

ASSOCIATION ADVISOR

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President's Message

GCSAE President Laura Nakoneczny, CAE
National Association of College Stores

Creating a Culture of Excellence

Among the many topics addressed last month by John Graham, the new president and CEO at ASAE, there was one that particularly captured my attention. It involved the culture changes he's trying to instill among ASAE's staff.

Often, we take our organization's staff cultures somewhat for granted, focusing instead on the habits of our members or donors. However, John's comments made me take another look at whether my activities invariably foster the most supportive environment for our members. Maybe they'll give you something to think about, too.

Graham's three challenges to ASAE's staff follow:

1) Create a customer-centric organization. To do this, Graham maintains that you need solid information about what members/donors need. Too often, staff (particularly those that have been around for a while) make assumptions about what customers need. This is a bad habit that needs to be broken. Reliable information on customers' needs can easily be gathered via sur-

veys, focus groups, and other methods. But ultimately, the burden is on you to collect and assess this data, just as the burden to provide necessary services is. Graham contends that the best customer-centric organizations know their members so well that they are able to anticipate their needs, working today on the solutions that will have value for members in the future. When the future arrives, they simply provide the needed solutions.

2) Everyone must operate within an organization context. In short, Graham argues that everyone in your organization should understand what it is that they do and be competent in its execution. Moreover, staff should understand how their role contributes to the organization's purpose. This is just as true for the CEO as it is for the maintenance crew. Until human beings understand how they "fit" into your organization, they cannot achieve excellence in their contributions to you.

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GCSAE Schedule of Events

April	Luncheon Seminar at Cleveland Airport Marriott Topic: Drugs in the Workplace
May 20	Annual Meeting at Embassy Suites
July 30-31	Golf Outing at Atwood Lake Resort

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3) Achieve the habit of excellence. Sounds easy, but often it's more comfortable to overlook a flawed execution than it is to address the reasons behind the failure. (Yes, we're all human!) A culture with a habit of excellence would not fail to address individual or group behaviors and activities that fall out of alignment with stated expectations. Too often, we accept mistakes in our organizations and just move forward.

Looking forward to seeing you at the Cleveland Airport Marriott for our April meeting about handling drugs (and the varied consequence of their usage) in your workplace. And don't forget to mark your calendar for our May 20 Annual Meeting, featuring Action News 19 Anchor and author, Jack Marschall.

Assns Advance America Organ Donor Program

GCSAE is participating in a new Associations Advance America awards program to increase the donation of organs, tissue, marrow and blood. This new initiative was discussed at a recent ASAE/ Allied Societies meeting in Washington, DC.

This effort and the new ASAE awards program is being launched in response to a national crisis - a severe shortage of blood, marrow and organ donations:

- * A number of cities have less than a two-day supply of blood;
- * More than 81,000 people are waiting for a life-saving organ; and,
- * About 17 of these people die each day without getting a donation.

Award winning efforts would cover contributions in at least two specific, measurable areas:

- 1) GCSAE needs to initiate at least 3 blood drives in the next six months, sponsored by active or associate members.
- 2) We would like both our active and associate members to contact their employees and/ or members to request that they email a message to all employees urging them to take one minute to visit a website -- www.workplacepartnership4life.org -- and affirm their wishes to be a potential organ donor.

If your organization would like to sponsor a blood drive or if you're willing to contact your employees/members about being an organ donor, please contact the GCSAE office at gcsae@core.com or call the office at 330-273-5756.

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Send your camera-ready artwork along with a check to:

GCSAE, 3487 Center Road, Suite 6C, Brunswick, OH 44212

Deadline for submission is the 10th of each month.

Advertising Rates

GCSAE March Meeting Review

ASAE President & CEO John Graham presided over the the GCSAE luncheon and a morning Senior Executive Roundtable at the Sheraton Cleveland City Centre Hotel on Thursday March 11th. The topic of the day was "The Future of Association Management." Twelve senior executives attended the morning roundtable which was followed by lunch at 11:30. Eight-five GCSAE members and guests were present to hear Mr. Graham's address, which was followed by many questions on the state of the industry. Sheraton Cleveland City Centre Hotel provided outstanding meals and service for both the roundtable and the luncheon as well as hosting an early morning GCSAE Board meeting. Our thanks to Sheraton Sales Manager Dave Toler for making us feel so welcome and going the extra mile to provide such a delicious luncheon meal!



Joe Zion of the Greater Cleveland Convention & Visitors Bureau presented Mr. Graham with a Rock and Roll Hall of Fame jacket.

John Graham spoke to a full house of GCSAE members and guests.



Brunch at LACENTRE

Easter Sunday, April 11th • 11am to 4pm

Join LACENTRE on our special holiday brunch event this Easter in our warm, elegant atmosphere & enjoy;

- Buffet menu selections including shrimp cocktail, fruit & salad, lamb, turkey, beef, & ham carving stations, waffle, omelet & dessert stations and a variety of warm dishes
 - Available drinks for adults include mimosa, bloody mary or screw driver
 - Enjoy live piano music & prize drawings
(Win a catered dinner for six!)

\$24.95 for adults,
\$8.95 for children ages 4 to 10*
(children 3 & under dine free)

*Children's buffet includes cereal, fruit, yogurt, chicken fingers, mac & cheese, tator tots, & mini corn dogs

Upcoming Holiday Brunches at LACENTRE:
Mother's Day Brunch, Sunday May 9th
Father's Day Brunch, Sunday June 20th

Call (440)250-2000 or
stop by the business office
for details.



It's Called "Thank You"

By Jeffrey and Laurie Ford
Critical Path Consultants

We have a manager friend, Daryl, who, over the past two years, has built the revenue for a project from \$60,000 to over \$200,000. Thinking he had accomplished something really outstanding, Daryl kiddingly commented to his boss, "This is where you would say Thank You". Instead of getting the Thank You, he got scolded instead. It seems the boss believed people don't need to be thanked if the result was (a) part of your job description, or (b) produced in concert with other people who are equally deserving of praise.

When I (Jeffrey) shared this story with the managers in my MBA class, one of the students, a Vice President at a national clothing store, said a similar thing had happened to him. In his case, he had taken the company's revenues from \$40 million to \$60 million. Another high-producing manager, and no one said anything to him. Not a word!

What's going on here? Are the bosses of these high-producing managers blind or are they stupid? Although it is tempting to treat these two situations as exceptional cases, it has been our experience that what happened to these two managers is the norm rather than the exception. We are finding many managers who are either under-acknowledged or tend to under-acknowledge other people. In fact, the failure to acknowledge others is one of the ten most common mistakes made by managers. (For other common mistakes, see our [Special Report #03-2 Ten Common Mistakes Managers Make and How To Avoid Them](#))

Business surveys have repeatedly shown that the one thing people in organizations want most is to be recognized and appreciated for what they do. And guess what the same surveys say is the biggest thing missing in organizations? Right - recognition and appreciation.

The biggest reason managers fail to give recognition and appreciation is because they don't think they should have to do it. We've talked to many of them who, when asked why they don't say Thank You for something, reply "Why should I, when they are just doing their job?" The reasoning appears to be that people are expected to succeed at their job, and when they do it they have only done what they were supposed to do. So why give them any additional recognition?

A second reason managers don't provide direct Thank You's is because they feel they have provided recognition in other ways. For example, Daryl's boss felt that she had already provided sufficient recognition. She had extended additional budget resources as well as some personal support in making important contacts. Although this was not the kind of recognition Daryl expected, it counted as recognition for his boss.

A third reason managers don't give recognition and acknowledge accomplishments is that they actually don't understand the consequences of not doing it. People like to know they are valued and what they do matters to other people. This is particularly true where the "other people" are influential and important to us, such as our boss. When these important people do not acknowledge or express appreciation for what we do, we conclude that they "don't care" and that what we did "doesn't matter to them". It doesn't take long for these conclusions to develop into attitudes of

It's Called "Thank You"

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“why bother?” or “who cares?” And once those attitudes settle in, managers find themselves facing the challenge of trying to motivate people. The cost for failing to recognize high performance can be very high.

In our last issue of Great Managing (Vol 2, number 18), we talked about identifying and acknowledging accomplishment as a critical component of success. Saying Thank You is important because it actually gives a person the sense of succeeding. People can accomplish the assignment in front of them, but the real sense of accomplishment and achievement comes from its being recognized by others, especially people whose opinion we value. In the absence of even a simple Thank you, people may begin to become resentful, discouraged, and less willing to give their all to the work they do.

But – and here is the really exciting part - this resentment and discouragement can be greatly reduced (if not eliminated) with a genuine Thank You. You'll be amazed at what can happen with an authentic appreciative comment. A favorite example comes from a friend of ours. Elaine was a financial manager, and she had to get data from someone in the IT Department. The IT person had a reputation for being difficult to work with. All Elaine's colleagues told her that she was going to have trouble getting the data, but she didn't.

Elaine was smart: she thanked the IT person in advance for doing the work! She said she knew the job would be difficult, maybe even annoying, but that it would make a big difference in the Finance department to have the information. And then she actually thanked the IT person for doing the work before anything even got done. Elaine's colleagues were amazed at the fast turn-around she received, and they wanted to know how she did it. Elaine didn't tell them she had said, “I want to thank you in advance for helping us handle this headache and solve a big problem.”

If you want the kind of success Elaine gets when she asks people to give her something, it's really very simple. The next time someone does something that benefits you in any way, look them straight in the eye, and give them a genuine “Thank you.” You can say more than that if you want, but just those two words will make a big difference for you and the people around you.

Laurie Ford PhD, president of Critical Path Consultants, facilitates seminars, work sessions, and customized leadership retreats for Association Executives and Boards. She can be reached at www.laurieford.com



ASAE April Calendar of Events

- 08 Apr** Creating the Silver Bullet to Build Your Brand & Establish Successful Member Relations Audio Only!
- 13 Apr** Captive Insurance Opportunities
- 13 Apr** Metrics Based Management
- 14 Apr** Virtual Seminar: Hitting the Mark With Your Members: The Retention Connection
- 14 Apr** Chicago Legal Symposium
- 15 Apr** DigitalNow: Association Leadership in the Digital Age
- 15 Apr** Books Your Association's Best Kept Secret
- 15 Apr** Future Leaders Conference
- 20 Apr** ASAE Foundation Leadership Discussion with Warren Bennis
- 22 Apr** The Cost of Making A Good Decision

For information on any of these events, visit ASAE on-line at www.asaenet.org.

