



Productivity vs. Solar Eclipse **By Ann Golden Eglé, MCC** **August 2017**

For those of us who have national and international businesses, I'd like to say "Let's not miss a beat of communication or productivity through the August 21 Solar Eclipse." But of course, we will.

I don't want to be a doomsayer, yet do want us all to be prepared. It's impossible to know the effect that 200,000+ visitors will have on Central Oregon businesses and businesses in its path across the USA. Even if you don't care about the eclipse, you and your people will be affected by massive traffic delays.

The week before, day of and week(s) after the eclipse present colossal opportunities for loss of time, motivation and productivity. This could cost your company thousands of dollars.

Let's devise a strategy to maintain productivity during this known disruption as a dress rehearsal for the Cascadia Subduction Earthquake, should it occur.

In preparation begin answering these questions today:

Will you be open for business? Decide if your business will be open. If so, will you have modified hours? Communicate your decision to customers as well as staff well in advance so that all can plan accordingly. Most individuals I've spoken with have no idea whether their workplace will make adjustments.

Will your employees watch the eclipse? If so, make it an organizational challenge to be as productive that day as possible. Create a location to jointly observe and discuss the eclipse for one hour and then back to work as normal. This could be a fun team building exercise. Be sure to have eclipse glasses to prevent permanent eye damage.

How will you maintain communication? Appoint a spokesperson to represent your company to customers and staff should a massive fire or other community wide disaster occur. Phone and internet communication may be diminished or completely lost. All involved need advance notice of your arrangements for all to stay informed.

Will your employees be more productive working from home rather than spending hours in traffic? Due to increased traffic, many of your employees who typically do not telecommute may be in the new position to do so. Traffic is projected to be extremely heavy from August 16 through August 22, on which days an estimated 80,000 additional cars will be on Central Oregon roads. Decide which employees will telecommute and for how long.

How can you help your new telecommuters remain focused and productive? What projects will keep them motivated and engaged? What additional resources can you provide? Can they prepare a proposal to take their area of responsibility to a higher level of productivity? What research project would provide benefits?

What will keep your employees focused? Most locals will have an onslaught of friends and relatives visiting for this event. Entertaining their guests while staying focused on their work will be a challenge. Help them establish boundaries; prioritize specific work hours and tasks. If work is not time sensitive, perhaps they take August 21 off. Will this be a paid or unpaid day off?

If you have a well communicated plan for ‘business as usual’ during the eclipse, I congratulate you. If not, I challenge you to begin preparations today. We’re all in this together. Let’s make the absolute most of this once in our lifetime event.

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