

Postal Newsletter

Press

AMERICAN POSTAL WORKERS UNION

NATIONAL POSTAL PRESS ASSOCIATION

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March-April, 2013

2013 Biennial PPA Conference

August 22-24

Madison, Wisconsin

Pre-conference session August 21
(See pages 4-5 for details)



Located a couple blocks from the state capital building in Madison, Wisconsin is The Madison Concourse Hotel, site of the biennial PPA conference on August 22-24 and the John Akey Seminar on August 25-26. Preceding the conference will be a full day of workshops on Wednesday, August 21. The room rate is \$127 per night, single or double occupancy. Room reservations can be made through the PPA website at www.apwupostalpress.org or by calling the hotel at 1-800-356-8293.

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Statement of purpose: Published by the American Postal Workers Union National Postal Press Association, the *PPA Newsletter* is an educational tool designed to assist PPA members with the performance of their duties as communicators and to help promote the goals and objectives of the APWU.

This publication is 100% union printer produced:

Union typeset, Union layout, Union printed.



Awards to be presented

The 2013 PPA Awards Committee recently completed its work of designating the award categories and formulating the rules of this year's PPA Awards Program. Serving on the committee are Chairperson Jenny Gust, editor, *Ohio Postal Worker* and *Black Swamp Outrider*, Toledo, Ohio; Ray Holland, editor, *The Alabama Flash* and *The Union Voice*, Falkville, Alabama; Christine Nellman, editor, *Postmark*, Stockton, California; Larry Sorrells, editor, *Tarheel Postal Worker*, Asheville, North Carolina; Jacque Childs, editor, *Flash Report*, Madison, Wisconsin.

First place and honorable mention awards in 15 categories will be presented at an awards banquet on Saturday, August 24 in Madison, Wisconsin at the conclusion of the 2013 PPA Conference.

With the exception of the website category, the awards committee also has the responsibility of independently reviewing and rating each entry using a point system. The results will be tabulated to determine the top eight finalists in each category. A

judge from outside the Postal Press Association and APWU will then review the finalist entries and select the award recipients. All website entries will be sent directly to the outside judge for review and final selections.

Originally called the Biennial Award of Merit Program, it was established at the August 1967 conference in Cleveland, Ohio. The purpose of instituting an awards program was to recognize Association editors for outstanding work in editing, publishing and writing. The first awards were presented at the 1968 conference in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Over the years, the awards program has been modified several times to reflect changes in technology and production methods.

Awards Program rules and entry form were previously mailed to editor members. A duplicate copy of this material is available on the PPA website, www.apwupostalpress.org or by contacting the PPA. Deadline for receipt of entries is Monday, May 20.

Weapons of mass instruction

by **Hank Greenberg, Honorary Member PPA Advisory Council**

One of the activities I miss most is the PPA Conference. If you have attended in the past you know what I mean and if you have never attended, you don't know what you're missing.

New editors will find the classes to be the single most important opportunity to get a jump start on making your local or state publication a more professional vehicle of information and education for your members. If you already have a few years under your belt as editor, you will **always** learn new information, new ideas and at the

same time have an opportunity to renew old friendships and make new ones.

PPA President Tony Carobine always manages to bring together a group of talented instructors who present a well-rounded educational program; the kind of program you will not find anywhere else. I have attended many journalism classes in the public sector and the private sector and have **never** found a better program than the one presented at the PPA Conference.

These classes are "**weapons of mass instruction**" that will make you a better editor. I sincerely believe this and after you attend I think you will agree too.

Election committee formed

Members of the 2013 PPA Election Committee were recently appointed. Serving as chairperson is John Durben, editor, *Badger Bulletin*, Cecil, Wisconsin. The committee is responsible for

conducting the PPA election of officers.

Other committee members include: Tonya Brooks, editor, *Fort Worth Outpost*, Fort Worth, Texas and Jim Gabe, editor, *The Spectrum*, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.

Exercise 'power of the press' to benefit members

by Tony Carobine,
President

Picture just one member in your organization – a clerk, maintenance person, motor vehicle operator or mechanic. Now take a few minutes and put yourself into that member's shoes. Ask: If I were this person . . . What would I know about the day-to-day workings of my union other than dues are deducted from my paycheck and I can file a grievance? What other information would entice me to be more supportive and interested in becoming involved?

Shouldn't I be continually reminded that the union, not postal management, has made it possible for me to enjoy good pay and benefits and in these disastrous economic times protected my job? If I have a question or a problem, would I know how to get in touch with the local's officers for help? What member-only benefits and services does the local union provide and how can I participate? Do the officers do anything besides attend conventions and seminars? When and where are union meetings held? Does the union exist for the sole purpose of filing grievances? Why does the union get involved with the election of candidates for public office?

How much members know depends upon the effort put forth by the union to keep them informed. Because learning and being informed are cumulative processes, they aren't limited to an orientation session when a person joins the union. Rather, it is an ongoing endeavor.

That's where you, the editor, come in. You can be part of the members' continuing education. With the power of the press, you can expand the knowledge of all members with a continuous flow of well-planned, well-chosen stories that tell what goes on throughout the organization. You can explain everything the union does and why it is so important to the members and their families and over the course of time, give a fuller picture of all that goes into making the union work.

Equipped with this knowledge, members will more likely be supportive and stand a better chance of becoming involved. Putting yourself in your readers' shoes is a valuable exercise for every editor. Do it periodically to be sure that you're on target and communicating at the right level for your audience.

Reducing production costs

Looking for ways to decrease newsletter production costs in this era of tight budgets? Consider the following suggestions to lower the costs of publishing a paper without sacrificing service to the membership.

Mailing. Publications that mail their paper as a flat can reduce postage costs simply by folding the paper into letter size (the most common size newsletter, 8½x 11 becomes eligible for the letter size rate simply by folding in half and tabbing it.)

Printing bids. The prices that printers charge to produce a paper can vary greatly. Occasionally seeking competitive bids will ensure the paper is being printed at the lowest possible cost. (See the Member Resources section of the PPA website for assistance with preparing a printing bid specification form.)

Plain paper. Uncoated paper stock costs less than coated stock (shiny paper).

Advertising. Include advertising from businesses in a publication's geographic area. (See "Advertising" in the Member Resources

section of the PPA website for the booklet, *Advertising for the union publication* that has step-by-step help with establishing an advertising program. A hard copy of this booklet is also available upon request.)

Number of pages. Slightly reducing the number of pages contained in the newsletter, or occasionally supplementing a two-sided 8½ x 14 bulletin for a full issue is yet another way to keep members connected with their union through a union publication while at the same time reducing costs.

Seeking ways to reduce costs while maintaining a service of informing the membership through the union publication involves work, creativity, and imagination but in the long run will serve the union much better than simply passing a motion at a union meeting to discontinue publishing or reducing a newsletter's frequency. Remember, publishing a union newsletter should be thought of as a vital and necessary service that members receive in return for paying union dues.

Piece of cake!

by Jenny Gust, Editor-at-Large

Most (if not all) of the people who write for your publication are not writers. I'm betting that you don't consider yourself a writer. I know I don't think that of myself! They, like you, are everyday people who were voted or appointed into office. They are now expected to educate and inform the membership on a regular basis AND by a deadline. Oh boy they were not looking for this! Here are a few ideas to help them. Because if they look good – your paper looks good!

If someone says they don't know what to write, have suggestions ready – the contract, your local agreement, the last grievance they won (or lost!), the latest crack down from management. If you have someone who is into politics, perhaps they could write on legislation. You could have someone go out and interview a few members each month. A sports column, jokes (clean only!) or a personal column for births, deaths, retirements, birthdays, etc.

Another way to help is to "clean up" or edit their articles. Not to change the intent or purpose of what they are writing but keep it

in order with proper grammar and spelling. Always check with the writer first but most won't mind as long as you keep their message intact. Some people have a tendency to write long paragraphs that go on and on. Some will write a whole article with no paragraphs! Get in there and shorten them up. Use subheads, bullets, or put an especially strong comment in bold type or box it. Anything to break the article up so it is easily readable.

If the writer doesn't give you a title, don't just use The President's Report, the VP Report. Use a little imagination and read the article and pull something out that will catch the reader's eye and make them want to read it. If a person sees Maintenance Report, they may not read the article because they are a clerk. But that article may be written about something they would be interested in anyway.

Most of all encourage your officers by letting them know they don't have to write a Pulitzer Prize winning article. They just have to educate and inform the members, do so on a regular basis and oh yes, meet your deadline. Piece of cake with a little help from you!

Plans set for August PPA Conference

Plans are set for the 2013 Biennial Conference of the American Postal Workers Union National Postal Press Association (PPA). Established in 1967, this event is part of the PPA's mission; helping communicators fulfill their responsibilities of informing and energizing the membership of our great union. This year's event will be held on August 22-24 in Madison, Wisconsin with a full day of pre-conference workshops on Wednesday, August 21.

The intensive four-day program consists of ten workshops that will be helpful to all who attend; from novice to experienced, to local or state organizations interested in establishing or enhancing a communications program for its membership. Also featured will be three general sessions.

Faced with a variety of issues affecting our livelihood, these are indeed trying times for postal workers. As a means to confront these challenges, it is especially important to have an active, supportive and united membership.

How can this be accomplished? We should consider the value of maintaining a presence with our members and in our communities by the regular use of effective communication mediums; such as

newsletters, social media and by communicating through public forums as well.

The PPA Conference is an opportunity to learn more about communicating – a valuable activity that can influence not only the membership but also everyone the union needs to reach in order to promote and protect the interests of union members and their families.

The conference will be held at The Madison Concourse Hotel in Madison, Wisconsin. A guestroom rate of \$127.00 per day single or double occupancy will be in effect throughout the conference, in addition to three days before and three days after the actual meeting dates. Current tax rate is 14.5%. For more information about The Madison Concourse Hotel or to make room reservations, please visit the PPA website, www.apwupostalpress.org or call hotel reservations at 1-800-356-8293. A conference registration form is also available on the website.

PPA Conference attendees are also welcome and encouraged to attend the John Akey Seminar which will be held immediately following the PPA Conference on Sunday and Monday, August 25-26. This biennial seminar named after the late John Akey, who served as a clerk craft national business agent, Wisconsin state president and president of the Wausau Area Local, will include a variety of workshops pertaining to clerk, maintenance, and motor vehicle issues. PPA members interested in attending the John Akey Seminar should contact APWU of Wisconsin President Steve Lord at PO Box 2371, Oshkosh, WI 54903 or email lordsa@charter.net.

Included in the PPA Conference educational program are the following sessions:

Pre-conference session Wednesday, August 21

Administration of Union Publications & Resources

Publishing a union paper requires more than preparing the content and printing the finished product. This workshop will examine various responsibilities associated with the administration of a union publication and

other union resources. What are the requirements for including election notices in a publication? Is it appropriate for an individual to use the union's logo? Must income generated from advertising be reported? What is the best way to maintain an up-to-date mailing list? These and several other topics will be explored in this interactive session.

Photojournalism, Creating Irresistible Photos

Even more compelling than the adage, "People like to read about people, themselves first and others second" is the fact that people like to look at people and other visual images. The focus of this gathering will be the benefits of including the membership and activities of the union in your publication and website through the art of photojournalism. Also discussed will be the ethics of editing photographs with computer programs.

APWU—A Historical Perspective; Organizing the Nonmember

How did the American Postal Workers Union come into existence? What was achieved because of the postal strike of 1970? The first segment of this workshop will address these questions and many more interesting events involving the history of the American Postal Workers Union and its predecessor unions. Nonmembers affect the strength of our union at all levels. The second part of this workshop will examine various communication methods and reference material to use when attempting to organize nonmembers.

Conference Workshops Thursday, August 22 – Saturday, August 24

Mail processing consolidations: Developing a Strategy for Getting Your Message Out (Thursday only)

This session will examine the importance of developing a working relationship with the mainstream media and strategies

Friday Night at the Movies

Networking is an important part of every conference. For conference attendees who like to continue stimulating discussion into the evening hours this event is for you. At this session you will be invited to pull up a chair, grab a snack and watch the film *As Goes Janesville*, a documentary about how a town tries to reinvent itself amid the loss of their century-old GM plant and Wisconsin's civil war over unions. The film will be followed by a discussion about the movie's subject matter.

– 2013 John Akey Seminar to follow

for influencing public support as a means to confront mail processing consolidations and other closings. Presented will be communication techniques for developing and executing a plan that will boost your media relations efforts and give your local or state union the coverage and public support it needs to properly address these important issues.

Re-designing Your Publication

Is your newsletter in-tune with the times, or is it a relic? This workshop will help you modernize your paper, transforming it into a powerful instrument that commands attention. Learn design techniques that will capture the reader's interest in the first few seconds; improve six key elements of your newsletter: format, nameplate, masthead, page layout, type choices, and paper selection; discover ways to use photos, headlines, outquotes, borders, rules and other elements for maximum impact. *Re-designing Your Publication* will provide you with the specific "how-to's" for propelling your newsletter to a new level of quality and effectiveness. (Note: Participants should bring a copy of their publication to this workshop.)

Illustrate Like a Pro: A Cartoon Collage Workshop

In addition to the written word, cartoons are an important communications tool and another way to deliver a message. Join cartoonists Huck and Konopacki in this interactive, hands-on session and explore the deep dark secrets of political cartooning. You will brainstorm ideas relevant to your workplace and learn how to use readily available material to transform those ideas into cartoon collages that demand attention. Learn to think like a cartoonist without having to draw like one.

Legal Issues: Who Pays for What I Say?

Who does a union publication belong to? Do libel and copyright laws affect your freedom of speech and freedom of the press? What are the benefits of establishing an editorial policy? How do union election laws apply to union publications

and websites? *Legal Issues: Who Pays for What I Say?* will address these questions and others with a presentation on the issues of editorial policies, responsible journalism, libel, copyright and union elections.

Using Social Media Effectively

This session will teach you the do's and don'ts of social media for union communication. Discussed will be developing an overall strategy and why social media should be a part of your plan. Also covered, the best practices when using Facebook and Twitter, and how to integrate social media content with printed newsletters and other communication resources. No experience required, only a desire to learn about how to connect with your online members. Bringing your computer to this workshop is encouraged!

Labor Journalists – Linking the Past to the Present

Exploring the relevance of labor history to today's labor movement is the focus of this workshop. By examining how our predecessors built and maintained effective unions, we can learn what strategies and tactics might be currently useful. As the labor movement increasingly becomes comprised of a new generation of members, it's important to pass on the lessons that the founders of our unions learned so well themselves. This session will help communicators educate their readers about the purpose of unions, inspire them to increase their involvement and encourage them to face up to the issues of today.

Writing and Editing for the Union Communicator (Friday & Saturday)

At this valuable hands-on session, you will learn the elements of writing and editing. You will be taken through a host of exercises to help you write inspiring editorials, powerful news stories, attention-getting features, headlines that scream "Read Me" and more. This workshop is a must for anyone that communicates with the membership through the written word.

Conference Schedule

Following is a condensed timetable of conference meetings and activities. A complete Schedule of Events is available on the PPA website, www.apwupostalpress.org.

Wednesday, August 21

7:30 a.m. – 9:00 a.m.
Registration
9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.
Pre-conference session
6:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.
Reception
(Dinner from 6:30 – 8:00)

Thursday, August 22

7:30 a.m. – 9:00 a.m.
Registration
9:00 a.m. – 10:45 a.m.
General Session
11:00 a.m. – 4:15 p.m.
Workshops
4:30 p.m. – 5:30 p.m.
Book review and discussion

Friday, August 23

8:30 a.m. – 5:15 p.m.
Workshops
7:00 p.m.
Friday Night at the Movies

Saturday, August 13

8:30 a.m. – 12:15 p.m.
Workshops
1:45 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.
General Session
5:30 p.m. – 6:30 p.m.
Reception
6:30 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.
Awards Banquet
7:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.
Award presentations/Installation of officers

Media advisories, not just a press release

by Lance Coles, Editor-at-Large

A media advisory is a short announcement to let the media know about a time sensitive planned event or to let journalists know where you will be releasing information such as a report. The goal of an advisory is to give just enough essential information to convince the media outlets of the importance of sending a reporter to cover your event or activity.

A good media advisory answers the 5W's – who what when where and why.

The difference between a media advisory and a press release is that an advisory functions as a “teaser” that alerts the media to an upcoming event; a release should contain all the information a reporter needs to write their piece. A press release is a full-fledged article with full details, relevant quotes and event photos.

Before you write a word, remember that the media outlet you are advising isn't really interested in helping you; they are looking for a story for their market. Look at your story with an objective eye.

Just like a good news story, a press advisory has to have a good headline. State your most exciting news, finding or announcement in as few words as possible. Make it punchy.

Right under the Headline, is usually a “subhead.” They are a very useful tool. The subhead gives you the opportunity to flesh out your angles and further hook the reporter, without stepping on the headline.

The headline and subhead, combined, can be up to four lines if necessary.

Like a good news story, the lead is basic journalism. The lead paragraph usually includes the who, what, when, where and how of the story, and the goal of the event. Reporters are busy and may only read the headline, subhead and lead, so all the necessary information must be in these three items. Most reporters spend 30 seconds looking at an advisory. Make the lead visual. List the speakers, and their titles. Included a quote from somebody from your organization. The quote should be the main message that you are trying to convey to the press. It should be clear, thought out and strategic.

It may be necessary to explain the location of the event, include a map or a link to the event location. If you have an agenda with times of speakers, etc. include this so reporters can attend based on when things are happening.

Mention a “photo opportunity” if one exists and be sure to send it to the photo editors. The reporters and photo editors don't always share information.

Included a short summary of your organization in the last paragraph.

Structure and form of the advisory

In the top left corner, type “FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE” then under that “Media Advisory” and beneath that type the date.

Every Media Advisory must have contact information. This usually is in the top right corner. It includes names, phone numbers, email address of two, if you have that many. Make sure the contacts can be easily reached.

Type “###” at the end of your advisory. This should be centered on the page. This is a signal to reporters that it is the end of information. If there is more, additional page(s), then type “MORE” at the bottom center of the page. You will need to put a contact phone number and a short headline in the upper-right hand corner of subsequent pages. Try to keep your advisories to one page if you can.

If possible, print the advisory on letterhead.

If you are emailing the information, copy and paste the advisory in the body of the email, and include a letterhead attachment. Make sure you place a compelling proactive subject heading in the email.

When to send out the advisory

This depends upon the types of media that you are targeting. For daily media, fax or email the advisory a couple of days before the event. You will have to allow more time for weekly shows and publications. Keep in mind that most media reporters meet early in the morning for their assignments.

The day before the event, call reporters. Let them know you sent over an advisory and then pitch the story and remind them about your event. You might want to call the reporters the morning of the event to remind them. Have a copy of the advisory ready to be emailed or faxed.

If possible, create press packets or kits. This should include detailed information, contact information again and places they can get even more information. Place these in folders and hand out as the reporters arrive.

APWU LOCAL

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
MEDIA ADVISORY
August 24, 2013

CONTACT:
Lance Coles, 555-3323
lanceapwu@yahoo.com

Congressman Braley to march with Postal Workers and Community

Postal workers, elected officials and labor to march across town to get the public support to save the United States Postal Service

WHO: Congressman Braley, Des Moines Mayor Anderson

WHAT: Walk from main post office to federal building, to help make the public aware of the proposed closing, and loss of Saturday delivery. Speakers at Federal Bldg.

WHEN: Sunday August 25, 2013 1:00 PM

WHERE: Main post office, 2nd and University to Federal Bldg.

WHY: There are officials in Washington D.C. that are out to dismantle the USPS, and the only way to stop them is with the public getting involved. They want to privatize the service which will impact Iowan's everywhere.

“If we don't stand up to those in Congress that want to destroy the postal service, they won't stop there. What service is next?” Said Mayor Anderson.

Agenda: 1:30 Congressman Braley; Mayor Anderson; Jan Laue; Alliance of Retired Americans; Lance Coles, president Local 44 APWU

Great photo opportunities.

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Ignorance costs – knowledge pays

by Edward J. Brennan,
Secretary-Treasurer

One of the greatest assets of being human is the ability to reason, absorb knowledge and then transfer that knowledge to others and use it to benefit ourselves and humankind through our thoughts, words and deeds. Doctor, lawyer, union president or editor are just titles for positions until the persons who fill them can perform the required duties by transferring their knowledge into action for the good of the persons they represent.

Being called a teacher does not a teacher make until the person filling that position can pass on their knowledge to their students. Being a lawyer is just a title until the person holding that title can represent their clients by winning cases through their knowledge and interpretation of the law. And doctors are not doctors until they can put their knowledge to work for the health and welfare of their patients.

So it is with postal union presidents and editors in today's ever-changing postal service. Recent reductions of postal facilities, lack of funding because of the effects of unwise congressional actions through poorly conceived legislation and changes in the workforce through early retirements have all added to a loss of union members, funding, and even skilled officers.

New people have had to step up as leaders in positions for which they had no training. Members of local and state organizations are spread throughout their areas of the country because of closings of large facilities and vacancies in smaller offices. Knowledge of contract regulations and postal rulings that were previously not applicable to present employees has suddenly come into play in their lives. Suddenly we are faced with the issue of re-tooling the machinery of our local and state organizations and retraining our members and officers in the everyday functions and regulations of our workplace.

The main problem placed before us is ignorance; ignorance of our ever-changing workplace and ignorance of the rules and regulations governing that workplace. The cure for this new found ignorance is education, not only of the officers of our union but also the continued education of our members. And since most members

can't or don't attend union meetings, the only possible way to achieve and educated membership is through the printed word.

Local and state organizations should either start or update newsletters which can be regularly printed and circulated to the entire membership. The strongest unions are educated unions. The strongest members are educated members. Good members are members who know the workplace rules and know they are being violated or misinterpreted. Educated members make stronger unions and make the jobs of their officers easier. Educated members and officers save money. Uneducated members and officers cost the local and state and even the national union through ignorance of what is right and wrong in the workplace and how to enforce the contract and maintain a correctly functioning workplace for the members.

With this in mind, I would like to remind the members and officers of the APWU about one of the best training programs for

the members of our organization. This educational program is the biennial conference of the APWU National Postal Press Association in August of this year. What better way to learn about keeping our members informed than learning about postal union newsletters?

New officers and editors can learn about structure and composition, writing feature stories and editorials, grammar and punctuation, legal issues, social media and much more. Dedicated union officers stepping into new positions can learn first-hand about the proper functioning of their positions. Theirs would no longer be the acceptance of a title but the stepping up to a position they now know something about and deserve to be called president or editor. They will now begin to be educated in performing the functions of their positions and creating an educated and fully operational local or state organization. Now they will readily be able to see that **Ignorance costs – knowledge pays.**

Avoiding burnout

by Frank Antinone, Editor-at-Large

I came across an article in *The Mind Tools Newsletter*, discussing the topic of burnout. All of us can suffer from this because of working full-time at the USPS and trying to balance our union positions, if it's either state or local editors. I have taken some excerpts from this article. I think it will be very beneficial to all of us.

What is Burnout?

Two important definitions of burnout are:

“A state of physical, emotional, and mental exhaustion caused by long term involvement in emotionally demanding situations.” – Ayala Pines and Elliot Aronson.

“A state of fatigue or frustration brought about by devotion to a cause, way of life, or relationship that failed to produce the expected reward.” – Herbert J. Freudenberger.

Between them, these definitions embrace the essence of burnout, with the first stressing the part that exhaustion plays in it, and the second focusing on the sense of

disillusionment that is at its core. Anyone can become exhausted. What is so different about burnout is that it mainly strikes people who are highly committed to their work: You can only “burn out” if you have been “alight” in the first place. While exhaustion can be overcome with rest, a core part of burnout is a deep sense of disillusionment, and it is not experienced by people who can take a more cynical view of their work.

Specific symptoms of burnout include:

Having a negative and critical attitude at work.

Dreading going into work, and wanting to leave once you're there.

Having low energy, and little interest at work.

Having trouble sleeping.

Being absent from work a lot.

Having feelings of emptiness.

Experiencing physical complaints such as headaches, illness, or backache.

Being irritated easily by team members or clients.

Please see Avoiding burnout, page 8

Avoiding burnout . . .

Continued from page 7

Having thoughts that your work doesn't have meaning or make a difference.

Pulling away emotionally from your colleagues or clients.

Feeling that your work and contribution goes unrecognized.

Blaming others for your mistakes.

Thinking of quitting work, or changing roles.

Stress and Burnout

So, what's the difference between stress and burnout? Although the two share some characteristics, there are distinct differences. Stress is often relatively short-term, and it is often caused by a feeling that work is out of control. You might experience stress several days in a row, especially when you're working on a large project or under a tight deadline. However, once the situation changes, stress often lessens or disappears entirely. (Stress can affect you over the longer-term, however, if you're consistently experiencing these things.)

Burnout often takes place over a longer period. You might experience it if you believe your work is meaningless; when there's a disconnect between what you're currently doing and what you truly want to be doing; or when things change for the worse – for example, when you lose a supportive boss, or when your workload increases beyond a sustainable point. You go through “the motions” instead of being

truly engaged. Over time, this leads to cynicism, exhaustion, and, sometimes, poor performance.

Causes of Burnout

People experience burnout for a variety of reasons. Lack of autonomy is a common cause, so you might experience burnout if you don't have much control over your work, or if you feel that you never have enough time to finish tasks and projects. Another common cause is when your values don't align with the actions, behaviors, or values of your organization, or of your role.

Other causes include:

Having unclear goals or job expectations.

Working in a dysfunctional team or organization.

Experiencing an excessive workload.

Having little or no support from your boss or organization.

Lacking recognition for your work.

Having monotonous or low-stimulation work.

Consequences of Burnout

Clearly, the consequences of burnout can be severe. Your productivity can drop dramatically; and this not only impacts your career, but it negatively impacts your team and organization as well. Your creativity will also be affected, so you're less likely to spot opportunities (and you don't

have the interest or desire to act on them), and you may find excuses to miss work or take days off sick.

Career burnout can also spill over into your personal life, negatively impacting your well-being and your relationships with friends and family. Burnout can cause a variety of health problems including sleeplessness, physical ailments and sicknesses, depression, and even substance abuse. If you're concerned for your health, speak with an appropriate health professional.

How to Avoid Burnout

When feelings of burnout start to occur, many people focus on short-term solutions such as taking a vacation. While this can certainly help, the relief is often only temporary. You also need to focus on strategies that will have a deeper impact, and create lasting change. Symptoms of burnout include low energy, a loss of interest in your work, and irritability with colleagues or team members. As such, it can cause low productivity, high absenteeism, low creativity, and even health problems.

To avoid burnout, follow these tips:

Work with purpose.

Perform a job analysis, and eliminate or delegate unnecessary work.

Give to others.

Take control, and actively manage your time.

Get more exercise.

Learn how to manage stress.