



Your Campus Store Industry Resource

# The Campus Connection

Campus Stores of New England, Inc.

www.csne.net  
Spring 2007

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## A Letter from your President

Dear CSNE Members:

It's almost hard to believe that summer is just about upon us again, the warm and sunny weather is a much welcomed contrast to the frigid temperatures we encountered during our **Joint Meeting and Trade Show** in Saratoga Springs. The meeting itself was a terrific success, informative and motivating sessions, well attended trade show and a very entertaining dinner murder mystery. Thanks to all the volunteers for making the meeting so enjoyable. Hopefully all who attended the Saratoga meeting came away with some new insights & motivation.

Now the time is almost upon us again to focus on the fall rush. Our industry is a constant recycling of events which brings with it concerns, stresses and the constant search for new ideas and innovations. One of the primary objectives of CSNE is to provide creative, innovative and practical education programs that will help us all be more successful.

Some of the upcoming CSNE programs include the **Prep School Get Together** this month at the Governor's Academy and two one-day **Customer Service Programs** that will be held this fall—see page 6 of this newsletter for details. The next **Super Regional Meeting & Buying Show** will be



March 25-28 at the Borgata Hotel in Atlantic City, NJ. Expect a terrific educational program and wonderful trade show. Booths should sell out quickly.

Thanks to the newly elected CSNE board members for their generous contributions of time and talent that they all bring to the organization. We will be meeting this month to review the strategic plan and discuss different ideas and thoughts that will help us continue to be a strong and effective organization. You can contact me or any board member at anytime with your thoughts, suggestions, and questions. They are important, welcomed and encouraged.

I sincerely wish you a relaxing and enjoyable summer.

Jerry Houlihan

## Pass Me Along! Route to:

### Stores:

- Auxiliary Director
- Textbook Department
- Merchandising Department
- \_\_\_\_\_

### Vendors:

- New England Sales Rep
- National Sales Manager
- \_\_\_\_\_

## Member News

### Friends of the Association:



**Barbara Miller Heron** recently celebrated her retirement from the **Skidmore Shop** at Skidmore College. Barbara is pictured to the far right with colleagues at the party given in her honor.

### Tuition Contest:

**Merriam Webster** is offering a contest called *Look Us Up*. The Grand Prize is a free semester's college tuition. (College students 18+ are eligible to enter; tuition will be paid directly to the institution at which they are enrolled.) Other prizes will be offered to runners-up. Contestants may enter starting August 1st on Merriam-Webster's web site, [www.merriam-webster.com](http://www.merriam-webster.com). Entrants must use a dictionary to complete their entry, and the winning entry will be chosen at random from all correct entries received by September 30, 2007.

### We've Moved:

#### Old Time Sports

10 Fanaras Drive  
Salisbury, MA 01952  
Toll Free: 888-829-2400 ext 115  
Fax: 978-499-3844

### Awards:

Congratulations to **Bill Kowaleski**, of **The Pennacle Group** winner of this year's CSNE Outstanding Service Award. Here's what Bill's customers had to say about him:

*"Bill is always here to help out during rush etc. He doesn't just help stock and sell his own products he rolls up his sleeves and does what needs to be done! He's also very funny!"*

*"Bill is a rep that I know I can always depend & rely on to assist me in any area of my store. He is A+++++"*

*"Bill is very helpful and responsive to our store needs. He seems to be available to help in so many capacities, he's a knowledgeable sales rep, he can be quite helpful on the sales floor too!"*

Congratulations to **Rick Schwartz**, New England Sales Representative for **Charles River Apparel** who received a "Power 10" Award from the company for demonstrated excellence in sales.

Congratulations to **Lucie Voves**, President, **Church Hill Classics**, who was of three winners of the sixth-annual NAWBO/Wells Fargo Trailblazer Award. Lucie received a cash prize and was honored at NAWBO's 2007 Women's Business Conference.



Congratulations to **Don Burden**, Director of Marketing Services for **McGraw-Hill Higher Education** on his receipt of the NACS Foundation, Distinguished Service Award. The award was developed in 2002 to recognize devotion, service and visionary leadership in the college store industry. Pictured above: Pam Mills, CCR Director of The CU Book Store and Don Burden.

# The 2008 Super Regional Meeting & Buying Show

**The Borgata Hotel Casino & Spa, Atlantic City, NJ**  
**March 25 — 28, 2008**

## New, 5-star contemporary hotel

70,000 square feet of sleek modern meeting & exhibition space—unobstructed by pillars.

Conference space is on a separate floor away from the hustle and bustle of the casino.

Easy move-in/move-out for exhibitors.



Palm Trees in NJ? You bet! You've never seen a hotel pool in the Northeast like this one! And that's not all there is to do at **The Borgata!**

Network with your colleagues and vendors at any of Borgata's fabulous restaurants and bars such as **Bobby Flay's**, **Wolfgang Puck's** and **Old Homestead** to name just a few.

Enjoy the spa, workout room and casinos in your free time. **The Borgata** frequently features big name entertainment. Atlantic City is also home to many new fabulous outlet stores as well as **The Borgata's** own retail shops.

There will be

- ▶ **Super Sessions with fabulous authors and speakers**
- ▶ **Super Networking**
- ▶ **Super Buying Show**



All at a Super Property — **The Borgata!**

An overnight room awaits you  
...so please join us for the 2008 Super Regional!

If you would like to be on the 2008 Super Regional Committee or would like more information on the MACS, CSA-NYS and CSNE Super Regional Meeting & Buying Show, please call **978 250-9847** or e-mail [Pam@McKennaMgt.com](mailto:Pam@McKennaMgt.com)

Chaired by: **Karen DeLarco, CCR**

## Meet Your New President, Jerry Houlihan

CSNE recently caught up with your new President, Jerry Houlihan.

CSNE: *What 3 words would you use to describe your Presidency?*

Houlihan: Commitment, Educate, Trust

CSNE: *What is the thing you would most like to accomplish as President of CSNE?*

Houlihan: Strengthen membership

CSNE: *How would you describe your Board?*

Houlihan: Exceptionally talented and committed

CSNE: *How have you participated in CSNE prior to your Presidency?*

Houlihan: Served as vendor rep for CSNE and volunteering for trade shows

CSNE: *Tell us about your job.*

Houlihan: Account manager for Matthews Books/McCoy Health Science products, gives me to opportunity to constantly meet new people and maintain relationships with old friends and at the same time providing good services and products to the stores in my territory.

CSNE: *Where did you work prior to your position at Matthews/McCoy?*

Houlihan: Northeast Regional Ops Manager for Login Brothers Book Co

CSNE: *What, if any, changes do you anticipate in CSNE in the future?*

Houlihan: Keeping the membership educated with new technological developments.

CSNE: *Why do you think people should volunteer for CSNE positions and leadership roles?*

Houlihan: It provides a terrific insight of awareness within your own industry and at the same time gives you a sense that you are contributing to the success of the organization.

CSNE: *What do you do for fun in your spare time?*

Houlihan: Enjoy sports, "puttering" around the house and just spending time with my family.

CSNE: *Who is your biggest supporter in your life?*

Houlihan: My wife Kathy

CSNE: *Tell us about your family.*

Houlihan: Three children all have graduated, one at Suffolk, one at Northeastern and the other at Notre Dame. One two year old granddaughter Shannon and another grandchild due in October

CSNE: *What changes have you noticed in CSNE since you have been involved in the association?*

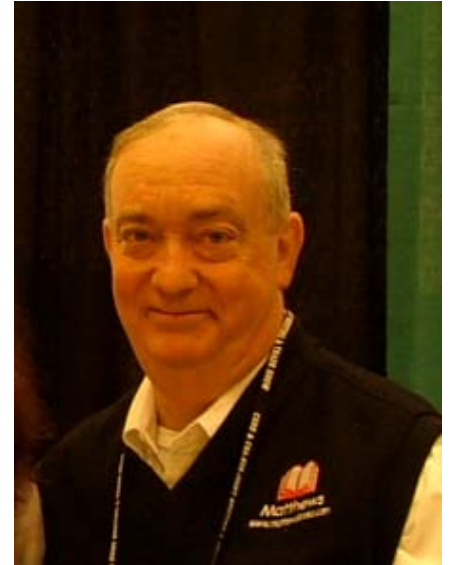
Houlihan: Increased memberships from outside the college market, specifically Prep/Private schools and the volume of college institutional stores gone lease

CSNE: *What is the one thing you want to do in life before you die that you haven't done already?*

Houlihan: Visit the Vietnam Memorial in DC

CSNE: *If you weren't working as an Account Manager what other career could you see yourself doing?*

Houlihan: Working in some capacity as a youth counselor.



## Welcome New Members

Rachel Peckar, School Store Manager

### Hillside School Store

404 Robin Hill Rd.  
Marlborough, MA 01752  
Phone: 508 208-6665  
rpeckar@hillsideschool.net  
www.hillsideschool.net

Tim Hannon, President

### New England Picture

491 E Industrial Pk Dr - B  
Manchester, NH 03109  
Phone: 603 625-8901  
Fax: 603 625-8902

[tim@newenglandpicture.com](mailto:tim@newenglandpicture.com)  
[www.newenglandpicture.com](http://www.newenglandpicture.com)

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Jody Danaher

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Fax: 602 437-5445

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[www.suttersmill.com](http://www.suttersmill.com)

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Marsha Hemm

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Fax: 802 459-2948

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[www.vermont-marble.com](http://www.vermont-marble.com)

Products: Engrave able marble gifts quarried in Vermont

## Call for News!

The next edition of the Campus Connection, CSNE's Newsletter, will be going to print in the fall. Please submit your professional or personal news, job openings, photos, articles and/or advertisements to [office@csne.net](mailto:office@csne.net) by **October 1st**.

# Choose The BEST... & Build More Sales.

Get higher margins and more dollars on your bottom line!



The National Association of College Stores Reports that insignia products deliver higher average margins than any other product—and no other insignia product matches the quality of a piece from W.A. Mitchell of Maine.

Our heirloom quality furniture is made by hand in the finest old-world tradition using solid wood joinery. Uncommon touches such as handcut mortise and tenon joints and precision hardwood pegging go into creating furniture your customers will treasure for a lifetime. These unique pieces are then carefully engraved with your school's insignia. For more information on how these exceptional products can help you boost your insignia sales program, call us today at **1-877-499-8163**.

- **BOOST** Your In-Store Merchandising
- **OFFER** Your Customers Quality
- **BUILD** Your Insignia Product Sales

We offer a full line of distinctive handmade armchairs, office chairs and rockers. Please visit [www.WAMitchell.com](http://www.WAMitchell.com) or call us toll free at **1-877-499-8163**.

**W.A. Mitchell** Fine Furniture



## Please Join Us For CSNE's Fall Programs on Quality Customer Service!

Quality customer service doesn't just happen. It takes some forethought and preparation. During this workshop we'll enjoy our own "attitude adjustment hour" where participants will use the face of a clock to discover 12 simple ways to become a hero to their customers. We'll create a customer service matrix and take a serious look at who the customer really is and how to meet their needs, exceed their expectations - and still have fun in the process!

Includes:

- Customized customer service matrix (Disney style)
- The customer is NOT always right! Really!
- The 93% solution
- Listening techniques to avoid or diffuse problems
- What to say - what not to say
- Success in seven critical seconds
- Saying "no" successfully
- 10 ways to be a hero to your customer
- and more . . .



Both programs will be presented by the always fun and highly rated **Melody Templeton**

Also included is a quick, interactive personality test that allows the participants to discover some of the challenges and opportunities in dealing with a variety of behavior traits. In this eye opening exercise, the group can discover some "ah ha" moments regarding how to approach store customers and some ways to avoid or diffuse a personality clash with a customer.

Participants can expect a very interactive learning experience that provides customer service tips they can implement immediately. The program is designed for both managers and employees at all levels.

Expect an engaging, thought provoking and interactive session. Come prepared to learn, to play and to laugh!

### **Sign me up!**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Title: \_\_\_\_\_

School & Store or Company: \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Fax: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Check one:

- I will attend the **October 9th** presentation at the **University of Maine** in Orono, ME
- I will attend the **October 10th** presentation at **Assumption College** in Worcester, MA

Early Registration Fee: \$25 per person for members, \$50 for nonmembers. (After September 30, add \$10)

Checks payable to **Campus Stores of New England** and mailed to: 60 Hornbeam Hill Rd; Chelmsford, MA 01824  
or pay by credit card and fax to: 978 250-1117

MasterCard or Visa #: \_\_\_\_\_ Exp. Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

I authorize CSNE to charge my card for the registration fee for this program

- Check here if you have a disability and may require accommodations to fully participate
- Check here if you do not want your information published on the attendance list

Dietary Restrictions: \_\_\_\_\_

# 2007 CSNE & CSA-NYS Joint Meeting & Trade Show Photo Gallery



Our winning Spelling Bee team of **Pauline Connors, Eric Browning, Peg Mead and Dirk Fecho**



The Murder Mystery Banquet coordinated by **Kerri Wilson** was a lot of fun for everyone



**Joe Falcone** presenting "What is Fair Trade?"



NY Times Best-selling Author, **Elizabeth Berg**



National Book Award Nominee, **Dana Spiotta**



Trade Show



**Ellen Broughton and Kevin Stevens** at the Trade Show

## Joint Meeting Photos Continued.....



The Joint Meeting & Trade Show was chaired by **Therese Garufi** of the Red Dragon Bookstore at SUNY Oneonta



Power Sleep expert, **Dr. James Maas**, was the highest rated speaker—pictured here with **Darrin Lyons** signing copies of his book



CSNE's Past President, **Elsworth Gottlieb** looks dapper as always with his gift from the CSNE board.

## Thank You!

**The 2007 Joint Meeting & Trade Show Committee is Grateful to the following companies for their support**

### PLATINUM SPONSOR:



**Nebraska  
Book Company**

### SILVER SPONSORS:



### BRONZE SPONSORS:

**BUDGETEXT CORPORATION**

**THOMSON LEARNING**

### IN-KIND DONATIONS:

**BOOKBAGS INC — FOLDERS**

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**FOUR POINT PRODUCTS — BINDERS**

**EUROS — T-SHIRTS**

**FRAMING SUCCESS — FRAMES**

**NEIL ENTERPRISES — PENS**

**SPIRIT PRODUCTS — LANYARDS**

## Straight to Prison

*By: Ron Rosenberg*

Sometimes we assume that there are facts and information that our customers know about, so there's no point in telling them again. But this is not always the case, and can be a fatal error when trying to pursue new customers.

Not too long ago, we saw the sentencing of Martha Stewart to five months in prison for lying to securities investigators. In honor of this, our local "classic rock" radio station decided to have a special theme event. They called it the "Straight to Prison" weekend and every song they played was from a band where at least one member had spent time in jail. This was interesting, I thought, and I kept my radio tuned in for a bit to see if I could guess which person from the group was the guilty party.

First came "LA Woman" by The Doors. And sure enough, Jim Morrison, the group's lead singer, had been arrested and jailed numerous times for public indecency. "Band on the Run" by Paul McCartney was next, and Sir Paul was jailed for nine days in Japan for marijuana possession in 1980. "Gimme Shelter" by the Rolling Stones was up next. No problem here, just take your pick, since most of the band members had spent time in jail at one time or another.

And as I continued to listen to the string of songs that followed, I was struck by an interesting thought: the play list for this special "Straight to Prison" weekend was not much different from any other day.

In other words, it seems that someone from almost every single classic rock group had been arrested at some point in time. It's just that no one had ever taken the effort to point that out in such a direct way.

The same thing applies when you market to potential customers. There may be benefits of your products and services that you don't specifically point out to potential customers because they don't seem unique (be sure they don't involve jail time). Unfortunately, these benefits won't really make a difference to your customers if they're not even aware of them.

Do you have an on-time guarantee? Tell them! Will you special order an item? Tell them! Do the members of your team have special training or professional designations? Tell them.

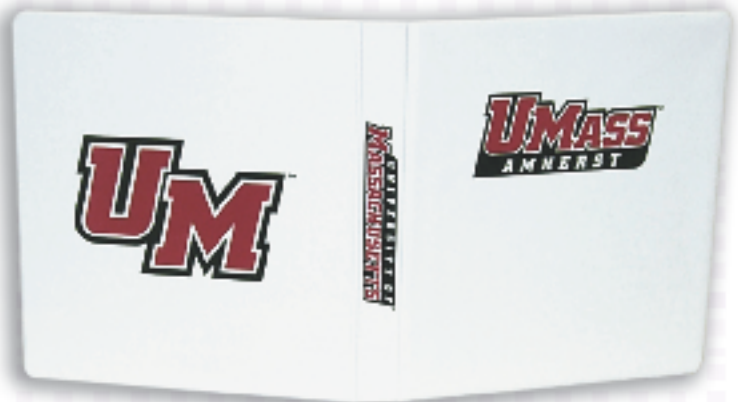
One sure way to lose business is to have your product or service perceived as a commodity - a common item that can be found anywhere and is to be selected based solely on price. Conversely, one of the keys to dominating a market is to distinguish what you do and how you do it in a way that is so unique that it's in its own special category with only one option: your company.



So the next time you communicate with your customers or prospects, make sure they know everything you can do for them, no matter how obvious it may seem. You may not make it on the radio, but you'll be a "star" in your own right.

*Ron Rosenberg teaches people how to get the service they deserve and shows companies how to provide it. Visit [www.drive-you-nuts.com](http://www.drive-you-nuts.com) to receive our free e-mail newsletter, In A NutShell. © 2004 QualityTalk. All Rights Reserved.*

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## Prep School Get Together A Success!



Many thanks to **Christine Robinson**, Manager of **The Governor's Academy Bookstore** and **Louisa Jones**, Manager of the **Pomfret School Store**, for all their work on this year's Prep School Get Together! The event was held on June 14th at The Governor's Academy in Byfield, MA.

By all reports, it was another successful get together with comments from attendees including:

*"What a wonderful meeting. Linda and I walked away with so many positive ideas for our "new" book venture!! Thank you all so much for letting me pick your brains!"*

*"Thank you Louisa! It was a very helpful event for me."*



CSNE looks forward to sponsoring this event next year. In the mean time, if you are a prep school or college store in need of answers—feel free to post your questions to the CSNE listserv! Many of our members find the listserv to be the most valuable benefit of membership! Send your posts to [office@csne.net](mailto:office@csne.net) Please be sure to include your contact information with your posts and remember too that pricing discussions are not allowed as they violate anti-trust laws.

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**Brooklyn, N.Y. 11237**

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 &  
 CSNE

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Picture Courtesy of Brooklyn Bridge Website Web Master: Gary Feventain

## Why Every Company Needs A “Sharon”

*By: Christine M. Bordonaro, PR Manager & Account Executive, Charles River Apparel*

What would happen to your company if your IT Manager left for vacation and never returned? How would you handle an unexpected termination of your Chief Operations Officer due to a serious indiscretion? Who would temporarily fill in for a Human Resources Manager during interviews for potential candidates? Is there such an employee who can do it all?

Charles River Apparel, a Boston-based manufacturer of performance outerwear, has the answer...Every company needs a “Sharon.” Sharon Hennessy joined Charles River Apparel, a Medford-based family business, over 23 years ago. She is the ideal employee for any organization and if you don’t have someone like her, you could be in trouble.

She can process and facilitate orders. She can supervise production and communicate with overseas factories. She can control all of the company’s financials, including payroll, accounts receivable and accounts payable. She can manage all operational and technological functions and train other employees on them as well. She can serve on the company’s Board of Directors as Secretary. She can educate employees on the company’s code of ethics, policies and procedures and advise them on which benefits are available. She is a major contributor in the organization’s computer upgrade and software conversions. She can be a great friend and co-worker.

Sharon began at Charles River Apparel as the owner’s Personal Assistant, then soon after became the company’s Office Manager & then the General Manager. Today she is Charles River Apparel’s Accounting and Licensing Manager, by title, but often times plays the role of a Human Resources Manager, Operation Manager and IT Manager.

So, now the question is how do you find a “Sharon?” First, look at your current employees. Is there anyone who has been working with you for a long time, someone whom you trust and confide in? Is he or she familiar with the basic foundation and structure of the company? Does he or she truly understand the business’s practices, policies & regulations? Can he or she perform any task requested? If you do not have an employee like this, start looking.

It’s important to keep in mind the following qualities when hiring a new employee to act as a “Sharon:” First, will they make a long-time commitment to the organization? Was he or she at their previous job for over 3 years? Next, does it seem like the candidate has multitasking abilities? Can he or she wear multiple hats in different departments? Finally, will the individual be loyal and responsible to not only your business but also to other employees? These qualities will be obvious during several interviews as well as after speaking to his/her references. Don’t be afraid to ask for additional references in order to get to know your candidate better.

It really all comes down to finding the right employee who can do it all! You never know when you are going to need someone to “fill in.” When the Lipsett Family hired Sharon Hennessey over 2 decades ago, they never imagined that she would play so many roles in helping the company to grow. Charles River Apparel grew to be a \$35 Million company throughout the years, and the family often reminisces that without her, it probably wouldn’t have happened. Barry Lipsett, President and CEO of the company, noted that Sharon is a “utility infielder...” you can count on her for anything and no job is too big or too small. Barry rewarded her for her dedication to Charles River Apparel and recently sent her & her husband on an all expense paid vacation to Atlantis Resort in the Bahamas.

So next time you are evaluating your employees or hiring someone new, make sure you look for “Sharon qualities. You never know when you are going to need someone to assist you when the going gets tough. Having a “Sharon” is a blessing... you should consider that today.

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## Reception @ CAMEX

A good time was had by the members of CSNE, CSA-NYS and MACS at our Joint Reception at CAMEX in Orlando this past March. Over 200 members attended and enjoyed good food and great company in a filled to capacity room at the Orange County Convention Center! It was great to see so many friendly faces including some of our retired members—**Bob** and **Helen Ware!**



# Registration is now open for technology training!

Register today on the **Service Plus** website for technology product trainings especially designed for college stores! We look forward to teaching you more about the value these products bring to your students.



**ThomsonNOW** is an online teaching and learning resource that give students more control in less time and delivers the results they want—NOW.



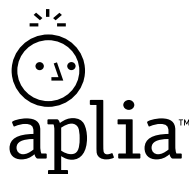
Transform any lecture into a truly interactive student experience with **JoinIn™ on TurningPoint®** from Thomson Higher Education—the easy-to-use Microsoft® PowerPoint®-based student response “clicker” system.



Developed by the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, **OWL** is the most effective and widely used web-based homework and assessment program in chemistry. Available for Liberal Arts Chemistry, Intro/Prep Chemistry, General Chemistry, Organic Chemistry, and GOB Allied Health Chemistry.



**WebAssign** is an online, web-based homework and assessment system developed by North Carolina State University. Available with many Thomson physics and mathematics titles, Enhanced WebAssign features end-of-chapter problems, worked examples, and quick quizzes.



**Aplia** is a comprehensive online homework system for the economics discipline. Homework is automatically graded and recorded for the professor. Interactive problem sets, analyses, tutorials, experiments, and critical thinking exercises give students the hands-on application they need to succeed in the course.

Sincerely,

*Mickey Lane*

Mickey Lane  
Marketing Manager, Sell-through/TLC  
Thomson Learning

## Taking Back Your Personal Life

*By: Jim Carroll*

Remember the FiloFax? It was the hottest workplace accessory back in the '80s - the paper-based calendar, notebook, address book and to-do list was the "personal organizer" that people swore by. So much so, that the company boasted a huge share of the nearly \$1-billion worldwide market for desktop organizers. But then along came personal computer organizer software, closely followed by Palm Pilots, cell phones with built-in calendar software, RIM pagers... and with these new technologies, came the popularity of e-mail, the Internet, voicemail, instant messaging and e-mail paging. Suddenly, it seemed, we had a lot more tools to organize our working life and a lot more connectivity as well.

FiloFax ended up being bought out by its competitor DayRunner in the late 1990s for less than \$85-million US and today, while you can still buy a FiloFax, it seems like nothing more than a quaint reminder of a decade that featured new wave music, spiked hair, and "personal time" that was actually personal. What a difference we've seen in the workplace as a result of the change from paper to technology! One of the most significant impacts is that the new way of doing things has led to a significant reduction in the fine line between "work time" and "personal time."

Quite clearly, back in the "good old days" of the FiloFax, we had time of our own. When we left the office at the end of the day, it was rare for us to be contacted by our fellow employees or clients. Sure, we might have taken some work with us on occasion, but we weren't faced with constant interruptions from the office and co-workers. We didn't scramble at 10 p.m. to read our latest business message, or to contact someone with a great idea we just had.

Today, in the wired world, people are lugging around with them laptops, cell phones, pagers, and email pagers. They're taking calls at all hours of the day, checking their e-mail on a constant basis, constantly calling in to their voicemail, and are taking their work with them wherever they go. Maybe the first signs of the reduction of our personal life were evident when cell phone companies began boasting that they were improving their network coverage in "cottage country" and other recreational areas.

All of this makes many people wonder if things have gone too far. It's certainly an issue that's a hot topic in the world of human resources. Examine the brochure for any HR conference, and you'll find that there's a discussion of the idea of "work/life balance" on the agenda. These people are at the vanguard of a growing perception that perhaps we need to work harder to ensure that people can get their valuable personal time back.

There is no doubt that people are adopting technology with a vengeance. In North America, there are now over 100 million cell phones - and an additional 46,000 people sign up for cell phone plans each and every day. On the Internet, people are sending about 10 billion e-mail messages every day, a figure that is expected to grow to 35 billion in a few short years. Our usage of the Web has come to rival the time we spend in front of the TV.

While much of this technology is referred to as "time-saver" technology, studies show that most of us feel like our personal time is being stolen from us. A survey by IPSOS-Reid found that 59% of people check their office voicemail after their work day is finished, 30% accept work related faxes at home, and 29% keep their cell phones on so that they can be reached at home. Mix into this, the number of times we might sneak into our e-mail to see what might be waiting for us there, and you've got a lot of work going on during personal time.

How bad is it? Perhaps the most telling statistic comes from a recent survey by Wirthlin Worldwide, which indicated that 39% of those polled said they would answer a cell phone call in the bathroom.

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It's time that everyone thinks about the need to find a proper degree of balance between how much they work, and how much time they devote to the rest of their life. What should you do if things have gone overboard with your technology- plugged-in-life? First, question the "buzz" that suggests that you need to be plugged in all time. Over the last few years, the mantra has emerged with the so-called "fast economy" that we need to "work fast, work faster, work 24/7."

Is this really necessary? Maybe not - step back and assess your situation. You can best do this by assessing your values. To achieve real balance in your working life, you've got to rethink the fundamental values which motivate you: is it money and career success that is your overriding goal, or is it something else? How important is your family compared to your job? How important is that vacation you've been thinking about? Perhaps a fundamental re-assessment of your own values will help you determine how to achieve a better balance between work and life in the digital age - because it will help you to decide whether to unplug a bit during your personal time.

If you feel that other things in life are more important to you than your job, it becomes an easy matter of achieving balance, even in a world in which technology can link you to your job all the time. And make sure you create some personal space. Take the time to create technology-free zones in your home, your office and in your life. You need to establish several areas of digital-free life – areas and times in your life when you will truly be unplugged.

Bottom line? Learn to ignore. Turn things off! Go without sometimes! Successful people are plugged in, but they know when to tune out and unplug - take the time to do the same. If you are headed on vacation, do you really want your cell phone or pager? Assess the necessity of this with every family vacation you set out for.

Should you share your cell phone number with everyone, or restrict it to just a few? Think about the consequences. You should also be frank and forthright with your co-workers and boss about your digital boundaries. There are far too many expectations in the workplace today that you should be reachable all the time, from anywhere. That's fine. In fact, that's fantastic for during the business day. There's no better way to provide optimum customer service by having instant connectivity especially if you are a busy road warrior. It's the best way to keep on top of all your client's accounts.

But if you want some down time, if you truly want some down time, pick a right time for it and make sure that people understand you are going to have it.

Of course, this calls for a complete cultural shift within many organizations. If you are a senior executive, then you should take some time to learn the business case of balance, and encourage the organization to think about the issue at a corporate level. The fact is, there are many studies and reports that indicate that individuals who better manage their time, and learn to divorce their personal time from their work time, reduce their stress, improve their health, and end up living a happier and more enriching life. The bottom line is that many organizations need to question their current corporate culture when it comes to their digital values. It shouldn't be up to an employee to advise co-workers that there are times that they can't be reached!

*Jim Carroll, an author, keynote speaker and columnist, lives in a home that features 18 personal computers, yet he feels gloriously unconnected much of the time. He learned how to draw a dividing line between his digital work world and his unplugged personal time one Saturday morning while reading e-mail on his Internet cell phone and ignoring his 6 and 8-year-old sons. At that point, he got rid of the device, and gave them permission to keep him away from technology during his "off time." You can learn more about him at [www.jimcarroll.com](http://www.jimcarroll.com). To provide feedback to the author, please contact Jim at [jcarroll@jimcarroll.com](mailto:jcarroll@jimcarroll.com).*