

Focus IPMA - CANADA Alberta and North Chapter

A publication for Alberta, Yukon, Nunavut, N.W.T. and members of the International Personnel Management Association - Canada

Presidential Note

from – Loverne Gretsing

Hi there!

This has been a long winter for us all -- hopefully, the snow and frost has stopped in all our neighbourhoods! The scary part is that there is only one month (July) in which no snow has fallen in Edmonton. Here's hoping it will be a long time before it does!

I am just back from the National Training Conference in Fredericton (May 31st to June 3rd) and it was a great success. As advertised in the brochures/programmes, it was a great conference as well as a great experience. Sorry that you had to miss the steak and lobster (yum, yum). There were many interesting topics and for those of you that could not make the trip, check out the brochure on the IPMA-Canada website - <http://www.ipma-aigp.ca/conferences/IPMAConferenceEN-PR.pdf>

The Chapter's Annual General Meeting will take place June 17, 2009. I hope to see many of you there -- don't worry, most of the Executive positions are filled. We are, however, looking for a volunteer to fill the position of Secretary. If you are interested or would like to know what is involved, please let me know.

Have a great summer and I hope to see you at the AGM or in the fall.

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National Training Conference – Highlights

The theme of this year's National Training Conference was "A partner in Organizational Excellence" and the conference LOGO is below.



A Partner in Organizational Excellence
Un partenaire en excellence organisationnelle

You will find the speaker's notes and presentation on the IPMA-Canada website - <http://www.ipma-aigp.ca/conferences/IPMAConferenceEN-PR.pdf> in both official languages.

Oh, did I mention the highlight that surprised all of us from Alberta and North Chapter. Here is a speech that National President Sharalyn Young made during the Awards ceremony.

“2008 - 2009 Best Chapter Award

This Award recognizes the Chapter which has, through its programs and services to members, contributed the most (within its resources) to the attainment of IPMA-Canada's goals and the advancement of IPMA-Canada.

In the last year the Awards and Nominations Committee, chaired by Peter Trask, Past National President, IPMA-Canada, identified a Chapter whose:

- ***Overall performance was solid;***
- ***Membership numbers were up; and***
- ***Many events were successful during the year***

In addition, the Chapter showed innovation in:

- ***Membership Survey development for IPMA-Canada at the National level; and***
- ***Successful student membership drive***

And in the same year, the Chapter held a great National HR Training Conference which was:

- ***Successful in financial terms;***
- ***Brought in 54 new and reinstated members; and***

- ***Made money for the Chapter and the National levels of the Association.***

This latter piece was particularly important as the previous year's conference had not been that successful.

It is no surprise then that the Best Chapter Award in 2008-2009 is given to:

The Alberta and North Chapter”

Economic Navigation and Leveraging Your Human Capital.

By Bruce Baker

Certainly many of the readers have either followed a diet of some sort or have heard from their family and friends about the diets they have followed. In many cases, individuals have experienced the extreme side of their dieting practices. One theme, in particular, continuously rears its ugly head and that would be the damage that results in attempting to satisfy their dietary requirements and short-term goals. In many, if not all cases, damage is done on the onset and, most unfortunately, damage can last for an extended if not permanent period of time.

Similarly, organizations, during severe economic downturns may also find themselves needing to do on a diet to weather the storm over the next several quarters.

As a result, during unfavourable economic downturns, the same companies reactively cut costs to ensure that their margin remains at suitable levels so as to sustain acceptable operational levels. Whatever the costs may be, prudence must be paid to effective cost-reduction management throughout the organization on a regular and consistent basis in

order to reduce dependency on reactive and “knee-jerk” decision-making practices.

One of the best strategies in a severe economic downturn would be to take a step back and assess the current SG&A expenditures (i.e. Sales, General and Administrative, in this case human capital expenditure and current infrastructure) and really consider the implications, both overtly and covertly, that will inevitably affect the organization and the individual employees that form the core of the organization’s existence.

If we know that the current theme of short-term and “knee-jerk” reactions can be very harmful without considering medium and long-term effects, then logic would dictate the need to sustain cost-reduction strategies over the long-term in order to avoid the extreme short-term “knee-jerk” reaction that many companies take in order to respond to external pressures like our current economic picture. When attempting to employ a balanced decision-making strategy that not only “stops the bleeding” for now, but one that is sustainable moving forward, equal emphasis must be placed on how to leverage off of long-term decision-making and not necessarily destroying what has been built in the name of the “knee-jerk reaction”.

The above are extracts from a larger article by Bruce Baker that is available by contacting us at IPMA@interbaun.com

Blue GURU Presents Letters

Dear Blue GURU:

I have just started my first job and find it very stressful. For example one of my co-workers got mad at me when I told the boss about a problem. I felt it was important to warn the boss. The supervisor seemed glad, however he blasted

everyone for, what appeared to him was, the poor job that was being done. That didn’t feel all that good and helped me find out that no-one share information here. The boss is always pushed for time because of all the double checking-up on things. I am not sure if I can work without sharing information about problems that crop up when doing the work. I am finding it tough not to talk.

Dear Tough-not-to-talk:

Communicating between staff and supervisors is a skill critical to company and employee success. Not sharing information with the boss can be a problem as bosses do not like surprises. Discuss your concern about trying to help especially as you are new. You can approach it from the perspective that the issue you brought up resulted in you and everyone else getting blasted. This upset you and you were unsure about what to do the next time something seems to be going wrong. If he reacts negatively you may be working for a company and boss that doesn’t appreciate the help or understand the dynamics of collective learning. His attitude and actions could be poisoning the work environment. If this is the case start looking for another job, the sooner you get out the better. If he is positive and/or apologies it could be your co-workers who have the problem. This may indicate that you may have to work with your co-workers to build a stronger communicative and working relationship. If a learning culture is totally absent it is time to re-assess why you are there.

Dear Blue GURU:

During intermission at a public function I overheard the couple behind me discussing my company and the lack of customer service. Each individual told their own horror story. As a manager of a unit I did not expect our customers were getting bad treatment. How do

you think I can go about clarifying if in fact this is happening and start an improvement process? I feel if these stories are typical we need to shape up.

Dear Need-to-Shape-up:

Customers are your most important resource next to you employees. Both groups need to have the same understanding about good service. Why did you not introduce yourself and ask if you could investigate and right the wrong they had experienced? This discussion could have been your first opportunity to take a pro-active step. To find upset customers you need to let you employees and customers know you want to hear from them and discuss potential solutions. You have to make it worth while for upset customers to share their concerns thorough prompt and fair action. Start visiting the customer service office or if you do not have one start working to make customer service everyone's responsibility. Listen to customers and ask what they would like have done. Discuss their concerns and solutions. Stay open, ask for alternative and make suggest several yourself. If you are a front line service provider there may be solutions from others like your suppliers. Go back up the delivery chain as they may have encountered the same issue in other locations. Let it be known your products are just part of an overall satisfaction package that customers want. Your goal is to fill customer need so they start telling their friend about the great service and the product satisfaction they get when dealing with your company. Look for disgruntled customers and address their concerns and get everyone involved.

Upcoming Events

June 20th, 2009 Annual General Meeting

September 16th, 2009

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October TBA – Workshop on Knowledge Management

October 21st, 2009

November 18th, 2009

December 16th, 2009

Luncheon Registration

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Address Changes

Keep us informed by sending your new address to:

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