



# NewsForum

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## It's all in the family for *Reist Industries*

As a young man in the 1940s, Emmanuel Reist was known to his neighbours as the man who could fix the machinery they used for working their farms.

“Back then there wasn’t as much equipment on the market as there is today,” remembers his son Peter Reist. Machine parts were not easily accessible or interchangeable in those days—it wasn’t the industry it is today—so when equipment broke down it needed to be fixed.

“Dad was always known as kind of an inventor,” says Reist. “So if somebody needed something to do something, rather than a bunch of men, he would try to design something for it.”

By 1950, the business, REIST WELDING, had expanded and manufactured numerous custom pieces including self-propelled swathers, beet harvesters, front-end loaders, and snow blowers.

What Emmanuel Reist started in 1947 as a small welding shop on his family farm on the outskirts of Elmira, has been renamed REIST INDUSTRIES, and has grown into an international landscape equipment design and manufacturing firm owned and managed by his son Peter.

“I enjoyed farming too,” says Reist who was only three-years-old when his father built the first shop, “but you can’t stand in the way of progress. Our goal is to design and manufacture our own line of products. We still do repairs, welding and custom machining, but we’re in a transition into more manufacturing.”

Currently REIST INDUSTRIES produces a handful of unique pieces geared to the recreation industry: golf courses, ball diamonds and landscaping, as well as a line of snow blowers. Topping the list of innovative designs is the Landscaper, a five-tools-in-one machine that is making quick headway into US and European markets.

“We started with the Landscaper in the 1990s because somebody wanted one. So we built it. Then another guy wanted one and it grew from there. We’re getting to the point now where people are calling

us for our products because they see the one their friend has and they want one too.”

Ultimately, Reist would like to have a product line of 15 to 20 unique pieces. But it takes time to develop a niche and produce the designs he says, “We’re not just building someone else’s product.”

It can also be a challenge getting the word out in a market that is dominated by big companies with large manufacturing capabilities. Traditional marketing and advertising techniques don’t necessarily work.

Personal contact and trade shows are essential, but not always effective. More often than not it’s a demonstration that makes the sale. “When you put it on the tractor and demonstrate how it works, most of the time you just leave it there.”

A lot has changed in the 60 years since REIST INDUSTRIES began. The town has closed in. The farm is gone. And though Emmanuel passed on in 2001 at

the age of 85, the spirit of entrepreneurship that he cultivated lives on in the family and in the business he left behind.

Built on the strength of their Mennonite heritage and tradition both REIST INDUSTRIES and the Reist family have grown.

“There are times when family businesses don’t work out, but it’s worked well for us,” says Peter. “I grew into it myself. I didn’t start from scratch or anything. But I think anyone who gets into business has to have a lot of perseverance and energy to move on with it. It’s a lot of work.”

Today Peter’s wife, Leona, spends two days a week working in the office while son, Brian, has taken over part of the shop’s operations. Until recently daughter Sheri and daughter-in-law Joanne also worked for the company before starting their own families.

Next in line to join the business are granddaughters Carmen and Chloe (two and four years old) and two-year-old grandson Blake.



*Peter Reist sits in a field of Landscapers, a five-tools-in-one tractor attachment designed and built by the company his father founded on the family farm over 60 years ago.*

## Our client's side

# Any child today, has a 1 in 165 chance of having autism

The greatest things in life often come disguised as challenges or problems. However, according to Napoleon Hill, with these problems 'come an equivalent or greater opportunity.' Such was the case for us April 9, 2002 with the birth of our daughter Andrea Michelle. We thought she was perfect – beautiful skin, crystal blue eyes, slept through the night and was easy to keep happy. We were so PROUD!

Over time, things began to change and she began exhibiting troubling behavior. She couldn't tolerate loud noises or crowds. At Christmas she would go into another room and read a book while her cousins opened presents because she was unable to deal with the claustrophobia, noise and commotion. She would run screaming from the room whenever we used the vacuum or blender and would go into hysterics at the grocery checkout.

Although Andrea could say the alphabet, spell, and read words at 18 months, she didn't respond to her name or answer when she was called. It was impossible for her to follow simple instructions; she could count to 10, played with her magnetic alphabet constantly, and loved books being read to her repeatedly. However, if one of her letters or shapes was missing at the end of the day, she became so upset she would not go to sleep until it was found. When you combine her selective hearing with a desire to open doors and wander away, you can imagine some of the frantic times we enjoyed!

Many people labeled Andrea's behavior as disciplinary, the product of a strong-willed child and bad parenting. The insinuation was: If her parents would insist on compliance and institute corrective measures when instructions were not followed, her behavior problems would be resolved. We later discovered that at this stage, it was not possible for Andrea to comprehend language in the same manner 'normal' children did.

Through our own research and the help of friends, we suspected that Andrea had Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and had her tested at Kidsability in Waterloo, Ontario, Canada. In Nov 2005 we received a formal diagnosis and an action plan from our child psychologist.

Immediately we began to put the plan into place:

- We entered her into a daycare where she could have speech, behavior and toileting modeled by peers. Andrea learned to use appropriate speech by memorizing and repeating what she heard others say in a similar situation. Many times we would need to give her the correct words (model) and eventually her language became appropriate and creative.
- We learned play therapy. We created games that required her to initiate and communicate. We played these games OVER AND OVER AND OVER AGAIN AND AGAIN. Many of these games have helped her to deal with her sensory issues.

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## Health Clinic

# Men and women call EAPs about different problems

By Elizabeth Boyd

New research reveals men are more likely than women to call employee assistance programs for help with substance abuse, job and, relationship problems according to Bensigner, DuPont and Associates (BDA), a national EAP provider.

For instance, men were 4.1 per cent more likely than women to contact EAPs for advice on couple issues and 6.7 per cent more likely to call about substance abuse. With work-related problems, 3.1 per cent more men called the EAP than women, who typically call about mental health issues.

While men make more calls to EAPs regarding certain issues, women still constitute the majority of calls. BDA found 63 per cent of callers were female and 37 per cent were male. Interestingly enough, women comprise 46 per cent of the total U.S. labor force, according to the US Department of Labor. However, BDA reports they use EAP services more than males at almost a 3:1 ratio.

"While we cannot pinpoint exactly why this happens, one explanation is that, overall, research has shown women are more likely than men to seek help for concerns related to mental health and wellbeing, which are the traditional issues handled by EAPs," explains Gus Stieber, national director of sales at BDA.

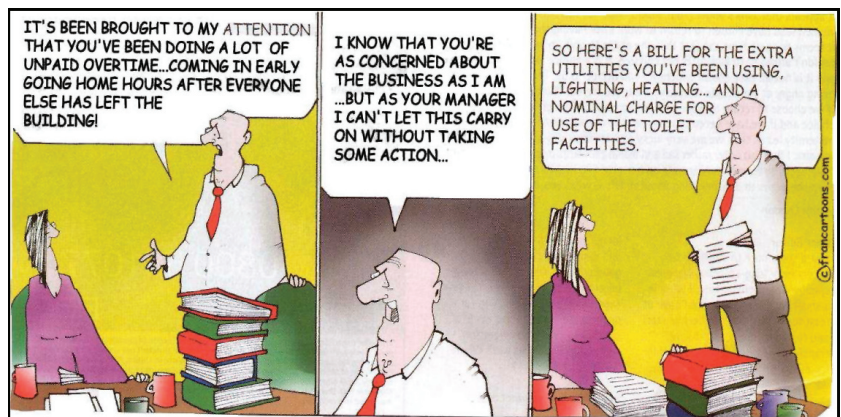
Regardless of gender, the top four reasons individuals called the BDA helpline in 2007 were:

- mental health issues (36 per cent of callers)
- legal issues (19 per cent)
- relationship/couple issues (10 per cent)
- family issues (8 per cent)

The survey reflects utilization trends for the first six months of 2007.

Stieber says, "Armed with this information, employers are better able to identify trends in EAP usage and provide strategies, programs and training targeted at problem areas for their workforce."

<http://ebn.benefitnews.com/> August 9, 2007



# Club membership: taxable benefit or not?

By Elizabeth Boyd

In two recent technical interpretations the Canada Revenue Agency has clarified its position on when employer-paid golf and fitness club memberships give rise to taxable benefits of employment, and when these apparent perks can be made available to employees tax-free.

In a technical interpretation dated August 10, 2007, CRA says:

“Generally, the cost of a golf club membership provided to an employee is considered to be a taxable benefit included at 100 per cent of fair market value in the employee’s income ... However, if the employer and employee can establish that the membership is primarily for the employer’s advantage, no taxable employment benefit will arise.”

Six factors that can be taken into account in determining whether an employer-paid golf club membership resulted in a taxable benefit to the employee were identified by CRA:

- Could the employee have performed the job as well without the membership?
- Was there a business reason that obligated the employee to use the membership?
- Were there conditions that prohibited the personal use of the membership?
- Did the employer save money by providing the membership (compared to alternatives)?
- Does the employer advertise the membership as an inducement to attract or retain staff?
- Is the membership made available on the basis of salary, seniority, job function or some other criterion?

A similar approach was reflected in another CRA technical interpretation dated August 20, 2007 dealing with an employer-paid fitness club membership and the payment of fees for fitness training.

The list of factors noted above identified by CRA should assist employers and employees in determining whether or not an employer-paid club membership gives rise to taxable employment benefit.

However, the bottom line is that this determination is a question of fact in each case depending on the specific job requirements of the employees to whom the club memberships are provided, and how such memberships specifically relate to those job requirements.

In addition CRA stresses it would generally not be sufficient to demonstrate that a club membership produces an indirect benefit for the employer, e.g., that a fitness membership results in a healthier employee who takes less sick leave or incurs lower employer-paid healthcare expenses.

Where a club membership clearly benefits both the employer and the employee, there has been a least one court decision which suggests the value of the benefit can be pro-rated so only the “personal” portion of the cost of the membership is considered a taxable benefit to the employee.

However, CRA still takes the position that pro ration is not appropriate—if the employee receives the primary benefit of the membership, then 100 per cent of the cost should be treated as a taxable benefit of employment

<http://ebnc.benefitnews.com>; September 25, 2007

# Autism’s challenges

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• We took classes to help us understand her thinking process and learned to restructure our vocabulary. For example: You might tell your child to wash his hands. This means nothing to her and will not generate a response. She is likely thinking about all the places she washes—the garden hose, pool, bath, laundry, kitchen sink—and is wondering if she should do it today or tomorrow.

Then she begins to think about her TV, or a book and about friends washing and may respond to the request by sitting down to read a book where they talk about someone getting a bath. So, we’ve learned to say “please go wash your hands with soap and water at the bathroom sink.” Utilizing this specific language opened a new world for Andrea and we have marveled many times that the child we thought was stubborn and obstinate was actually very eager to please when she understood our requests.

• Andrea attended Kidsability in Waterloo for Junior Kindergarten where the programs and staff are exceptional. Andrea was able to advance very quickly with an Individual Education Plan (IEP) targeted specifically to her needs. After learning about feelings of happy, angry, and sad, Andrea is able to relate to the world around her more appropriately. People that had not seen her for six months were astonished!

As parents of an autistic child we have to come realize how high the stakes are; especially if those around you don’t support your belief that something else is at the root of the problem. Research now indicates that there may be a genetic link to autism as well as an environmental link. Neither of these has been conclusively documented, but there is very strong indication of both in some or many of the cases. In fact, Southwestern Ontario ranks very high in percentage of kids with ASD compared to other areas in North America.

Our story is different from many. We did a lot of research first and then sought the diagnosis to confirm our suspicions. Since we had come to the painful recognition first, before receiving the authoritative confirmation of the psychologist, the diagnosis itself was not nearly as devastating as it has been for others. The early intervention for Andrea combined with the excellent program at Kidsability has made it possible for Andrea to function, with some challenges, in a traditional school setting.

If you or someone you know would like more information on ASD, you can find many resources at [www.autismontario.com](http://www.autismontario.com). Please, also feel free to email us at [charmianekuepfer@rogers.com](mailto:charmianekuepfer@rogers.com). We really would love to assist anyone else facing these challenges.

*Paul and Charmaine Kuepfer live in Waterloo Region and have three children Andrea, Alexander, and Gregory. Paul is the sales manager for a Waterloo Tech company and enjoys golf and hockey. Charmaine stays busy with their children and is employed part-time at WAY-MAR Inc., a local home renovation company.*

## Managing Transitions—A New and Complementary Opportunity



April 1, 2008 will be my 20th anniversary in the insurance business. Like most business people, it is time to begin thinking about where the business has been and where it is headed.

Many facing this kind of milestone begin to consider transitioning the business to the next generation, right? Wrong! I've been thinking of a different type of transition: a transition which will extend our services to

help you manage your risk when implementing change initiatives in your small and medium size enterprises.

Change in business today is the norm. With rapid advancements in knowledge and technology, small and medium sized enterprises (SME) rarely have a chance to implement innovations before they are faced with the challenge of their next change initiative. It could be something as simple as acquiring a new customer or the retirement of a long serving office manager/receptionist, or as complex as downsizing or introducing a new product/technology into your workplace.

And while all of us managing SMEs carefully think through such changes, often we are unprepared for the short and long-term effects of our actions. How do you manage such a risk? This is where I can help by providing a high degree of assurance to cushion your organization against adverse outcome of your well-intentioned actions. Offering you the same high level of specialized insurance service and expertise, I would like to assist you with one of the major challenges of the Canadian SME: managing change-resistance.

The question though is why would you need a change management expert? If change is part and parcel of doing business in our present environment, why do you need my help? Why not simply go online to seek advice or pick up a book on the subject matter?

While doing research for my Master of Business Administration (MBA) degree, I discovered that a majority of the strategies available today for managing resistance to change, are geared towards larger organizations like IBM and Toyota. Obviously the culture in these corporations is dramatically different from that in the small and medium size family businesses. Consequently, many of the paradigms for change management available today do not adequately address resistance to change in SMEs.

In adopting an approach which focuses on finding the "one best way" to manage change, researchers, have often ignored


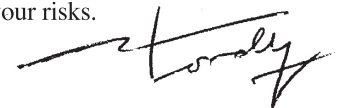
the practical problems arising from implementing these change initiatives. The application of these models of change management, pose unique challenges for SMEs.

Notably among these challenges are the internal structural lines of communication. Whereas large corporations have large bureaucracies, SMEs have little or no hierarchical structures resulting in shorter lines of communication and quicker resolutions of problems. These structural and cultural differences radically affect the strategies adopted to succeed in managing a change initiative.

Focusing on the specific needs of SMEs, my research concluded that what undermines the successful implementation of change in the workplace is not poor strategizing but rather poor implementation. Indeed, this is a key factor in explaining why about 70 per cent of change management efforts fail.

Focusing on the culture, communication and leadership within the organization—adopting a holistic approach—my research found that it is the failure of change managers to address the concern of employees through the appropriate blend or interactions among these factors that result in resistance to change. To address this problem I have developed a unique model. *The Digestive Tract System* is geared toward managing employees' expectations during an organization's transition. It emphasizes that only with adequate and honest communication can change be successfully managed.

Today's fast-paced economy, demands that businesses change. But few companies manage corporate transformations as well as they would like to or as well as they could. I know you and know the issues surrounding change management. Give me the opportunity to work with you to manage your employees' expectations, minimize their resistance to change and facilitate the transitions you need to make in a manner that minimizes your risks.



Let ours be a time remembered  
for the awakening of a new reverence  
for life, the firm resolve to achieve  
sustainability, the quickening of the  
struggle for justice and peace, and the  
joyful celebration of life.

**The Earth Charter**  
**[www.earthcharter.org](http://www.earthcharter.org)**

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