

Fully Utilize Your Talents

– Optimization

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Optimization is like administrative skills and attitudes on steroids (in a good way). Optimization means to enhance the effectiveness of something; to make something function at its best.

When I read the definition of optimization, I immediately think of two things:

1 Part of my “job” is being brought into companies by senior leaders to help make their administrative partners function at their best. I have all the tools and answers to help administrative professionals be successful. Whether or not they choose to listen to me, take my advice, trust me and are willing to adopt new behaviors is another story. I can’t make anyone change anything, as is true for me. I attend educational events, read and am exposed to a variety of talented, smart subject matter experts but it is up to me to make changes.

2 Part of my “job” is to work with already successful executives and their executive assistants to enhance their effectiveness. I go to the client’s facility and work with the leader and assistant one-on-one. I watch everything they do, listen to what they say, learn their processes, absorb their environment and dynamics and, basically, get inside their heads. When I do this kind of work, I can best help that team.

What does this mean to you?

You need to embrace the idea of ‘optimization’ to be successful in the future and to illuminate your career. I’m certain you already are a star performer. The idea is, are you moving yourself to your very best potential? Are you fully engaged? Do you push through difficult tasks and assignments that you normally don’t like? Have you taken classes this year that advance



your skills? Yes, we all need a nudge sometimes. We need an outsider to tell us “Stop being lazy and get on with it! You know what you need to do; you are just taking the easy way out.”

Let me give you an example: I wrote the Star Achievement Series® in 1990. The program consists of 12 full day workshops with three levels of learning. I wrote extensive workbooks for each class (12 in all). I have revised this program 14 times in 20 years! And guess what? At the writing of this article, I am getting ready to make a massive overhaul of the content and design of the workbooks.

Repeatedly organizations and participants tell me this program truly changes lives. My husband Dave (now deceased) used to always ask me, “Why are you making changes? People love it.” I always responded, “Because I know there is more. I can write an even better curriculum and create more dynamic learning activities. There is always room for improvement.”

I regularly optimize something that is already great. It’s just the way I live life. I am growing as a result because I have to challenge my thinking,

do extensive research, reach out to subject matter experts and exercise my creative muscle.

How many times in the past 15 years have you updated you? How many enhancements have you made to yourself? 1? 5? 15? Are you constantly optimizing you?

I know far too many assistants who have been in the administrative profession for 20 plus years and have hardly changed. If this is you, it’s time to wake up! You are not being all you are capable of being. We are all here to become better, to contribute to the greater good – we are not designed to be stagnant, vanilla, boring or lazy.

For those new to the profession... great! You are young enough or novice enough to establish “success” behaviors. You are like the seed of a tree that is newly planted. How you grow, how tall you grow, how strong you grow, is up to you. Make sure you stay away from bad soil. Don’t be influenced by people who might be negative about the administrative profession. This profession is fabulous and rewarding. It is interesting, challenging, fun and offers you great opportunity. Make sure you fertilize your thinking so you can grow and then occasionally apply “booster fertilizer” (this is turbo-charged fertilizer) – meaning *optimize* yourself and everything you do.

When you fully utilize all your talents and capacities, your leader will function at her best because she will be able to focus on the work she does that brings value to the company and impacts the bottom line. And one of the greatest gifts to yourself is that you will be a more joyous and fulfilled individual which will spread to other aspects of your life.

Now is the time to embrace this mindset!

about the author



Joan Burge, a renowned author and administrative expert, is known as the red-lipstick-wearing “Rock Star” of administrative and executive assistant training. She’s a successful entrepreneur who created a unique business niche by founding a movement to help administrators see themselves as professionals so they can excel in business. Joan Burge equips administrative assistants, executive assistants and office support professionals to move beyond task work to higher-level functions that meet the ever-changing demands of today’s workplace. In addition to being Editor of the weekly e-zine *Monday Motivators*™ Joan is the creator of the Star Achievement Series®, World Class Assistant™ Certificate Program, more than 40 customized workshops and seminars for administrative professionals, and is the author of several books, most recently published: *Who Took My Pen... Again? Secrets from Dynamic Executive Assistants*, www.officeDynamics.com.

