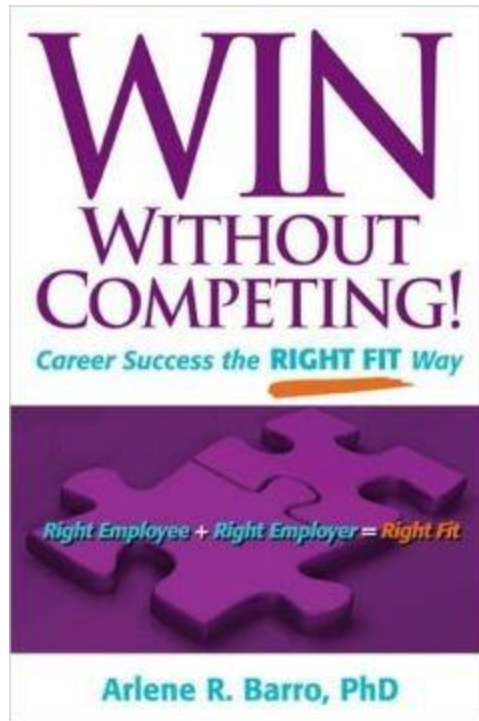


Conquering Stress! With Dr. Arlene— Work Causes Stress



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By Dr. Arlene Barro

More than 30 million employees walk out of work every year. Suddenly, they are unemployed. They blame their “bad bosses” for causing their walkout. Is that the real reason? No! It is all about stress management. The stress is managing them. They believe if they leave their jobs, the stress will magically disappear. Not necessarily so. Remember, they are now unemployed making it more difficult to be hired.

Some employers tell executive search firms that they do not want to meet unemployed candidates. Staying employed benefits the employee.

The Wrong Fit: Fix It Or Flee

I became profoundly aware of the significance and impact of work stress when a national association of MBAs invited me to speak about my Right Fit Method. The title of my presentation was “The Wrong Fit: Fix It or Flee?” They had to turn people away from my event! Why? I quickly found out. Every person who attended the event had work-related stress. Some had been hospitalized and returned to work. Others did not. Every attendee wanted solutions. I posed two questions:

1. When you accepted the position did you believe the job was the Right Fit?

They responded honestly. Some believed that it was The Right Fit. Others knew that they could have issues which they did. As we talked further, I found out that no one had taken the Right Fit Job. They missed red flags indicating danger including reorganization due to company acquisition. It is critical to thoroughly evaluate a company's financial situation, culture, and management. Taking a new job is like getting married. Learn about the negatives before, not after the marriage.

2. Did you leave your job because of stress without having another job?

About one-third of the group had left their jobs because of their stress-related health issues. The others were miserable trying to figure out what to do. They were ready to learn my Right Fit Method.

Fixing the Fit

In almost every job the fit has to be fixed, even if the candidate selected the Right Fit. Nothing is static. Changes occur all the time. Employees must reduce the risk of a Right Fit turning into a Wrong Fit. I have created strategies to do that which I have discussed in previous columns. Depending on the situation, these strategies can alleviate employee stress and allow enough time to search for a new position, if necessary. When I tell my clients that they must start looking for a new job, I can foresee that firing will occur within a year. It is like having terminal cancer. The difference is that the employee can stop the cancer, if they act in a timely fashion. Those who delay experience increased stress and are ultimately fired. The key is future-casting your fate and planning ahead.

Making Erroneous Assumptions

Employees make three perilous erroneous assumptions.

- 1. Employers know what I do and what I have achieved.* They do not know unless you tell them verbally or in writing.
- 2. I will be promoted without asking for a promotion.* Not necessarily. You have to speak up or they could assume you like the status quo.
- 3. I can trust my associates and share my thoughts about the employer.* They are not your parents.

Avoid these perilous erroneous assumptions to reduce the risk of firing.

Questions about work causing stress? Email drbarro@barroglobal.com Responses could appear in her next column.

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