

// SPOTLIGHT ON SUCCESS //



Protecting the Personal

Smart work and performance do not require long hours in the office or a barren personal life. The highly motivated executive team leading the San Francisco Child Abuse Prevention Center came to this realization together.

The team of seven represented a fresh mix of leaders implementing a revised mission for the rapidly growing not-for-profit organization, which was rehabbing its current center and building a new one. With so much change facing them, the group sought the expertise of Sarita Bhakuni, organizational psychologist and consultant for CPP Inc., to help them create greater synergy.

Through Bhakuni's guidance and facilitation, the leaders completed a series of four assessments during the course of two years. After each assessment—personality, leadership, needs, and conflict management—the leaders debriefed both individually with Bhakuni and as a team. Using action plans, the leaders worked to incorporate what they learned within their professional and personal lives.

"We learned that this highly talented team was basically running at full

capacity with no time to take a breath," Bhakuni says. "Front facing they were fantastic—connecting with the community, prospective investors, and so forth. Yet often this was at the expense of their personal lives, health, and well-being."

The leaders realized that investing in their personal lives actually increased their productivity, morale, and engagement at work.

Bhakuni helped the leaders to challenge their assumptions around working excessively. They examined their true productivity during those extra hours, as well as the cultural expectations they precipitated by neglecting their personal lives. The group began to keep one another

accountable to protecting their well-being. For example, if a leader worked past normal business hours, he was asked by another teammate, "Give me three good reasons why you're still here."

As they learned to let go of these false assumptions and negative expectations, the leaders began to experience a sense of relief. They realized that investing in their personal lives actually increased their productivity, morale, and engagement at work. The two years of gradual self-reflection, relationship building, and behavior change concluded with a management retreat during which the team discussed how they planned to sustain the change.

"We talked about how to extend this beyond the team, to understand how to prioritize critical moments, use team synergy to get things done, and to work smarter, not longer," Bhakuni says.