

## **FIGHTING BACK - Training Your Replacement**

By Richard F. Tax, President, AEA

*I had some concerns about writing this from an ethical point of view, but after some consideration I must admit this is the same advice I would pass on to an associate in the position of losing their job to a foreign worker.*

A time has come for many engineers, programmers, high tech workers and others when we are told we must train our replacements. It happens justifiably on occasion. When retiring, for instance, we must train our replacement. On the other hand, we are told to train our replacement, a foreign worker, for other reasons that I can't fathom. Corporate America will not admit they are cheaper; that would be wage busting. So it must be that they are brighter, better. Hmmm, if they are better why, being inferior do we have to train them?

Remember your replacement is not your enemy or your friend. This training relationship is a competition for your job. Only one winner? Let it be you.

But, let's get down to Training Our Replacement. Engineers usually work on the premise of "first one finished, first one fired" and if you do a good job and you're lucky, another assignment may come your way. In most cases of training our H-1B, or foreign replacement, "the jig is up." No chance of survival. What do you do? Survive the best you can for as long as you can. Remember; sooner finished - sooner fired.

I will address your responsibilities later, but now for the activity "Training Your Replacement." On the premise of first finished first fired you are obligated to follow the lead of your greedy CEO's and enhance your position. You are obligated to draaaagg this out, but subtly. Make it last. Now I'm not advising you to mislead your trainee. That would be dishonest, but get to know him or her and engage them in pleasant conversation. Be friendly, get acquainted, ask questions. Learn about their heritage, background. Talk about their homeland, climate, vegetation, cities, hobbies, likes, dislikes. Do they have a Florida, Jersey Shore, Cape Cod, a garden, swimming pool, Porsche, roads, vacations, whatever..... The USA acronym for this procedure is BS. Congress has another term for this and it is an acceptable process.

A typical response to a trainee's question can be "that's intuitive" (I used to get that from my college professor). "I believe you can solve that yourself. It will be a good training exercise and a confidence builder." The blank looks can be very rewarding. Then, "how are the roads in your country...? Any family pictures?"

Tell them about how overtime pay is determined by State Labor Laws and that they can sue for unpaid OT hours. It is illegal to falsify time sheets.<sup>1</sup> Educate them, but not about your job. You will be surprised how

many enjoyable, paid, minutes, hours and days will slip by. This can run into months before management has to come to grips with the situation and make a decision. Who do they blame? Have patience. Become your own CEO. Survival is your new project. Make the most of it. Then there is always unemployment compensation to look forward to - but not yet.

Your supervisor, a fellow American next to be replaced, may be impressed by your performance and perhaps even follow your example. On the other hand your supervisor, if enthusiastic about the "Replacement" program, may be unhappy about productivity and the training progress. This is normal and to be expected. He or she may suffer anxiety attacks, get angina pains, headaches, drink more coffee, pace, take up smoking, lose sleep and even have to cover up (you know, CYA.) and make excuses up the ladder. He or she may even be replaced. Make this fun. Enjoy it. What other choice do we have?

Remember: management has set the climate for this corporate atmosphere.<sup>2</sup> Learn and respond. Loyalty has been destroyed and Corporate America has destroyed it. So, when in Rome, do.....

Do your job and be responsible. Your primary job and responsibility is to yourself and family. Job incentive is gone. You have no future working for these people. We must continue to survive.

Ride it out and take survival action. Go to the "brown bag" and save every buck. Write to your government, state and local representatives. Get your spouse, family and friends to call and write. You cannot work any more free overtime since you need to use the time to find another job. Meanwhile you will still have your company medical plan. Networking is a must. It may or may not find you a job, but it will increase your Legislative Activity and group visits to your representatives. Join your own professional organization or the American Engineering Association. [www.aea.org](http://www.aea.org). Start or join local AEA Chapter meetings. MAKE THINGS HAPPEN.

1. "Overtime Is No Free Lunch"

<http://www.aea.org/documents/tax/overtime.pdf>

2. "...And Business for All,"

[http://www.aea.org/documents/tax/business\\_for\\_all.pdf](http://www.aea.org/documents/tax/business_for_all.pdf)

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