

WINTER 2000

Roger L. Firestien, Ph. D.



insights into innovation

A NEWSLETTER TO HELP YOU BECOME MORE CREATIVE

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Rewards: A Two-Way Street

Who most wins when you reward and recognize an employee for a creative contribution to your business? The employee, right? Be careful—don't be too quick with your answer!

Janet DiClaudio has served as Director of Medical Records at both Buffalo General Hospital in Buffalo, New York, and at Candler Hospital in Savannah, Georgia. While working at Buffalo General, Janet had trouble getting doctors to complete their medical records on time. That was a huge problem, because all medical procedures, however small, must be recorded. Medical records also determine how the hospital gets paid—yet filling out medical records is not the most exciting thing in the world.

Janet solved her problem by developing a sophisticated system to get doctors to complete their medical records on time. Janet called her system, "Tootsie Roll Pops." Here's how it worked.

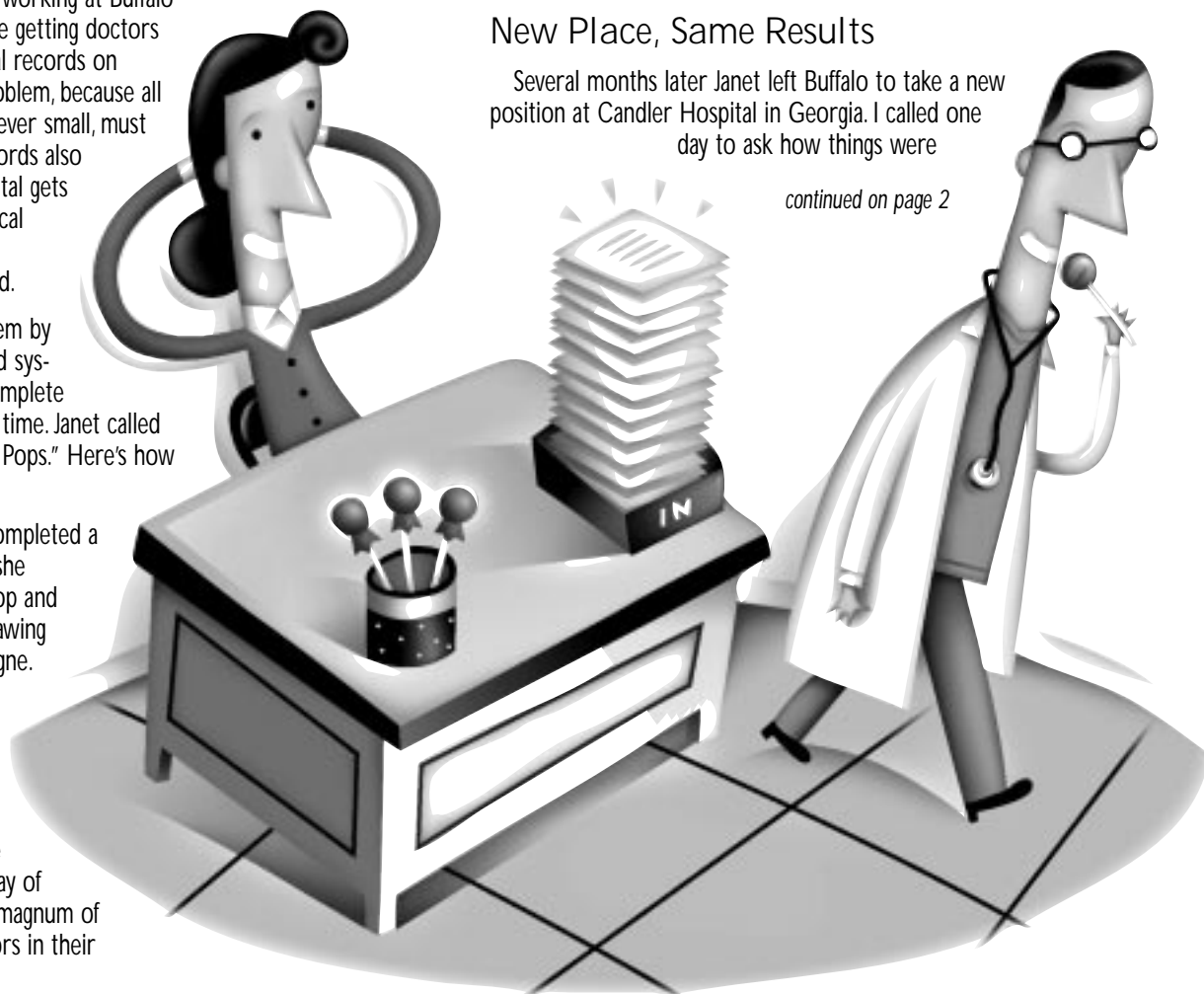
Every time a doctor completed a medical record on time, she received a Tootsie Roll Pop and her name went into a drawing for a magnum of champagne. Now, some of these doctors could afford to buy a Tootsie Roll Pop factory and they had cases of the finest champagne in their home wine cellars. Yet on the day of the first drawing for the magnum of champagne, twenty doctors in their

scrubs and lab coats stood there, Tootsie Roll Pops in their mouths, betting on who would win. And get this: medical record productivity went from something like 42 percent completion to over 80 percent completion! (For you math whizzes: how many percentage points of improvement did each Tootsie Roll bring? Hint: it's a trick question.)

New Place, Same Results

Several months later Janet left Buffalo to take a new position at Candler Hospital in Georgia. I called one day to ask how things were

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Recognition Works!

Management experts Thomas J. Peters and Robert H. Waterman offer six guidelines for effective use of praise and recognition.

1. *Make the praise specific.* Give as much content in your praise as possible.

2. *Make the praise immediate.* Thomas Watson, Sr., of IBM, is reported to have made a practice of writing out a check on the spot for notable achievements.

3. *The system of positive feedback in use should take account of achievability.* Small wins as well as major wins should be rewarded. Good news swapping is common in the excellent companies.

4. *A good portion of the positive feedback should come in the form of attention from top management.* This kind of reward may be intangible, but it may also be the most important form of recognition of all.

5. *Positive reinforcements should be unpredictable and intermittent.* Regular reinforcement loses impact because it comes to be expected.

6. *Recognition should be smaller and more frequent rather than larger and rare.* Big bonuses often discourage scores of workers who think they deserve them but can't get them; such big rewards frequently turn into political bombshells.

In general, leaders should simply remember to be generous with praise and stingy with criticism. It works!

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going. "Roger, the doctors are acting like children," she said, "so I've decided to treat them like children."

"Janet, what are you doing?" I asked.

"Well, we've gone through twenty pounds of animal crackers in the last two weeks," she replied.

"Janet! First it was Tootsie Roll Pops in Buffalo; now it's animal crackers in Savannah. What's going on?"

She explained that her new hospital had a backlog of about 300 medical records. To change that, she instituted a system that rewarded completion of backlogged records with a handful of animal crackers.

Two weeks and twenty pounds of animal crackers later, the hospital had only thirty-two medical records to complete, resulting in a collection of more than *four and a half million dollars* in attestation signatures (which allows the bill to be processed).

After Janet got doctors to complete their medical records on time, however, another problem soon emerged. The doctors weren't coming to the medical records office to sign them.

Janet gave that problem to her staff. In a Creative Problem Solving session she asked, "How might we get doctors to sign off on their completed medical records?" One idea her group conjured up: "If the doctors aren't coming to medical records, let's take medical records to the doctors."

At face value the idea seems pretty far-fetched—Medical Records is an entire department of a hospital; it can't trail behind tardy doctors. But Janet had established an environment in which people felt free to contribute ideas. Her group did a little research and found that a consistently high concentration of doctors could always be found in a single area of the hospital: the doctors' lounge. Why not put a desk from Medical Records in the hallway in front of the doctors' lounge, then staff it with a Medical Records staff person, two computers and a telephone?

Janet gave legs to the idea and these days, when a medical record is completed, it doesn't sit in Medical Records waiting for a doctor to come in and sign it. Instead it is taken to the desk in the hallway in front of the doctors' lounge. When a

doctor comes down to the lounge for a cup of coffee or to consult with a colleague, a Medical Records staff person opens the appropriate record and asks the doctor to sign off on it. Then the doctor is rewarded with a dinosaur-shaped graham cracker. By moving a Medical Records outpost to a desk-in-the-hall-by-the-lounge, the hospital is regularly reducing its accounts receivable by about *three and one-half million dollars a month!*

Recognizing people for a job well done doesn't have to be expensive. A dinner, a note, even Tootsie Roll Pops and animal crackers will work. And the payoff can be extraordinary. (Besides, you can occasionally help yourself to some of these rewards. Why shouldn't the rewarder be rewarded once in awhile?)

Recognition and the Motivation to Excel

Research on creative productivity has found that people are motivated in various ways. It's a great mistake to think that money is the only (or even the best) motivation. In fact, a group I worked with at a public utility generated a list of fifty ways in which they would like to be recognized for their creative efforts. Only four of those fifty items—less than 10 percent—had anything to do with money. Some of the creative rewards they craved included:

- Flexible schedule
- Time off
- Using the company president's office for a day
- A preferred parking place
- A ride in the company's hot air balloon
- Using a company car for a day

When a worker enjoys his or her work and is praised and recognized for noteworthy accomplishments, motivation skyrockets. Albert Einstein said, "It's a very grave mistake to think that the enjoyment of seeing and searching can be prompted by means of coercion and a sense of duty." Arthur Schawlow, the Nobel Laureate in physics, said this about his own creativity and that of his colleagues: "The labor of love aspect is important. The successful scientists often are not the most talented, but the ones who are just impelled by curiosity."

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Patricia Troy at *Newsday* A Big Payoff on the First Day

Creative Problem Solving can be applied to an infinite number of situations where fresh thinking and new approaches are most needed. And sometimes it can even get you a job.

That's the testimony of Patricia Troy, Training Project Manager for *Newsday*, a Times Mirror company. When she originally met Dr. Roger Firestien a few years ago at a problem solving seminar sponsored by Times Mirror, she held a different job. "I am now in the training department and responsible for the whole program," she says, "so I guess you could almost say that Roger's method helped me get this job! That's another plus I never thought of."

Of course, that's only one of the possible benefits of harnessing the power of creative problem solving. Much more common is the savings of untold thousands of dollars.

In what she describes as "probably our biggest success," Pat facilitated a CPS session for *Newsday's* production department. The group started off with a very general goal: "It would be great if we had no errors in producing the newspaper." After nine or ten attempts at rephrasing their problem statement, they decided to focus on how to develop a system to check the paper for accuracy before it is released. After the session concluded that afternoon, the production team went back to the composing room and created their comprehensive checklist. By using the list that night, the team caught an error in a full page color advertisement that would have cost \$22,000 to fix. "We made our money back on the first day!" Pat declared.

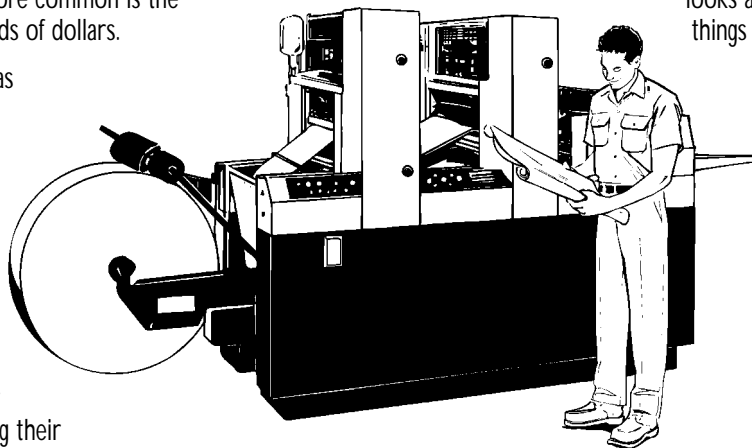
Since then the composing room foreman has reported that his team catches between three and eight errors a week with the new checklist. Not every error avoided saves the company \$22,000, but as Pat says, "Every error is something you don't want."

Additionally, because of the CPS session the production team set up what they call "huddles" between four or five departments at set intervals to check "in position" sheets—and "in position" errors are now reduced between 80-100 percent.

How did the team feel about these changes? "They told us this wasn't brain surgery and it wasn't anything they couldn't have thought up on their own," Pat said. "They just never did. This was the little push they needed. No one came up with any major breakthroughs; it was just so obvious sometimes that you don't think of it."

The techniques Pat learned at Dr. Firestien's CPS sessions impressed her so much that she's now using some of them at home. She admits that

she now
looks at
things



differently than she once did. She doesn't jump to conclusions before really checking out whether she's identified the real problem. "I actually make my kids do it once in awhile at home," she says. "I ask them, 'Are you sure this is really what you're trying to do?' And then I ask them to rephrase the problem. Sometimes they come up with a little different way of looking at things."

That's pretty amazing, coming from someone who used to think she didn't have a creative bone in her body. "But Roger proved to me that I do," Pat said. "I just never thought of it that way."

See the Vision

Perhaps you have heard of Christopher Wren, one of the greatest of English architects, who walked one day unrecognized among the men who were at work upon the building of St Paul's cathedral in London which he had designed.

"What are you doing?" he inquired of one of the workmen, and the man replied, "I am cutting a piece of stone."

As he went on he put the same question to another man, and the man replied, "I am earning five shillings two pence a day."

And to a third man he addressed the same inquiry and the man answered, "I am helping Sir Christopher Wren build a beautiful cathedral."

- attributed to Louise Bush-Brown, Director of the Pennsylvania School of Horticulture for Women.

"An intelligent plan is the first step to success.

If one doesn't know where they are going, how can they expect to get there?"

- author unknown

"Innovative organizations provide freedom to act, which (in turn) arouses the desire to act."

- Rosabeth Moss Kanter

Mama, lookit all the the goodies

Let's see . . . Santa has hightailed it back to the North Pole, his elves have disappeared with him, all the Yuletide decorations have been put away for another year (except at Roger's house), and Christmas is long gone. Yet . . . what are these shiny presents I see stacked everywhere? Where did these mounds of goodies come from?

Could it be . . . is it possible . . . (let me catch my breath)—this is Roger Firestien's famous product catalog bundled with this issue of *i*? It is! It is! And it's loaded with all sorts of fabulous resources designed especially for you.

You want business-enhancing books? You got it. You want idea-generating, income-increasing videos? You got it. You want inspiring cassette tapes? You got it. You want nifty toys (for those still panting after Santa's sleigh)? You got it.

Just take a peak at the innovation resources detailed in the catalog, and make Christmas arrive in your office a little early this year.



We're Rewarded With Your Presence!

Each year as one calendar ends and the next one begins, we're reminded of the good things in life we enjoy and the great people we are privileged to know. But here at *i*, we can do that one better. We don't have to wait for the holiday season to give thanks for the good people in our lives; we get to do that several times each year when we welcome new folks to our growing family of discerning readers!



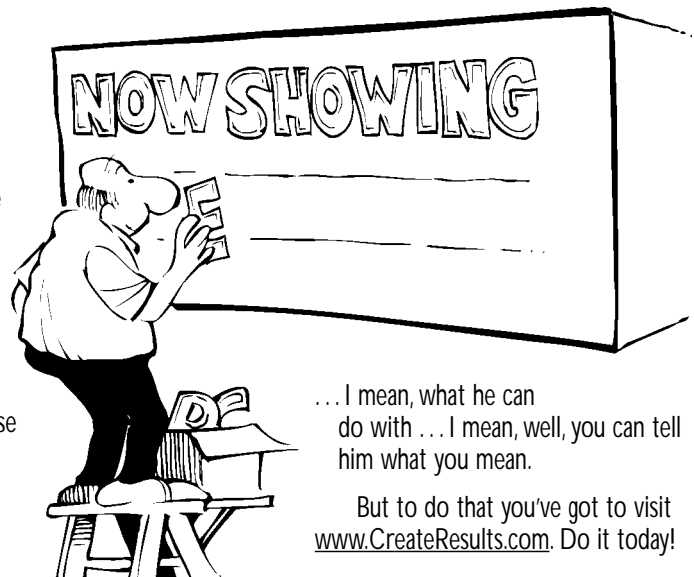
We're positively giddy to announce our newest *i* friends:

- GE Capital
- United States Department of the Treasury
- Greater Buffalo Convention & Visitors Bureau
- Foodservice Educators Network International
- Chef des Chefs Conference
- National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)

Welcome, one and all! We consider you to be (whether you like it or not) our best present this season!

Explore! Ideas! Action! Contact!

No, it's not the weak opening line of a bad Hollywood movie, but the cheery welcome you'll receive when you dial up Dr. Roger Firestien's dazzling website at www.CreateResults.com. On-line you'll find helpful descriptions of the seminars and programs the Creative One offers, as well as news about other resources (videos, books, assorted goodies) available at the touch of a mouse button. You can even send the Regal Rewarder an e-mail message about where to stick



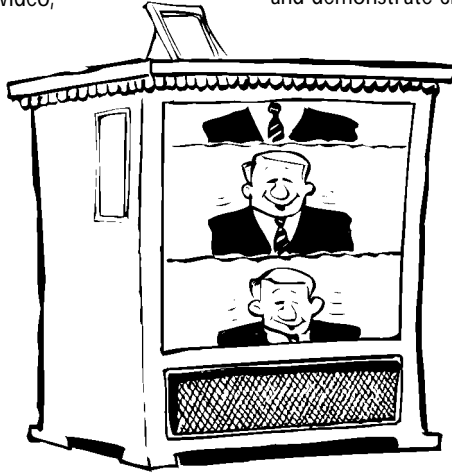
... I mean, what he can do with . . . I mean, well, you can tell him what you mean.

But to do that you've got to visit www.CreateResults.com. Do it today!

Reward Yourself with A New Way of Seeing

The best rewards are often the ones you give yourself. So why not do yourself a huge favor and send for Dr. Firestien's new video, *Brilliant, Simply Brilliant*, a delightful five-part video series designed to jump start the creative urges in each of us?

In these exciting videos five brilliant ideas are compellingly presented to show how the creative process can work for you, right now, where you sit. The five installments—*Over & Outta Here*; *There's Something About Judy*; *Plastic Gold*; *Play It Again*,



Vin!; and *Thinking Inside The Box*—are taken from widely differing sectors of business and industry and demonstrate clearly how the creative process can be applied to benefit your bottom line. Each installment lasts approximately six minutes and is perfect to open or close (otherwise dull) meetings. Each one is instantly applicable to real-life situations you may be facing right now.

Order *Brilliant, Simply Brilliant* (call 1-888-777-9144) and enjoy what could be the best reward you'll receive all year!

Getting the Boot Doesn't Mean Winning a Trip to Italy

And we're not announcing a European Travel Contest, either. *Actually*, we're loathe to be one of those presents that sits around in some dusty little corner, unopened and unappreciated. So if you'd rather not be blessed with your own free copy of *Þ* each quarter of the year, we beg you to give us the boot. Or the hook. Or the old heave-ho. However you say it, let us know that you'd prefer hereafter to be *Þ*-less, and we'll send your subscription to . . . well, the great hereafter. Contact us by phone, fax, mail or e-mail (information at the bottom of each page of this rag), and we'll be sure to say a prompt *arrivederci* or *ciao* or whatever most firmly communicates our immediate absence from your mailbox.

And the next time you're in Rome, you can read *Il Giornale* instead.



A Two-Way Street

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Leaders can help create these "labors of love" by liberal use of praise and recognition. Threats and appeals to duty and obligation are simply not effective in the long term.

The Power of Praise and Rewards

Tom Peters speaks of "an almost spooky similarity of language" among America's top company managers when it comes to praise and recognition. To a man and woman they stress the value of a positive attitude and the effectiveness of praise and other forms of positive feedback. "The most successful managers," Peters says, "are those who are unwilling to tolerate the negative stuff."

You simply can't go wrong by showering your employees and coworkers with praise and rewards. Of course, it must be genuine; who wants to receive an obviously bogus compliment?

But what power there is in genuine, generous praise! It has the muscle to give hope to the discouraged, energy to the feeble, and life to the dead.

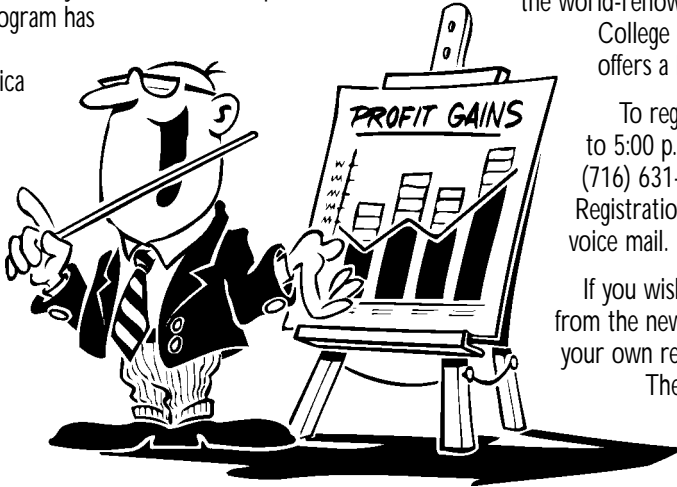
A letter that Ralph Waldo Emerson wrote to a young Walt Whitman encouraged the latter to finish and publish his now-famous book, *Leaves of Grass*. In part, that letter said, "I greet you at the beginning of a great career, which must yet have had a long foreground somewhere, for such a start. I rubbed my eyes a little to see if this sunbeam were no illusion: but the solid sense of the book is a sober certainty. It has the best merits, namely of fortifying and engaging." Emerson's public endorsement not only encouraged Whitman—"I was simmering, simmering," wrote Whitman, "Emerson brought me to a boil"—but helped the published book to sell out each printing.

Certainly, I know that giving praise and recognition doesn't come naturally to many leaders. It may be that it's not an inherent part of your nature. But if you want to succeed in the marketplace and keep ahead of your competitors, you'd better learn the value of praise and rewards, then practice them in your business. The bottom line is, they work.

News Flash: Unleash Your Creativity

Start making plans now to attend a unique three-day event called *Unleashing the Power of Creativity*, to be held October 17-19, 2000, and again on April 17-19, 2001, at the Garden Place Hotel in Williamsville, New York, just ten minutes from the new Buffalo Niagara International Airport.

Dr. Roger Firestien will be leading the first two days of the workshop (8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.), while faculty members from the Center for Studies in Creativity will be leading the programs on the third day (9 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.). In this interactive program, participants will learn the Creative Problem Solving process and how to apply it in order to solve actual problems that they encounter in their professional or personal life. This program has been delivered in both North and South America to train existing work groups as well as entire divisions and organizations and has consistently exceeded participants' expectations in terms of financial gain, time savings, and organizational effectiveness.



Cost for the program is \$895, which includes the following:

- Breakfast and lunch for three days
- The book, *Creativity Unbound*
- All instructional materials
- Lifetime subscription to *Insights into Innovation*
- And other lovely gifts and gadgets

The program is presented by Dr. Roger Firestien in cooperation with the world-renowned Center for Studies in Creativity at Buffalo State College in Buffalo, New York—the only place in the world that offers a Master of Science Degree in Creativity and Innovation.

To register call Lois or Gary in Dr. Firestien's office, 9:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Eastern Standard Time, Monday through Friday, at (716) 631-3564; or fax the form below to (716) 631-2610. Registrations will also be taken 24 hours a day, 7 days a week on voice mail.

If you wish to stay at the Garden Place Hotel, which is 10 minutes from the new Buffalo Niagara International Airport, please make your own reservations by calling 716-635-9000 or 1-800 GARDEN1.

The address of the hotel is 6615 Transit Road, Williamsville, NY 14221. Mention the Unleashing the Power of Creativity program to get our special rate.

Registration Form

Yes! I would like to attend Unleashing the Power of Creativity and learn how to help my business multiply through applying the exciting principles developed by Dr. Roger Firestien and the faculty of the Center for Studies in Creativity at Buffalo State College.

Name: _____

Title: _____ Phone: _____

Organization: _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip _____

E-mail: _____ Fax: _____

I would like to reserve space on the following dates:

October 17-19, 2000

April 17-19, 2001

Fees and Payment Policies

The fee for the program is \$895 (US). The fee is due no later than 15 days before the program. Fees are fully refundable if cancellation is made at least seven days prior to the program. Thereafter, 75% is refundable. Transfers and substitutions may be made at any time.

Method of Payment

Registration fee enclosed Bill my organization

Charge my: Visa MasterCard

Number: _____ Exp. Date: ____/____

Signature: _____

Enrollment is limited. Register today! Questions? 716-631-3564

Send the completed form along with your payment to: Innovation Resources, Inc. P.O. Box 615, Williamsville, NY 14231-0615

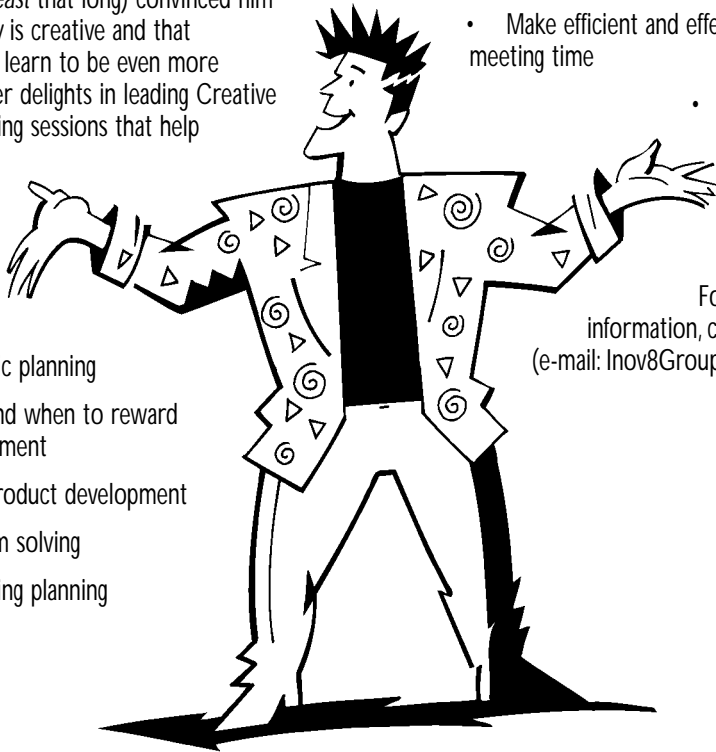
Let the Regal Rewarder Reward You—In Person!

Absence may make the heart grow fonder (in cheap romance novels anyway), but we believe that Presence makes the Bankroll grow Fatter—at least when that presence is supplied by Roger L. Firestien, Ph.D.

If you're ready to make the next leap toward greater business success, consider scheduling Dr. Firestien for a creative session or two. The Regal Rewarder longs to help you apply your creativity to your world in order to create results. Roger is a noted speaker, author, and consultant who each year trains thousands of people throughout North and South America and Europe in the uniquely effective techniques of Creative Problem Solving. His interactive programs help participants to harness and utilize their innate creativity.

Roger is President of Innovation Resources, Inc. and Associate Professor at the Center for Studies in Creativity at Buffalo State College in Buffalo, NY. Forty years of research (it really didn't take him that long to earn his degree; although if you had to read one of his term papers, you'd swear it took you *at least* that long) convinced him that *everybody* is creative and that *everybody* can learn to be even more creative. Roger delights in leading Creative Problem Solving sessions that help people learn to use their knowledge to solve challenges such as:

- Strategic planning
- How and when to reward achievement
- New product development
- Problem solving
- Marketing planning



Dr. Firestien also assists business people to:

- Generate lots of innovative ideas that create results
- Understand and clarify problems to solve the right problem
- Strengthen solutions and plan for implementation
 - Make efficient and effective use of meeting time
- Lead teams and groups creatively and effectively

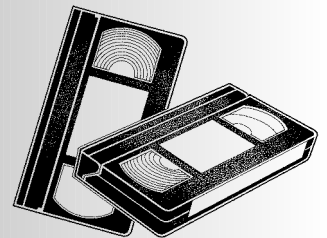
For more information, call 716-631-3564 (e-mail: Inov8Group@aol.com).

When We Say 'Free', We Mean It

Some things in life advertised as "free" really aren't. "Free vacation"—as long as you listen to some dreary 90-minute presentation about the wonders of living in prefabricated condo-type shacks set down in the middle of some Florida swamp. "Free advice"—as long as you swallow every word.

But our "free" isn't like their "free." Our free really *is*. If you'd like a free copy of our preview video tape featuring Dr. Roger Firestien as he delights and informs audiences at one of his popular seminar presentations, just write or call one of the numbers listed in the copyright line at the bottom of the page. Ask for your free preview video tape, and quick as a flash, you'll have in your hot little hands a *free, no obligation* videotape of the man Clorox calls "the gold standard" among the world's creativity experts.

And did we mention it's *free*?



Credits:

Rewarders' Review

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Lisa Halliday: Reworder's rewarder
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Lois Donovan: Receiving rewarder
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Blow Away Those Winter Blues!

- Use creative rewards to put your business into high gear!
- How creative problem solving could save you \$22,000—overnight!
- Where you can go to be refreshed, renewed and re-energized!
- And still more from the Regal Rewarder!



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Smart, Successful, and
Good Looking, Too!

No, we're not talking about Dr. Roger Firestien (he wishes!), but about you, our dear reader, who is about to dive into the newest edition of fun and frolic commonly known as *Insights Into Innovation!*

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