

# The Management Mind

## TRENDS

## Napping As Management Philosophy

Craig Yarde, president of Yarde Metals Inc., has received national media attention about his management philosophies that include allowing employees to nap on the job. Although Yarde estimates he's been on scores of radio talk shows, television shows, and a national televised program, he didn't plan to capture the media spotlight. It just happened that word spread of his plans to design a nap room for his 330 employees at a new manufacturing plant in Bristol, Conn.

Yarde doesn't promote his management style as a way to be a progressive company or on the cutting edge. "It comes from the heart," says the 48-year-old Yarde. "It's how we feel about the people working here." Yarde Metals is a first and secondary metal manufacturer and distributor that supplies the communications, aerospace, and automotive industries. Over the last five years the company has seen revenues grow from \$30 million to \$105 million.

Yarde calls his management philosophy "leveling"—treating everyone with equality, respect, dignity, and compassion. These are values Yarde learned from his parents, and he uses them in his company that he established 23 years ago out of



his basement. Yarde says leveling has opened the lines of communication and encourages the sharing of information between management and employees—opening the financial books monthly to employees, discussions with management on the good and bad news, and what the company needs to be doing to improve operations.

Yarde also believes in allowing employees to do what they want on the job even if it means taking a nap. About five years ago he noticed some employees were taking naps at their desks, in their cars, or on outdoor lounge chairs during warm, sunny days. So when he was in the design phase of the company's new 330,000-sq-ft plant, he asked his employees if they would use a "nap room."

Fifty percent said they would use a nap room one to five times a week. About 80% of Yarde's employees filled out the survey. Yarde plans to dedicate about 600 sq ft of the yet-to-be-constructed plant as a nap room that will have eight semiprivate stations with recliners.

"There won't be any restrictions as to when people can take a nap except that they might have to reserve a time," he says. "If they are on a production machine, obviously, they will have to get somebody else to keep the machine running."

Napping on the job is becoming more prevalent in the workplace, says William A. Anthony, author of *The Art of Napping* (1997, Larson Publications) and head of Boston University's Center for Psychiatric Rehabilitation. After the book was published, Anthony says he fielded a lot of calls from executives and employees who nap, and it gave him the idea to write his second book, *The Art of Napping at Work*, due out this fall. Anthony and his wife Camille W. Anthony will review studies that show workplace napping can contribute to productivity. The book also will feature the results from an online survey of workplace nappers. For more details on the book: [www.napping.com](http://www.napping.com).

BRUCE JABLONSKI

## RELATIONSHIPS

## Workplace Dysfunction

All managers have their favorite and least-favorite employees. While it may be easier to look to favorite employees to tackle challenges, managers do so at the risk of creating or deepening workplace dysfunction, a common problem that all executives struggle with, says Tom E. Jones, author of *It It's Broken, You Can Fix It* (1999, AMACOM).

"A functional workplace is one in which all employees participate fully in problem-solving processes, and this can't happen if you continue to look to the

same few people for solutions," writes Jones, a 30-year organization-development expert who works with private and public organizations to manage change and improve job performance and human relationships.

The book offers a variety of practical ways on how managers can identify workplace dysfunction and how it can be resolved. Jones also provides step-by-step advice and useful strategies on managing conflict, making teams work, adjusting to change, influencing work behaviors, improving communications, and reshaping your corporate culture.

If It's  
Broken,  
You Can  
Fix It

Tom E. Jones  
AMACOM

## STRATEGIES

## Is Your Company Learning?

C. Carl Pegels, author of *Handbook of Strategies and Tools for the Learning Company* (1998, Productivity Press), contends studies that try to link performance improvements to one specific improvement technique have generally shown disappointing results. Pegels, a professor of management science and systems at State University of New York at Buffalo, says it takes an entire toolbox of best practices and strategies for a company to attain success.

In his book, Pegels succinctly describes dozens of management tools used by large and small manufacturing companies and makes the case for firms to become "learning organizations." He also outlines employee focus and empowerment, teams and employee participation, improving operations through restructuring, outsourcing components and services, customers and product management, and use of analytical tools.