FEATURE

# SHED OR YOU'RE DEAD®:

## SEVEN UNCONVENTIONAL STRATEGIES THAT EVERY HR PROFESSIONAL NEEDS TO KNOW TO KEEP AN ORGANIZATION ALIVE!

by Kathy B. Dempsey, CSP

**MILLIONS OF DOLLARS AND** thousands of hours are lost each year due to the inability to get employees to move forward with your organization's changes. The bottom line: NO organization can thrive unless their people learn how to SHED. Remarkably, lizards can teach us a lot about work health and success. They grow by shedding their skin. If they don't shed, they die! The same is true with organizations. If they don't shed, they become unhealthy and die!

Below are seven shedding strategies that I've successfully used in my 20 years of organizational development work. My goal is to ignite your organization to SHED for Success™!

**1. Quit!** Yes, I said quit! When was the last time your organization sat down and focused on answering one question: What do we need to stop doing? If you haven't read Seth Godin's new book, *The Dip,* do so! The most successful companies know when to SHED and when NOT to SHED. Begin by asking, "What's outgrown or overgrown in your organization? Work roles? Clients? Products? Budgets?"

**2. Panic Now!** Yes, have a panic attack now! Most people who panic do it too late. The blessing with panicking is being consumed with "what ifs." So, stop and deliberately panic now. Get your team together and have a Panic Party! Ask yourself, "What if we lose our biggest client? What if our computer system crashes? What if we lose the most valuable member of our team?" Consciously asking yourself "what if" will allow you to more strategically plan for the future.

**3. Hallucinate!** Yes, I said hallucinate! Most organization don't spend enough time hallucinating, or visualizing, their future state. Is your organization currently stuck or facing challenges? Can your team imagine being twice as successful as you are right now? Hallucinate, or visualize, then go ahead and throw a party and celebrate your success now! Then operate as if your success has already happened. You'll be AMAZED at the results!

**4. Shut up!** Yes, stop talking! Most people don't listen well. They are too consumed with their own agendas. Want to have an edge on your competition? Then listen to your customers. Listen to your staff. Listen to your gut. It's no coincidence that Bill Marriott, CEO of Marriott hotels, spends 80% of his time visiting sites and listening to his staff.

**5. Be Codependent!** Yes, the best work environments are those that mutually support each other. Can you imagine a work place where everyone shines and is recognized for it? But how can organizations be supportive in these unpredictability times? John Bollinger, MD, psychiatrist says, "People can survive just about anything if they have three things: honesty, a plan, and support."

**6. Be a Know-It-All!** Yes, have a "know-it-all" passion to learn! Many executives are now saying the number one skill they look for in hiring employees in today's environment is the ability to "learn on the fly." Training guru Bob Pike says, "Learning has not taken place until behavior has changed." Are you hiring the right people? Are you training them? Is behavior really changing? Are you getting ROI? If you are conducting training and can't clearly define what business objectives you're addressing, it's time to SHED the training!

**7. Be Narcissistic!** Yes, be selfish! Many organizations are burning up their most valuable resource – their human capital. In this fast paced 24/7 world, do you ever hear employees saying, "Work is driving me crazy?" Or "I wish I could get out of the fast lane?" If so, encourage your employees to pull over and take time to refuel. Cars, like humans, who neglect regular maintenance, break down. Taking care of the human resources FIRST will allow the necessary energy for your organization to thrive!

Let's learn from the lizard. It's time for a corporate exfoliation. Shedding will help you stop wasting resources and propel your organization to move forward.

*"In times of change, those who shed will grow and prosper; those who refuse to shed will find themselves well-equipped for an organization (and life) that no longer exists."*

SHED OR YOU'RE DEAD®!
What do you need to SHED today? ■

*Kathy B. Dempsey is author of* Shed or You're Dead®: 31 Unconventional Strategies for Growth and Change *(Writers Digest International Book Award). She ignites organizations to SHED and visualize the possibilities. Kathy led Memorial Health Care System's strategic organizational development efforts to become one of top 100 hospitals in America. Get proven strategies to SHED for Success™ at www. KeepShedding.com.*