

**GLOBAL BUSINESS AND ECONOMIC ROUNDTABLE
ON ADDICTION AND MENTAL HEALTH**

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MEDIA RELEASE

NOTE TO EDITORS AND REPORTERS: The Roundtable is the first and only network of business, health and education leaders focussed on mental health as a business and economic issue. The Industrial Accident Prevention Association (IAPA) has 40,000 members and is Canada's leader in workplace health and safety.

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**Mental Health and Work
12 GIFTS FOR CHRISTMAS**

**Roundtable on Addiction and Mental Health and IAPA
Unveil "12 Gifts For Christmas" To Fight Epidemic Of Workplace Stress.**

TORONTO, Ontario – December 19, 2000 – Earlier this year, the Roundtable published the "Top Ten Sources of Stress." The list appeared in newspapers and magazines and on television and web sites in Canada, the United States and Europe.

Today, the Roundtable joins Canada's leading workplace health and safety organization – the Industrial Accident Prevention Association (IAPA) – to unveil *12 Gifts for Christmas* to create mentally healthier places of work in this country.

These gift suggestions – which will be shared with the IAPA's 40,000 members and other employers nation-wide – are both practical and strategic.

Once given, these very special workplace Christmas gifts will reduce company absenteeism and disability rates over time, improve output, reduce costs and create a more vital and effective work force. They are fashioned from studies analyzed by the Roundtable over the past two years.

The 12 Gifts of Christmas

1. *The Gift Of Time And Space To Do Our Work*

This gift means helping employees off the treadmill at work. Many people are getting ill not from too much to do but from their sense they have too much to do all at once all the time. With this gift we will put a high value on the time of employees, not waste that precious resource and stop breathing down the neck of those who are on deadline.

2. *The Gift Of Knowing What Is Expected Of Us*

This gift means giving employees a clear picture of what their employer expects of them; what, fundamentally, their job is; what priorities they are being asked to observe one day to the next. Perpetuated confusion about these things produces self-doubt on a large scale in today's workplace that creates harmful stress and impairs productivity.

3. *The Gift of Acknowledging What Others Do*

Money is not the only reward people work for. This gift gives them something just as valuable in the long-term – appreciation for doing good work, the boss saying thank you for the extra effort, helping us realize that what we do contributes to the company's success.

4. *The Gift Of Sharing Success At Work*

This is the gift of seeing success as something to share not own. With this gift, we will salute the part others played in the good work we did, sharing the credit just as we shared the load.

5. *The Gift Of An E-mail Ceasefire*

E-mail overload is a huge source of frustration and anxiety in the workplace. Casualties are mounting daily. This is the gift of a Christmas ceasefire. The gift of not doing an e-mail dump on others over Christmas or at the end of the year, not forcing others to face several hundred e-mails when they return. This is the gift of liberation – liberation from the enslavement of e-mail.

6. *The Gift of Call-Forwarding – When Someone's Really There*

This is a gift of common sense. Call-forwarding today promises a human alternative to a voice message but often delivers – another voice message. This is a real tooth-grinder for hurried callers trying to break through cyberspace and make human contact. Let us resolve in 2001 to call-forward – only when someone else is there.

7. *The Gift of Leadership*

This is a gift from the top. A gift of clarity in setting a future direction for the company. Productive employees need this sense of direction. Without it, bad management practices produce confusion, frustration and reduced output. This generates dangerous stress on a large scale. Weak leadership is bad for your health.

8. *The Gift of Job Fulfillment*

This is the gift that spurs productivity. It is the gift of opportunity. It is the gift of personal growth through on-the-job training. It is the gift of matching the right employee with the right job. Just as the pay cheque buys bread for the table, self-fulfillment at work buys bread for the soul.

9. *The Gift of Listening To Others At Work*

This gift is an art form, hearing not only what other say but understanding how they feel and what they need to do their job. Body language means a lot in communication between people. We can't read body language by e-mail. In a society hurried, worried and rattled by change, let us resolve to start listening on the job – to others.

10. *The Gift Of Redistributing Workloads Wisely*

One person doing the job of two or three, working a lot of overtime, feeling trapped. Heavy workloads are one of the top ten sources of stress today – employees are not whining or complaining, they are worried their workload is preventing them from doing what they perceive to be a good job. They are worried about quality, and about making mistakes. With this gift, supervisors and managers will hear those concerns, and interpret them wisely.

11. *The Gift Of Inclusion At Work*

Isolation at work – not getting information, not being invited to meetings, feeling shelved, your work going unnoticed, your suggestions going unanswered, the boss playing favorites – is number two on the top ten list of workplace stress. Isolation breeds unhealthy insecurity, a loss of self-esteem, and even depression. This gift replaces isolation with inclusion, information and a sense of belonging to the team.

12. *The Gift Of Trust*

A lack of control over one's own work is number one on the list of the top ten sources of stress. *It poses a risk to the cardiac health of workers as great as smoking. The gift of trust gives employees the freedom to make decisions about the tasks before them, fusing a pledge between employer and employee to trust each other in order to do good work and receive the benefits of it.

* Reference: Institute of Work and Health

Reference: Bill Wilkerson, Co-founder & CEO, Business & Economic Roundtable
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