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WAIT — SCREEN TIME IS GOOD FOR KIDS?

How a Balanced Media Diet Bolsters Child Development

If you Google the effects of screen time on children, you're sure to be bombarded with horror stories. Numerous articles claim that, beginning in infancy, the more time a child spends in front of a TV, phone, or computer, the worse their developmental outcomes will be.

At first glance, the research is utterly conclusive. It seems we should throw out every TV in our house, smash our kids' smartphones, and usher our children into the great outdoors as soon as possible. But what most of these studies fail to take into account is the content of the electronic media. If a child spends two hours a day bingeing episodes of "The Big Bang Theory" or screaming obscenities into a headset while playing "Call of Duty," it's going to negatively impact their experience of the world along with their mental and physical health. But not all content is created equal.

In the past, the American Academy of Pediatrics recommended strict limits on electronic engagement for kids, following the old line of thinking that any kind of screen time would be better spent climbing a tree or running in the backyard. But in October of 2016, they offered new recommendations for parents.

For infants and young toddlers, the research still sides pretty heavily against the use of iPads and television. Before 18 months of age, a child lacks the cognitive capabilities allowing them to apply the lessons of technology to real life, and even after that, the APP recommends that media consumption should be limited to "high-quality programming, such as the content offered by Sesame Workshop and PBS."

But for kids ages 5 and up, parents should avoid banning screen time outright, but function as their child's media mentor. Instead of decrying



time spent building complex structures in "Minecraft" as hours that could be spent on the soccer field, we should set expectations and boundaries to ensure that children can deepen their experience of the world through media, not hamper it. The problem starts not with the screen itself, but when the consumption of media becomes problematic, replacing regular face-to-face interactions and physical activity. But with a balanced media diet, kids can have the best of both worlds.



AN APP FOR THAT

BRINGING IAQ INTO THE 21ST CENTURY

Happy New Year!

Don't worry, I haven't forgotten what month it is. With the way my business operates, March is the start of our year. This is the time when proactive building owners and property managers call me to walk through their buildings. They say the best defense is a good offense, but when it comes to indoor air quality (IAQ), it's far better to look for potential problems before they occur rather than always trying to play catch-up.

I've been doing proactive IAQ inspections for a number of different clients over the last 20 years. My largest proactive client has me walk through four buildings between 34–50 stories each, so as you can imagine, I get a lot of exercise while making note of tiny details. This year, I am thrilled to be trying something a little different. I'm now conducting proactive inspections and Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certification surveys simultaneously!

LEED buildings need to be recertified every five years, so in the past, a few clients have asked if I could do both inspections at once, but the workload — inspections and written reports for both surveys — was a little much. To be honest, the proactive surveys alone take so much dedication that I claim every year will be my last, but I'm always back out there again when March rolls around. Fortunately, I now have a secret weapon: an app. Over the last several months, I have developed an app that enables me to input details I notice during a building walk-through. When I'm finished, it automatically generates a report.



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Building an app is an interesting process. I'm not writing the code myself — I hired a company to handle that — but I needed to think about the work I do and what functions the app needed in order to make my work easier. The idea of creating an app to help streamline my proactive inspections is something I've tossed around for years, but I haven't had the time to make it a reality. However, when my biggest client told me they were purchasing more buildings, increasing the number of proactive inspections I'd do this year to 20, I realized I need to make time.

With the app, I'll still be walking down countless staircases, but there will be far less writing in my future. Plus, since I'm already in the building inputting details on the app, it's not that much extra work to add the 35 other things that need to be examined during a LEED inspection. I'll be honest — what I'm most looking forward to about using this app is no longer needing to manually turn my notes into a full report. Taking the busywork out of your job is one of technology's greatest accomplishments.

In creating this app, I'm able to bring to life an idea I've had in my head for years, and that's really exciting. Plus, I'm thrilled to offer my clients more precise proactive inspections in addition to helping them stay LEED certified.

Train West

ARE YOU KEEPING UP WITH YOUR BUSINESS GOALS?

The first quarter of 2018 is rapidly coming to an end. What steps have you taken to achieve the goals you've set for your business this year? How much progress have you made? Have you already logged a string of successes, or are you struggling?

Business owners and entrepreneurs set their sights on a number of goals every year. The problem is that a lot of those goals are left unaccomplished due to flaws in the planning stage. Here are some common goal-setting mistakes.

- Setting goals that are too lofty or unrealistic
- Not taking the proper steps to see goals through
- Not working together as a team to achieve goals
- Not defining the goals in a way you, and anyone in your organization, can clearly understand
- Not having a tracking system in place to monitor and review progress

As you work toward your goals, it's critical to celebrate the smaller milestones along the way. Recognizing achievements keeps your team energized and motivated. As part of the celebration, discuss what still needs to be done to accomplish big-picture goals.

If you find yourself or your team falling short of expectations, use this as a learning opportunity. Evaluate your progress and see if you can identify any roadblocks. Did you give yourself and your team enough resources? Were goals miscommunicated? Did changes in your business, your community, or the economy affect your goals? How can you get back on track?

If you need to make changes or recalibrate — do it! The longer you wait to adapt to changing circumstances, the longer it will take to find the right course. Even the best-laid plans can be disrupted by unforeseen circumstances. It's up to you and your team to embrace change.

It's not uncommon for marketing strategies to evolve over the course of a year. You may discover that certain aspects of your referral campaign aren't working. Trimming the fat isn't necessarily easy, but taking the time to do so will set you up for better results in the long run. Don't be afraid to make decisive cuts. If a strategy or a goal simply wasn't a good fit, say goodbye and revisit it later.

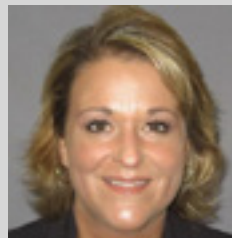
For now, take some time to review your Q1 progress. What do you need to do to make Q2 — and the rest of 2018 — a smashing success?



Jennifer Riveira, MPH, CSP, CHFM, CFI-I



EHS Consultant (Fire and Life Safety) at UTMB Health



When patients visit a hospital, they don't want to worry about whether or not the building they are walking into is safe. At the University of Texas Medical Branch in Galveston, it's my job to ensure they don't have such worries. As an EHS (environmental, health, and safety) consultant who specializes in fire and life safety, I work with health care facilities to make sure they are not bringing in environmental hazards that could affect patient care. Health safety and environment consultation are my bread and butter, and my work has me solving unique problems.

Several years ago, I was involved with a project at an elementary school in Spring, Texas. The vapor barrier had been left out when the school was built, which meant water could seep into the walls around the school. As you might expect, this led to a serious mold problem. They basically had to rebuild the school from the inside out. Fortunately, the children and faculty within the school weren't at risk of mold exposure, but they could have been had the remediation not been handled properly.

This was the first time I worked with Travis West on a project, and since then, I have lent him my help on many more unusual cases. I met Travis at an indoor air quality seminar in 2006, and we hit it off right away. Travis is hilarious, and working with him is always a good time.

My many areas of expertise overlap with the work Travis does with IAQ, particularly in regard to mold. This is why I have found myself working with Travis on various projects throughout the years, such as helping with mold assessments after Hurricane Rita. Just last year, while Travis visited his daughter in South Korea, I stepped in and worked with a manufacturing company that couldn't figure out why mold had started to grow on their A/C coils after they were shipped off to customers.

Quite often, I jump into these jobs during my free time away from my real job. Though I specialize in fire and life safety these days, I am still a certified mold assessment consultant. When I have the opportunity, I like to stay up to date on what's going on in the industry. Plus, I like working with Travis. He's an interesting, good-natured person who is very knowledgeable about his field. It's always fun to pick his brain about a tough case and learn from his experiences. If you're going to be working on your free time, you might as well work with someone you can learn from.

WHO'S RESPONSIBLE FOR IAQ?

When it comes to property management or homeownership, one might wonder who is responsible for indoor air quality. In truth, just about everyone has a role to play, including management and tenants.

Nearly 30 years ago, management carried the responsibility of maintaining indoor air quality because tenants seldom understood the processes associated with HVAC systems. However, over time, occupants began to have higher expectations about breathing clean air as spaces became more densely occupied. After all, with increased occupancy, there are more contaminants than ever.

Tenants demanded more from their property managers in regard to air quality. As a result, tenants enjoyed improved air filtration, better maintenance and operations, and more attention was lavished on air systems. Furthermore, tenant complaints about air quality were taken more seriously and addressed in a timelier manner.

Travis once heard someone say, "If we didn't have tenants in buildings, we would not have IAQ problems!" However, we choose to see it from a different perspective. The truth is, if we had no tenants, we would all be out of a job.

Our experts at Building Air Quality think it's important to educate building occupants about the effect they can have on air quality. The burden doesn't land with *just* management or *just* tenants — it's a shared responsibility!



The problems caused by management and building owners decreased as they became more knowledgeable about how to look after and prevent IAQ issues. Knowing this, increasing tenants' knowledge would decrease IAQ problems even further.



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