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From the CEO's Pen by Jack Llewellyn, Chamber CEO

A New Year Brings New Regulations

A new year comes with new goals, new ideas, and a fresh start. It's also a busy time as we are wrapping up 2022 and welcoming 2023. As our business community turns the clock, we face both opportunities and obstacles so it's important to know several items that impact businesses and entrepreneurs in 2023.

There are numerous changes that business owners and managers need to understand, including new employment laws and regulations so you can implement correctly. Many require you, as business owners, to enact policies around these new rules on family leave, retirement savings, etc., ensuring that you are in compliance. Non-compliance may result in financial penalties and other consequences, so it's crucial that businesses have a comprehensive knowledge of these new requirements.

1. Colorado Secure Savings Act

- If you already offer a retirement savings plan for your employees, you must fill out the exemption form for the Colorado Secure Savings Act. Qualified exemption plans, include a 401k, Simplified Employee Pension (SEP), SIMPLE IRA.
- If your business has been around for 2 or more years, has 5 or more employees and doesn't offer a (qualified) retirement savings plan for any employees, your employees will need to be registered in the Colorado Secure Savings Act, a state-run retirement savings plan.
- Payroll deductions must be automatically taken from their paychecks unless the employee opts out, and businesses do not provide a match.

It's important that you determine the best option for your employees and business. Watch for a letter from the State of Colorado with your unique access code and instructions. Learn more <https://coloradosecuresavings.com/>

2. Family & Medical Leave Insurance (FAMLI)

In 2023, Colorado employers are required to collect a percentage of their employees' wages to help fund Colorado's Paid Family & Medical Leave Insurance program (FAMLI), or opt out by offering a private plan with equal or greater benefits.

- Beginning Jan. 1, 2023, employers with 10 or more employees (who earned \$2,500 in wages or more a year) must collect .45% of employee wages and match the employee contribution at .45% (with a cap of 1.2% combined).
- Those with 9 or less employees do not have to pay the employer match but are required to deduct the employee share (.45%) and remit those contributions starting Jan. 1, 2023.
- Beginning in 2024, Colorado's FAMLI will provide qualified private-sector employees and self-employed up to 12 weeks of paid leave (stated funded - not employer-paid) for eligible employees with a qualified event. For more information visit <https://famli.colorado.gov/>

3. State-wide Retail Store Carryout Bag Fees

- In Durango, the bag fee requirements only affect retail stores (including grocery stores & convenience stores) where either of the following apply:
 - The store has more than three (3) retail locations; and/or are part of a franchise, corporation, or partnership that has physical store locations outside of Colorado.
- Starting January 1, 2023, non-exempt retail stores must charge customers a fee of 10 cents per bag (paper or plastic) for every carryout bag customers receive.
- Beginning January 1, 2024, a store may only furnish a recycled paper carryout bag to customers at the point of sale for a fee. Single-use plastic bags and polystyrene packaging will be banned from being used.
- Stores must remit this fee quarterly starting April 2024 (but the city recommends starting in April 2023) with 60% of the fee revenues going to the city where the store is located and the remaining 40% fee being retained by the store. Visit [City of Durango for info](#)

4. Termination Notice Requirements for Employers.

When an employee's employment is terminated for any reason, employers in Colorado are required to provide additional information for unemployment insurance benefits in addition to the information already required.

For more information, visit <https://cdle.colorado.gov/businesses-employers>

But wait there's more:

- A new consumer privacy bill goes into effect July 1, 2023. Colorado's **Protect Personal Data Privacy Act** (SB 21-190) gives Colorado consumers the right to opt out of processing their personal data. [Read more here.](#)
- Also enacted was a modification of the **Colorado Wage Theft Laws** which include penalties for employers that don't pay wages timely, among other provisions. Learn more about [SB22-161](#).

The Durango Chamber continues to work with key partners and elected officials on policy issues that affect our business community and will provide updates on matters that specifically impact business. If you are wanting to learn more about local issues, visit our governmental affairs page, [here at DurangoBusiness.org](#). We invite our chamber members to contact us with further questions.



Don't Miss Coffee Connections Learning Series – Feb. 7!

Join Ohana Physical Therapy, in their recently expanded



space, for Coffee Connections Learning Series on February 7th from 8 – 9 am. Enjoy coffee and pastries, tour their newly expanded space, and meet their four physical therapists. Walter Rogers, PT, DPT will demonstrate exercises used to improve balance and reduce the risk of falling. Bria Rubie, PT, DPT will discuss conditions that affect pelvic health and how these issues are resolved through physical therapy. Carolyn Archer, PT, DPT will discuss physical therapy for athletes of all ages. Andre Botha, RPT will address solutions for neck and back pain. Volunteers can try dry needling and estim for any achy parts. Free registration.

For more information and to register, click [here](#).

“Strive not to be a success, but rather to be of value.” ~ Albert Einstein

What Program Topics Will Help You & Your Team?

The Chamber is conducting a survey about workshop topics that are of interest to members, and we want to hear from YOU! From HR to marketing to management and accounting, there are a lot of topics that could be covered with experts who can lend their advice and tips. Please take a minute to provide feedback on this brief survey.

Take Quick Survey [Here](#)



Watch the latest Member Moment Video featuring [Grassburger](#). Find past Member Moment Videos [here](#)

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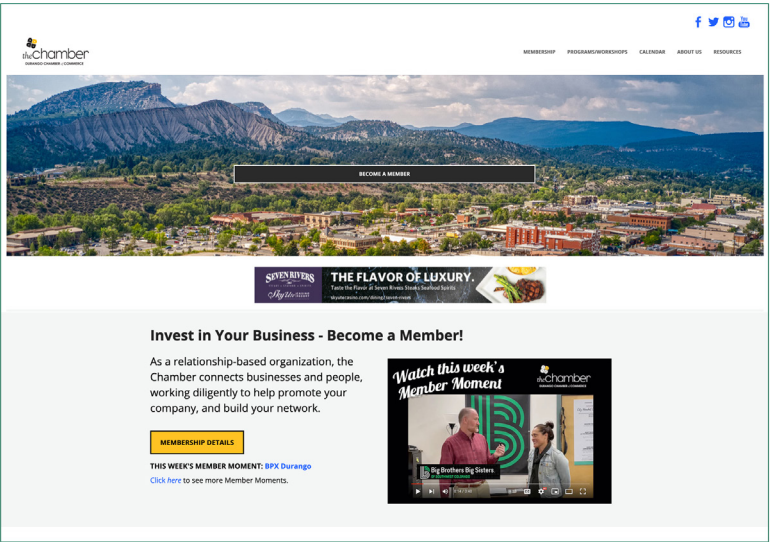
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The Durango Chamber Launches its New Value-Based Membership Structure!

The Chamber is changing its structure to offer value-based membership with the ability to choose what works best for businesses. The current membership structure is a “fair share” model, based on the number of employees, with 15 total membership levels, including three enhanced levels. The Chamber has been working on this change for several years, as it identified that the “fair share” model wasn’t really “fair,” members have different needs throughout the business life cycle, and a business joins the Chamber based on a variety of motivations and characteristics. The Chamber hasn’t changed its structure in 10+ years, and it’s hasn’t changed pricing in over 5 years. The current 15 levels are being simplified to 7 and all members are being offered a choice of what is best for their individual business.

The new Value-Based Membership Structure allows business owners to determine what’s important in their partnership with the Durango Chamber, what their needs are, and how they want to take a leadership role in the business community. The Chamber is also making it easier by featuring investment payments via check, credit card and



ACH, and scheduling payments as frequently as monthly, quarterly, semi-annually, or annually. Many of the benefits are also a la carte, so businesses can still utilize marketing, advertising, networking, branding and sponsorship opportunities.

The transition for existing members begins in January 2023. The Chamber will continue to work off of a rolling 12-month year, so individual member’s anniversary month remains the same.

Learn more about the new structure and get your questions answered by attending the Chamber’s Value-Based Membership Q&A session on January 25 at 4pm. Join via Zoom or in person, by registering [here](#). Or call (970) 247-0312, ext. 2.

Upcoming Programs & Events!

Find more information [here](#).

- Jan. 20** Ribbon Cutting at Animas High School’s New Location at 5:30pm
- Jan. 25** Lunch & Learn Workshop on Instagram Reels for Small Businesses, Noon
- Jan. 25** New Membership Structure Q&A Session at 4pm
- Feb. 1** FunOfficial Kick-Off to Snowdown Business After Hours, 5-7pm at the Strater Hotel
- Feb. 7** Coffee Connections with Ohana Physical Therapy

What’s Happening with our Chamber Members

- Jan. 14** From this Earth: the Timeless Beauty of Pueblo Pottery
- Jan. 21** Homebuyer Education Class in Durango
- Jan. 27-Feb 5** Snowdown: Shakespearean Theme [Snowdown.org](#)
- Feb 11** Homebuyer Education Class in Durango
- Feb 23** ServSafe Certified Food Protection Manager Training

Do you want your program or event listed? It’s free through your member online portal. Questions, ask Hannah@durangobusiness.org or call (970) 247-0312

YPOD Feature of the Month: Kierstan Ellender YPOD Board Member

Where do you work? State of Colorado Department of Vocational Rehabilitation

What is your job title/responsibilities? Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor

Why did you want to be a YPOD board member? Where I used to live, I was on the board for an organization that worked with small businesses and seeing the impact of business improvement was really exciting. So when I moved here, I was eager to get involved with an organization that worked closely with the community. I also saw this as an opportunity to meet like minded individuals who all shared the same goal.

Hobbies: Art, reading, running, anything active and outdoors

Information about the YPODs can be found [here](#)



Featured Chamber Diplomat: Sandy Lane 2023 Diplomat President

What is your business? In my prior life, I was a consulting partner at a CPA firm. Although I still provide CFO volunteer assistance to Durango start-ups through SCAPE, I spend most of my time now as a transition coach, value consultant, and course creator of on-line workshops (I help people in perfecting their life pivots).

How long have you been a DIP? 3 years

How long have you lived in Durango? 3 years

Tell us about your family: Husband, Garrett, and Goldendoodle, Zeke. I also have three grown sons who live in Denver and Omaha.

Why did you become a DIP? I have always loved being an active part of the business community. The first Durango event I attended after moving here in 2020 was Durango Rocks. I loved the energy of the Chamber and Durango businesses and decided to volunteer as a diplomat.

What is your favorite part of being a DIP? I love the ribbon cuttings and getting to know the new business owners and the



stories behind their new businesses. Then it is so much fun to run into them at Chamber events like Business After Hours. I also enjoy the energetic vibe and enthusiasm of my fellow diplomats!

What are your favorite things to do in Durango? Anything to take in the outdoors: dog walking, biking, hiking, running and some skiing. Meeting new people while attending Durango favorite events and concerts.

Fun fact about you: In 2006, I was honored as one of the Ten Outstanding Young Omahans and was also named as one of Omaha’s 40 Under 40 that same year.

Learn more about the Diplomat Program [here](#).

Featured Leadership La Plata Alumnus: Kris Oyler

What do you do for a living? CEO of Peak Food & Beverage, which operates Steamworks Brewing Co., El Moro Spirits & Tavern, and Homeslice Pizza.



What LLP class were you in? The best class ever from 2002-2003!

What do you love about LLP? The lifelong friendships that I’ve created with some of my classmates as well as the comradery with other classes.

Fun fact about you? During a hiatus from college, I worked on a commercial fishing vessel in Alaska for two seasons, long lining for black cod and halibut.

What is the most important benefit the Chamber offers for you & the business community?

The Chamber is at its best when is advocating for small, local businesses. It is also helpful when The Chamber provides clarity on the multitude of new laws and regulations for proper compliance.

What do you love about Durango? What’s not to love?!? I love all the outdoor amenities the area offers and the small, real town feel.

Interested in participating in LLP? Learn more about LLP or become involved in LLP committees, visit [Leadership La Plata.org](#).

FUN-official Kick Off of Snowdown Business After Hours!

It's back! The FUN-official kick off of Snowdown starts with Business After Hours on Feb. 1 from 5pm to 7pm at the Strater Hotel. Join the Chamber, Four Corners Broadcasting and celebrate Durango's favorite local holiday: Snowdown! Don your best Shakespearean and Elizabethan attire and win great prizes during the costume contest. Online registration is \$10 (includes 2 drinks + appetizers) or it's \$15 at the door. [Register](#) now. O Romeo, Romeo, wherefore art thou Romeo?



Lunch & Learn Workshop: How to Create Reels for Your Business

This "Lunch and Learn" will be packed with tactics you can launch right in the workshop. Hannah Birdsong is the social media coordinator and graphic designer at Fort Lewis College. Before starting at the Fort, she was a marketing consultant and program manager at the local SBDC office as well as a social media freelancer on the side. In this hands-on workshop, you'll learn how to create Instagram reels for your business. She'll discuss the importance of video content, a tutorial on how to create a reel, and resources available for you to use to create video content. [Register here](#) \$10 workshop or \$20 lunch+ workshop. Thank you TBK Bank for sponsoring this event.



Visit Durango Wants Your Opinion!

Take the [Tourism Survey](#)

Visit Durango cares about the local community and would love feedback from La Plata County residents. To understand tourism's benefits and impacts in La Plata County, we are conducting a survey. By taking this survey, you can help us identify locals' sentiment about the visitor economy.

The survey consists of multiple-choice questions ranging from how the tourism industry has impacted the local economy to how it has affected your quality of life. As a resident of La Plata County, this is your chance to provide helpful insight. Your responses will help us better understand what adjustments should be made in order for visitors and locals to enjoy their experiences here and improve quality of life.

In addition to providing valuable feedback, you will be entered for a chance to win a fifty-dollar gift certificate to a local business.

Please visit engage.durango.org to take the survey.



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Labor Shortage, Employee Turnover and Benefits Demands Keeping Employers Up at Night

85% Expect to Face Hiring Challenges in the Next Year

While a majority of U.S. hiring managers feel positive about their company's hiring outlooks, 85% still expect challenges over the next year with 75% saying it keeps them up at night.

This is according to a survey from The Harris Poll commissioned by Express Employment Professionals.

Pertaining to more general hiring difficulties, hiring managers worry about increased competition in the job market (35%), available talent pool not matching the company's needs (29%), reaching diverse candidates (23%) and difficulty assessing candidates' skills during the hiring process (23%).

But as to what is causing these decision makers to lose sleep, 3 in 10 say the labor shortage continuing (29%), increases in employee turnover (28%), increased demand from candidates for better benefits in order to accept a job offer (27%) and an inability to fill open positions (27%) are among those late-night fears.

For some, the inability to fill open positions is not just a fear for the future, but a current problem they are actively trying to solve, including many hiring managers (42%) who say their company currently has open positions that they cannot fill. Corresponding with the top hiring challenges companies face, those with open positions report they are not filled due to a lack of applicants. This includes applicants with hard skills (39%), relevant experience (38%), soft skills (36%) and/or applicants in general (34%).

Demand for top talent is still incredibly high and even if all the other pieces fall into place, such as sufficient product and



Hiring/Recruiting Challenges Keeping Employers Up at Night



demand, businesses can't operate without workers, according to Express Employment International CEO Bill Stoller.

"With some promising signs of inflation easing and more job seekers entering the picture, my hope for the new year is that employers can finally catch a break and get a good night of rest after the tumultuous past two years," he said.

Survey Methodology

The survey was conducted online within the United States by The Harris Poll on behalf of Express Employment Professionals between May 3 and May 23, 2022, among 1,003 U.S. hiring decision-makers (defined as adults ages 18+ in the U.S. who are employed full-time or self-employed, work at companies with more than one employee, and have full/significant involvement in hiring decisions at their company). Data were weighted where necessary by company size to bring them into line with their actual proportions in the population.

The Durango Express office is located at 321 So Camino Del and serves the Four Corners area. Local businesses and applicants are encouraged to stop by, visit ExpressPros.com/durangoco or call (970) 403-8780.

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Business Connection

11th Street Station, Owner and CEO Marcos Wisner

By Sara Lynn Valentine



"It's been quite a journey," Marcos says as he thinks back on the inception and growth of his popular, downtown culinary collective, 11th Street Station. Marcos, a 5th generation Durangoan, has been part of the foodie world since his first jobs in the kitchens of Carvers and East by Southwest. Marcos went on to cook at two of the most highly accredited, high-end restaurants in the world, one in Manhattan and one in Copenhagen.

"But I wanted to get back to skiing," Marcos says, "so eight years ago I returned to Durango and started a food truck business." He named it 'The Box' and parked it right in front of a property his dad, Jaime, owned on the northwest corner of 11th Street and Main Avenue.

Permitting, however, proved to be a problem, plus Marcos wanted to open a bar to create more evening business. He envisioned a bar surrounded by inviting outdoor space with al-fresco seating and hookups for independently owned and operated food trucks.



"My dad was thinking of selling his property. I said 'Hey man, no, let's keep this is the family!' I went to him with a proposal, and we put together a business plan, got financing through a bank, and started the process with the city."

Marcos' dad came up with a gas station theme, based on the fact that for most of its history the property was used

as a gas station or car repair shop. The original 1920s era building was still there. Jaime and Marcos shifted from business design to decorating, and began enthusiastically acquiring fun memorabilia and thematic art.



It took five months to create the infrastructure and build out. They opened October 21, 2017. "It's great that the city has embraced food trucks now," Marcos says. "We paved the way and proved that Durango can maintain its quaintness." Marcos thinks of 11th Street Station as a business incubator, teaching chefs how to enter the market. "Brick and mortar is just such a big barrier to entry, plus it's hard to get through the red tape and regulations.

At 11th Street, a chef can start his or her own business with an investment of just \$15,000. "Our chefs have been very successful, and many have been able to grow into larger models. That's important to me because this is about more than just making money. I want to see this community thrive," commented Marcos.

11th Street Station has seven food truck options: The Box (pizza), Avalanche Bowl (multi-ethnic bowls), Back Country Gourmet (specialty sliders), Mare Nostrum (Greek/middle eastern), and DeVera. Love n' Juice serves fresh, cold-pressed juices, Taste offers an organic, free-trade coffee bar, and Sunshine Smoothies features delicious blended fruits. Ernie's Bar serves craft beer, specialty cocktails, mocktails, and wine.

"People love the vibe and the diversity of food here at 11th Street Station," Marcos says. "The most frequent comment I hear is 'This was what Durango needed!' My Pops trusted me - and it was a good business idea. He trusted me and took this leap with me."

Learn more at <https://11thstreetstation.com> or call (970) 422-8482.

ATTENTION LA PLATA COUNTY

RENTERS: Need help with 1st, last and security? Let us help with a Micro-Loan!

The **La Plata County Workforce Rental Assistance Program** is offering low-cost, fixed rate micro-loans of up to \$5,000 to cover first month's rent, last month's rent and/or a security deposit for eligible La Plata County renters.

Loan Terms:

- \$5,000 Maximum Loan Amount
- Unsecured (no collateral required)
- 2% Annual Percentage Rate*
- Payable over 3 years with monthly principal and interest payments
- *\$5,000 loan amount @ 2% Annual Percentage Rate: 36 monthly payments of \$143.22
- No associated fees or pre-payment penalty.

The La Plata County Workforce Rental Assistance Program is made possible through a partnership between La Plata Economic Development Alliance, La Plata County, City of Durango and First Southwest Bank.



LEASE AGREEMENT

Requirements:

- NEW lease agreement must be for a minimum of one year. Proof of lease must be provided.
- Borrower must make 80% or less of Area Median Income (AMI) for La Plata County.
- Rental property must be located in La Plata County.
- No minimum FICO score is required.
- This program is First Come First Served and limited to \$150,000.
- Loan will be limited to one loan per residence. Co-borrowers are permitted though loans will be capped at \$5,000.
- No preferred rate reduction for automatic payment.

Questions?

Email: info@fswb.bank
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Apply today at [FSWB.bank](https://fswb.bank)

Ideas: Go Out of your Way to Welcome New Employees

This idea is excerpted from Barbara's book "CARE Packages for the Workplace – Dozens of Little Things You Can Do to Regenerate Spirit at Work" (McGraw-Hill, 1996)

The Idea:

Think of fun, creative ways to make new employees feel welcome. If they begin work in an atmosphere of caring, they will be much more likely to continue adding to that atmosphere.

The Idea In Action:

One organization with whom I've worked arranges lunch with the president of the company for every new employee during his/her first week. Another has created a special company shirt that new employees are asked to wear for the first month they are on the job. (Yes, they give them two for laundry purposes!) Whenever anyone sees a person with the shirt on, they make it a point to introduce themselves and do something special for that person. One employee told me that she was so specially treated that she NEVER wants to work anywhere else!

Maria Marino, the President of Swinging on a Cloud in London, Ontario, creates welcome kits for new staff complete with a welcome card signed by each employee, a fun name tag, a map, and other goodies to make them feel special.

Tips:

Remember what it felt like when you were new. What can you do to help someone else have a better experience than you did? It is easiest to show empathy when you've "been there!"



Barbara Glanz Biography

A member of the prestigious Speaker Hall of Fame and one of fewer than 700 Certified Speaking Professionals worldwide, Barbara Glanz, CSP, CPAE, works with organizations to improve morale, retention and service and with people who want to rediscover the joy in their work and in their lives. She is the first speaker on record to have spoken on all 7 continents and in all 50 states. Known as "the business speaker who speaks to your heart as well as to your head," Barbara is the author of twelve books including *The Simple Truths of Service Inspired by Johnny the Bagger*, *CARE Packages for the Workplace*, and *180 Ways to Spread Contagious Enthusiasm*™. Voted "best keynote presenter you have heard or used" by Meetings & Conventions Magazine, Barbara uses her Master's degree in Adult Learning to design programs that cause behavior change. She lives and breathes her personal motto: "Spreading Contagious Enthusiasm™" and can be reached at bglanz@barbaraglanz.com and www.barbaraglanz.com.

Holiday Business After Hours, Hosted by the Bank of Colorado!

The Chamber teamed up with the Bank of Colorado to host the Dec. 15 Business After Hours at their facility on Main Avenue. This special Holiday Business After Hours featured the Fort Lewis College String Quartet, which kicked off the event with delightful holiday music. Attendees also enjoyed delicious food and beverages, along with fantastic door prizes, compliments of Bank of Colorado and Star Liquors handed out by Santa himself. Participants were able to catch up with colleagues and meet new ones at this well-attended event.



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La Plata County Extension: Health Tip of the Month by Nicole Clark

Cooking up Good Health



Do you find that your evening routine shifts during the winter? Seemingly impossible during summer, but in the winter, it's not uncommon to have dinner and dishes finished by 7:00 pm.

Ah yes, dishes, the less desirable end product of a home-cooked meal. Perhaps not the most enjoyable task, but it is an expected part of meal preparation. It may also be a convenient excuse to avoid cooking your own food.

In fact, cooking at home has been on the decline for all Americans since the late twentieth century.

As we source meals from outside the home, we can wipe away the burden of dishes. However, with the dishes, we may also eliminate nutrient-rich foods more commonly found in a home-cooked meal. Across almost all socioeconomic groups, meals prepared at home tend to include more fruits and vegetables. Not just at dinner, but also at breakfast and lunch.

While dishes can be a burden, the more likely reason fewer Americans cook at home is a lack of skill and/or time. No one can give you more time. But with practice, your culinary skills will improve efficiency in the kitchen (e.g. less time to prepare a meal), save money, and offer more nutritious foods.

Eventually, you'll also be able to claim the food you make is superior in taste to foods away from home.

With three months of winter remaining, there's plenty of time to hone your cooking skills. As always, start with the basics. Check out Colorado State University Extension's [FoodSmart Colorado how-to videos](#).

Consider making it a social event so it feels less like work. Invite friends over, [share the work](#) and share the joy.

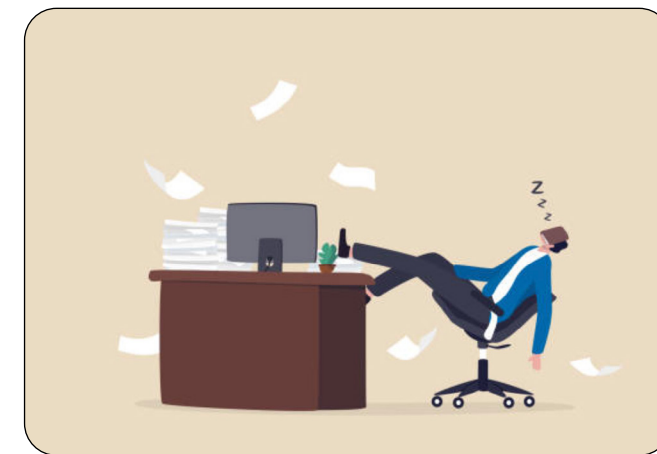
- **Choose one meal to make.** Use beginner cookbooks from the library or do an internet search for a recipe using ingredients you have, like, or can find on sale.
 - Check that you have all ingredients or a good [substitute](#).
- **Complete your meal plan** by including food groups according to [MyPlate](#). This design provides you with a variety of tastes, textures and nutrients!
- **Practice preparation skills** such as [knife handling](#) and measuring.
- **Make homemade soup!** A perfect one-pot meal for winter, surprisingly easy, considerably cheaper than canned soup, and it makes great leftovers!
- **Take a cooking class.** La Plata County Extension offers cooking classes. Call to register. (970) 382-6461.

La Plata County Extension health programming:
nicole.clark@co.plata.co.us or (970) 382-6461.



Managing an Employee Who's Checked Out

There are many reasons an employee might mentally check out. They could be experiencing burnout or a personal issue, or they could be totally unaware that they've been slipping. Before you initiate a conversation, learn about any available support systems — including employee resource groups, assistance plans, and health networks — that could help your employee if they need it. Next ask yourself: What are the specific requirements of the job that this person is not meeting? Be ready to present this evidence. Then, open an honest and empathetic dialogue. Give your employee a chance to tell you what's going on before sharing your assessment of their performance. Be compassionate and make it clear you have a sincere desire to support them. Then discuss your priorities, be straightforward and specific about your concerns, and come up with a plan to re-



engage them in their work. You need to be patient — but to a point. Lighting a spark under a disengaged employee won't happen overnight. But if an employee is truly checked out, it ultimately might not be the right role for them.

This tip is adapted from "What to Do When Your Employee Is Totally Checked Out," by Rebecca Knight



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Stop Overthinking Big Decisions

Thoughtful deliberation is an essential leadership quality that can help you make better decisions and produce better outcomes. However, it can also devolve into overthinking, which can be paralyzing. Here are three ways to avoid a thought spiral that can slow you down:

- 1. Curb your perfectionism.** Perfectionism is one of the biggest blockers to swift decision-making, because it operates on faulty all-or-nothing thinking. To curb this tendency, ask yourself questions like: What's one thing I could do today to bring me closer to my goal? Or what's the next step based on the information I have right now?
- 2. Pay attention to your intuition.** When it comes to difficult decisions, your gut reaction is often an important data point, particularly when time is short or when you don't have all the information you need. Research shows that pairing intuition with analytical thinking helps you



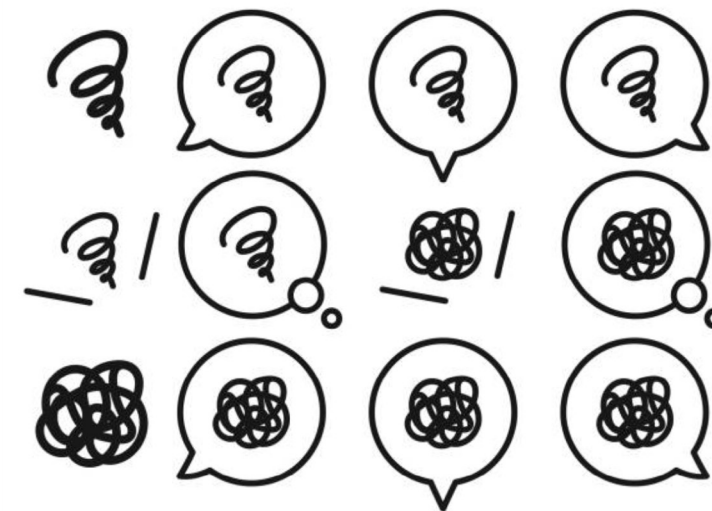
make better, faster, and more accurate decisions and gives you more confidence in your choices than relying on intellect alone.

- 3. Construct creative constraints.** Determine a date or time by which you'll make a choice. Put it in your calendar, set a reminder on your phone, or even contact the person who's waiting for your decision and let them know when they can expect to hear from you.

This tip is adapted from "How to Stop Overthinking Everything," by Melody Wilding

How to Manage a Chronic Complainer

Chronic complainers can have a damaging effect on those around them. So what should you do if you manage an employee who's prone to perpetual pessimism? First, be realistic with yourself about the situation. If the person is truly a chronic complainer, offering sympathy or solutions is unlikely to change their behavior or mindset. You need to set clear boundaries instead. Tell your employee that you're prepared to listen and discuss whatever is bothering them, but that your conversation needs to focus on a specific issue that can be resolved. Going over the same, unsolvable problem repeatedly won't do either of you any good. If the issue at hand doesn't have a solution, or is entirely out of your hands as a manager, urge your employee to change their perspective and reframe their thinking around appreciation and gratitude for the things that they value. Of course, fostering this kind of a behavioral change takes time



and may require support from a coach or therapist. Present these options to your employee, and explain that while you care about their wellbeing and happiness, you may not always be the best person to help them work through all of their personal struggles.

This tip is adapted from "Managing a Chronic Complainer," by Manfred F. R. Kets de Vries

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LLP Monthly Focus:



3 Steps to Transformation.

By Stacy Reuille-Dupont, StudioB

As we all move through the transition between one year and the next, it is a time of transformation for many of us.

Although so many people use this time to create resolutions of change, I thought it might be more fitting to talk about transformation instead. Resolution connotes building resolve to fight what you do not want in your life. This deficit orientation often leads to being stuck in what is missing rather than what you want. As a result, most New Year's resolutions are done by February 14th.

Let's make your changes stick this year.

A quick definition of transformation is "in process." You are acting and practicing being different. This requires you assess your life, determine what you are missing, but instead of focusing on what is not working, orient to what you want. This process sets you up to focus on good stuff: rewards of acting, accomplishment of being a better version of yourself, happier emotions you will experience, and actions you will need to take to make your desires happen, rather than what you are taking away.

An example I often use in my office is alcohol use. When working with people who want to quit or decrease drinking habits, you should focus on being sober, rather than not drinking. Can you hear and feel the difference? Brains focus on subjects. Saying "I'm sober today" gives a place for focus and attention. Saying "I'm not drinking" keeps you focused on drinking. Thus, it will be a lot harder to shift neurology toward what is wanted and leave behind what is not because your mental resources for changes are actually building current neurology of what you want to stop.

This is the premise behind what you focus on grows. It grows because as you focus on a topic, you are reinforcing a neurological pattern. As you do this, physiological processes build to keep the neurology quick and efficient. After all your brain really just cares about keeping the species alive in the easiest way possible.

So as you set off on another trip around the sun, use this wintertime of reflection to make yourself a better human. Here are 3 steps to your metamorphosis.

1. Determine what it is you do not want anymore.

Maybe it's a long-held habit or belief. By taking a moment to assess what you are currently unhappy with, you will have options for what you want to be different. You want to get clear, but not spend too much time here.



2. Next, determine direction. In every situation you have many choices.

You may not always like the choices in front of you, however you always have a choice. As you determine what you will transform in your life, allow yourself time to choose best choices for you based on your current situation and desired direction.

3. Outline your plan. It is in this step that you define how you will be different once your transformation is complete.

Vision the big goal, break it down into smaller steps, consider challenges and obstacles to making this change, and spend time focused on how you will emotionally feel when things are different. This is a very important step.

Emotions are an intelligence system that set up your physiology to "know" something. When you allow yourself opportunities to feel what your future will be, you are shifting your neurology toward change. This makes habit change much easier. It allows you to focus on your process with less struggle.

Remember what you do repeatedly is a habit ... and habits can be changed. Here's to the process of being the best you, you can be in 2023!

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