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Team Network News

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October 11, 1996

Recollections of a “PIP” Commuter

By Ela Work

Commuting for team meetings once is a trip; twice is an experience; and three or more times can be an adventure.

Via plane.

Flying Delta to and from NY was my favorite and easiest mode. Its seats are somewhat more comfortable and you get served a bagel and coffee in the morning to help get you going, and a snack and refreshment in the afternoon to give you sustenance. And Delta rarely cancels flights. On the other hand, flying Continental is a true adventure. Continental only gives you refreshments — and then only if there is no turbulence. Usually you get ZIP/NOTHING! And you can count on Continental to cancel your flight two out of three times.

Via Metroliner.

Although the ride is longer and slower, you usually get where you are going on time. And the seats are reasonably comfortable. You can buy refreshments and sandwiches — tuna, ham or hot dog — and usually only one out of the three.

Via taxi.

You'll get to where you're going if you can understand or speak Swahili, Bengalese, Arabic, or some other foreign languages. Knowing your way around NY and NJ also helps, if you don't want to be taken on a grand tour (funny, that you pay a different amount each time you ride in a taxi.)

Via limousine service.

Having the surname “Work” presented a lot of confusion. Whenever there were several limousines parked in the same area, any driver would eagerly give me access to his limousine (thinking I asked him “are you working?”), only to find myself evicted by the rightful customer.

(I'm considering using an alias.) And having a driver ask you for directions, as you ride through a world unknown to you, is not a comfortable feeling. By experimenting I discovered that I could make my 9:00 meetings on time if I flew into La Guardia and took a limousine to the NJ Office. But after seeing Manhattan too many different ways and breathing exhaust in the Holland Tunnel, I gave that up.

One morning just before the Holland Tunnel, my limousine got sideswiped by a beer truck (they never even offered us a beer). On the way to Newark Airport, during my most recent trip, my driver and I were caught in a flash flood. We sat inside a white stretch limousine (motor stalled) in a lake under an overpass to the NJ Turnpike. For 20 minutes we were alone while the water rose to the windows and began slowly to fill the inside of the car. My driver's call for help brought a four-wheel-drive vehicle to the rescue. Thank heaven for dress-down day! The water was so high, we had to climb through the continued on back...

What Makes a Good Cross-Functional Team Leader?

Ed Rose

There are many synonyms for the words “team leader”. There is coach, facilitator, motivator, manager, counselor, diplomat, “mother”. A cross-functional team leader must be all of these and be knowledgeable of his/her fellow team members' backgrounds, strengths and abilities, know what the goals of the team are, and thoroughly understand what its mission is.

What is the difference between a cross-functional team leader and a manager of a day-to-day team? Basically, nothing. Both cross-functional team leaders and day-to-day team leaders coach, facilitate, motivate, etc. The only slight difference is, on a day-to-day team, all members usually come from similar backgrounds, and have similar experiences. On cross-functional teams, as the name implies, members come from different backgrounds and have varied experiences. When dealing with the membership as a whole, these differences are an asset to each cross-functional team.

So, how does a team leader become a good one? Marianna Morgan, former leader of the State Societies MST, has a laundry list of skills that a good team leader should possess. She says, “A strong team leader must know their team members and their skills, be able to encourage people to

take the next step and not be afraid to take risks.”

Rich Walker, Leader of the Design Team says, “A key skill is the ability to monitor flow of conversation, while ensuring everyone gets a chance to voice his or her opinion.” Sometimes that can be a bit difficult if there are team members of various ranks. The members of the lower ranks tend to defer to the higher-ranking members. Part of a good team leader's role is to break down those “rank barriers” and treat every member as an equal, all the while ensuring all team members follow their lead.

Every team leader, be it cross-functional, day-to-day, cub scout troop, neighborhood crime watch, or the _____ (enter name of favorite sports team here), must be organized, have an agenda (and stick to it!), and encourage openness, foster teamwork and be enthusiastic. In Pat Riley's, book *The Winner Within: A Life Plan for Team Players*, he writes about how Magic Johnson was a great team leader. “Earvin had both style and efficiency and knew when to let one dominate over the other. ... He was an avid student of all styles of basketball. Instead of crushing his teammates under his own greatness, he studies their styles and figured out how he... could help them get the continued on back...

MORE



Empowerment: What's It All About?

RoseAnn Beni

Em-pow-er — To give power or authority to; to enable or permit.

Think back to nine or ten months ago, when the AICPA first moved to become a team-based organization. If you were to count the times you heard the word "team" in one day back then, you would have needed a high-powered calculator just to add them up. While the word "team" is still very much a part of our vocabularies, a new term has cropped up, and is fast becoming the buzzword of Team AICPA — **empowerment**. As you walk around our offices, you constantly hear that Team AICPA members are now "empowered".

What images does empowerment bring to mind? An AICPA team member ordering a sound system for his or her office, running off to Tahiti for a few months to find the meaning of life, à la Marlon Brando, or deciding that during the summer it would be a great idea to come to work in shorts and flip-flops? Of course, we're being outrageous, but it's to make a point — there are still budgets, dress codes, vacation schedules, and other boundaries we must respect at the AICPA, and that's not going to change. So we don't expect to send a search party to Tahiti to find an errant team member anytime soon. But, what does empowerment *really* mean? Everyone agrees that the concept itself is wonderful, but it can certainly be taken out of context.

Robert Rosen, Ph.D., author of *Leading People: Transforming Business from the Inside Out*, challenges

office professionals to think hard about their roles in business today. According to Rosen, leadership has traditionally been thought of in terms of corner offices, expense accounts, excessive authority, and executive perks. Now, Rosen says, leaders are beginning to think differently about themselves and their employees. They help and support, and enable employees to grow in their jobs, make more decisions, and look beyond their current responsibilities to more challenging ones. This, in a nutshell, is what empowerment is all about. Let's look at some typical situations a day-to-day work team might face, and actions the team leader might take to empower his or her team members.

In his book, Rosen says that the trend in business today is to develop employees and take advantage of their intelligence, character, insight and heart, at every level. Since this trend is, to some degree, a new one, empowerment is not going to happen overnight. But Team AICPA is definitely on the right track, with flexible work arrangements, new and better training options, the Internet, and even casual business days throughout August, which are all, in various ways, empowering. And that's not where it ends — there are many more positive, cutting-edge innovations coming our way. So, while no member of Team AICPA will be encouraged to go around chanting "empowerment to the people," the signs are clear — empowerment is beginning to happen, and it's an idea that will benefit team members at every level of the AICPA.

Situation	Actions
Deadlines are not being met.	Leader discusses objectives and priorities with team members and lets them figure out ways to solve problems and meet deadlines.
Leader fears that delegating projects will produce inadequate results.	Leader develops team members by assigning new projects and letting them learn from their mistakes; accepts new ways of doing things.
Excessive routine forms must be signed; routine documents must be reviewed and signed off on.	Leader changes policy so people closer to the work can sign forms, and assume greater responsibility for documents.
Leader fears losing skills if too many projects are delegated.	Leader spends more time being a manager and trusts staff to make the right decisions.

PIP Update

Pat Duane

"We PIPped all day and we'll be GLAD when IT'S NIGHT", a quote from a fellow PIP team member after a major milestone meeting. For the past eight months, staff members in the Production, Product Development, Conference Planning, Member Services, Accounting and Human Resources Teams have been hard at work analyzing how work is currently done, and expending a lot of energy in redesigning the work to streamline the process to achieve our new goals and objectives.

Where We Are in the Process

Each PIP team (except Accounting*) is putting its final touches on the summary of recommendations of how they can streamline the process and fix the situations in which there was a gap or missing link. Within the next few weeks, each team expects to hold a meeting with its Steering Team, the group

of individuals who are the decision makers from the process under review, to evaluate and consider the recommendations of the "Should" phase. The Steering and PIP teams will support the recommendations with an implementation plan that includes designation of ownership to individuals or teams to fulfill the recommendation(s), details of activities required to accomplish the change and a proposed time line as to when each recommendation should be targeted for completion.

Next Steps

All of this information will be presented to the Executive Steering Team for final approval and then communicated to you.

*The PIP process for the Accounting Team will begin the "Should" phase after completion of the fiscal year-end close.

New Team Members Needed!

Will You Play A Role on Our Team?

State Societies & Associations for CPA Firms Member Segment Team is searching for new members.

The State Societies & Associations for CPA Firms Member Segment Team is looking for additional team members to help meet the needs of its constituents. The Team's mission is to assess and improve communications, service and coordination between the AICPA and State CPA Societies and Associations for CPA Firms to better meet their needs and to more effectively serve the CPA profession.

Prior experience with State Societies and/or Associations for CPA Firms would be helpful to the team. However, it is not a requirement. What is important is a willingness to be a team player; an interest in serving the needs of the Team's constituents; and the desire to contribute to achieving the Team's goals.

Your participation on the Team will not only help the AICPA realize its vision of the future but will also allow you the opportunity to develop your professional skills and work with (and enjoy!!!) a cross-section of AICPA team members, state CPA societies and Associations for CPA Firms. The Team is currently composed of a wide variety of day-to-day team members with various backgrounds and experiences. Some have extensive state society experience. Others had little or none until they joined the team!

The Team generally convenes a meeting once a month in the New York office. Meetings last approximately six hours — including lunch! Meetings, are based on team members' availability and the work to be done. So, if you want to play a role on the State Societies & Associations for CPA Firms Member Segment Team and enjoy the experience of working with a great group of people, please contact Team Leader Leigh Knopf (ext .6132). Leigh would be happy to answer your questions and provide you with additional details!

Spot Open on Big Six Member Segment Team

The Big Six Member Segment team is looking for one new member to join our team.

Our team's objective is to identify and assess the need for, and facilitate the development of, timely and relevant products and services that will attract and retain members from the Big Six. Come and help us understand the needs, demands and challenges facing our Big Six members. Meetings generally occur in New York but teleconferencing is an available option.

Team members include staff from New York, New Jersey and Washington who represent a wide cross section of the day-to-day work teams within the Institute. The only requirement is commitment to working with a great group of people.

We are just beginning the in-person interviews of Big Six members and would welcome someone willing to pitch in and join us. Interested? Call Caroline Maldonado at ext. 3178.

Please check the Team Tools Bulletin Board and future issues of *TNN* for more team advertisements.

Searching for Topics of Interest!

The Communications Implementation Team is planning to provide a forum in *TNN* where Team AICPA members can vocalize his or her opinion or editorial comment.

The Op-Ed articles will be opinion or analysis that sheds light on a team member's concern or point of view on an AICPA-related issue. Or, a professional experience encountered while working at the AICPA and the benefits received,

which may help other AICPA members. We need your help in order to develop this column. So, please provide us with topics of interest to you. You may send them via e-mail or interoffice mail to Ed Rose.

Final decision on what is printed rests with the Communications Implementation Team.



Team Network News is written and edited by a cross-functional team. Decisions regarding this publication are made collectively by members of the Communications Implementation Team, including RoseAnn Beni, Leslie Billera, Carmela Chinnici, Irene Cohen, Krissy Korte, Joanne Lindstrom, Ray Lipay, Rich Peden, Moe Powell, Ed Rose, Anne Rothkopf, Nelson Stephens, Kim Shapiro, and Louise Williamson.

Recollections... continued

roof opening to transfer to the rescue vehicle, which got me to the airport ten minutes before my flight, only to find out it had been canceled (Continental, of course)!

Via elevator.

I'm not kidding. I got stuck in an elevator for more than 10 minutes. When the door suddenly opened just wide enough for one person (revealing that we had stopped below our floor), I took advantage of the opportunity and jumped out — my heart

stayed behind. The door closed after me, leaving the other passengers still inside. I made it to my meeting on time!

Would I do it all over again? Yes, definitely! Travel headaches aside, being a member of a team, involvement in a process of change, and building new cross-functional ties with other team members has been a very rewarding and positive experience for me.

Good Team Leader... continued

most out of the abilities they had.” (p.33) This is an excellent example of how a team leader, not only leads the team toward its goal, but encourages or assists his or her members to do the best for themselves and the team too.

Cross-functional team leaders and future cross-functional team leaders: the best way to become a good team

leader is to be knowledgeable of your team members' skills, be open and positive, and work together towards the goal(s) the team has set. It may sound like a daunting task at first, but with the right attitude and the right “people skills” anyone can be a good team leader.