



# Motivate Your Employees



**And Make Your  
Workplace Come Alive**

*Dr. Joanne G. Sujansky*

**Make Your Workplace Come Alive:**  
**129 Tips on Winning the Hearts and Minds of Your Employees**

**By**

**Dr. Joanne G. Sujansky, CSP**  
*(Certified Speaking Professional)*  
**Founder and CEO of KEYGroup®**

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**KEYGroup®**  
1800 Sainte Claire Plaza  
1121 Boyce Road  
Pittsburgh, PA 15241  
Business (724) 942-7900 • Fax (724) 942-4648  
[www.keygroupconsulting.com](http://www.keygroupconsulting.com)

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**CONTENTS**

Introduction: Breathe New Life into Your Workplace.....	p.4
Chapter 1 Work Collaboratively: Nothing Works Better.....	p.5
Chapter 2 Hire and Tap Diverse Talent .....	p.8
Chapter 3 Coach the Players .....	p.11
Chapter 4 Keep the Keepers .....	p.14
Chapter 5 Embrace Change ... Don't Brace Yourself for It .....	p.17
Epilogue: Nothing Succeeds Like Practice .....	p. 20
About Dr. Joanne G. Sujansky, CSP (Certified Speaking Professional) .....	p.25

## **Introduction**

### **Breathe New Life into Your Workplace**

Good employees stay for many reasons. But they are most likely to remain with companies that create and sustain a workplace that epitomizes what Dr. Joanne G. Sujansky, CSP (Certified Speaking Professional), Founder and CEO of KEYGroup®, calls a Vibrant Entrepreneurial Organization, or VEO.

Employees who work at a VEO know the organization's big picture and behave like accountable entrepreneurs. Their work is enriching, and they have what they need to move the corporate vision forward more profitably. Employees in a VEO are highly productive, but their on-the-job stress is minimal. They work with higher energy, creativity and greater focus.

VEO employees create a winning tradition. Victory celebrations create a living momentum that produces more wins. Communication reaches the level of an art form. Diversity of opinion, background and culture are valued highly, and organizational rigidity gives way to the flexibility needed in today's unforgiving business world.

The result? New and better bonds occur at all levels and talented employees want to stay.

This book of tips will help you to create a work environment that comes alive, instilling the principles of a VEO that will sustain your company's growth and profitability.

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## CHAPTER 1

### WORK COLLABORATIVELY: NOTHING WORKS BETTER

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**Tip # 1****Share your principles and live by them.**

People want to know what you stand for and that you are guided by your values and beliefs.

**Tip # 2****Fight for what's right.**

If something is right to do, push for it. If it's wrong, unethical, or out-of-line, refuse to do it and don't force others to do it.

**Tip # 3****Think positively.**

Being positive is contagious and fosters positive attitudes and behaviors.

**Tip # 4****Establish on-going and final evaluative processes and decide on a feedback system to use as people work on their goals.**

This provides opportunities for improvement.

**Tip # 5****Keep notes on performance discussions held with your team members.**

Annual reviews are much more valuable when they summarize performance over the full year.

**Tip # 6****Fix what's broken, whether it's a machine or a process.**

People don't need to be burdened by problems that can be corrected.

**Tip # 7****Network. Be a servant in your organization, profession and community. Devote time to informal contacts inside and outside your organization.**

When you are seen and heard, you are real and more believable. When you serve, chances are better that others will serve. Plus, you'll find the talent you need everywhere.

**Tip # 8****Notice the little things that people do for you and say, "Thank you." Send personal notes of congratulation, condolence, encouragement, get well and appreciation to people as often as possible.**

In this high-tech, low-touch world, you will stand out as a caring, devoted leader with heart. People like to be acknowledged for their kindness.

**Tip # 9**

**Acknowledge birthdays, weddings, anniversaries, promotions, awards and community service.**

People feel they belong when they are recognized and remembered. This may keep them with you or available to you when you need them most.

**Tip # 10**

**Express your concern when something sad happens to a person.**

Showing that you have a heart goes a long way in today's fast-paced, no-time-for-touch culture.

**Tip # 11**

**Try something difficult and challenging for you. Get help if you need it.**

It's useful to feel the pressure that we often put on others.

**Tip # 12**

**Squelch rumors. Kill the grapevine.**

People have enough to worry about.

**Tip # 13**

**Sometimes, be happy and satisfied with less than perfect.**

If you wait for perfect, another company, organization or team will get there first.

**Tip # 14**

**Schedule time for reading trade journals, business briefs, newspapers and books.**

You are a better resource for your team when you are informed.

**Tip # 15**

**Take action for your team. Often we know what to do, but we let things get in the way.**

Schedule the appointment. Coach your team members. Get the funds you need. Whatever you are putting off is probably best done now.

**Tip # 16**

**Support your ideas with three points.**

Mention three facts, three reasons, three benefits or three examples. This helps others to remember your points and to attract them to your way of thinking.

**Tip # 17**

**Expect and model ethical behavior.**

Others around you will know the standard and understand what's expected of them.

**Tip # 18**

**Mind your manners. Good manners are always in style.**

Your followers will be proud of you.

**Tip # 19**

**Balance your work and your life.**

This will energize you and those around you.

**Tip # 20****Get in touch with the child within you.**

Playfulness and freedom can unleash you and your team's creativity.

**Tip # 21****Remember and reflect on the process you used when you accomplished previous successes.**

Reapply it. You and your team can repeat previous accomplishments.

**Tip # 22****Run participatory, well-planned, purposeful meetings.**

People want to be involved and to have their time respected.

**Tip # 23****Cultivate relationships.**

Good working relationships make a difference to people, when they know you care.

**Tip # 24****Take a walk with a team member.**

Get to know the other person when there are no interruptions.

**Tip # 25****Delegate to others tasks that you enjoy doing.**

Others may enjoy them, too. They may learn something new or may feel privileged to have been given the work.

**Tip # 26****Do it your team's way. Perhaps your way would work, but maybe theirs is better.**

Try it. You may like it.

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## CHAPTER 2

### HIRE AND TAP DIVERSE TALENT

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**Tip # 27****Build diverse teams.**

Different perspectives, experiences, education and ages enrich the work environment. These perspectives may go a long way in solving problems and seizing opportunities.

**Tip # 28****Address diversity, especially multicultural and generational differences.**

Customize coaching techniques to the individuality of each team member. Respectfully acknowledging differences helps to make people feel valued.

**Tip # 29****Help your team make 1 + 1 = 3.**

Techniques like brainstorming and creative problem solving generate more and better ideas.

**Tip # 30****Delegate whatever it is that you should not be doing to someone who could or should do it.**

The person you delegate the assignment to may love it, learn from it, get well-needed visibility, or all of the above! This can provide a possible motivator, perk, or learning experience for them.

**Tip # 31****Welcome resistance to change or decisions.**

When you can see it or hear it, you can begin to help people resolve their resistance.

**Tip # 32****Recognize that my-way-or-the-highway tactics don't work today.**

People want to be heard and to have choices.

**Tip # 33****Value people more than you value things.**

You will be truly rewarded.

**Tip # 34****Always solicit feedback. Listen. Listen. And then listen some more.**

You don't learn by hearing yourself talk. You will be surprised at what you'll learn.

**Tip # 35****Ask “Why?” often.**

This question is a good investment of your time and effort, because it enables you to get a deeper understanding of what may be very important.

**Tip # 36****Tap a cross section of people when you have big decisions to make.****Select the best people, places and times for decisions.**

Others may have information you lack, but need. Your energy will rise, you will move faster, and your decisions may be better.

**Tip # 37****Make time for important, high-value things.**

A continual crisis-management approach provides a bad example for others.

**Tip # 38****Avoid taking yourself seriously all the time.**

If you do, you may find that others take to you more easily.

**Tip # 39****Frequently recognize and celebrate even small accomplishments.**

Employees appreciate spontaneous, positive recognition along the way instead of a delayed recognition during a performance review. Such recognition motivates them toward more success.

**Tip # 40****Rejoice in your uniqueness and the uniqueness of others. Talk with people and discover their singular abilities. Take notes to remember what you learned.**

If you do, those around you will appreciate your uniqueness and seek to identify their own. People will feel special and recharged.

**Tip # 41****Acknowledge a job well done.**

Well-placed compliments prompt people to repeat the behaviors that got the compliment.

**Tip # 42****Invest time in your key people. See the good in them and tell them what you see.**

Most people have had more feedback about what they are not doing well. Change the way you deliver your feedback to other people and you'll change them. Giving them your time is one of the best gifts you can give.

**Tip # 43****Let people know they make a difference.**

They will repay you with their loyalty many times over.

**Tip # 44****Feel good by helping others to feel good.**

This improves everyone's mental health.

**Tip # 45**

**Discover what's in it for you and for others. If you can't find it, create it.**

We all want to know what's in it for us.

**Tip # 46**

**Show that you care.**

When you show employees that you care about them and treat them as your most valuable resource, they'll care back.

**Tip # 47**

**Listen between the lines.**

People show what they feel through their actions and reactions. Pay attention to what concerns them and what turns them on.

**Tip # 48**

**Acknowledge and nurture the uniquely different strengths of each of your team members.**

Different things motivate different people and are important to them.

**Tip # 49**

**Creatively build in flexibility.**

Consider work schedules that may include longer workdays and shorter workweeks and telecommuting where appropriate.

**Tip # 50**

**Partner with your team members. Think and talk in terms of "we."**

Working collaboratively toward desired outcomes bonds team members together so that they solve problems and seize opportunities better and faster. Doing so reminds you and your team that you're all in it together.

**Tip # 51**

**Stand by your team. People need to know you're in their corner.**

Help them get the resources and support they need to achieve their goals. They feel more valued when they see you fight for what they need and stand up for policies that help them.

**Tip # 52**

**Cheer your team on. Let them hear you and see you when they are showing their stuff.**

Your support is powerful for you and them.

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## CHAPTER 3

### COACH THE PLAYERS

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**Tip # 53****Coach and facilitate more.**

The “I tell/you do” method of management fails to retain people.

**Tip # 54****Raise the bar. Challenge others and yourself to do better. At the same time, set specific, challenging, attainable outcomes for your team members.**

This makes your expectations clear and allows them to check their own progress.

**Tip # 55****Set goals mutually whenever possible and let others figure out how to get a job done.**

They will feel empowered when you do this.

**Tip # 56****Avoid micromanaging.**

Employees expect freedom combined with frequent, honest feedback.

**Tip # 57****Acknowledge your liabilities.**

Admitting something is tough for you to do helps others to acknowledge where they may need help.

**Tip # 58****Allow yourself and others to make mistakes. When you make a mistake, admit to being wrong and look for a better way.**

Mistakes often lead to learning and progress. Demonstrating this vulnerable, yet positive, behavior to others is what being a role model is all about. When people know that mistakes are understood as a part of the experience, they’ll be more creative and take more calculated risks.

**Tip # 59****Correct constructively.**

Offer information on ways to improve and to attain or surpass desired results. Most people are grateful for your suggestions and the attention you pay to their progress.

**Tip # 60****Give praise freely, but consider the receiver.**

Although praise seems to be a motivator for everyone, some prefer to receive their praise privately, others like it publicly ... the grander the better.

**Tip # 61**

**Relay praise.**

When you hear someone praise one of your team members, tell that team member about the praise. Add some of your own. This can serve as a double dose of recognition and as a strong motivator.

**Tip # 62**

**Encourage team members to coach each other.**

Encouragement, teaching and support increases dramatically when all team members provide it.

**Tip # 63**

**Besides cash, give varied and frequent rewards that employees can enjoy.**

Some appreciate tickets to the theater or to a sporting event. Others relish an afternoon off from work.

**Tip # 64**

**Pepper your daily interactions with humor.**

People relax and feel renewed when they laugh.

**Tip # 65**

**Coach by offering encouragement, guidance, correction and recognition.**

Most people appreciate this kind of support, and are motivated by it.

**Tip # 66**

**Catch yourself and others doing something right and reward the behavior.**

There's a good chance the behavior will be repeated.

**Tip # 67**

**Seal any deal in writing, whether it's a project deadline, a performance plan, or a new job description.**

People take signed agreements more seriously than purely verbal ones.

**Tip # 68**

**Mentor someone who needs you.**

Take another person under your wing and help that person achieve great things.

**Tip # 69**

**If you're overworked, or unable to do the job right, say no, not maybe.**

Suggest other ways to get the task done. You owe it to your team.

**Tip # 70**

**Correct constructively and give only one corrective comment at a time.**

Offer information on ways to improve and to attain or surpass desired results. Most people are grateful for your suggestions and the attention you pay to their progress. People can only work on big changes a little at a time.

**Tip # 71**

**Be patient with those less skilled or experienced than you.**

The best ideas could come from them.

**Tip # 72**

**Use a no-surprises approach. The end of a project is not the time to first mention what went wrong earlier.**

Feedback is better timed when delivered closer to the actual time of performance.

**Tip # 73**

**Ask rather than tell.**

Give people an opportunity to say “Yes” and to commit to what you want them to do.

**Tip # 74**

**Confront conflict constructively.**

Others will see that some of the best decisions arise from conflict.

**Tip # 75**

**Don't be afraid to say “I'm sorry.”**

Apologies go a long way to mend a damaged relationship.

**Tip # 76**

**Remember to say “Thank you.”**

Letting people know that you're grateful for their efforts makes them feel appreciated.

**Tip # 77**

**Demonstrate what you want from others.**

People learn more from what they see you do than from what you tell them.

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## CHAPTER 4

### KEEP THE KEEPERS

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**Tip # 78**

**Surround yourself with highly competent people. Decide whom you want to retain and do whatever it takes to keep the keepers.**

Competence breeds competence. Attracting new talent is difficult and expensive. You may not want to retain everyone, nor retain everyone in the same way. Decide how and which positions contribute to your business and design a retention strategy around this assessment.

**Tip # 79**

**Re-recruit your existing talent.**

Match their current skills to existing positions within the organization. Discuss development possibilities and potential future assignments.

**Tip # 80**

**Invite different opinions and avoid responding defensively.**

Team members may have valid concerns about a decision you are making or a plan you've put into action. Hear them out!

**Tip # 81**

**Make employee retention a top priority now. Focus on it. Talk about it.**

Never lose talent because you neglect to pay attention to what's important to them.

**Tip # 82**

**Recruit good talent and tell them what you want. Let them know what they do right and have a game plan for them.**

Encourage correct behaviors and celebrate with them. Feel their pain, push them hard, but know their limits.

**Tip # 83**

**Terminate people who fail to contribute.**

Watch poor performers. They will surely hurt the morale of the high performers.

**Tip# 84**

**From time to time, interview employees and ask them why they stay.**

This keeps you current on what people like. Plus, they may tell you what's wrong.

**Tip # 85**

**At exit interviews, learn the reasons why people leave.**

Share this information with those who need to hear the reasons so they can do something about it.

**Tip # 86****Get creative about your benefits plan.**

Employees may likely have more sophisticated needs in this area than you thought possible. For example, some companies now offer employees shopping services, adoption reimbursements and even pet care and pet insurance.

**Tip # 87****Stay attuned to employees' needs for work-life balance.**

Employees want to keep work life, home life and community life in balance. They may stay up all night to finish a special project, but over the long term they won't sacrifice family and friends for the sake of their jobs.

**Tip # 88****Keep your employees marketable.**

Make sure they have development and learning opportunities. Include formal training and mentoring.

**Tip # 89****Make work challenging and meaningful.**

Employees don't want to be bored, and they want to know how their work fits into the company's big picture.

**Tip # 90****Inspire people to lead. Lead people to inspire.**

Leading produces wonderful things.

**Tip # 91****Show team members you are committed to the organization. Speak highly of the company and its future whenever you can.**

Team members want to be proud of their workplace.

**Tip # 92****Create a flexible working environment in which your organization shares authority, information and resources.**

This challenges everyone to work together to improve services and products.

**Tip # 93****Raise the bar. Challenge others and yourself to do better.**

If we're using what most psychologists say is only 10% of our potential, we have room to grow.

**Tip # 94****Develop a dynamic performance-management process. Be sure to set specific goals for each staff member.**

Make sure coaching occurs regularly, that you conduct periodic reviews against objectives, and that the annual review includes discussion of a development plan.

**Tip # 95****Provide training and development for everyone.**

People want to know they are valued and to have marketable skills.



**Tip # 96**

**Provide challenging work.**

Most people prefer to stretch themselves, to have new experiences, and to increase their value.

**Tip # 97**

**Build and maintain a flatter organization rather than multiple levels of hierarchy and approval.**

Climbing ladders that are too high is ineffective and exhausting.

**Tip # 98**

**Keep employees well informed.**

If you do not convey current information, the grapevine will – and grapevine information might be distorted.

**Tip # 99**

**Help make dreams come true.**

People feel alive and satisfied when dreams come true.

**Tip # 100**

**Lead with the right.**

This includes the right example, the right way, the right message, and the right person.

**Tip # 101**

**Invest time in your key people.**

Giving them your time is one of the best gifts you can give.

**Tip # 102**

**Imagine a different way of doing everything and ask yourself, “What if?” and “Why not?”**

The new ideas that follow can boost productivity.

**Tip # 103**

**Share your resources.**

Jobs become easier when you share what you’ve got at hand.

**Tip # 104**

**Stay in touch with former employees.**

Some day, you may have the opportunity to rehire them. Or they may identify other talent for you to recruit.

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**CHAPTER 5****EMBRACE CHANGE ... DON'T BRACE YOURSELF FOR IT**

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**Tip # 105****Be a can-and-will person.**

Your attitude will have a great impact on you and those around you.

**Tip # 106****Welcome change.**

You'll serve as a great model for others. Focus your energy on accepting, not resisting, the change. "I can" and "I will" attitudes empower people to make desired changes. We support changes that we have had a hand in creating. As you prepare yourself for upcoming changes, think also about what will not change. There is comfort at times with the familiar. It can be great fun to accomplish what others thought you could not.

**Tip # 107****Demonstrate the behaviors you expect from others.**

They will learn how to respond to change more from what you do than what you say.

**Tip # 108****Participate fully in the change process.**

We support changes we have had a hand in creating.

**Tip # 109****Don't be afraid of mistakes.**

Progress comes from making them.

**Tip # 110****Face what you fear about change.**

You may find that change then becomes do-able.

**Tip # 111****As you prepare for upcoming changes, remember what will not change.**

Thinking about what will not change can bring comfort in times of change.

**Tip # 112****In your mind's eye, see yourself making changes.**

It helps to visualize yourself positively reacting to change before actually doing it.

**TIP # 113****Focus on your strengths to make change happen.**

Focusing on your weaknesses may hold you back.

**Tip # 114****Learn to accept what you cannot alter.**

Then you can focus on what you can.

**Tip # 115****Ask yourself what makes you resist change.**

Our resistances are doorways to knowing what really bothers us about change.

**Tip # 116****Bring joy and fun back into the workplace.**

When people enjoy their work, when the climate is positive, when people laugh and smile often, resilience and productivity go higher.

**Tip # 117****Involve people early in any changes you are considering that may affect them.**

They will likely enhance the process and will feel more strongly committed to the changes and to the organization.

**Tip # 118****Frequently connect with your team members.**

Encourage them. Show interest in their work. Challenge them. The climate you create will energize your motivation – and theirs!

**Tip # 119****Face it – change is inevitable, and happens continually in little ways every day.**

All of us, actually all things, go through change. Even rocks go through a silent metamorphosis over billions of years.

**Tip # 120****Recognize that the pain of change is mainly in the brain.**

Some feel awakened and renewed by the very thought of change. Others say, “Wake me when it’s over!” With our environment, our upbringing, our personality and our way of thinking, our attitude enables us – or disables us – to deal successfully with change.

**Tip # 121****Remember that a problem may really be an opportunity in disguise.**

Fear must move out before courage can take its place. Face your fears about change, and often the impossible is a reality.

**Tip # 122****Look inside yourself first when a change needs to happen.**

The most important person to convince is you! See the change in your head.

Put your strengths to work at making change happen. Focusing on your weaknesses may hold you back.

**Tip # 123****Focus on what you want to become, and think about it daily.**

“I can” and “I will” attitudes empower people to make desired changes.

You’ll be drawn in that direction. Ask yourself, “What would I like to be remembered for?”



**Tip # 124**

**Ask yourself if the change is better or just different.**

Discover what's in it for you. If you can't find it, create it.

**Tip # 125**

**Acknowledge that change can be exhilarating for the very reasons that it can be difficult.**

Change helps us find strength when we're weak, uncover courage when we're afraid, muster creativity when we're stale, and take action when needed.

**Tip # 126**

**Let go of what you can't control.**

Spend your time and energy on what you can control or influence.

**Tip # 127**

**We often complicate things unnecessarily. Do things more simply.**

Less complicated ways help to reenergize people.

**Tip # 128**

**Get the lead out. Find out what's holding you and others back and help them along.**

This is your job.

**Tip # 129**

**Consider people's hot buttons or whatever it is that makes them tick when trying to influence them to think differently or take action.**

Focusing on what's important to them gets their interest.

## **EPILOGUE**

### **Nothing Succeeds Like Practice**

If you haven't used any of the approaches and responses I've suggested here, doing so may seem different or strange at first. But take heart. You'll experience a growing comfort level with them as you incorporate them into your repertoire of leadership and supervisory behaviors. It all comes down to practice, practice and more practice. This will lead to your owning these tips as your own and reaching greater heights of leadership and supervisory success in your workplace. The ultimate payoff will be the difference you see in the behaviors of your employees.

**(Signature)**

**Dr. Joanne G. Sujansky**

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**About Dr. Joanne G. Sujansky, CSP**  
**(Certified Speaking Professional)**  
**Founder and CEO of KEYGroup®**

For more than twenty-five years, Joanne G. Sujansky, Ph.D, CSP (Certified Speaking Professional) has helped leaders increase productivity and inspire loyalty. Her experience, insight, wisdom, humor and practical solutions have made Joanne a highly sought-after speaker for keynote addresses, seminars, conferences, and workshops. She has helped executives and audiences in over 30 countries around the globe.

Joanne is an award-winning entrepreneur who, earlier in her career, held management and director level positions across several different industries. She is past National President of the American Society for Training and Development (ASTD), and the recipient of their highest honor, the Gordon M. Bliss Award. Joanne is active in the National Speakers Association, and holds its highest earned designation, Certified Speaking Professional.

KEYGroup®, founded by Dr. Sujansky, is a recognized leader in creating productive workplace cultures that are filled with passionate, dedicated people who are committed to increasing market share, building brand value, embracing new ideas and delivering superior customer service.

Joanne has found that in today's fiercely competitive business environment, there is only one thing your competitor can't duplicate: your corporate culture. Those businesses that have a culture where employees think and act like an owner are teeming with innovation, creativity, energy and passion. In such a culture, employee ownership flourishes and grows. She calls this type of business a Vibrant Entrepreneurial Organization, or VEO for short.

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About the Author:

For over twenty-five years Joanne G. Sujansky, Ph.D., CSP, has been helping leaders to increase business growth and profitability by creating and sustaining what she calls a Vibrant Entrepreneurial Organization. Her expertise, insight, wisdom, humor, and practical solutions have made Joanne a highly sought-after speaker for keynote addresses, seminars, conferences, and workshops. She has brought fresh concepts and effective techniques to executives and audiences in over thirty countries around the globe. Client favorites include the following topics:

- Culture: Your New Competitive Advantage
- Developing a Lifelong Vibrant Mindset
- The One & Only Thing Competitors Can't Steal

Joanne, who founded KEYGroup®, is an award-winning entrepreneur. Earlier in her career, she held management- and director-level positions across several different industries. She is past national president of the American Society for Training and Development (ASTD), and is a recipient of its highest honor, the Gordon M. Bliss Award. An active member of the National Speakers Association (NSA), she has received its highest earned designation, Certified Speaking Professional (CSP). Joanne has authored numerous books on leadership, change, and retention.



KEYGroup®  
1800 Sainte Claire Plaza  
1121 Boyce Road  
Pittsburgh, PA 15241-3918  
t 724.942.7900  
f 724.942.4648  
[www.keygroupconsulting.com](http://www.keygroupconsulting.com)  
[www.joannesujansky.com](http://www.joannesujansky.com)