

The Training Post



This season is significantly different from traditional summers. COVID-19, civil unrest, and preparing for the fall, to name a few, have been topics of concern. However, there is a silver lining. Sometimes chaos begets fresh beginnings and positive changes. We must discover different ways of living, working, and learning. Reinvent your “best” self and embrace this opportunity to cultivate a path to the new norm.

In this **Training Post** edition, we will focus on ways to create positive work habits and relationships from afar. Start on your path to the new normal with our featured training and development opportunities, professional growth advice, and beneficial updates and tips for the Learning Management System (LMS) and ePAR.

“The new normal is to always be better than your old normal!” -Garrison Wynn



Must-Have Skills of 2020 & CLIP Web-Based Training

Requires a CLIP All Access Pass



Creativity



Collaboration

Effective Problem Solving and Decision Making

Leading Innovation: Innovation Sessions

Characteristics of a Successful Team

Creating Collaboration: The ProcessTeam Building: 05



Diversity



Leadership

Five Strategies for Creating an Inclusive Work Environment

Why Diversity Matters

Building Your Leadership Capability

Leading with Emotional Intelligence in the Workplace



Organization



Technology at Work

12 Guidelines of Effective Time Management

Brain Bites - Time Management

Access

OneDrive

Outlook

Project

Excel

Oracle

PowerPoint

SharePoint

*Because successful training programs are not just about content, each edition of **The Training Post** will spotlight an individual who has been involved in one or more of the many professional development programs offered by CLIP.*

As a facilitator for the Civil Service Commission’s Center for Learning and Improving Performance (CLIP) since 2013, Rita Williams-Bogar has earned a reputation as an exemplary trainer. With a career that spans over 15 years, Mrs. Williams-Bogar’s entry to training was ignited by a workshop she attended during her corporate profession. She reflected on the facilitator’s delivery of the topic and concluded “that’s what I want to do.” From that pivotal point to the present, Mrs. Williams-Bogar has focused on refining her training methods. She has progressively adapted new skills and techniques for successfully delivering professional development topics. Discussing a major shift in her training career Mrs. Williams-Bogar related that, “one of the biggest changes has been transitioning from the classroom setting to an online format.”

Now a veteran of virtual training, Mrs. Williams-Bogar stressed the importance of adapting various online platforms. Specifically, she pointed out the value of learning Zoom, WebEx, GoToMeeting, and Microsoft Teams. Mrs. Williams-Bogar noted that “each platform is slightly different and presents opportunities for trainers and learners to gain new skills. Additionally, maximizing a platform’s features can make a course just as engaging and fun in the virtual environment as in the classroom.” Mrs. Williams-Bogar also emphasized the importance of knowing how to pivot when technical difficulties occur so as to maintain a seamless learning experience.

Lastly, Mrs. Williams-Bogar pointed out that it’s important for instructors to, “understand the underlying theory of the topics, to make them practical and applicable for learners’ real-world use.”

Please visit our website at www.nj.gov/csc/employees/training. For training inquiries, contact CLIPTraining.Support@csc.nj.gov.

#TECH TIPS



The Buzz...



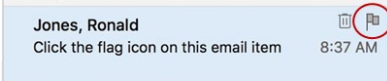
Saving Emails as Tasks

Working from home has its pros and cons, especially concerning staying organized. Back in the office, you could dial an extension, relay information verbally in a meeting, or even walk over to a coworker's cubicle or office to deliver a message. But with more employees working remotely, many of our communications occur via email.

How do you quickly highlight key emails when you've received a constant flow of messages, some urgent while others read a simple "you're welcome"? The goal is to triage your emails so you can follow up on important items later. You can find a wealth of information on organizing and prioritizing information online, but here are two quick and handy techniques.

Send emails to your list of task items

Click the small **Flag icon** in the message list to quickly flag an email.



Navigate to your **Outlook Tasks** to view the email in your task list.



You can edit details such as the Follow-up date and Priority setting by right clicking the item. Mark items complete as you go along, just like your other tasks. The list view may vary depending on if you are using the Outlook Web Application (OWA) in a browser or the Outlook Desktop Application.

Create a task from an email (Desktop application)

Click and drag a message to **Tasks** on the navigation bar. This action will create a new task. All email contents, except attachments, will be copied into the body of the new task. Enter task details into the popup window and select **Save & Close**. Note: This feature may only work in the desktop application, unless you are using the OWA with the new Task/To-Do Module update. The new task will appear in your **Outlook Tasks** pane.

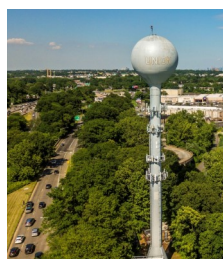


What's the difference?

The email that you have sent to your list of task items will be removed if the original message is deleted. However, the task that you created from a message will remain in the task list if you delete the original email. That task is an independent item, separate from the original email.

Fun Fact

Union New Jersey is home of the World's Tallest Sphere. The **Union Watersphere**, also known as the **Union Water Tower**, is 212 feet tall.



At CLIP, we strive to provide our participants with innovative and cutting-edge learning experiences. **"The Buzz,"** features the latest training trends and noteworthy "buzz" about various professional developmental themes. Cultivating your path in the new "remote work" norm may seem daunting at times. In this edition, we explore how and why this might be, and provide tips for tackling challenges.

Cultivating Your New Norm by Setting Boundaries

Although working remotely has become the new norm, it's important to recognize that not everyone has fully adjusted to their new workspaces. Some people may even be experiencing diminished levels of productivity. Dr. Sahar Yousef, UC Berkeley professor at the Hass School of Business, studies neuroscience and productivity. In her video, she explains that home is typically the place where we unwind, the place we go to disconnect. So, we need to reprogram our way of thinking to unblur the line between our work and home lives. Establishing routines and maintaining physical and cognitive boundaries has never been more important.

Setting up Physical Boundaries - The actual physical space that you work in helps you to set up the physical boundaries. Create a morning ritual to get your day started in your home workspace. Make sure you include physical associations, like a tablecloth or trinket, or listen to a work playlist, etc. that can help trigger your mind into a state of work. Make sure you can remove those associations after the workday is complete and they aren't used when you're not working so a clear boundary between work and home is created.

Setting up Cognitive Boundaries - Establish the mental practice of prioritizing your tasks and making a conscious effort to concentrate on each task. Dr. Yousef recommends doing "focused sprints". These are sixty to ninety-minute timeframes to perform specific and clear tasks. Sprints shouldn't be about just getting a lot of work done, the focused work needs to be outlined. Established blocks of time can help you avoid distractions and will keep your team and family aware of your availability to communicate with them. Be sure to stay within your focused sprint timeframe and center your breaks around them. Breaks are very important, Dr. Yousef notes, "take a true cognitive break...Allow your body to biologically prepare to continue to do more work." This will help you "avoid burnout by days end."

Avoid blurring the lines between work and home. Set boundaries, improve your productivity, and most importantly, preserve your sanity.

Dr. Sahar Yousef. The Neuroscience of Work-From-Home Productivity. (2020, April). Retrieved from: bing.com/videos/search?q=neuroscience+working+from+home&docid=608055291829422310&mid=6DE2CFA2C9C3E72677C76DE2CFA2C9C3E72677C7&view=detail&FORM=VIRE



Staying Connected: Tips for Enhancing Communications in the Virtual Workplace

Over the past several months, organization leaders and employees have embraced a “new normal” – working remotely. The prevalence of this change has made effective communication and collaboration strategies more important than ever. Diminished interaction is a potential catalyst for disengagement. Luckily, today’s technology makes engaging and collaborating with others as easy as clicking a button.

Here are tips to enhance your interactions with others in a virtual workspace:

Resist isolation tendencies. While working on a task remotely, it’s easy to isolate your ideas and thought processes. This may seem productive, but you may be missing the synergy that comes from diverse ideas. Initiate teamwork by saving your files in a shared space and asking your colleagues for feedback to get real-time collaboration.

Get chatty. Using the “chat” function on a digital communication platform typically gets quicker responses than email. Take advantage of talking “in person” through video as much as possible. The combined elements of verbal and non-verbal communications add interpersonal value to conversations.

Keep your schedule transparent. Let others know when you’re available. Try using a status message and be responsive to communications. Even if you don’t have time to fully answer an email, a reply like, “Hi, I’m reading your note and will reply by tomorrow morning!” lets others know when they can expect to hear from you.

Make the call. When in doubt, communicate more. Do not leave an unknown up to assumption or chance. A quick phone call may provide clarity and prevent a miscommunication.

Reestablish office rituals. When you were in the workplace, did you take morning breaks with co-workers to get coffee and share conversations? Recreate this routine by scheduling time to have virtual coffee breaks instead. Collegial time with your co-workers helps complement your collaborative work efforts.

Start a “water cooler” communication. Posting rapport-building comments in a shared forum is a great way to maintain a social element while working remotely. Milestones and updates like birthdays and graduations can be shared to enhance connections with colleagues.

References:

Grant, J. (2020, March 18). How to Stay Connected While Working Remotely StartupNation Media Group Inc: retrieved from: startupnation.com/grow-your-business/stay-connected-working-remotely/#:~:text=How%20to%20Stay%20Connected%20While%20Working%20Remotely%201,...%203%20Set%20up%20communication%20best%20practices.%20

Pollack, S. (2020, March 18). How to Stay Connected With Your Colleagues Remotely While Working From Home, retrieved from: zenefits.com/workest/how-to-stay-connected-with-your-colleagues-while-working-from-home/



George Bernard Shaw once praised a classic Charles Dickens novel as “All of one piece and consistently truthful”. During this unprecedented time when many employees are working remotely, it is critical for supervisors and managers to remember that the primary objective for performance reviews has not changed. It is to give employees the opportunity to develop and grow professionally, even as they adjust to uncertain circumstances. For the first time, employees are working remotely, and for many, it has been a stressful transition. Be mindful that job expectations derived for work in the office may look different when working remotely. It is important for supervisors to engage in frequent conversations with their employees about what they believe can be achieved while working from home. Regular and consistent communication of expectations is key. Any discussed changes to job expectations should be incorporated in the ‘Significant Events’ feature of the ePAR system. Face-to-face meetings should be delivered virtually to set the right personal tone, to provide useful feedback, and to reassure employees that they are actively being supported during this stressful time. The key is to follow Shaw’s comments. The novel? “Great Expectations”.

Please contact ePARHelp@csc.nj.gov for any questions.

Good Read: 60 Ways to Keep Your Brain Sharp

In this refreshing and grounded book, author **Bonnie Beth Sparrman** addresses everyday life with inspirational and research-backed ideas. Sparrman explores how the brain functions and offers ways to improve your quality of life in the following areas: physical activity, nutrition, intellectually stimulating activities, and spiritual and social connections.



The “LMS Café” has something for everyone. In each edition of **The Training Post**, the LMS community can find information on new course releases, blended learning recommendations, and for our LMS administrators, system updates. Check out the **What’s Brewing** section for highlighted new online course releases, the **Barista** section for useful system updates to help administrators better serve their LMS community, and **Signature Blends** for a list of recommended online courses that complement our classroom training.

What's Brewing

FEATURED COURSES

QUICK CLIP VIRTUAL TRAINING

- Guided Imagery Meditation – A Walk in the Forest
- Leading and Motivating While Working Remotely
- Managing Time and Distractions
- Rapid Change: Remembering Your Purpose
- Working in Teams

COMING SOON: LMS Learner Video



The New LMS

The new LMS is up and running. Agency Admins will have an opportunity to register for virtual training in August. The training will review essential topics on Admin roles and responsibilities.

Signature Blends

(available with a CLIP All Access Pass)

Leading a Virtual Meeting

Classroom Complement: Make Meetings Matter

Telephone Doctor Customer Service: 07. Essential Telephone Skills

Classroom Complement: Customer Service

OneDrive Essentials (2019)

Classroom Complement: Microsoft OneNote and OneDrive 2016 Bundle

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Newsletter Mailing List

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WRITING @ WORK

Staying Connected through Writing

To borrow from the author, Virginia Woolf, “distance has an extraordinary power.” Woolf’s observation from the turn-of-the century remains remarkably relevant in our current setting. As many of us continue to work remotely, we may not feel as engaged with our colleagues as we were in our workplaces. From this perspective, we can use writing to stay connected with our colleagues. Email writing presents opportunities to relate with our co-workers and maintain camaraderie.

Here are two tips to consider:

Tip – Include a Story

Sharing a brief story at the start of the work week can be a great way to re-engage, with one or more team members. You may include an anecdote at the beginning of your email or at the end as a postscript.

“By the way, I found a new trail at the county park and about halfway through it, I saw a small herd of deer. There was even one with antlers!”

Tip – Communicate by Query

You can relate your anecdote to a question, or your question can stand alone.

“Have you had a chance to read the last chapter of Grish’s novel? You’ll never believe who Nancy really is!”

The key is to think about topics and interests you’ve shared with your colleagues in the workplace as the bases to reimagine your emails and instill them with the power to reconnect.

Did you know? July 31st is System Administrator Appreciation Day.

Question Corner

Summer Question:

What new work/life habits have you developed as a result of the new normal?

(Click here to respond)

**Respond to be entered into our*

“Free Single-day Training” drawing - \$159.00 value!

Spring Question:

What does grit mean to you?

Thank you to all of our Spring “Question Corner” respondents. Congratulations to **Aparna Shah** from the Office of Information Technology! You have been selected to receive the “Free Single-Day Training”.

Spring Responses

Click on Spring Responses to view all the responses.

The Training Post Credits