



Harriet Anzek

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Summary

HR.com's Karen Elmhirst speaks with VP Harriet Anzek of JMW Consultants on Productivity and Work and Home Life Balance.

HR.com's Karen Elmhirst sat down with Harriet Anzek, VP accountable for JMW's Productivity Products, to discuss one of today's most pressing concerns: productivity and the sustainability of current work levels. She explores a new program from JMW that enables Human Resources professionals to offer a solution to their organization that has real and meaningful impact on productivity and work/life balance at every level.

What is unique about your approach at JMW Consultants?

Our mission is to work with business leaders to perform in new and extraordinary ways that require fundamental shifts in thinking and behavior. JMW has a singular ability to alter what people view to be possible and produce results for which there is no precedent. Working from the principle that results and behavior are a function of people's view of what's possible and our proven ability to alter that view through our products and services are what make JMW unique.

Also, rather than give clients the answer, we provide a new framework that has people inside the organization invent the ways to get there. This leaves client organizations with a new capability and the confidence to perform at new levels.

Why do clients hire you?

Clients hire us when they are clear they need a new level of performance and results in a critical area of the business and are also clear that being successful will require their people to think and act in new ways. The pressure on performance could be the result of any number of factors – the need to take ground on competitors, to meet aggressive growth goals, to dramatically improve margins, to generate higher levels of profit, to meet regulatory or other stakeholder requirements or, in some cases, to turn around an area of the business that is weakening or even jeopardizing the company's future viability. Most frequently, clients come to us when they realize that employing their usual formulas for success are not going to get them where they want to be. Industries we have worked in include: oil and gas, pharmaceuticals, financial, consumer products, engineering, computers and telecomm.

What pressing concerns are your clients faced with today?

Productivity and the sustainability of current work levels are concerns that grow year by year. Clients are telling us that that their people feel out of control and depleted. They speak of long hours, feelings of frustration and lack of focus. Initiatives keep getting added to already full plates. People continue to be asked to do more with less.

Organizations are starting to recognize the need to address these issues in order to achieve a higher level of sustainable productivity. People need to regain control of their workdays, feel a sense of accomplishment and focus their efforts on the work that contributes most to organizational success.

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This issue is of concern to JMW because it seriously limits people's ability to entertain new possibilities or opportunities. Everything sounds like "more". I was recently working with a group of non-profits to develop a proposal that the hosting corporation wanted to fund. Their lack of enthusiasm and difficulty in thinking BIG was startling. However, in the context of being understaffed and overworked, their struggle is understandable. Major organizations have the same challenge. Organizations today are often like huge machines that churn out e-mail, meetings, initiatives, objectives at a rate that engulfs people and leaves them unfocused, distracted and resigned about their ability to do a great job at anything. Keeping their head above water is a major accomplishment. Strategic and long-term thinking take a back seat to short term fixes. Some organizations appreciate that this way of working is not sustainable in the long run and is costly both in terms of retention and stress-related health issues. However, despite their attempts to intervene, the condition persists and worsens.

What resources can you provide our HR professional members to address these concerns?

JMW has developed a new program that enables Human Resources to offer a solution to their organization that has real and meaningful impact on productivity and work/life balance at every level.

Our program called *Work and Live by Design*[™] helps companies achieve new levels of productivity by providing both a new framework for designing one's day-to-day work and new practices and tools that are consistent with that new framework. The existing time management approaches were developed in another era – an era before e-mail, voice mail, instant messaging, the flood of information and the constant demands created by increased competition and rapid change.

What makes this program different from "time management" programs?

Time management is designed to get more done and success is measured by how much you get done, whereas *Work and Live By Design*[™] is focused on the quality and satisfaction of your life. It is committed to enabling people to experience greater levels of accomplishment and fulfillment through designing their work to be an expression of that which is most important to them and their organization. Therefore, success of the *Work and Live By Design*[™] program is measured by experiencing greater peace of mind and overall satisfaction at work and at home. It is designed to support people in being the author of their work and home life versus a reaction to what's being thrown at them. One aspect of this transformation is to shift people's focus from activities to outcomes. In the endless stream of meetings and e-mail, it is easy for people to lose focus on the results they are there to produce. Our program is committed that people's time becomes self-determined versus circumstance-determined.

By the way, we have participants look at everything they have to do from a holistic approach, that is, we apply all these same principles to people's personal lives as well. I just received an e-mail from a recent client saying that he had just successfully scheduled his 2005 travel to honor both his commitment to his global businesses as well as his commitment to not be gone from home more than 60 nights or miss any school holidays. As you might imagine, he is quite excited about this and looking forward to the year ahead.

What benefits are your clients experiencing as a result of this program?

The biggest benefit is increased productivity as a result of people focusing on their primary concerns and objectives and designing their work day to deliver those objectives. Additional benefits are increased levels of satisfaction, reduced stress and peace of mind. People report a new-found ability to focus fully on what's at hand and in creating time in which to think and plan. One client told me that she was "twice as productive" since the program and had launched a program she'd been "trying" to get to for an entire year.

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Work and Live By Design™ launched 18 months ago and has been met with rave reviews from the executive leadership and management teams that have participated. Participants have regained a sense of control over their work and their workday. Instead of *surviving* the day, they are now *causing* their day. The post-program surveys, which are conducted three months after the close of the program, are showing very tangible improvements in people's productivity and work habits. These clients are now asking JMW to conduct this program at the team and organizational levels.

How does this program fit into the bigger picture of your performance-based solutions?

The program is designed to support people in implementing the new ideas and approaches they develop as part of our work addressing performance improvements. If people have great ideas but no space or time in which to work on them, the company has lost the value of their human resource. JMW views *Work and Live By Design™* as an enabler for organizations with high aspirations. Combining this solution with our full range of performance-driven consulting and executive development expertise, we enable our clients to reach heights they never thought possible.

Founded in 1982, JMW Consultants Inc. is an international executive education and management consultancy firm that specializes in helping companies worldwide produce performance breakthroughs in critical areas of their business. JMW supports clients in causing the necessary shifts in thinking and behavior of the people essential to their success. For more information please call +1 203 352 5000 or visit www.jmw.com.

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