From the Editor



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EDITOR

I walked into the office early this morning, said hello to senior editor Megan Patrick, and immediately our conversation turned to food. Specifically, to our rather fussy taste in chicken salad, and our respective techniques for preparing it. Food—the purchasing, cooking and consuming thereof—is a frequent topic of conversation here at HOW HQ, especially during our weekly staff meetings.

I mention this because one of our typically off-topic discussions recently arose when senior art director Tricia Bateman mentioned a segment she'd seen on CBS' "The Early Show" about friendships in the workplace. Contrary to business myth, there's a growing argument that advocates stronger personal connections in the office. An article on CNN.com in August cited a recent Gallup poll that found that 38% of respondents develop most of their friendships at work. Similarly, the Miami Herald published a story that said friendships are key to employees' on-the-job satisfaction. To further bolster the case, a survey conducted in June by Office Team (a sister company of HOW's career partner, The Creative Group) revealed that 40% of employees consider water-cooler conversations a boost to productivity because they foster camaraderie and collaboration. (Not surprisingly, that same survey found that only 21% of *managers* feel likewise.)

The HOW team has worked together for quite a long time: Our most tenured staffers have been on the masthead for eight years, and our newest have worked on the magazine for two. Each of us brings distinctive strengths to the mix, and we largely collaborate as equals, so there's no competition for choice projects or jockeying for political position. But our chemistry also stems from the casual friendships we've developed over time. As a manager, I understand the potential pitfalls of buddying up to my team, but it's made us all happier at work—and it's helped make the HOW brand a business success.

We're no different from any in-house creative group; we have the same battles with the suits that you do. But our rapport helps us weather the corporate B.S., so we can focus on doing good work. We know we can't expect appreciation from the higher-ups, so we celebrate our own successes and reward each other for over-the-top effort. (In fact, that desire for recognition—which every in-house creative shares—led us to introduce a new In-HOWse Design Competition to spotlight great work from in-house teams. Look for info on page 130.)

Let the H.R. wonks worry about the perils of workplace friendships. We've found that it's tough to argue with the success of a tight-knit team.

