take advantage of year-end deals and get new vehicles? Don't forget that the beautiful new wrap on that vehicle still needs to have your company license information on it! Refer to Private Security Administrative Rule 35.8 and Texas Department of Insurance Fire Alarm Rule 34.610 to make sure you are compliant.

Did you have changes with any security employees recently? Make sure you don't forget to submit the employee termination forms to the DPS. The DPS form "PSP-19B" was last updated June of 2016, so make sure you are using the correct form when submitting employee termination notices. The latest form is available on the DPS Regulatory Services website.

Very recently, I was contacted by one of the largest police departments in Texas about the PSP-53. In case you don't remember, all security alarm companies in Texas are required to submit the PSP-53 upon any completed installation – monitored or not. Even if you primarily install in a municipality that once declined receiving the activation forms, now is a good time to check again, and don't forget to remind your customers of any alarm permit requirements!

Speaking of checking things, have you made sure all your security licensed employee folders are current? Do you have a copy of their pre-employment background check in their file? In a recent conversation, I was asked what a security company should do if they didn't have a copy of the pre-employment background check. After a nice conversation with a lead investigator from the DPS, it was determined that a failure to provide the pre-employment background check was much worse than having one done after employment occurred. (Of course, he did ask that the company immediately begin pre-employment checks, to which the company did comply!)

The above examples are just a few of the "basics" that all security & fire alarm licensed companies need to remember. There are many more, but the point is, even though we are busy getting things ready for 2017, let's all make sure we are not forgetting the basics. Best wishes for 2017 to everyone, and be sure to join and participate in your local and state alarm association – your involvement is the key to success!

TBFAA Region 3 Director Dennis White

The Rio Grande Valley Alarm Association had its annual Holiday party on January 5, 2017 with very good vendor and customer turn out. The event was held at Arturo's restaurant in Weslaco, with plenty of food and drink for all. The event featured CEU classes held by vendors, as well as presentation on new products available in the industry. Our next meeting will be held at the same location on March 2nd, and we invite all dealer and vendor in the area to attend. The guest speaker is to be announced.

TBFAA is in the process of vetting a new subscriber agreement that will be available to all TBFAA members. There is a final draft being scrubbed by our attorney, and should be available in the near future. This is an item that is often overlooked by dealers, and should be on the radar for everyone that is selling their services to the public. We have become a very litigious society, and having a subscriber agreement that covers all liability issues is something that each dealer should review. There will be more details forthcoming, but I would urge all dealers to review their existing agreement to make sure it is current and relevant in today's business environment.

For comments and suggestions please feel free to contact Dennis at 713-870-3702.

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4 lessons I learned from my first 4 website builds

Really, I've learned hundreds of lessons just from my first small business website build, but that doesn't help with a catchy headline. It would also be a *much* longer article, and nobody got time for that.

Let's start with the fact that having a website is crucial. I don't know about you, but if I Google a company and can't find them online, my first thoughts are, "It doesn't exist" or "They're sketchy," and my last thought is usually, "Oh, maybe I misspelled it."

Regardless, it's 2016 — almost 2017 — if dogs can have Instagram accounts, your business should have a website. Now that we're all on the same page, let's talk about the website build. In my humble opinion, these lessons are just as important to the party building the website (e.g., an agency) as it is to the party who wants a website built (e.g., a client).

1. A website is a tool — treat it like one

I like a "pretty" website as much as the next person, but if I end up on a website and my only thought is, "Ooh shiny," there is a bigger problem. If a website has the right structure, it might not need a redesign. There are plenty of other ways a small business website can become a lucrative tool, worth an investment.

A small business website should be able to do the following:

- Educate me on the business
- Earn my trust (as in, convince me this business is the thought leader)
- Allow me to do all the necessary research before any transactions
- Offer information throughout my journey as a buyer
- "Capture" my information, so you can continue to "nurture" me

Now, all of this can be accomplished as long as you keep reading to at least point No. 2 ...

2. The groundwork is the most important part

During a website build there is crucial moment that determines how the next 3-6 months will play out. That crucial moment is the beginning. Shocker, I know, but I can't stress this enough.

Everyone gets so excited about the design and the development that sometimes we rush through the timeline, the sitemap, the wireframes and the conversion path mapping. I get it, I really do, but if these four steps aren't given the attention they deserve, two things will happen:

- The website probably won't launch on time — if it does it's because there will be a lot of late nights, a few bicker matches and a lot of unnecessary passive aggressiveness.
- It won't be the tool we all know it could and should be.

So let's get into what these things are and why these things are important.

The timeline determines all deadlines and tries to ensure the build doesn't take 18 months when it should be five months. As a project manager, I'm a little biased about the importance of this step, but a lot of anger and disappointment can be avoided if everyone has the appropriate expectations — expectations that are based on the timeline.

In the timeline, it should be clear when everything starts, when things are due from the agency and from the client and there should always be buffer room. Let's face it, nothing goes as planned. Everyone can have the best intentions but not everything can be accounted for, so be sure to pad the timeline.

You know when you go to a restaurant and you hear it's a 45-minute wait, and you go, "Ugh!" But when it's actually 20 minutes, isn't that a great feeling? Well, imagine the reverse. Yeah, that's where the anger and disappointment roll in.

The sitemap is what's going to live on the website. Oh my God, this is so important! This is the infrastructure. This is when a decision is made about what should live on the website and where.

It's usually just a sheet of paper. It looks like an outline. It's not very exciting. I cannot tell you how many times this has been ignored by both the agency and the client.

But here's the problem: You're in design phase 2, or, even worse, development and you go, "Where should this vital piece of information live?" And then you have to Frankenstein the website. It's just so upsetting. End of rant.

The wireframe and the conversion path mapping are the blueprint. They make the website a tool — the brains behind the design. Please take the time to think through this, review it and provide revisions because this is the website, this is the house.

The design is just the wallpaper, the paint, the curtains. I'm going to circle back to lesson No. 1 here. A website is a tool — treat it like one.

The next two points are shorter, I promise.

3. There should be buy-in from everybody

You've spent all of this time on the groundwork, you have a great infrastructure, and you've built a beautiful website — only to have some guy not like something that is actually pretty vital to it being a useful tool.

The team gets it, the client gets it, but the sales guy doesn't get it, or the guy in the Boston office doesn't get it, or the CEO doesn't get it — you get the point. Collect everyone who will be approving the website, using the website, making the website, and get them all on the same page. A difficult challenge I admit, but I believe in you.

4. It doesn't need to be perfect

This last thing is hard for me to say, because I always strive for perfection: When the website launches, it doesn't need to be perfect.

Do not confuse this with not having an infrastructure. The things I mentioned in lesson No. 2 should be as polished as possible. In fact, when building the infrastructure, growth and change should be considered.

What doesn't need to be absolutely perfect is the copy, the design, the fancy functionality. And it's OK for a few pages to be missing (you can always add some). Those are all important things to have, but getting your website live so you can use it as a lucrative tool is more important.

A website is living and breathing. It should not be static. It should not be treated as a project that is ignored until it needs to be "spruced" or "redone" again. No, it should be worked on constantly. And [there is so much you can do with a website](#). If you don't believe me, just Google "inbound marketing."

SOURCE: MultiBriefs - <http://exclusive.multibriefs.com/content/4-lessons-i-learned-from-my-first-4-website-builds/communications>
by: Masha Popelyukhina, November 17, 2016



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Houston Alarm Detail

Check with the [City of Houston to make sure your company is listed on their alarm permit web site](#). They have a specific form you need to fill out and submit to them for inclusion.

You also need to be [sending municipalities notice of alarm system activation](#).

Please make sure your customers are using the most [current alarm permit form](#).

Harris County Alarm Detail

Please make sure your customers are using the most [current alarm permit form](#).

Montgomery County Alarm Detail

Check with the Montgomery County Sheriff's Office to make sure your company is listed on their alarm permit web site.

Please make sure your customers are using the most [current alarm permit form](#).

<http://mcsoalarm.mctx.org/GeneralDocs.aspx?rpt=Alarm%20Ordinance.c1d>

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