

EXPRESSIONS

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PEACE

Wars happen when intolerance reaches epic proportions, when the reasons for war become greater than the sanctity of peace. Wars happen when we fail to realise the value of being alive. World leaders try to bring peace, but it is not an issue of institutions. It is human beings who start wars. Before a war begins outside, it starts inside. The war on the inside is more dangerous because it is a fire that may never be put out.

Wars are being fought because peace is not being found within, because it is not being allowed to unfold. We are all searching for something; we may call it success, peace, love, or tranquility. It is the same thing. What we are looking for has many names because we do not know what we need. To find what we need, we look around us. To know where to find what we are looking for, we first need to ask ourselves where we can find it. Have we considered looking within?

Living is not an easy task, especially if we want the best of it. We have to mine for it. Mining is not easy. We have to take out what we need and leave the rest. If we want to mine for peace, then we have to seek what is precious and discard what is not. The thing that we are searching for is not outside of us. It is within us. It always has been and always will be. Contentment feels good, and it is not an accident. It is not an accident that peace feels good. Peace is already here, and it resides in the hearts of all human beings.

Life is a journey. We are passengers in a train called life, and we are alive in the moment called now. The journey of life is so beautiful that it needs no destination. On this journey, we have been given a compass. The compass is the thirst to be fulfilled. The true journey of life begins the day we begin to seek to quench our thirst.

This quest is the most noble one. For many centuries, a voice has been calling out: "What you are looking for is within you. Your truth is within you, your peace is within you, your joy is within you." In our hearts, peace is like a seed waiting in the desert to grow, to blossom. When we allow this seed to blossom inside, then peace is possible outside. We have to give peace a chance.

Will we give peace a chance?

Maharaji

Do not judge those who try and fail, judge those who fail to try.

International Gold Star Award for Quality

ASTRAL CONSULTING LIMITED, INDIA
 Awarded the International Star Quality Award Paris 2006

P R E S S R E L E A S E

PARIS 2006



Business Initiative Directions

Building better business reputation worldwide



International Award in Recognition of Commitment to Quality, Leadership, Technology and Innovation

BID, Paris, April 3, 2006

In Paris, at the International Quality Convention held at the Palais de Congrès on April 3rd, Mr. Srivatsan Coimbatore Natarajan, Director, and Mrs. Gita Srivatsan, Consultant accepted the International Star Award for Quality based on the principles of the QC100 model of quality management, on behalf of their company.

ASTRAL CONSULTING Ltd. was presented with the International Star Award for Quality in Paris for its outstanding achievement in business excellence. Coinciding with India's economic boom, Astral Consulting, headquartered at Coimbatore, headed by Mr. C.N. Srivatsan, a qualified Audit and Management professional, has grown exponentially. Astral's expertise in various areas of management and internal audit has enabled it to establish 7 branches across India. Team Astral comprises a core group of over 100 qualified experts with the privilege of working with a varied client portfolio. Some of the areas that have benefited from its proactive solutions include: Agriculture & Plantations, Automobile, Banks, Educational Institutions, Engineering, Export Houses, FMCG, Granite, Hospitals, Paints, Pumps & Motors, Service Industry, Software Houses, Sugar, Textile and Trading.

The event was presided by

Jose E. Prieto, President and CEO of Business Initiative Directions, along with outstanding personalities from the business world and the diplomatic corps in Paris.

The purpose of the 10th International Star Convention Paris 2006 is to recognize the commitment to quality of awarded companies whose activities cover the top areas of industrial production and services.

Among the outstanding companies at this year's ceremony were:



KING FAHD INDUSTRIAL SAUDI SEA PORTS AUTHORITY (Saudi Arabia) As Saudi Arabia is the world's main oil exporter, the country implemented the Ports Authority in 1976 to ensure

the most efficient operation of its seaports. Since then, it has realized many achievements in cost reduction, unification of the port system, and lessened congestion of its ports. The Ports Authority oversees 95% of all Saudi imports and exports, and has increased productivity to from 489 tons/berth to 1550 tons/berth.



THE HOUSING BANK FOR TRADE AND FINANCE (Jordan) Using Total Quality Management as its guide, The Housing Bank offers strategic financial planning and management to Jordan's citizens, particularly those in low income groups. Established in 1973 as a housing finance specialist, the company has grown into a full bank, becoming Jordan's lender in capital (\$141 million USD), shareholder equity (\$394

billionUSD), and geographic expansion.

TAAG - LINHAS AEREAS DE ANGOLA (Angola) Established in 1980, TAAG Airlines is a public company that seeks to connect Angola to the rest of the world with quality-driven top speed and efficiency, a skilled staff and outstanding customer service.

DIAGNOFIRM MEDICAL LABORATORY (Botswana)

Founded in 1990, DML was the first private clinical laboratory in Botswana to computerize its services, including online test results, Pro-BNP and the first Real Time PCR instrument in the country. DML eliminates the need to cross borders for medical tests through its groundbreaking computerized networks.



D. MASOUTIS S.A. (Greece) In the past 30 years, the company has expanded to the leading grocer in Northern Greece and one of the top 5 in the country, including 153 retail and 16 wholesale shops, and by offering the latest technological conveniences to the consumer and promoting Greek products.



HINDUSTAN CARGO LTD. (India) Established in 1994, Hindustan Cargo is a leading provider of specialized logistics solutions in air and sea freight services, with a global network covering all continents. A subsidiary of Thomas Cook India Ltd., founded in 1881.



Mr. Srivatsan Coimbatore Natarajan, Director, and Mrs. Gita Srivatsan, Consultant of Astral Consulting Ltd., from India, receiving the International Star Award for Quality at the B.I.D. Convention in Paris.

Quality begins on the inside... and then works its way out.



International Gold Star Award for Quality

ASTRAL CONSULTING BAGS AWARD

Businessline, April 18, 2006



Business Initiative Directions (BID), has conferred the 'International Gold Star' award for 'quality' on Astral Consulting Ltd. The award was presented at the International Star Quality Convention, Paris, early this month. The award is based on a number of criteria such as customer satisfaction, communication strategies, benchmarking, information and data analysis, leadership, planning and decision-making, human resources, financial outcome and processes and production. Astral Consulting offers internal audit services, management advisory and information system and assurance service.

BID carries out continuous polls among companies who vote for the best companies. The International Business Initiative Directions awards are presented on the basis of meeting the criteria of the QC100 TQM (Total Quality Management), the contents of which serve as guidelines to successfully implement a TQM program in companies are:

- A quality-driven organization
- Job satisfaction
- System efficiency
- Concentration on the most profitable areas of business
- A customer-minded approach
- Technological renewal
- Leadership in society

The BID QC100 TQM allows company managers to consolidate and strengthen their position on the market.

The International Star Award for quality is a great recognition, but what pushes us towards such achievements is our clients' appreciation and well wishes. These are indeed the moments to cherish. And it makes us feel exhilarated to share some of their sentiments.

Mr. Amitabha Mukhopadhyay, CFO Thermax Ltd., Pune. Congratulations on being awarded the "International Star for Quality".

During my close interaction with Astral I have always felt the complete commitment towards customer satisfaction displayed by all the staffs of Astral. You have been successful in creating an organization which is devoted to the concept of "Excellence". We are all happy on this moment of recognition. Let the journey continue.

Mrs. Vanitha Mohan, Executive Director, PRICOL, Coimbatore

Hearty congratulations to both of you and your team for the great honour! With QUALITY being the buzzword in today's business arena, it comes as no surprise that you have been awarded the 'International Star for Quality' for your total commitment and dedication to whatever you do.

We are the sure that this honour that you have received will be the forerunner for many more laurels that are sure to come your way in the years to come. I pray to God Almighty to give you good health, strength and guidance in your mission. God bless!

Sri S.V. Balasubramaniam, Chairman & Managing Director, Bannari Amman Sugars Ltd., Coimbatore.

My hearty Congratulations to you and I wish that you attain many more such laurels in the years to come.

Mr. Harjeet Singh, Executive Director, Elgi Equipments Ltd, Coimbatore

Congratulations from all of us here at ELGI. Well done and keep it up. It is a pleasure to know that we are associated with an advanced looking world class organization like ASTRAL. All the best for the future.

Mr. Sudit Parekh, Partner, Sudit K Parekh & Co., Chartered Accountants, Mumbai

Heartiest congratulations for the award for the International award for "Excellence in Service". We all are so proud of you and your team. It's an apt title 'A moment to cherish'. Lets all cherish this moment and celebrate. Many more such moments to come.

Dr. R.V. Ramani, Managing Trustee, Sri Kanchi Kamakoti Medical Trust, Coimbatore

Hearty Congratulations to both of you and everyone at Astral. Your commitment, clarity of approach, conviction, perfectionism and farsightedness all put together have culminated in this deserving recognition.

Knowing you and your team, it doesn't surprise me. On the other hand I am sure it is the beginning of many more laurels. All of us at Sankara are proud to have associated with Astral. Whatever systems have been developed here at Sankara, can be traced to Astral's inputs and participation. Sankara extends its hearty felicitations to Astral.

The only thing in life achieved without effort is failure

Management Advisory Services

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS (KPI)

How an organization defines and measures progress toward its goals

Key Performance Indicators, also known as KPI or Key Success Indicators (KSI), help an organization define and measure progress toward organizational goals.

Once an organization has analyzed its mission, identified all its stakeholders, and defined its goals, it needs a way to measure progress toward those goals. Key Performance Indicators are those measurements.

What Are Key Performance Indicators (KPI)

Key Performance Indicators are quantifiable measurements, agreed to beforehand, that reflect the critical success factors of an organization. They will differ depending on the organization.

- A business may have the percentage of its income that comes from repeat customers as its KPI
- A school may focus its Key Performance Indicators on graduation rates of its students.
- A Customer Service Department may have percentage of customer calls answered in the first minute.
- A social service organization might have number of clients assisted during the year.

Whatever Key Performance Indicators are selected, they must reflect the organization's goals, they must be key to its success, and most important, they must be quantifiable (measurable). Key Performance Indicators usually are long-term considerations. The definition of what they are and how they are measured do not change often. The goals for a particular Key Performance Indicator may change as the organization's goals change, or as it gets closer to achieving a goal.

Key Performance Indicators Reflect The Organizational Goals

An organization that has as one of its goals 'to be the most profitable company in our industry' will have Key Performance Indicators that measure profit and related fiscal measures. 'Pre-tax Profit' and 'Shareholder Equity' will be among them. However, 'Percent of Profit Contributed to Community Causes' probably will not be one of its Key Performance Indicators. On the other hand, a school is not concerned with making a profit, so its Key Performance Indicators will be different. KPIs like 'Graduation Rate' and 'Success In Finding Employment After Graduation', accurately reflect the schools mission and goals.

Key Performance Indicators Must Be Quantifiable

If a Key Performance Indicator is going to be of any value, there must be a way to accurately define and measure it.

'Generate More Repeat Customers' is useless as a KPI without some way to distinguish between new and repeat customers. 'Be The Most Popular Company' won't work as a KPI because there is no way to measure the company's popularity or compare it to others.

It is also important to define the Key Performance Indicators and stay with the same definition from year to year. For a KPI of 'Increase Sales', you need to address considerations like whether to measure by units sold or by currency value of sales. Will returns be deducted from sales in the month of the sale or the month of the return? Will sales be recorded for the KPI at list price or at the actual sales price?

You also need to set targets for each Key Performance Indicator. A company with a goal 'To be the employer of choice' might include a KPI of 'Turnover Rate'. After the Key Performance Indicator has been defined as 'the number of voluntary resignations and terminations for performance, divided by the total number of employees at the beginning of the period' and a way to measure it has been set up by collecting the information in a Human Resources Information System (HRIS), the target has to be established. 'Reduce turnover by five percent per year' is a clear target that everyone will understand and be able to take specific action to accomplish.

Key Performance Indicators Must be Key To Organizational Success

Many things are measurable. That does not make them key to the organization's success. In selecting Key Performance Indicators, it is critical to limit them to those factors that are essential to the organization reaching its goals. It is also important to keep the number of Key Performance Indicators small just to keep everyone's attention focused on achieving the same KPIs.

That is not to say, for instance, that a company will have only three or four total KPIs. Rather there will be three or four Key Performance Indicators for the company and all the units within it will have three, four, or five KPIs that support the overall company goals which can be 'rolled up' into the main KPIs.

If a company's Key Performance Indicator is 'Increased Customer Satisfaction', that KPI will be focused differently in different departments.

The Manufacturing Department may have a KPI of 'Number of Units Rejected by Quality Inspection', while the Sales Department has a KPI of 'Time in minutes, a Customer is 'On Hold' before a sales rep answers'. Only if every department meets its respective KPI will the company KPI be achieved.

"People are lonely because they build walls instead of bridges." ...



Management Advisory Services

What Does One Do With Key Performance Indicators?

Once you have good Key Performance Indicators defined, ones that reflect your organization's goals, ones that you can measure, what do you do with them?

You use Key Performance Indicators as a performance management tool, of course. KPIs give everyone in the organization a clear picture of what is important, of what they need to make it happen. You use that to manage performance. You make sure that everything the people in your organization do is focused on meeting or exceeding those Key Performance Indicators.

You also use the KPIs as a carrot. Post the KPIs everywhere: in the lunch room, on the walls of every conference room, on the company intranet, even on the company web site for some of

them. Show what the target for each KPI is and show the progress toward that target for each of them. People will be motivated to reach those KPI targets. Project a cheer group that has done exceedingly well in lines of KPI and what this achievement has meant to them personally. That way, the organisation grows, the people grow, and the organisation grows .. and so it goes, with good, defined KPIs.

We at Astral have been conducting regular Performance Review Meetings with KPIs as the guiding tool. Remarkable improvements have been observed not only in increased performance but also in eliminating non-value added processes. Every activity carried out is linked to the KPI. The entire organisation is tuned on to the KPIs and every resource committed to achievement of enterprise goals.



VALUE ENGINEERING

What Is Value Engineering?

Value Engineering is a systematic method to improve the "Value" of goods and services by using an examination of Function. Value, as defined, is the ratio of Function to Cost. Value can therefore be increased by either improving the Function or reducing the cost. It is a primary tenet of Value Engineering that quality not be reduced as a consequence of pursuing Value improvements.

Value Engineering uses intuitive logic (a unique "how" - "why" questioning technique) and the analysis of function to identify relationships that increase Value. It is considered a quantitative method similar to the Scientific Method, which focuses on Hypothesis - Conclusion to test relationships, and Operations Research, which uses model building to identify predictive relationships. Value Engineering is also referred to as "Value Methodology".

The Origins of Value Engineering

Value engineering began at General Electric Co. during World War II. Because of the war, there were shortages of skilled labour, raw materials, and component parts.

Lawrence Miles and Harry Erlicher at G.E. looked for acceptable substitutes. They noticed that these substitutions often reduced costs, improved the product, or both. What started out as an accident of necessity was turned into a systematic process. They called their technique "value analysis".

As others adopted the technique, the name gradually changed to Value Engineering. Va / Ve has been rehashed over the years into various other programs like lean, tqm and business process re-engineering.

The Job Plan

Value Engineering is often done by systematically following a multi-stage Job Plan. Larry Miles' original system was a six-step procedure which he called the Value Analysis Job Plan. Others have varied the Job Plan to fit their constraints. Depending on the application, there may be four, five, six, or more stages. One modern version has the following four steps:

Information gathering (Includes Preparation & Analysis) -

This asks what the requirements are for the object. Function analysis, an important technique in value engineering, is usually done in this initial stage. It tries to determine what functions or performance characteristics are important. It asks questions like; What does the object do? What must it do? What should it do? What could it do? What must it not do?

Creation (Alternative generation): In this stage value engineers ask; What are the various alternative ways of meeting requirements? What else will perform the desired function?

Evaluation: In this stage all the alternatives are assessed by evaluating how well they meet the required functions and how great will the cost savings be.

Presentation (Includes Development & Follow-up) : In the final stage, the best alternative will be chosen and presented to the client for final decision.

Cost Optimization

Often Value engineering reduces costs by eliminating wasteful practices. This can be done in several areas:

The bad news is time flies. The good news is you're the pilot.



Management Advisory Services

Material substitutions : Unnecessarily expensive inputs can sometimes be replaced by less expensive ones that function just as well. If a product has a life span of ten years, then using a material that lasts thirty years is wasteful. In a perfectly value engineered product, every component of that product will function perfectly until the product is no longer useful, at which time all components will deteriorate.

Process efficiency and producibility : More efficient processes can be used and the product can be redesigned so that it is easier to produce. Reducing unnecessary parts, unnecessary precision, and unnecessary production operations can lower costs and increase manufacturability, reliability, and profits. Process engineering can be used to increase process efficiency.

Modularity : Subassemblies that are designed and developed once and reused in many slightly different products can reduce a project's engineering and design costs. For example, a typical tape-player has a precision injection-molded tape-deck compartment. This component can be produced, assembled and tested by an independent manufacturer and sold to numerous companies as a subassembly. The tooling and design expense for the tape deck is shared over many products that can look quite different.

Market driven product improvements: A product with more features than customers want is inefficient. Customers will be paying for features that they don't want to pay for. Value engineering can determine how to produce a product that exactly matches the wants of a major segment of the market. When a customer needs more features, these can be sold as options.

Energy efficiency: Value can be created by making a product or process more energy efficient for the user. This is particularly true in heating and air conditioning systems, transportation vehicles, industrial equipment, and other systems that use much energy.

The Benefits of Value Engineering (VE) can be summarised as follows:

- VE is a proactive result oriented methodology that "adds value" to products and services.
- VE provides high returns on investment.
- VE reduces capital and life cycle costs.
- VE provides a steep change rather than just an incremental change.
- VE teaches to do the "Right" job, TQM helps to do the job "Right".
- Provides reduction in actual expenditures below the projected level of costs.

Astral's Commitment to Society

Voluntary Services done at Siruthuli's Treepark

Last Friday, i.e., on 13th January 2006, a wonderful group of 64 auditors led by Mr.C.N.Srivatsan, Director of Astral Consultants visited our Treepark with the willingness to do any kind of tasks that might exist on our treepark. The group had checked in at our treepark little before 8:00 am and left the site by the noon after delivering about 250 valuable hours to the cause of "Green Kovai". I personally appreciate the team for their attitude towards social service.

Typically, auditing consultant's profession deals with computers, files, documents etc. But, on that day they were completely soiled while using all kinds of earth moving

equipments. Even though the crowd was huge, various groups were formed and identified with specific tasks. On the whole, it was like a planned orchestra with lot of parallel activities going around along with a perfect rhythm. On behalf of Siruthuli, let me thank once again through this e-mail and highly appreciate the team for their noble service.

Message from Mrs. Vanitha Mohan - Siruthuli

This novel initiative can also become part of our future plans whereby we can invite groups of school and college kids, service organisations, Industries, professionals bodies to come and do 'Kar Seva' for our tree park-this can also be extended to our tree planting activities also.

Astral in the field of

Business Process Engineering ★ Inventory Management ★ Cost Consultancy

You cannot step twice into the same river; for other waters are continually flowing in.



Internal Audit Services

INTERNAL AUDITORS' ROLE IN ENTERPRISE RISK MANAGEMENT (ERM)

To ensure that risks throughout the organization are addressed, many savvy businesses today implement enterprise risk management (ERM). COSO defines ERM as "a process, effected by an entity's board of directors, management, and other personnel, applied in strategy setting and across the enterprise, designed to identify potential events that may affect the entity, and manage risk to be within its risk appetite, to provide reasonable assurance regarding the achievement of entity objectives."

ERM is a structured and coordinated entity-wide governance approach to identify, quantify, respond to, and monitor the consequences of potential events. Implemented by management, ERM is evaluated by the internal auditors for effectiveness and efficiency. Other key activities that management should ensure are included in its ERM are reducing operational surprises and losses, identifying and managing multiple risks throughout the organization, seizing opportunities, and improving capital allocation.

Organizations should fully understand management's responsibility for risk management. Internal auditors should provide advice, and challenge or support management's decisions on risk, as opposed to making risk management decisions. The nature of the internal audit activity's responsibilities should be documented in the audit charter and approved by the audit committee.

Core Internal Audit Roles In Regard To ERM

- Giving assurance on risk management processes.
- Giving assurance that risks are correctly evaluated.
- Evaluating risk management processes.
- Evaluating the reporting of key risks.
- Reviewing the management of key risks.

Legitimate Internal Audit Roles With Safeguards

- Facilitating identification and evaluation of risks.
- Coaching management in responding to risks.
- Coordinating ERM activities.
- Consolidating the reporting on risks.
- Maintaining and developing the ERM framework.
- Championing establishment of ERM.
- Developing risk management strategy for board approval.

Roles Internal Auditing Should Not Undertake

- Setting the risk appetite.
- Imposing risk management processes.
- Managing assurance on risks.

HOW MODERN IS YOUR PURCHASING DEPARTMENT?

The purchasing function has changed dramatically over the last several years. And it continues to change and evolve almost daily. Here are 10 signs of a modern purchasing department...

1. The head of purchasing reports directly to the CEO of your company.
2. Your department is responsible for procurement in "non-traditional" spend areas such as healthcare benefits, fleet management, facilities and construction, temporary labour, and travel.
3. Purchasing is actively involved in senior management level, long-term strategic planning.
4. The purchasing staff is responsible for manually placing only a small percentage of your organization's purchase orders.
5. Logistics and inventory functions either fall under Purchasing on the organizational chart or are integrated into the work of purchasing staff.
6. Maverick buying is a thing of the past.
7. When dealing with large, frequently used suppliers, no paper is exchanged between the time that a need for a product or service is defined until the time that the supplier receives payment.
8. No major sourcing process is conducted without the use of a cross-functional team.
9. You are buying from global sources and measuring non-domestic spend as a percentage of total spend.
10. Your department has social responsibility goals and measurements in place.

If your Purchase department is close to this benchmark, good. If not, these 10 points could well be the direction your most important process has to take.



Astral Consulting Ltd

Our Work

can change the way

you work

Never look down on anybody unless you're helping him up.... The Reverend Jesse Jackson



Assurance Services

WHAT IS A TAX HAVEN

A tax haven is a legal jurisdiction such as a country or principality where the rate of taxation is lower than in surrounding areas. Tax havens are generally characterized by strong privacy protections, low tax rates, and highly reputable banks. They are traditionally amongst the most politically stable regions in the world.

To take full advantage of a tax haven, it may be necessary to live there. The French principality of Monaco, for example, only provides tax benefits to individuals who are legal residents. The tax benefits are so significant that a small industry has grown to establish residency for individuals who don't actually want to live in Monaco. Other examples of tax havens are Switzerland, where resident foreigners can negotiate their taxation level with local authorities, the Channel Islands, where there is no taxation on foreign income, and Gibraltar, where companies with no significant business interests in Gibraltar itself are charged a flat tax of approximately \$200.

Individuals hoping to benefit by moving assets to a tax haven must be aware of the potential legal ramifications. While banks in a tax haven may not report income to the client's domestic taxing authority, the client does have a legal obligation to report such income. This is especially true for citizens of the United States; while most countries base taxation on residency, the United States taxes solely on citizenship. No matter where an American may be living, all their income is, by law, taxable in the United States. Failure to report income earned outside the country may constitute tax evasion.

Corporations may take advantage of a tax haven by establishing their legal headquarters there. For example, many large US corporations locate their legal headquarters in Bermuda. In addition to tax advantages, this confers certain legal protections in the case of civil lawsuits. It may also allow a company to circumvent regulatory issues in the home country.

What is Offshore Bank account?

The term *offshore bank* is often used interchangeably with tax haven. While related concepts, they are not synonymous; an offshore bank is simply a bank located outside an individual's home country.

If the term 'offshore bank account' conjures up images of fugitive billionaires and organized crime bosses, be prepared for a reality check. Generally speaking, any bank account opened outside of one's native country can be considered an offshore bank account. There is usually not much difference in service or benefits between the bank on the corner and a bank located in the Cayman Islands. The appeal of an offshore

bank account is much more apparent during tax time, when assets and income must be reported to the Tax department or other government revenue agencies abroad.

Because the banking industry is perhaps 10% storage and 90% accounting, many smaller countries can offer offshore bank account services without a substantial investment of their own. Island nations such as the Cayman Islands or the Channel Islands can successfully compete with Switzerland or Belgium for offshore banking customers. Local laws can limit or eliminate the taxes placed on traditional bank accounts. This is why some companies and wealthier individuals prefer to open an offshore bank account in small sovereign states which allow account holders to remain virtually anonymous.

For many years, an offshore bank account was indeed a convenient way to hide profits from illegal activities or underreported business earnings. The United States' Internal Revenue Service (IRS) would have little knowledge of money deposited elsewhere. The offshore banks were not obligated to report the existence of these accounts, and the account holders could legally pay little to no taxes to the host country. In recent years, however, the rules governing an offshore bank account have become much stiffer. Any bank account containing over \$1,000 USD must be reported as income to the IRS, even if that bank account is in the Cayman Islands or Ireland.

Many people consider opening an offshore bank account for very legitimate financial reasons. Residents of a politically or economically unstable country may arrange for an offshore bank account in a more stable country. If the government should collapse financially, residents can still protect their money from a run on the national bank. Those who travel frequently to Europe or the Orient may benefit from an offshore bank account in England or Japan. The exchange rate between foreign currencies is often more favorable with 'local' accounts. With the advent of electronic banking, the holder of an offshore bank account can easily conduct routine transactions without traveling abroad.

There is still a stigma attached to an offshore bank account because of some gray-area financial dealings, but there is nothing illegal or unethical about opening one for legitimate reasons. Some foreign banks may require a substantial initial deposit or other restrictions, but the benefits of a lower tax obligation or higher interest rate usually outweigh these hurdles. Most accounts are protected by international banking insurers. Many foreign banks which offer offshore bank account services advertise on the internet and investment-oriented periodicals.

"There are many ways of going forward, but only one way of standing still." ... Franklin D. Roosevelt.



Information Systems Services

SAVE YOUR BRAIN, TURN OFF THE E-MAIL (NOTIFICATION)

In mid-2005 a survey commissioned by Hewlett-Packard found that the constant distraction of e-mail could cause a loss of mental processing power equivalent to losing 10 I.Q. points. The media ran with this data, publishing stories with frightening statistics such as the drop was two and a half times the decline caused by smoking marijuana.

Martin Wainwright, writing in The Guardian, noted: "Respondents' (of the survey) minds were all over the place as they faced new questions and challenges every time an e-mail dropped into their inbox. Productivity at work was damaged and the effect on staff, who could not resist trying to juggle new messages with existing work, was the equivalent, over a day, to the loss of a night's sleep... The most damage was done, by the almost complete lack of discipline in handling e-mails. There was a compulsion to reply to each new message, leading to constant changes of direction which inevitably tired and slowed down the brain."

The Problem Today

Most of us who work in offices need to have our e-mail on at all times. Very few e-mail programs are just for messaging. Our calendars, task lists and notes are usually chained to the program. If the e-mail program is not up, we are not getting reminded of meetings, we cannot see what else we need to do on our task lists; in short, our day can come to a screeching halt.

Imagine a typical day in your office. You are working on a very important presentation and you actually are looking forward to it, because your brain is full of inspiration about just the right way to phrase your bullet points, you have thought long and hard about the perfect graphics to gain attention and which charts are going to showcase your presentation so that everyone viewing it will recognize you as the business-genius you are. You take the phone off the hook, you shut the door to your office and you sit down at your PC in order to transfer all of your awesome ideas into PowerPoint.

You begin to get into your work. Then it happens! A little ding and an envelope appears in the corner of your screen to inform you that someone has sent you e-mail. You ignore it, and try to continue with your work. However it is still there, your eyes are drawn to the little envelope; it will only take a moment... You double click it. The message opens, you read the e-mail. Maybe it is a joke. You read it, have a good chuckle, respond quickly to the sender and then take a moment to also forward it to a few friends who would enjoy this "little" distraction. Back to work on your presentation.

Then it happens again! This time the e-mail is work related, so you stop what you are doing, dig up some information and respond immediately. You go back to your report. Another

e-mail, probably about the response you just sent, arrives. You read and respond. After this has happened several times in a row, you cannot remember what it was you wanted to say in your presentation. The wonderfully scripted bullet points, the charts arranged so perfectly in your mind are gone, you cannot even figure out what you were trying to write in the sentence that you left three times to answer the siren song of the "New Mail" icon. No one will ever recognize your genius. **You don't recognize your genius.**

Manage your E-mail. Don't let the E-mail manage you.

If you cannot turn off the e-mail, *turn off the notification*. Stop the little chime from ringing, put an end to little beckoning envelope. Then see how easy it is to manage your e-mail system. Work on that report and when you are ready for a break, or better yet, when you have finished your project, check your e-mail. Respond to it all at one time then move on to your next task. When that is complete you can check again. Keep this up for a few days and you will find you have developed a liberating new habit.

What an idea! How do I do it?

If you are hooked on Microsoft Outlook, which is the most common e-mail system used in businesses around the world today click on **Tools**, then select **Options**, then click on the **E-mail Options** button. Uncheck the **"Display a Notification Message When a New Mail Arrives"** checkbox. Next, click on the **Advanced E-Mail Options** button. Uncheck the **"Play a Sound"**, **"Briefly Change the mouse cursor"**, and **"Show an envelope icon in the system tray"** checkboxes. Keep clicking **OK** until you are back in your inbox.

Congratulations! You have just freed yourself from being managed by your e-mail!

If you use a different system, please look in the help file under the topic of "New Mail" or "Mail Notification"

This is great, but I need to see some E-mail immediately!

In a few cases some e-mail is so important that it does need to be seen and dealt with as quickly as possible. If this is the case, an e-mail rule can be set up to inform you of when you have received mail from this person.

To create a rule:

Click on **Actions**, then select **Rules Wizard**, click on **New**. Select **"Start from a blank rule"**. Highlight **"Check messages when they arrive"** Click **"Next"**. Click the checkbox for **"from people or distribution list"**. Double click on **"people or distribution list"** to bring up the address book. Select the name of the user that you want to be notified about when you receive e-mail from them. Click **"OK"**. You will then be

Fortune knocks but once, but misfortune has much more patience.

Information Systems Services

returned to the Rules Wizard Screen. Click **"Next"** to move to the next screen. Place a check in the **"notify me using a specific message"** checkbox. Double click on the **"a specific message"** link in the bottom window. The "Specify Message" box will appear where you can type your own custom message. Click **"OK"** when you are completed. Click **"Next"** when you have returned to the "Rules Wizard" to go to the "Exceptions Screen". Add any exceptions you wish in the same format as the other changes you have made. Then click **"Next"**. Finally, name your rule and make sure it is turned on. Click **"Finish"**.

You have now turned off all the distractions of e-mail without the fear of missing any from that critical someone. I recommend that you give very serious consideration to

whether or not you need to add rules for anybody. Is there any risk involved in not responding to an e-mail immediately? What would they do if you were in a meeting, on an errand or otherwise away from your PC? Definitely think about these issues before you allow anyone to be able to intrude on your newfound freedom.

The most important thing to remember is that you will not forget to check your mail. We are already well programmed. Despite the fact that the reminders are off, you will naturally gravitate back to your inbox several times a day.

The purpose of this article is to free you from the *urgent* distraction of e-mail so that you can be as productive as possible.

Article by Vince Lyons from the internet (edited)

* * * *

One Paragraph That Explains Life!

Arthur Ashe, the legendary Wimbledon player was dying of AIDS which he got due to infected blood he received during a heart surgery in 1983. From world over, he received letters from his fans, one of which conveyed: "Why does GOD have to select you for such a bad disease"?

To this Arthur Ashe replied: The world over, 5 crore children start playing tennis, 50 lakh learn to play tennis, 5 lakh learn professional tennis, 50,000 come to the circuit, 5000 reach the grand slam, 50 reach

Wimbledon, 4 to semi final, 2 to the finals, and 1 wins. When I was holding a cup I never asked GOD "Why me?". And today in pain I should not be asking GOD "Why me?"

Happiness keeps you Sweet, Trials keep you Strong, Sorrow keeps you Human, Failure keeps you Humble, Success keeps you Glowing, but only God keeps you Going....Keep Going

Inhouse Training

Month	Topic	Faculty
Jan '06	- Process Methodology Workshop - 3 day Technical update Workshop	
Feb '06	Report Writing	Gayathiri.P
March '06	- Training on Excel - Budget 2006-2007 - Workshop on "AS IS" checklist	Venugopal Sivakumar.S ISS-BS Team



When you give technology a long leash

... it helps to have

Someone Watching over it

Astral in the field of

- ★ Information Systems Audit ★ ERP Consultancy ★ ISO 27001/BS 7799 Implementation
- ★ Master Data Verification ★ IT Health Check Review ★ SDLC Review

The real voyage of discovery consists of not in seeking new landscapes but in having new eyes

Inhouse Happenings

Super Stars of the Year 2005

- S.Meena - Manager, Information System Services
 C.B.Jayasree - Asst. Manager, Internal Audit Services



Stars of the Week

- S.Vimal & PMaheshKumar - For detailed study of issues in purchases and projects of Engineering unit audit and obtaining maximum client satisfaction rating.



Feathers on the Cap

- VijayKumar .D - Cleared CISA and CIA.
 Rajesh Kanna A.M.S - Qualified in CISA (Certified Information System Auditors) & CSIM (Certified Software Test manager).
 Sathishkumar S }
 Subapradha.S.V } - Qualified as Chartered Accountant.
 Priya.S.Anand - Cleared the CISA Examination.
 Shyamala.V - Qualified as Cost Accountant
 Thirukumuran.V - Cleared ACS Inter 1st Group.
 Balaji Vishwanath.D - Cleared PE II Examination.

Welcome into the Astral Family

Information Technology Services	Internal Audit Services	Management Advisory Services	Human Resource	Business Development
Dhanu Gandhi Selvan.A Sruithi.J	Balaji Vishwanath.D Abhinand.K.Francis Skandesh.G	Shyamala.V	A.Anurekha	Senthil Kumar P

Birthday Wishes

to	on	to	on
Magesh Kumar.P	3rd April	Shyamala.V	4th June
Krishnaveni.P	10th April	Gayathri. P	5th June
Anandakumar.M	14th April	Abhinanad.K.Francis	15th June
Kathirvelu.G	18th April	Venkatesh Prabhu. K.K	15th June
Rajesh.C	24th April	Gowsalyaraman.R	19th June
Anurekha.A	8th May	Rajesh Kanna.R	20th June
Sreedharan.V	11th May	Thiru Kumaran.V	22nd June
Deena Lillac.C	13th May	Ragavan. C N V	22nd June
Sivakumar.S	22nd May	Meena.S	24th June



When the power of love overcomes the love of power, the world will know peace

Think Tank

THE FUTURE OF CUSTOMER SERVICE

Service Operator: "Thank you for calling Pizza Hut.

Customer : Haloo, can I order ...;

Operator : Can I have your multi purpose smart card number, Sir?

Customer : It's eh..., hold on ...6102049998-45-54610

Operator : OK ... you're ... Mr Singh and you're calling from 17 Jal Bagh. Your home number is 4123 0456, your office 7654 3210 and your mobile is 91234566

Customer : "How did you get all my phone numbers?

Operator : We are connected to the Main CRM system Sir

Customer : I want Seafood Pizza

Operator : That's not a good idea Sir

Customer : Why?!

Operator : According to your medical records, you have high blood pressure and an even higher cholesterol level Sir

Customer : What? ... What do you recommend then?

Operator : Try our Low Fat Hokkien Mee Pizza. You'll like it

Customer : How do you know I will like it?

Operator : You borrowed a book entitled Popular Hokkien Dishes from the National Library last week Sir

Customer : OK, I give up ... Give me three family sized ones then. How much will that cost?

Operator : That should be enough for your family of 10, Sir. The total is Rs. 949.99

Customer : Can I pay by credit card?

Operator : I'm afraid you have to pay us cash, Sir. Your credit card is over the limit and you're owing your bank Rs. 23720.55 since October last year. That's not including the late payment charges on your housing loan, Sir.

Customer : I guess I have to run to the neighborhood ATM and withdraw some cash before your guy arrives

Operator : You can't Sir. Based on the records, you've reached your daily limit on machine withdrawal today

Customer : Never mind just send the pizzas, I'll have the cash ready. How long is it gonna take anyway?

Operator : About 45 minutes Sir, but if you can't wait you can always come and collect it on your motorcycle.

Customer : What?!

Operator : According to the details in system, you own a motorbike,... registration number E1123

Customer : *! ^ *#?@%^**% ^ I7*

Operator : Better watch your language Sir. Remember on 15th July 1987 you were convicted of using abusive language at a policeman

Customer : [Speechless]

Operator : Is there anything else Sir?

Customer : Nothing ... by the way ... aren't you giving me that 3 Free bottles of cola as advertised?

Operator : We normally would Sir, but based on your records you're also a diabetic

If undelivered, please return to :

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"EXPRESSIONS"

Inhouse Magazine

Book-Post

Habit is either the best of servants or the worst of masters.