

Credit
Professionals
International



2006-2007
Education Manual

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introductions	
<i>by President Joyce Jones, CCCE/MPCE</i>	3
<i>by Marlene Wilcox, CCCE/MPCE</i>	4
Eight Habits To Enhance Your Life	5-12
<i>by Steven M. Lovs</i>	
VantageScore: The New Standard In Credit Risk Scoring	13-17
<i>by Rhonda McKinney, MPCE</i>	
Collecting Payment In Full	18-23
<i>by Carla Barnes, CCCE</i>	
A Tribute To Helen B. Sawyers	24-38
A reprint of her article from the 1999 Education Manual: The First Hundred Years Are The Most Exciting	
Learn To Recognize Counterfeit Money	39-44
<i>by Barbara Hall, CCCE/MPCE</i>	
Communicate! Communicate! Communicate!	45-49
<i>by Charlotte F. Maness, CCCE/MPCE</i>	
Handwriting Analysis: What It Means And What It Is All About	50-55
<i>by Giles Weigandt</i>	
In House Collections For Your Company: Using Small Claims To Collect	56-59
<i>by Jill Jaeckel, CA.</i>	
Employee Embezzlement	60-65
<i>by Don Krohn</i>	
Okay, Once And For All—What Is A Reverse Mortgage	66-75
<i>by Michael Gruley, CSA</i>	
What's Attitude Have To Do With Leadership	76-81
<i>by Larry Olsen</i>	
Seven Steps To Less Stress	82-91
<i>by Dr. Cindy Gale</i>	
Credit Education Resource Foundation	92-94
<i>by Martha Philip, CCCE</i>	
What is CPI	95
CPI Membership Campaign	96

IT'S A WHOLE NEW BALLGAME



Thank you so much Marlene for being there when we needed you. For those that do not know, when our Second Vice President was unable to continue in her position, Marlene volunteered to step in and produce the 2006-2007 manual. Due to her diligence and commitment, this manual continues to provide our membership with a vehicle to educate as well as providing opportunities for personal growth. We must also thank Charlotte Rancilio at the Corporate Office for her continued hard work in helping with the layout and editing of this education manual. Our authors too deserve our thanks for their contributions. The articles are diverse and have something for everyone.

This year "It's A Whole New Ballgame". We never know what the future may bring and each day is new and different. We need to be prepared for whatever happens in our "game". We have a wonderful team, and as in team sports, the coach or leader cannot do it alone. Teammates (members) are the most important components. Come along on our road trip by reading and learning from this manual. Use it as a tool for your local associations in the area of education and new member recruitment. Last year we learned that "You Make A Difference". The emphasis being on "you" the member. This year as we embark on our new season, our efforts will be on our team working together toward a common goal. The goal of course is to win our game by promoting and supporting CPI in the business world, in our communities and of course in our own lives.

I invite each of you to come along with us because as hard as your leaders may work, it is you the member that makes our team. Many years ago I was told that, in CPI, International is YOU. That is as true today as it was then.

*Joyce Jones, CCCE/MPCE
International President, 2006-2007*

THE 2006-2007 EDUCATION MANUAL



In Mid-April, 2006, then-President Linda Bridgeford, asked me to accept the challenge of creating the 2006–2007 Educational Manual. Since then I've been involved in a whirlwind of activity. It's been pretty exciting picking topics, finding authors and living on the edge of deadlines! I did not do this alone; several people helped and they have my gratitude.

First and foremost my thanks to my friend, my assistant and my everlasting corresponding secretary, Jill Jaeckel. She handled all the outgoing and incoming e-mails, accepted the finished products, got them to me to proofread and then sent them on to Charlotte Rancilio in the CPI Corporate office. I suppose I could have done it without her, but it would have been exceedingly more difficult.

Secondly, thanks to the authors who (after they committed) met my very tight deadlines. To some I gave only three weeks. Seven of our authors are CPI members and seven are speakers we've heard at local meetings and/or District and International Conferences.

Third, thanks to the International past presidents, as well as Joyce Jones, Jean Jervis and Charlotte Rancilio for advice, finding authors, writing a few pieces and being very encouraging and supportive.

Thanks to all of you. It's been a merry ride.

*Marlene Wilcox, CCCE/MPCE
Acting Second Vice President, 2005-2006*

EIGHT HABITS TO ENHANCE YOUR LIFE



by Steven M. Lova

This information comes from two books written by Steven Covey—*The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People* and *The 8th Habit—From Effectiveness to Greatness*.

Winston Churchill once said: "To every man there comes in his lifetime that special moment when he is figuratively tapped on the shoulder and offered a chance to do a very special thing, unique to him and fitted to his talents. What a tragedy if that moment finds him unprepared or unqualified for the work which would be his finest hour."

This quote captures the essence of Steven Covey's message. We need to continue to strive to improve ourselves so that we can be as effective as we can be. After becoming leaders we need to work to help others to find their voice to become leaders too. If we lead by example of a principle-centered life we can inspire those around us to shine and become more than they would otherwise be.

There are three dimensions to developing habits. First, we must know what to do and why we need to do something. With the

understanding of what needs to be accomplished and the knowledge of why it is needed, one will be able to design an elegant solution that solves the whole problem. Without this depth, the best we would be able to accomplish is part of the task.

Second, we need the skills to accomplish the task. Once we realize that something needs to be done, the next step is understanding how to accomplish the task of creating a better situation. Skills are acquired through thought, study, planning and accepting challenges outside our comfort zone in order to accomplish the change.

Third, we need the desire to make a difference. A desire to make something better and to commit oneself to fill a need or accomplish a task is what drives us to new heights. This internal motivation and willpower is what allows us to live a fulfilled life. Helping others to accomplish goals or to gain internal strength is a personal achievement that allows each of us to leave a small legacy in someone else's heart.

When we strive for efficiency and higher production in our daily work, we need to keep in mind the production capability of the system. Short-term gains at the expense of long-term health for the organization are not desirable. Remember the nursery rhyme about the goose that laid the golden eggs. We do not want to kill the goose just to get an extra egg today when the same goose will continue to produce eggs many days into the future. Nurturing our staff and mentoring those around us to become more effective and develop their own leadership capabilities will enhance the production capability of our organizations.

The eight habits can be broken down into three groups:

First, there is the Private Victory of gaining Independence through being
Proactive;
Beginning With The End In Mind; and
Putting First Things First.

Second, there is the Public Victory of gaining Interdependence through:

Thinking about Win-Win situations;
Seeking First To Understand, and then
To Be Understood; and then to
Synergize with others at the table.

Third, once these habits are accomplished we need to take time to rejuvenate ourselves and:

Sharpen The Saw.

Finally, we can use the gifts we were born with and our developed leadership skills to help others find their voice within themselves.

The Private Victory begins with being Proactive. When we think of being Proactive we need to consider all situations, not just the times when we are comfortable. We have the choice as to how we are going to respond. Sometimes stimulations may be uncomfortable or challenging. The time between the stimulus and our response is the opportunity where we can experience personal growth and create inner happiness. We choose how we are going to respond. It can be positive and create a learning experience or it can be prideful and antagonistic. We are all faced with times in our interaction with others where we may feel as though someone has taken advantage of us. Proactive people learn to forgive and forget.

On the way to the Private Victory we must also Begin With The End In Mind. All things are created twice. First they are created in our mind. This is where we envision different outcomes and plan our activities to achieve our goal. The second step is the physical act of accomplishing the task. Beginning With The End In Mind is used by both managers and leaders. Here are two examples:

Management sees how best to accomplish certain tasks;
Leaders ask what things do we want to accomplish.
Management efficiently climbs the ladder of success;
Leaders determine which wall the ladder leans against.

To Begin With The End In Mind we need to create a personal mission statement for ourselves. A personal creed is what we live by. It states the principles we follow in our day-to-day lives. It is something we can carry with us and look at periodically to remind us of the person we want to become.

The third habit in creating the Private Victory on the road to Independence is Putting First Things First. This is where we can examine a matrix of the importance of things to the urgency of things.

Quadrant I is the "Crisis" quadrant where things are both important and urgent. People spend 20-30% of their time here. We should spend no time here if we are fully prepared for our work.

Quadrant II is the "Leadership" quadrant where things are important but not urgent. People typically spend 10-15% of their time in this quadrant and should spend 50-75% of their time here. This is where we think ahead, plan, build relationships and recognize new opportunities.

Quadrant III is the "Deception" quadrant where things are not important but urgent. People spend 50-70% of their time in this quadrant and we should spend very little time here. Items in this quadrant are interruptions, some meetings and popular activities that come up.

Quadrant IV is the "Waste" quadrant where things are not important and not urgent either. People spend 10-20% of their time here. Time here is used up with junk mail, some phone calls, too much television, trivia and other time wasters.

Once the Private Victory is won, applying the first three habits, we can move on to the Public Victory. This is where we learn to be interdependent and work with others effectively. Here we focus on managerial and organizational leadership.

The Public Victory begins with thinking in terms of a Win-Win solution. The idea is to focus on the fact that there is an abundance of opportunity in the outcome of the resolution or negotiation. A Win-Win solution leaves everyone better off than they were prior to the meeting. A Win-Loose outcome is no good because both people can be better off. One person does not have to loose in order for another to gain. In the same regard, a Loose-Win outcome is also not desirable. Giving up something to make the other side feel good does not foster a good relationship for the long term; it can in fact cause the other side to loose respect for the willing looser. A Win-At-All-Costs approach is not beneficial because this implies that one side does not care about the other.

Relationships are built on understanding and wanting to reach the best possible solution not just focusing on a "What's in it for me" approach. Relationships take time and attention to the little things like courtesies, kindnesses and respect. One needs to clarify expectations and keep commitments. Personal integrity is the foundation. When another party is hurt or feeling wronged in some manner because of us, it is up to us to apologize sincerely to keep the relationship from deteriorating.

Negotiating for a Win-Win solution must include the option to "agree to disagree". This is not an outcome that is needed very often, however, it is one that needs to be understood in the ground rules and opening remarks. The idea here is that if we have vastly divergent desires for the outcome, it may not be possible to reach a mutually beneficial solution that will make both sides better off. In this case, agree to disagree and maintain the relationship. The relationship is what is important, so that the next issue can be worked amicably with both sides.

Building relationships on the way to true interdependence involves the next habit: Seek First To Understand, Then To Be Understood. This implies that we need to fully understand the other side before we expound on our own thoughts and desires. This action will disarm the other side and build trust for the

relationship. The key to listening is with the eyes and the heart. When we can reiterate the thoughts and feelings of the other side to their satisfaction, we will have communicated effectively together. Then they will be much more willing to listen to our concerns.

The next step in the Public Victory is to Synergize. This habit takes the idea of abundance to a new level: 1+1 can equal 3 or 20 or 50 or 100! Diversity is a strength. With several people in the same room working on the same issue the outcome will be better than if one person acted on their own. Synergistic solutions can profit both sides exponentially.

Finally, once the habits for Public Victory are committed to standard practice, Sharpening The Saw rejuvenates our body, mind, heart and spirit. People want to live, to love, to learn and to leave a legacy. To accomplish this we need to take care of ourselves. This means our bodies need to eat healthy, exercise and manage stress effectively. Our minds need to be active through reading, visualizing, planning and writing. Our social and emotional needs can be fulfilled through service to the community, empathy for others and achieving intrinsic security with others. The spiritual side of our needs is met through study, meditation and prayer. We nurture our spiritual side by deciding what values we want to live by and committing ourselves to these principles. We must first lead ourselves before we can lead others.

The eighth habit takes us from mediocrity to greatness. In this phase we not only find our own voice as leaders but go the extra mile to help others to find their voice. "Voice" is the nexus of talent. Effectively communicating and helping others to communicate is what allows us all to transfer ideas and information. Without it our knowledge goes to waste.

We find our voice through a passion that energizes us, excites us, motivates and inspires us to make a difference. If our passion aligns with a need then there is interest in others to participate.

Our conscience is once again a guiding voice inside us with integrity to do the right thing in all situations. This allows us to model exemplary behavior for others to emulate on their way to finding their voice.

God has given all of us many special gifts. These birth-gifts help us use our talents to inspire others to be all they can be. This opportunity presents itself every time we are presented with a stimulus. Before we respond we have a choice to make. Think about how best to respond that allows for both personal growth and growth for others watching you. Positive actions will lead to personal reward and happiness.

There are many natural laws we live by. Some of these include gravity, fairness, kindness, respect, honesty, integrity and for every action you can expect a reaction of some sort. Our God-given gifts or "intelligences" operate within these laws. For example, our Physical Intelligence governs the unconscious processes our bodies do without active thought. We are blessed with Mental Intelligence or IQ and the ability to analyze, reason, think abstractly, visualize and comprehend. Our Emotional Intelligence brings into play our self-awareness, social sensitivity, empathy and our ability to communicate successfully with others. Our Spiritual Intelligence is the most fundamental of the four intelligences. It guides the other three. Spiritual Intelligence represents our drive, belief and connection with the infinite. It is the belief that there is something greater than ourselves and it fosters our belief in God.

Using our voice and God's gifts or birth gifts we can inspire others to find their voice. We do this through four primary steps. First Pathfinding is used to create the blueprint of our plan. Great leadership begins with purpose and clarity of the mission. Pathfinding allows us to check our plan against our conscience to insure we are operating with integrity. Next we need to Align our system to accomplish the goal. Great Alignment will allow for a smooth execution. Misalignment creates the bumps, efforts in the wrong direction and potentially

the failure of the project. Alignment can be enhanced by giving people the proper incentives for what is to be accomplished. The third step is Empowering our talent to release their ideas and energy to maximize their contribution to the project at hand. Empowerment produces high trust, productive communication, ownership and an atmosphere welcoming ideas and individual genius. Finally, Modeling is the essence of effective leadership. An individual can only leverage his abilities to the extent he has unquestionable character. To become a great leader we must have a principle centered life and the willingness to take time to develop relationships with others.

About the author

Steven M. Lovs is proud to be born and raised in Alaska, graduating from West High School in 1977. In 1981 he obtained his Bachelor of Science degree in Mechanical Engineering from the University of Colorado; in 1985, a Master of Science degree in Mechanical Engineering from the University of Washington; and, in 1988, a Master in Business Administration from the University of Washington. Steve has been a licensed Professional Engineer for over 20 years and was employed at Boeing from 1981-1988 and at ARCO Alaska from 1988-1994. Since 1994, he has been employed as Vice President & General Manager of Anchorage Sand & Gravel Co. and their divisions: Alaska Soil Recycling, Dimond Fabricators, Precast Concrete Co. & Fairbanks Precast & Rebar. His lovely wife, Lenea, and children Katie, Kelly, Jenea and John are his family support system.

VANTAGESCORE: THE NEW STANDARD IN CREDIT RISK SCORING



by Rhonda McKinney, MPCE

By now most of us have heard of the VantageScore, even if we aren't sure exactly what it is, or how it impacts us personally. For curiosity seekers, there is a website, www.vantagescore.com, which has an excellent explanation:

VantageScore is an innovative score that simplifies and enhances the credit process for both consumers and credit grantors. It's the first credit scoring model to be developed jointly by the national credit reporting companies. As a result, it leverages the collective expertise of the industry's leading specialist in credit data, credit risk modeling and analytics to offer greater predictiveness and consistency.

In layman's terms, this means that Equifax, Experian, and TransUnion teamed up to develop a tri-bureau generic credit scoring system to address the market demand for consistency.

A credit score is a number lenders use to help predict the likelihood you pay back your debt on time. The score is determined by analyzing the information contained in your credit report. Currently there are many types of credit scores developed by credit reporting agencies, independent companies such as Fair Isaac, and even some lenders. The most recognized credit score is the FICO model which has scores ranging from 300-800; the higher scores are the better.

All the various credit scores may be different based on many factors. There are two major factors:

1. Scores may be different because the information reported and collected by the three reporting agencies may be different. Lenders make their credit decision based on the information from a single agency, or in the case of most mortgage companies, all three agencies.
2. Your credit score changes when the information in your credit report changes. You can improve your score with positive changes, or negatively impact it by not paying bills on time, opening too many accounts, or carrying large balances, just to name a few. It is important to review your credit reports annually to ensure the information is accurate.

The creation of the VantageScore is the first time that all three companies have joined forces to produce a model that scores consumer credit files consistently across the board. By combining cutting-edge, patent-pending techniques with an intuitive scoring scale, VantageScore provides consumers and businesses with a highly consistent score that is easy to understand and apply.

The VantageScore will be very similar to the traditional academic grading system. The score will range from A (best potential buyers) to F (worst potential buyers). Under the old system scores range from 350-850, with higher scores meaning a higher level of creditworthiness. With Vantage Score higher scores still mean

more creditworthiness, what is different is that there will also be a letter grade assigned. The new range is from 501-990 and the grades will be as follows:

- A: 901-990 (Super Prime)
- B: 801-900 (Prime Plus)
- C: 701-800 (Prime)
- D: 601-700 (Non-Prime)
- F: 501-600 (High Risk)

The model was developed from a national sample of approximately 15 million anonymous consumer credit profiles pulled from Equifax, Experian and TransUnion (five million from each source). The credit information included public record information, tradeline data, and inquiries. Vantage Score:

- predicts the likelihood of future serious delinquencies (90 days late or greater) on any type of account.
- returns a score range of 501-990 (higher scores represent a lower likelihood of risk).
- is based on a 24-month performance period.
- includes up to four score factor codes and a fifth FACTA reason code (Spanish version available).
- can be accessed from all three credit reporting companies.

The new VantageScore has benefits for the consumer and the business customer.

1. Limits score variability across credit reporting companies: Leveled characteristics across Equifax, Experian and TransUnion ensure that any score differences for the same

consumer are attributable to content differences, not the scoring algorithm.

2. Superior risk prediction: Advanced segmentation techniques were used to create a stronger, more robust model. This results in a stronger separation of good and bad accounts and the ability to classify more bad accounts into the worst-scoring ranges.
3. Effective risk management: Some risk models are unable to score a significant percentage of consumers due to insufficient credit information. VantageScore returns more predictive scores on consumers with limited credit histories, thereby reducing the need for manual review.
4. VantageScore assists financial institutions with their lending decisions in a manual or automated environment:

Does this mean that all of the various credit scores marketed by the credit agencies, independent companies, and lenders will go away? No, the old scores will still be an option in the marketplace to meet various business needs, but the VantageScore will provide a new and unique option. Vantage Score will compete on the merits of its consistent, predictive power and ability to level the playing field for consumers.

About the author:

Rhonda McKinney, MPCE, is currently employed as a Business Systems Analyst II with Equifax, Inc in Alpharetta, GA. She has been with the company since 1991, and was originally employed in the Equifax Consumer Service Center as a Customer Service Trainer. She held positions as a Consumer Center Manager, Customer Data Management Services Manager, and Senior Manager for the Office of Consumer Fraud Assistance before accepting her current position in the Technology division of Equifax. Rhonda joined CPI of Atlanta in 2003, and is currently serving as local President, on the District level

she is serving as Public Relations Chairman for Districts 3 & 4, and on the International level as Publications Chairman. In addition, Rhonda is a past recipient of the Comer Cherry Award for outstanding service in the Inter-City Credit Council. She is a graduate of the University of Georgia, and enjoys traveling, volunteering with Habitat for Humanity, and spending time with her extended family and friends.

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COLLECTING PAYMENT IN FULL



by Carla Barnes, CCCE

The obvious goal of any company, whether it is retail sales, wholesale outlet sales, or even banking, should be to maximize sales while at the same time minimize risk—but keep those sales coming in.

Risk assessment of any type is highly analytical, but that old “gut” feeling will kick in when you attack that next level of “what if”. Those old prospective sensory gauges can save you from the pitfall of retrospect, or “Ishoodaknownbeta”!

Following are a few brief tips for obtaining your sales and collection goals.

- ◆ Keep on top of your account aging and review previous paying habits of the customers. Don't let them set a trend of delinquency. If they fail to perform as promised, follow through with the consequences set forth. One letter, followed by a phone call should reinforce your position. If the customer again fails to comply, follow up with a stronger letter or certified demand and do not fail to

follow through on your intent, whatever it is, i.e. loss of credit availability, loss of discounts, higher finance charges or interest rate or more intense or aggressive collection efforts.

- ◆ A “Do it now!” policy is critical. Some collection laws and statutes set time limits to enable collection and recourse. A survey by Milliken & Michaels, a credit and collection company, found that when a customer is allowed to go beyond 60 days for payment (on a 30 day Net schedule), the customer is likely to pay late again 62% of the time. If the customer is allowed to go later than 60 days a second time, that customer will have a 95% chance of delinquency a third time. The old standard—“fool me once...., but fool me twice”—comes to mind. And note that customers who are chronically late payers are also those who want the best prices, rates and service!
- ◆ Train your credit staff well in credit law, company credit policy, communication skills. The credit and collection departments interface and support every other department. Take advantage of seminars and conferences offered by credit professionals in your community. The time and money spent is well worth it!
- ◆ Your credit personnel should also be familiar with the sales policy and the invoicing and return procedures. This is crucial in negotiating any confusion or discrepancies in statement billings. Invoice copies should be readily available to forward to the customer. Collectors usually do more problem solving and reconciliation than anything. Negotiation skill is the meat of collections, just as knowledge is the power or edge of the negotiation.
- ◆ Involve the sales people, as collections directly relate to relationships and communications. Often times pricing issues, delivery problems or return invoicing discrepancies do not come up until the billings become past due.

Collection staff then becomes a sales support service, and has to work closely with sales personnel. Estimates reflect that 70% of past due accounts have had something "go wrong" with an order, purchase, invoicing error or missed communication.

Having been in credit and collections for longer than I care to ponder, I strongly believe that sales people should spend about a month in the credit office, dousing themselves not only with reality, but maybe a little humility as well. I recently had one of my lumber yard assistant managers tell me "If it weren't for the salesmen, you wouldn't have a job." Keeping in mind, that I if could have reached through the telephone, he would have needed extensive dental work, you can probably guess what I really wanted to tell him. But I am a very patient "avenger", and about two months later, I had an occasion to work for a day at that yard. He witnessed first hand how I handled difficult customers, demanding telephone calls from other yard employees, customers and vendors, and I even managed to generate about \$4500 in past due accounts across that sales counter. I simply turned to him and said, "Hey, you just might get a paycheck next week!"

It is my personal opinion that loan officers and sales-people do not walk on water as they purport to be able to do—they simply know where the rocks are for getting from one place to another. Your knowledge, experience and successful negotiations will get you where you want to go, and faster.

- ◆ Measure performance results and share those results with your staff. The key to strong collections is obviously to be committed to getting payments quickly or within scheduled terms. Create your policies and procedures to collect on the set schedule. Instill a quality service level by using the RIGHT people and measure their effectiveness. Don't just set measurable goals—evaluate progress, and if the

goals are not being met, either the system or your people are not operating as expected—and you need to fix it!

- ◆ Be creative. You have an array of weapons in your arsenal! Just to name a few—
 1. Accept Post dated checks * (Follow lawful procedures and timelines closely) If the check is not honored on the date written, proceed in your courts as necessary. Securing a post-dated check will certainly place you at the top of the customer's list of creditors when the money is available. * *State regulations vary on rules of time sensitivity and notification to payers.*
 2. Use professional letterhead and correspond in an efficient and professional manner. Some companies have attorneys write the collection letters on their letterhead and the results are awesome, however costly.
 3. On commercial accounts, file against bonds and licenses and exercise your rights to lien when appropriate. Timeliness of certain filings is crucial!
 4. Use your small claims courts when necessary. It is an inexpensive recourse for your company and all costs usually become part of your judgment. Know your court systems and use them to your advantage! Keep accurate records of invoices, correspondence and collection calls. If you end up in court or in mediation, you will want all parties to know that every effort was made to collect that account, and that litigation was your only and final recourse.
 5. As a last resort, I heard of one company that actually sent charged off customers a 1099-employment form at year-end. When the customer called to complain about the mistake, the credit manager explained that the write-off of the debt is imputed to be income to the customer, and that the 1099 information had been reported to the Internal Revenue Service. Obviously,

a discrepancy appears on the customer's filed tax form—Nice little attention getter!

Your collection staff needs the courage to get serious with customers that they believe are in danger of becoming overextended. Your policies and procedures should dictate the next move.

One more very important, if not crucial tool for any collector is *THE CREDIT APPLICATION*. It is the number one essential instrument any business with a credit department requires. Not only is it the beginning of the credit analysis, it is the beginning of the collection process when recovery of delinquent monies becomes an issue. A completed and signed credit application will determine your prospective customer's character, integrity and professionalism. A good collector will always begin at the beginning, and with no beginning the outcome is undoubtedly in jeopardy.

There are no best procedures or practices that work for every company. Each company is unique by design, management temperament, aggressiveness and a number of other structural tendencies. Your credit department is the crux of the company's success. Learn what works and use it proficiently.

About the author:

Carla K. Barnes, CCCE, has been a member of Credit Professionals International since 1977, first in Central Oregon, then in Hermiston, Oregon and in Pendleton, Oregon. Since there is no local association in Bend, Oregon, she remains a member in Pendleton.

Carla began her credit career as a collector in 1976 for a small agency in Hermiston, Oregon. She remembers that it was "BC" (before computers) and all her collection files—small paper folders—were filed in small boxes, the size of show boxes. Those were simpler times and simpler small town collections. A short time later she moved back to Central Oregon and worked for the Bend CBI (Equifax) collection office for Betty Lou Thompson, a former long time member of CPI. It

was Betty's tutorship and encouragement that made her want something more. She joined CPI (then CWI-Credit Women's International) and the Credit Association of Oregon (CAO), where she is currently serving as an officer. She maintains that her long time friendships and networking through credit education has given her faith, vision and courage—just as Ida Bell promised.

Carla returned to the Hermiston-Pendleton and Milton Freewater areas and began another credit career in banking, which eventually brought her back to Central Oregon after 15 years. Carla is currently employed at Tum-A-Lum Lumber Company as the Credit Coordinator in the corporate offices in Bend. She and her husband, Dave, have always been very active in conference and educational fundraising for both CPI and CAO. They live in Redmond in the 65-year-old house they purchased from her parents, who bought it in 1969. After eight years of renovation and remodeling, they look forward to visits from friends and family all year around.

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Much, Much More**

On the following pages is a reprint of an article by Helen B. Sawyers. We know you will profit from reading it but, before you do, take time to read about this remarkable woman.

Helen Baldwin Sawyers
August 19, 1906 – January 28, 2001

Helen joined Credit Womens' Breakfast Club (our original name) in 1936, a year before the association was organized on a national level. She was a loyal member for over 60 years. In 1970 she was named as Honorary member and in 1986 was the first inductee into the CPI Hall Of Fame.

Her strongest contribution lay in educating the newcomer to the credit industry. She, herself, got the experience in the industry, then wrote about it, then taught it. She believed that credit education was the single most important factor leading to a successful career in the credit field. To that goal, in the mid-nineties, she gave a sizeable grant to the Credit Education Resources Foundation. Part of her money was used to create our first professionally produced audio program "Take Charge of Your Life".

Helen held high offices of esteem in every organization to which she belonged. She was a founder of many of them. She believed in bringing talent up through the ranks and developing their skills to ensure strong leadership for the future. She was an inspiration and mentor to many of us.

Credit Professionals International has two awards named in honor of Helen B. Sawyers. The one in District 10 is an "excellence in leadership" award and one on the International level is the "hero" award.

Those of us who knew her were very fortunate. When she wasn't talking about credit education, she loved a good joke. In after-Installation parties at Conferences, with her Stinger nearby, she regaled us with witty stories.

Mona Slocum said it best: "When Helen B. was born, they broke the mold. We won't have another like her."

A Tribute To Helen B. Sawyers

A reprint of her article from the
1999 Education Manual

THE FIRST HUNDRED YEARS
ARE THE MOST EXCITING



by Helen B. Sawyers, CCCE

Born in 1906 in a small Nebraska town, it has been my good fortune to see the most astonishing changes in events, making huge upheavals in the way we live.

I remember the excitement of our first telephone—one of those on the wall, where you had to crank to get the attention of the operator—and incidentally, the attention of others on the line, since as many as six or seven households shared this marvel of communication and could listen in. And did.

Before telephones, if you wanted to talk with your neighbor, you walked to his house, or if he was some distance, you hitched up a horse and rode over.

Sunday church service and the visiting before and after brought you up to date with the local news and sometimes even state and national news. If you lived in a town with a movie theater, Movietone News kept you up to date with flickering grainy pictures and loud accompanying music.

Our first radio was a giant step into the outside world of Kansas City: music and large helpings of static—at designated times during the week. Gradually, regular programs were scheduled—Ma Perkins during the days, Cab Calloway on Saturday nights, Ozzie and Harriet on Sundays in the 30s and 40s.

The first black and white TV with its tiny screen was nothing short of a miracle. Now we could see some of the things we had been hearing. (As things have turned out, some folks consider this a mixed blessing.)

Remember “chores”? I had mine before and after school: Pump the water and fill the reservoir on the wood-burning stove in the kitchen, keep the wood box full of kindling, keep the pail full of water we used for drinking, cooking and washing.

Monday was wash day. Mother heated water in a copper boiler on the kitchen stove (more chores for Helen). In cold weather, Dad brought the washing machine into the kitchen. This was operated by a combination of hand and foot power. Attached to one side was the wringer. One quickly learned how to get those long johns to go through without jamming up.

Finances were an item. I had an allowance of \$3 a month, which I earned by delivering milk to two customers every night. My folks bought my clothes, but anything else I wanted was up to me. Movies were 25 cents before six—30 cents after. Popcorn was five cents a bag, a regular candy bar five cents—a large one ten cents—ten cents for cream puffs at the bakery and ten cents for a root beer float. Living a full life took a lot of dimes!

To increase my income during my four years in high school, I worked afternoons in one of the printing offices, setting type by hand and "throwing it back" after it was used. Eventually, I was promoted to handling the job printing on weekends: setting up the copy, choosing the paper type and running the press. Another marvel of communication came along about this time. My father had one of the first typewriters in town and I learned to type on an Oliver: slow, deliberate strokes to prevent the keys from piling up.

As I finished two years in high school, I had to decide what courses I would take for the next two years: A "Commercial" course where you studied bookkeeping and typing, a "Normal Training" course if you were going to teach, and a "general" course, taken by most of the boys. Since both my mother and father had taught early in their lives, they thought this was the way to go. Besides, there were no large firms who needed to hire a bookkeeper or typist. Girls were supposed to get married and start raising grandchildren. Most of the ones in my class did that. Three or four of us decided to teach.

The next two years, besides the regular high school curriculum, I had classes in pedagogy (?) and a very intensive review of the material I would be teaching: Arithmetic, Grammar, Penmanship, History, Geography, Phonics, Reading, and Composition. When you graduated, unless your grades were 90 or above, you had to take a series of tests in order to receive a certificate to teach. (Mine were always above.)

My first school was two miles from town. I walked every morning. On cold days I built a fire before the pupils came. A country teacher was also a janitor, a first aid expert, a nurse and a judge.

I had about a dozen students in all grades from one to eight. This was the last school my mother taught, so I had several of the children of her pupils.

There's something about the wind in Nebraska: As the days grew colder, I noticed that I faced the cold breeze in the morning going north, but I also faced the same cold wind going south.

I'd been saving my money and by the end of the school year, I had enough to buy a new Ford car. Since I now had transportation, I was able to get a school the next year paying \$100 a month—better than my \$80. The only unfavorable item was the distance from home—35 miles over sandhill roads.

When school began, I was told I would have children in every grade. After several weeks, I asked one of the older girls why there were no first or second graders. As though I should know this already, she said they never sent the little kids until after the first freeze, when the rattlesnakes would be in their dens.

I had three eighth graders, two boys and a girl. In order to go from a country school into a high school, state tests had to be passed. We studied hard all year, they went to town to take the tests, and several weeks later we were told our three had passed with the highest grades in the county.

During the spring, the school board members asked me if I would come back and teach the 9th grade if they could arrange it with the authorities. They offered me \$125 a month—top salary, even in a town school. I thought of the rattlesnake we killed on the doorstep, the mornings I had to start the fire with paper and coal because they forgot to order kindling, the days the snow didn't melt off the back desks, the miles of drifts, frozen radiators—and I said yes.

The salary was good and I liked the three people who had made us look good in the tests. THEY were the ones who wanted the 9th grade, and had pushed the board.

Alter two more years of teaching, I went to Texas to visit family friends in 1928. That's where I met credit—and that's another story.

Life with Credit

My introduction to credit came as a rude awakening after four years of teaching school in Nebraska. I went to Texas in 1928 to visit family friends. I liked it and decided to stay. Since I was not qualified to teach in Texas, I went to business college to acquire the skills necessary for an office job. My first contact with credit was in 1932 when I was hired by the Local Loan Company in Dallas, one of the offices operated by Miller Management Co. out of Chicago, a firm with offices in every state west of the Mississippi.

My job as a clerk involved tracing skips and making collection calls. I was lucky to have as my trainer Bob Smith, a knowledgeable, no-nonsense man who taught me the loan business. At the point where my instructor began, I had never heard of a company that made small loans, nor did I know anything about the lengths people would go to avoid paying. Since my first job was to call people with past due balances, I soon learned.

The office had a large backlog of skips. Several days a week, I worked on those. Since I hadn't been gone from Nebraska long enough to lose my accent, my skip tracing was quite successful. Before long, my collection calls began paying off because I had such a good teacher. My promotion to manager transferred me to San Antonio and then to Galveston. Until 1934, I covered offices as Auditor and vacation relief in Houston, Amarillo, Austin, Beaumont and Port Arthur.

Before we go any further, I want to tell you about something that happened in San Antonio. While I was working in that office, I lived at an apartment hotel. One Sunday morning before I fixed my breakfast, I took a bunch of papers down the hall to the garbage chute. As I was disposing of this, I was joined by an

attractive older woman. I greeted her and asked if she was new to the floor.

She said she was here only for the week, while she appeared at one of the local theaters. I asked about her act. She told me, then said that as a hobby she also read palms and told fortunes with handwriting and birth dates. I told her I was about to fix some chili and eggs and would be glad to trade breakfast for my fortune. She said she had never heard of chili and eggs, but would be glad to trade.

After breakfast, she asked my birth date, studied my handwriting and looked for a long time at my palms. Finally she said, "I see these things in your future.

1. You have a long and very strong lifeline.
2. You will soon be transferred.
3. You will be promoted before the end of the year.
4. You will be very successful in another line of work.
5. You will live in the Northwest near water for many years.
6. You will own your own business.
7. You will be known nationally in your field because of something you write.
8. From this time on, you will always have all the money you need."

Would you believe that? No, I didn't either, but one must be pleasant to a breakfast guest. She said that tomorrow morning, first thing, I must do two things:

1. Put a red dot on the outside of the office door, just under the name of the Company, and
2. Change the way you sign your name. You now use H. Sawyers. Change it with your bank and your company and from now on, sign only Helen B. Sawyers.

Well, figuring I had nothing to lose, the next morning I did those two things. That afternoon I was transferred to Galveston.

After vacation relief, I was assigned an office of my own and on Friday, July 13, 1934, I landed in Butte, Montana. I took a taxi from the station and with the help of the driver found a furnished apartment in the best building in town. I surprised the landlady the next morning by asking for more blankets. I had nearly frozen the night before. "Blankets!" she said. "This is summer! It will be nearly 70 by this afternoon!" I told her I had been living where it was over 100 every day and that I would have to get used to 70. I got the blankets.

Butte is a copper mining town and the miners had been out on strike for months. I had the distinction of having the largest delinquent list in the Company.

The Credit Bureau Manager, Rose Shaw, came to see me my first week—interested in the fact that we were two women holding responsible positions in a man's world. I was the only woman manager in my company and she was the only woman in the Northwest to own a credit bureau.

She was most helpful in lending a ray of hope to my delinquency sea of despair. "Don't worry," she said. "This happens. When the strike is settled everyone will go back to work. The men who have stayed here will be in and pay you—and get another loan. The ones who went to the silver mines in Idaho will be home and will show up in your office. Your predecessor was a smart operator: he had credit reports before he made loans and put only honest people on the books." And she was right.

Rose was being urged to start a local credit association. She thought it would make business more profitable because of the credit education that would be available to the credit grantors as well as to prospective customers.

If the association were organized, it would sponsor weekly newspaper ads urging, prompt payment to establish good credit records. She asked me to help. I did and the Installation Banquet

was attended by more than 100 local people, and by the President of the National Association, Ned Barnes of Spokane's Old National Bank. I was the first Secretary and was appointed Chairman of the Pay Promptly Campaign. Every Thursday, I met for lunch with the PR man from the newspaper and we worked out the words and picture that would go with the 4x6 ad in the weekend edition: Things like—a picture of a house and under it "WOULD YOU LIKE A HOME OF YOUR OWN? A GOOD CREDIT RECORD WILL HELP PAY YOUR BILLS PROMPTLY."

As an aside—after we had been doing this for several weeks, I went back to the office one Thursday to find my assistant tied to her chair and all the money gone from the cash register.

The Pay Promptly Campaign was well received and the association membership grew. On Sunday, December 7, 1941, I was working in the office and heard on the radio the beginning of the war that changed my life and the lives of so many others.

Frank Anderson, a good friend who was buying the Credit Bureau of Helena, went into the Navy. He offered me the chance to take over his contract: \$2,500 due to a local judge. If I didn't have it paid by the time he came back, he would take over, and what I had paid in would be considered as "rent." I paid him what he asked as a down payment, and in 1942 I moved to Helena. Since over the past several years I had helped organize both a credit association and a credit women's breakfast club, I had lots of friends already.

One of the highlights of the Butte years was helping Rose organize a Credit Women's Breakfast Club in 1936 and being chosen to act as delegate to the meeting in Spokane in 1937 where the National was organized. This was an exciting meeting. Since we were not in the program, we had to meet in the evening, after all the other meetings were over. The men's organization—National Retail Credit Men's Association—agreed that the women could organize as a branch of their association.

They would oversee our activities and approve what plans met with their decisions. This situation existed for a number of years until we proved we could go it alone.

But—back to Helena in 1942. The months after I took over the Bureau were frantic with work. I was determined to meet the contract. Never before or since have I worked such long hours and with such intensity. Successfully, as it turned out. I made the last payment two weeks before Frank came home. He had been so sure I wouldn't make it that he had had his mail forwarded to the office and came in expecting to take over. Not so. Unhappy doesn't describe it.

I was working closely with the Credit Association which had monthly dinner meetings, and with the women's group that had breakfast meetings twice a month. I printed their bulletins, helped arrange their program, and loaned a girl to make reminder calls. We both thrived.

In 1949, J.A. Myers, the elderly grocer who had for many years operated the reporting bureau in Everett, Washington, decided he wanted to retire and was looking for a buyer. In January and February of that year five of my friends were in the hospital with broken bones as the result of the hilly, slippery streets of Helena. Friends in Seattle and Bremerton had been urging me to move to the coast before I joined my friends in the hospital.

The chance to buy the Everett bureau seemed like a good idea. We found it was owned by 17 grocers, a situation that took a little more time than planned, but on October 1st, I moved to Everett. I was lucky enough to find a house I liked, with the waters of Puget Sound just across the road and a view of Mt. Rainier from my back door. For two years, I ran both the bureaus—spending one week in Helena and three in Everett.

The Everett Bureau had been started by the Grocers Association in the late 1890s. As Everett's population grew and people moved from one part of the area to another, the grocers found

many families were leaving their grocery bills behind and starting over in the new location. The grocers decided they would all make cards for their past due accounts, listing the name, former address, new one if they had it, amount past due and date of last payment.

They hired Mr. Myer's daughter-in-law, Elsie, to file these. The Chamber of Commerce offered them space and the use of a phone. They began calling Elsie when a new customer applied. It worked. They caught up with a bunch of their old customers. A lot of past due balances got paid. Before long, they found they wanted to know whether other bills were owed, too, and they arranged for other firms to list their past due balances in the file: fuel dealers, clothing stores, hardware, loan offices, banks. When new customers applied for an account, they gave the names of firms where they were doing business, so good information was added to the file—and so a credit bureau was established. The majority of the credit reporting offices in the country were started just this way.

During this same time, Mr. N. M. McLeod was building the Credit Bureau of Spokane in much the same way. He and Mr. Myers got together and figured out a way to store the information on 5x8 printed cards to be housed in loose-leaf binders especially made for them. Beginning, with the grocers, each firm as it joined was assigned a number. All of the information was in code.

During this period, no mention could be made of a firm's name when giving a report, only the business classification. This made it very difficult for reporters to give reports over the phone. Each firm's code number had to be mentally translated into the name of the firm, then the business classification. More than 500 firms were listed. The reporters learned the ones they used the most,

but the rest had to be checked with the codebook. It was a cumbersome and most unsatisfactory system.

Avadana Cochran, who owned the Bremerton Bureau, had the same problem, as did all reporting bureaus. Ava and I had been friends for years. We decided we would take the New Year's weekend, get together in Bremerton, and try to solve the problem. After two and a half days and with the judicious addition of Holiday Cheer from time to time, we came up with this plan.

We assigned the letters of the alphabet to kinds of firms. For example, A for automobile dealer, B for bank, F for fuel dealer, M for medical, H for hospital, and so on. After all the firms were listed, then we used numbers to list all the firms in that category; for example, your auto dealer who called the most would be A1, others A2, etc. With this plan, all a reporter had to know was that it was a car dealer or a bank. The system was revised and before long adopted by the Associated Credit Bureaus for the use of all reporting offices.

Up to this time—the 1950s—every credit bureau had its own way of recording and reporting information. Usually, it was just what the credit grantor said about the account. When they were called for a report, they were always busy and reported what they remembered about the account instead of taking the time to look. So it would probably be something like this: "We've had an account with him for some time, he has a balance of several hundred dollars, part of which is past due. We consider him good but slow."

To work out an accurate way of reporting on an account, the Associated Credit Bureaus organized a Task Force of Credit Managers from the principal credit granting firms: major oil companies, banks, department stores and others. Over a period of a few years, these Task Forces came up with a standard formula for recording the information on each person's file.

The top third of the report holds the identity information: Complete name, present address, previous address if recently moved, own or rent, length of time there, date of birth, Social

Security number, name and address of employer, kind of job, length of time there, estimate of salary or commission, income other than salary.

The next small section lists the names and dates of firms inquiring in the last two years.

Derogatory information of record comes next: suits, judgments, bankruptcy, repossessions, accounts listed for collection.

The largest part of the report is made up of information furnished by the firms with whom the subject does business. Name of firm, date opened, high credit, terms, balance, amount past due if any, then ratings, type of account (O for open, R for revolving, C for contract), manner of payment (1 for current, 2 for 30 days, 3 for ninety, and so on down to 7 indicating a payment plan on past-due accounts such as Chapter 13, 8 for repossessions and 9 for derogatory information).

Many major credit granting firms report their account information regularly each month by computer. By the end of the 1960s, these innovations made it possible for credit grantors to make really informed decisions about applicants.

Remarkable things happened in the 1920s and 1930s. In 1922, there were 60,000 radios—in 1929, there were ten million. New York added the Empire State Building to its skyline. Lindbergh flew to Paris. Jack Dempsey was the heavyweight champion. Knute Rockne was coaching Notre Dame. In the news, the Marx Brothers, Ethel Barrymore, Charlie Chaplin and Calvin Coolidge, President. (My father's compliment: We didn't want anything done and he did it.) And on November 4, 1929, the stock market crashed.

In 1932, President Franklin Roosevelt gave us the New Deal, Social Security, Unemployment Compensation and Federal Insurance on bank deposits. In 1936, Edward VIII gave up the British throne to marry Wallis Simpson. Amelia Earhart, having flown the Atlantic, disappeared on her flight over the Pacific. In

1938, Hitler began his conquest of Europe. We were being entertained by Bill Robinson and Shirley Temple, Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers, the music of Irving Berlin and George Gershwin.

In the fifty years since 1950, truly astonishing events leave us with prosperity and peace at home, with Bill Clinton and Bill Gates sharing headlines. The predictions of my fortune-telling friend have all come true.

My most precious memories are of the caring, ambitious, serious, helpful, funny, cooperative people I've met. Thanks to all of you! You have made my first 93 years truly exciting. For all these blessings, I am truly grateful.

Ideas for discussion

1. What are some of the major changes you've seen since you started in the credit industry?
2. What are some of the unexpected turns your career has taken? How did you deal with them?
3. What do you want to achieve in YOUR first hundred years?

About the author

Helen B. Sawyers has been involved with credit activities since 1932, when she was hired as a stenographer by a loan company in Dallas, Texas. She has been a credit grantor, a credit bureau owner and has been in business for herself. She attended all District and most International conferences for CPI, ICA and ACB from 1942 to 1996. She has served as a speaker at literally hundreds of installations, conference sessions and local association meetings in Montana, Oregon, Idaho, Washington, British Columbia and California. Listed below are some of her activities.

Credit Professionals International 1936-1999

District President 1949

International President 1962

Awards Honorary Member, Hall of Fame

International Credit Association 1934-1999

*Awards: National Membership (most new members—550—
U.S. & Canada)*

Service Award for organizing 6 new credit associations

Awarded Honorary Membership 1985

Associated Credit Bureaus 1972-1964

District President 1949

*1959 Best Reporting Bureau in U.S. & Canada in Everett's
population bracket*

*1965 Golden Record for writing and recording training
sessions for reporters and collectors*

*1959-1975 ACB Management Institute, University of Cali-
fornia, merit Award for attendance, service as Board Mem-
ber and Instructor. Seminar Instructor for Reporting, Collec-
tions, Medical Programs.*

Consumer Credit Counseling Service 1965-1999

Board of Directors and President of local association

Management Services, Inc. 1971-1998

*Owner, Between 1972 and 1981, prepared and presented
Credit Schools (2 sessions, 3 hours each) in 53 cities from
Ketchikan to Sacramento, east to Great Falls and Boise.*

*Owned and operated Credit Bureaus in Helena (1942-1951)
and Everett (1949-1964)*

*1967-1970 Employed by Credit Bureaus, Inc., in Salem as
Director of Branch Office Personnel Development for 41
credit and collection offices on the west coast.*

*1970 Joined Truax Companies as Credit Manager. worked
with them as a consultant thru 1998.*

LEARN TO RECOGNIZE COUNTERFEIT MONEY



by Barbara Hall, CCCE/MPCE

West Central Illinois CPI hosted the District 5 CPI and CI/GNCD Conference in April, 2006. We were blessed to have so many wonderful speakers (thanks to our most recent PIP, Linda Bridgeford, CCCE/MPCE). All the speakers were very interesting and most informative.

Their topics were: "Coping with Life's Challenges"; "Conflict Resolution"; "Credit Scores"; "Bankruptcy Update"; "Leadership"; "Social Security Numbers and Credit"; and "Discovering Your Greatness". One young man from the Quad City office of the Secret Service—whom I cannot name or show a picture of—was, to me, the most interesting.

He told us many stories of his duties with the Secret Service, such as his guarding of very important persons arriving in the local area or anywhere in the USA. His duties are multiple. He can be called out at any time to go anywhere and be gone up to 21 days at a time. It was hard to be positive he would be available to be a speaker until a couple of days before the conference because of

his schedule. He has guarded heads of state, the president and many others. He has been with the Secret Service for over eight years and has a young son that regretfully he does not get to see enough.

The information he gave us was on counterfeit money and how to recognize these bills. It is part of his duty to teach the retailer, banker or just individuals how not to accept these bills. The person that really loses is the one who accepts the counterfeit bill, because the banks will not give you a good bill for a counterfeit bill. It cannot be deposited and will be confiscated to attempt to find the origination of such a bill.

A personal experience was when my boss (Gary) unknowingly accepted a \$100 bill from a customer to pay for the repairs done on her vehicle. The \$100 bill was put in the deposit that evening and taken to the bank. Fortunately—or unfortunately as our case was—the teller noticed and checked the \$100 bill and found it to be a counterfeit. He mentioned it to my boss and it was going to be reported by the bank. My boss finally convinced the teller to deduct the \$100 from our deposit and to return the bill to him, which meant our daily deposit was now short \$100.

Gary knew who had given him the bill and where she worked. He took the bill to the place of employment of the lady and confronted her with the counterfeit bill. She told him that she had cashed her check at a local grocery store just prior to paying her bill with us. Gary went to the grocery store and spoke with them about the bill. They checked on their surveillance camera and found the transaction between our customer and the customer service clerk at the store. The grocery store manager called the police and reported the bill.

The next morning a police officer was at our store to arrest my boss. After much convincing and explanation to the officer about the situation, the officer left (without my boss). Other steps were being taken to settle this problem but we did not know exactly what they were.

I mentioned this situation to the Secret Service Agent at our conference and, as it turns out, he had been in on the investigation of this incident. He jokingly told me to tell my boss that "he was off the hook." It turned out that the counterfeit ring had originated from the Chicago area.

As most of us have heard before, these persons are very smart. It is just too bad that they do not put their knowledge to better use and do something legal, instead of illegal, with it and then get caught and have to serve time. They must be taken off the streets, but your help is also needed. So even if you are out money, it needs to be reported in order to get the originators of these counterfeit bills stopped and to try to eliminate the problem in your area.

The Secret Service Agent passed out a poster that shows all the information to look for on any denomination of bills. This will help you to recognize a counterfeit bill before you take one. It tells you where to look for the secret strip on each bill and that the denomination of that bill is listed in that strip. (*see government brochure duplicated on pages 43 and 44.*)

One of the worst things going on these days is that the counterfeiters know how to wash bills so that the counterfeit bill detector pen is not really a safe and totally accurate determination of those bills that have been reprinted on a washed bill. The new colored bills are the government's way of trying to defer counterfeiters, hopefully making it more difficult to print a counterfeit bill. The worst thing is that it seems the counterfeiters are usually almost a step ahead of the government, not only here but also internationally. Check those bills and do not get caught up in the web of a counterfeiter. Be safe, not sorry.

He told me that I could give these websites and I would recommend that you go to them and check out the information they provide. Print off this information for yourself or for your own business. These sights are:

www.secretservice.gov
www.moneyfactory.com.

We were so proud of all our conference attendees this year. Even though there was a small attendance, everyone who registered attended every event that we had and especially all the speaker presentations. We know for a fact that that was a record breaker, because, as you all know, there are usually some who go to a few things or just do not come back from a break and skip several programs. We had 100% attendance at everything. Hurrah!!!!

About the author:

Barbara A. Hall, CCCE/MPCE, is Assistant Manager at Roggenkamp's Goodyear Tire Center in Galesburg, IL, where she has worked for the past 38 years. She says, "of course you see many, many things when you work in the retail business. You learn to collect money, do book-keeping, wait on customers and be a psychologist, (with no degree). It is a lot of fun, each day is certainly different, but I guess I love it to have stayed in it so long.

She and her husband Don were married for over 40 years until his untimely death in 2004. They had three sons: Darin, Brent and Brian. Brent is married to Stephanie and they have Mya, who is 7 years old and Austin, who is 4 years old. Brian is engaged to Heidi and she has Kassidy, age 10, and Kalleigh, age 7. Darin is single and still looking.

Barb has been in CPI since 1977 with perfect attendance. She wrote an article for the Informer many years ago, titled "Skip Tracing". She also has belonged to ICA since 1979, getting her certification in 1980. She has been President of District 13, District 5 and International CPI. She was also President of Creditors International/Great North Central District 5 and of her local Optimist Club. She says, "My local CPI has seen me as President many, many times."

She recently joined the Women's Issues Network (WIN) and served on the committee to judge 16 scholarship entries.

She loves to travel, to take pictures and be with her family



The New Color of Money Safer. Smarter. More Secure.

As part of the United States government's introduction of new currency with enhanced designs and security features, a redesigned \$10 note will be issued in early 2006. The new \$10 design retains three of the most important security features that were first introduced in the 1990s and are easy to check: **color-shifting ink, watermark and security thread.**



Security Thread

Hold the bill up to the light and look for the security thread, or plastic strip, that is embedded in the paper and runs vertically to the right of the portrait. If you look closely, the words "USA TEN" and a small flag are visible along the thread from both sides of the note. This thread glows orange when held under ultraviolet light. In the redesigned \$10 note, the thread has shifted slightly to the right of its location on older series \$10 notes.

Color-Shifting Ink

Look at the number "10" in the lower right corner on the front of the note. When you tilt the note up and down, the color-shifting ink changes color from copper to green.

Watermark

Hold the bill up to the light and look for the watermark, or faint image, similar to the large portrait of Treasury Secretary Alexander Hamilton. The watermark is part of the paper itself and can be seen from both sides of the note.

A blank oval has been incorporated into the new \$10 design to highlight the watermark's location.

Color

The most noticeable difference in the newly designed bill is the addition of subtle background colors of orange, yellow and red. The words "We the People" from the United States Constitution have been printed in red in the background to the right of the portrait. Also, small yellow 10s have been printed in the background to the left of the portrait on the front of the bill and to the right of the vignette on the back of the bill. The background colors differ with each denomination to help distinguish them.



Symbols of Freedom

The front of the new \$10 note also includes images of traditional icons of Americana – also called Symbols of Freedom. Two images of the torch carried by the Statue of Liberty are printed in red on the front of the bill. A large image of the torch is printed in the background to the left of the portrait of Secretary Hamilton, while a second, smaller metallic red image of the torch can be found on the lower right side of the portrait. The symbols of freedom differ for each denomination.



Portrait and Vignette

The oval borders and fine lines surrounding the portrait of Secretary Hamilton on the front, and the United States Treasury Building vignette on the back, have been removed. The portrait has been moved up and the shoulders have been extended into the border. Additional engraving details have been added to the vignette background.



Both new and old designs of U.S. currency will circulate together and will maintain their full face value.

The Federal Reserve and the Department of the Treasury are committed to continuing improvements in currency design in order to protect your hard-earned money.

For more information about new currency designs, visit www.moneyfactory.gov/newmoney

Item #213

COMMUNICATION!

COMMUNICATION!

COMMUNICATION!



by Charlotte Maness, CCCE/MPCE

"The way we communicate with others and with ourselves ultimately determines the quality of our lives."

Anthony Robbins

How often have you heard the phrase, "Location, Location, Location", in conversations surrounding the purchase of real estate, as the most important factor in making this major decision? It has become so well known, that it is a mantra not only in the real estate world, but also used as a way of emphasizing importance on various subjects.

As a Human Resources professional, I have also heard this repetitiveness used many times in discussions surrounding organizational development issues and challenges in the work world. You have experienced this as well, I am sure, and get the message very

quickly—COMMUNICATION IS A KEY COMPONENT TO THE SUCCESS OF ANY ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE OR RELATIONSHIP.

What is the big challenge and why is it so important? What is communication? Webster defines it simply: "To communicate is to impart information, to reveal, to convey.....Communication is the act of making known...by speech, correspondence, messages, etc.....A CONNECTING PASSAGE"!!!!

Wow, what a revelation. A connecting passage! That's it and that is why it is so important. In making a connection, there must be a point of contact at the beginning and at the end. Imagine a bridge, a highway, or other visuals to help us create the imaginary importance of connection.

As we know, there are various types of communication: written, oral, and listening! Within these types, we can further breakdown into letters, notes, emails, telephone conversations, formal presentations, asking questions, instructional materials, and so many more.

We are faced each day with the challenges of delivering the message for clear understanding. There have been many tools created in recent years to help us understand styles of communication.

PERSONALYSIS and TRUE COLORS are excellent and help us to be aware that not everyone receives a message in the same way. I encourage you to seek out these tools and if you have an opportunity to use them, please do. They will totally change your thinking about communication and understanding.

To make the message meaningful and well received, we must be very aware of various styles of listeners. Some people want all the details, some want only the facts and we must strive to deliver a message, both written and oral, for understanding and acceptance. Anthony Robbins tells us "to effectively communicate, we must realize that we are all different in the way we perceive the world

and use this understanding as a guide to our communication with others”

In today's environment, electronic messages through email and voice mail are so prevalent. We are often losing the skill to create thorough and meaningful text. I recently read in an article by Ellen Goodman, associate editor of *The Boston Globe*, and published in *The Charlotte Observer*, entitled “Just One or Two People Away from Loneliness.”

Ms. Goodman elaborates that too little time, too much technology isolate us from each other. With cell phones, email, fax copy, text messages, instant messaging, and many other technological ways of communication, I fear that we are losing creative writing skills and well crafted conversation.

With this challenge of creativity, we must try even harder to deliver the true message, rather than just the facts. We are missing the opportunity for body language, inflection in our voices, and facial expression that are creative parts of the personally delivered message.

The importance of clarity is still a major factor. Making the message clear, concise, and leaving contact information is so important in the technological arena.

In today's society, we seem to have trouble living with technology, yet we cannot live without it. Our challenge then is to make this type of communication workable, acceptable and clear. If we leave a telephone message, we should always give the name of the caller, the return telephone number, and a brief message. Do not assume that the receiver has your number, it saves time to have it on the message and not have to find it. It also helps to say that the call does not have to be returned, if it is not necessary. This gives the recipient relief from the responsibility to return the call, knowing that it is not expected.

In written message, the same principles apply. Clearly written, concise, correct information will save time for both parties and will accomplish the need of the message that is being delivered.

Good communication can get results and lead to team effectiveness or working relationships. Many marriages and parenting relationships are marred by poor communication, which includes listening skills. I recently read that listening should have one cardinal rule: Focus on one person at a time. Active listening is an art and must be practiced. If we are developing our reply before the sender has completed the message, we are not actively listening.

Techniques in active listening include showing external signs of listening by eye contact, nodding appropriately, smiling, gestures, and posture. Ask questions! Let the person know that you are interested, that you want clarification.

Allow silence and try to feel comfortable with it. Observe signals that a person wants to talk such as leaning forward, seeking eye contact with you, stealing glances with you or even inviting the person to talk. We often completely forget to ask questions as we try to immediately offer a solution or an answer.

One of the greatest examples of asking questions is from the Holy Scriptures. Jesus, in most cases, asked questions of his followers, rather than offering answers. In doing this, the follower learned by thinking and answering for themselves. I challenge you to explore this for a great example of active listening from 2000 years ago.

A Greek philosopher, Epictetus, once said, "We have two ears and one mouth so that we can listen twice as much as we speak". WOW!!! This is something that we all can work on. Once again, LISTENING IS AN IMPORTANT FORM OF COMMUNICATION AND IT IS A DEVELOPED ART. I challenge you to practice your listening skills and see the results.

Communication is a part of our lives and will always be a challenge as we communicate in different ways and to different audiences each day. It is A CONNECTING PASSAGE!!

Anne Morrow Lindbergh, an American writer and aviation pioneer, left us a great thought on this subject. I leave you with it:

"GOOD COMMUNICATION IS AS STIMULATING AS BLACK COFFEE, AND JUST AS HARD TO SLEEP AFTER."

About the author:

Charlotte Freeman Maness, CCCE/MPCE, has enjoyed a long and diverse career in banking, with experience in operations, lending, human resources, total quality process, and various levels of management, with her most recent role as Senior Manager in Human Resources at First Union National Bank (now Wachovia). She has done extensive work in training, both in her professional career and in various organizations. She has enjoyed serving at all levels, including International President of Credit Professionals International and serves as a motivational speaker for many types of organizations.

Charlotte is a musician, has served as organist for Central United Methodist Church in Albemarle, N.C., for 25 years, and teaches an Adult Sunday School Class, named after her late husband who taught the class for 20 years. She is Chairman of the Board for the Stanly County Community Concert Association and is serving as Executive Director of the OASIS program, Older Adults Services in Stanly County. She is Past President of Albemarle Lions International and owns her own businesses, which include travel and human resource consulting, in addition to her speaking career.

Charlotte enjoys life to the fullest, has two grown children, and two marvelous grandchildren. She believes that life gives back as much as we give to it.

HANDWRITING ANALYSIS:
WHAT IT MEANS
AND
WHAT IT IS ALL ABOUT



by Giles Weigandt
American Association of Handwriting Analysis

Handwriting analysis is a respected tool in nearly every part of the world. It has been in use for a century but has developed most rapidly in the last half of the 20th century. Most of the research on handwriting analysis was done in Europe in the first part of the 20th century. Much more than the actual execution of the letters is considered when analyzing writing. For instance the pressure exerted on the writing instrument is important. The size and spacing of the letters is important as well. Well, let's get on with explaining some of the characteristics that comprise analyzing handwriting.

SLANT is a good place to begin a study of writing. The slant reveals the writer's emotional expression to the people around him or her. The more the writing leans to the right, which is the way we were taught, the more natural and spontaneous the writer will

be. People who write with a rightward slant are far more open and relaxed with people, although other considerations, such as tension and fear, must be taken into consideration. The rightward leaning writing tells of a person who is easily affected by the people around him or her, and also a person who has difficulty in concealing emotions. The writing that is straight up and down shows a person of deliberation and objectivity when it comes to people. Left slant writers are very reserved and cautious when it comes to people. They avoid being personal with others. They also fear change, including the future. These people internalize their feelings and may seem to be outwardly open.

SIZE of writing is a reflection on how the writer looks at the world. People who write small need very little room in which to function. They prefer working alone, doing one thing at a time, and focusing all attention on the details at hand. People who write large are people who like to generalize and thus see the overall picture. The person who writes with a large script is usually very confident and even confrontational. They can be bossy or even pushy. They make good leaders, assuming other qualifications are there. The small writer is very observant of details, and can enjoy reading and studying in general.

PRESSURE placed on the writing instrument is an indication of the inner and outward strength and endurance of the writer. In order to write darkly, the writing instrument must be gripped very firmly. The people who write with heavy pressure are strong. They also have deep feelings and memories. The dark line writer has strong sensual expressions. Also, colors, sounds, aromas, tastes in food, and so on are all stronger in the writer who writes darkly. Light line writers are more fragile, more forgiving, adaptable, more sensitive to people around them, and so on. The light line writer does not like harboring negative feelings. Medium pressure writing, which most people use, is in between the extremes.

UPPER AND LOWER EXTENSIONS refer to the space that the lower and upper portions of letters such as g, y and p (lower), and h, k, and l (upper) take up on the page. The lower zone (extensions) gives information about the writer's sexuality, physical enjoyment and activity in general, imagination for creativity, love of variety, or, in the case of diminished extensions, the lack of these needs. The upper zone likewise refers to how much space the writing takes up in extending above the middle part of the letters. The higher upper zone shows a person who has great interest in religion or philosophy—imagery in creating the intangible parts of life. Writers with no apparent extensions to the upper and lower zones are very day-by-day people with no strengths in creating, imagining, or contemplating anything. These writers live just one day at a time and are very involved in themselves.

“T BARS” are very important as are “I dots.” Strong and heavy “t bars” reflect the writer's will power and general tenacity. Weak or light “t bars” reflect one who can be talked into things and who will not take a strong stand on issues. Height of the “t bar” is likewise mighty important. The higher the crossing the higher the goals. Low “t crossings” reflect apathy or low goals in life. Other aspects in “t crossing” are important, such as length of the bar or various other quirks that occur in the way in which a “t stem” is crossed.

“I DOTS” reflect much of what a “t bar” does. Well placed “I dots” indicate a person who is careful with details. Heavy “I dots,” like heavy “t bars,” reflect strong will and determination. Placement of “I dots” is important in ways other than accuracy. Flying “i dots” show impatience and a sense of adventure. “I dots” placed before the letter show that the person is one who procrastinates.

CAPITAL I style is a reflection on how the writer feels about his or her ego. A strong and high “I” reflects that the person feels very good about himself. We equate height to power of authority and the person who has a high capital “I” will give the feeling of power. A smallish personal pronoun “I” will show that the person

has a low self image and will not likely exert him or herself to promote him or herself. The style of the capital "I" (personal pronoun) is of great use to the analyst as well but must be studied carefully in order to explain it to the beginner. Generally speaking, a traditionally formed I (as taught in schools) reflects a person who holds to traditional values, most importantly, family and parental values.

CAPTIAL LETTERS are very revealing as to the ego of a person. Ornate and/or very original capitals tell the analyst that the person is very individualistic, sometimes showy and even vulgar. Large capitals with small writing tell the analyst that this person is bluffing most of the time. He or she is covering a basically shy or private nature with a public display of bravado. Highly stylized writing in general indicates that the writer has created an image of himself that says he or she wants to be very distinctive and non conforming. Capitals, like writing in general, that conform to the style of writing we were taught shows that the writer is willing to conform and abide by the normal rules of society.

THE SIGNATURE is simply the way the writer wishes to be—or imagines he or she is—seen by others. Much of what I wrote about in "Capitals" in general applies to the signature. An illegible signature says that the writer wishes to be vague and uncommunicative about him or herself. It can be a sign of the greatest vanity imaginable and also a signal that this person could be uncooperative. I will mention that when the writer's name is identified in typing (business letter or check) then this is not so applicable.

DIRECTIONS OF LINES show that the writer is on a course of optimism, pessimism, or even keel—shown in whether the writing goes uphill, downhill or stays even.

SPACING BETWEEN LINES is important in that it shows the organizational or lack of this ability. Nice and evenly spaced lines indicate organization and good timing. Lines that

are too close and even overlap could be an indication that the writer is confused by having too many things to do. Whether or not a writer can stay on a straight line is also important as to telling how the writer goes toward his or her goals.

SPEED OF WRITING tells the tempo or the writer's mind. People who think very quickly do not have the patience to form every letter perfectly. There is a difference in speedy writing and slow and poorly formed writing. Slow writing that is poorly formed indicates apathy and carelessness.

MARGINS are very important also, telling the analyst where this writer stands with people. Closeness or formality with people is indicated in the margins as well as other signs in the writing.

BEGINNING AND ENDING STROKES are also important in telling a person's generosity or lack of it.

REGULARITY of the rhythm of the writing tells whether or not the writer works in a smooth and coordinated manner or whether the writer is inefficient, lacking in attention span and so on.

Most certainly there are many more areas and details on handwriting that must be considered, but it is my aim to introduce you to the basic areas that the analysts look for when doing a writing.

About the author:

Giles Weigandt's interest in this subject began in the 1950s. He was majoring in psychology at Augustana College in Rock Island, IL at the time and saw how psychology and graphology went together. In 1966 he decided it was time to get serious on graphology and then began studying with a private teacher in Davenport, IA. Giles attended her classes for three years before he felt secure enough to teach this to others and to do programs for groups.

Giles has taught graphology for 23 years at the Scott Community Col-

lege in night school in Bettendorf, Iowa, using his own text book. Giles also presented workshops for other colleges, businesses and private organizations.

Giles has been qualified as an expert witness in courts since 1971. His programs are in the form of entertainment combined with knowledge. He has had bookings within a 200 mile radius of his home area of Moline, IL.

Giles has attended numerous workshops and has conducted some of them. In addition to spoken programs he also does detailed analyses for clients.

2007 DISTRICT CONFERENCES

District 3 & 4

April 19-21, 2007

Jackson, MS

District 5

April 13-16, 2007

Ann Arbor, MI

District 7&9

March 2007

Dates and location to be announced

District 8

Dates and location to be announced

District 10

April 26-29, 2007

Silverdale, WA

District 12

March 23-25, 2007

Virginia Beach, VA

IN HOUSE COLLECTIONS FOR YOUR COMPANY: USING SMALL CLAIMS TO COLLECT



by Jill Jaeckel, CA

In house collections for your company could mean that you turn all your accounts over to your attorney, although you may be able to save your company money by filing suit in small claims. The goal is to receive the payment on the account or to be secured with a judgment. *If your company is a corporation, you will need to have an authorization for a corporate officer to sign that you will include with each suit.*

Since small claims court is set up to be accessible to people without counsel, the court provides a very thorough instruction book available at the courthouse or online. The fees and limits vary from state to state, included at the end of this article are some websites to get the statutes for your state. *We are quite fortunate in Alaska to have small claims cases available up to \$10,000.00 in principal.*

A successful small claims case starts with knowledge about your debtor. Hopefully this is the information you are gathering at the time an application for credit is submitted, although we all know

that there are those NSF checks for cash sales and CODs that get delivered without payment, which might end up on your desk to collect. It is most important that you have the legal name of the debtor, along with any aliases that the debtor may use. Such as: "William R. Smith aka Billy R. Smith dba Billy's Home Repairs". The goal is to have the same name on your suit as the debtor has on their bank accounts, property titles and business names to make your Judgment effective.

Most states have internet sites that, for a fee, you can check public information to gather or update the data needed for your suit.

A small claims case requires that you turn into the court the properly completed signed forms, copies of your back-up, one set for the court file and one for each debtor named in the case, which clearly states why and what the debtor owes you. You need to submit copies such as your application, invoices or NSF check along with any letters you have sent to the debtor to collect the debt.

The case is opened with the court once all the documents are turned in with the proper fees paid to the court. The debtor now becomes the defendant in the case and must be served by legal service. This can be through the US Postal Service with certified, restricted delivery or by licensed process server. Both require a fee in addition to the amount paid to the court to open the case.

Once the defendant is served with the complaint, summons, answer and back-up documents they have a set amount of time to respond to the suit. There are a number of scenarios that can happen at this point, the defendant may call you directly to make payment, thus avoiding the continuation of the legal action. Remember to add the costs related to the suit when collecting payment in full. The defendant may answer to the court that they do not agree with the amount due, which will mean the court will set up a date for a hearing. This would be a whole other article on it's own. It has been my experience over the last 10 years that the majority of the defendants do not call to make payment or answer

to the court; they seem to ignore the whole action. After the designated time has passed, without contact or payment in full from the defendant, a request for default judgment is turned to the court, no additional fee is required and the forms are supplied.

In most cases, it is that simple. File the case, serve the defendants, wait the time, file for the judgment. A judgment against someone who owes does not come to your office as an item ready to deposit into your company's bank account. You must be proactive with the judgment, record a certified copy of the judgment in the recording districts or counties where the defendant owns property. If the defendant attempts to refinance or sell the property, your judgment will show on the title report and you could get that welcome call, looking for the pay-off amount to clear the title. I have had calls from title companies looking to clear a property ready to sell long after I had given up on the payment from the defendant; this is such a wonderful bonus.

Remember, you will receive post judgment interest and costs accrued to collect with the judgment. The court has additional instruction booklets for the Judgment Creditor which will walk you through the forms needed to file a WRIT OF EXECUTION to remove funds from bank accounts, garnish wages or receive funds from their cash register, should that apply. All executions are served by process service, so it pays to have a relationship with a process server that you trust, who has the right level of aggressiveness for your company.

Some of the most positive points about small claims is your ability to collect without the expense of an attorney on small amounts without sharing the percentage paid to a collection agency. The process is simple and the reward of getting paid is one your company can see on it's bottom line.

Web-site for State Court links around the USA:

www.nesconline.org/D_KIS/info_court_web_sites.html

About the author:

Jill Jaeckel, CA, is the Legal Assistant for Spenard Builders Supply, Inc, a building materials retail company with 14 statewide locations. She has been employed with SBS for over 20 years.

Her involvement with Anchorage Credit Professionals started in 1987 when her boss enticed her with free breakfast two times a month, although she became hooked on the credit education and started her perfect attendance certificates that very year.

Jill has held three District 10 Offices: Recording Secretary, Financial Secretary and Treasurer from 1995—1998. Instead of continuing up the District Offices, Jill kept busy with chairmanships for Future Planning, Trophy, Ways & Means, Alaska Crier Report & Mentor, Historian, Teller and was the Co-Chairman of the District 10 Conference held in Anchorage in 2003.

She is "on-going" Corresponding Secretary for 2003-2004 International President Marlene Wilcox, CCCE/MPCE.

Jill continues to be active with her local association, where she was the very proud recipient of Anchorage Credit Person of the Year in 1990 and 2000. Jill received District 10 Credit Person of the Year in 2004. She is currently Recording Secretary for District 10.

Jill is active with the Anchorage American Diabetes Association, volunteering for several fund raising events, and she is in her 10th year of running her own summer business, JJ's Lawn Care, which keeps her busy during the long daylight hours of Alaska.

EMPLOYEE EMBEZZLEMENT



*by Don Krohn
Security Officer
First National Bank of Alaska*

Trust. An intangible that cannot be bought; it must be given freely. When someone deliberately breaks that bond of trust, the results seem especially hurtful. That's the overriding feeling attached to employee embezzlement, on top of the obvious financial losses suffered and the pain and hardship that it brings.

How many times have you trusted someone only to find that trust betrayed? We see this in our personal lives, but it stings the most when a dishonest employee takes us for all we are worth. And the saddest thing is that embezzlement need not happen nearly as often as it does. In all my years of working in white-collar crime, I have not yet found one case that was not preventable.

Embezzlement is a crime that is preventable with internal vigilance. History shows that, by the time the embezzler is discovered and finally arrested, they have already been caught embezzling several times prior, but were not prosecuted. Usually, this is to

avoid embarrassment for the business affected, but leaves others at the mercy of the offender again and again.

What do you do when your bookkeeper comes to you or you finally check your bank statement only to find that a trusted person has stolen \$85,000? These days, the average embezzlement runs around \$80,000. During 2005, we saw several embezzlements in Alaska that ranged from \$142,000.00 to \$620,000.00.

It's essential for a businessperson to know what steps to take to prevent embezzlement. The question is not, "Could it happen to me?" The question you should be asking yourself is, when will I be victimized and for how much?

The most popular embezzlement schemes are:

- Billing fraud
- Payroll
- Expense reimbursement
- Check alteration
- Till tapping
- Fictitious vendors
- Check forgery
- Credit card fraud
- Identity theft

Let's take a look at the common traits of embezzlers, the warning signs to look for in employees and how to prevent this crime.

Embezzlers require three conditions to proceed from potential lawbreaker to actual criminal: Motivation to steal your money; Rationalizations to convince themselves that their unlawful actions are justified and; Opportunity. That's the condition only you can supply.

Motivation

There are numerous and powerful reasons why people decide to embezzle their employers and risk detection and a jail sentence.

Some of the most common are:

- Living beyond their means
- High personal debt
- Poor credit
- Personal financial loss
- Unexpected needs
- Extramarital affair
- Drugs and alcohol

Rationalizations

The embezzler needs to convince himself that it's okay to do something he knows to be against the law and just plain wrong.

The rationalizations they come up with include:

- Their need for the money is much greater than yours.
- The boss is dishonest. It's okay to steal from him.
- The embezzler feels unappreciated and underpaid.
- The embezzler lives the life they think he/she deserves.

Opportunity

Opportunity to embezzle arises through poor or misguided business procedures. Only you can provide the situations that give the embezzler his or her chance to rob you, such as:

- Bank deposits that include cash
- Checks without endorsement
- Single control of checks and account reconciliation
- General lack of oversight.

Signs and Symptoms of an Embezzler

What does an embezzler look like? Unfortunately, they come in all shapes, sizes, genders, and ethnicities. But there are certain signs to watch for.

The average embezzlement takes place after the employee has been on the job more than 18 months. This gives them plenty of time to gain the trust of their employer.

The embezzler is willing to:

1. Work long hours
2. Arrive to work early
3. Stay late
4. Work on weekends
5. Take work home
6. Take on more responsibility

Once they begin to embezzle, this person will become protective of their work area. They tend to work alone and resent normal routine questioning by their employer. The embezzler does not save or invest the stolen funds; they spend it.

Behavioral Red Flags

Embezzlers share certain behavioral traits. These traits, in combination with the signs listed above, could point to an employee who is a high embezzlement risk. The shared traits include:

- Being consistently angry or frustrated
- Blaming others for their problems
- Problems with authority
- Inability to accept change
- Viewing co-workers with suspicion

Prevention

Embezzlement can be prevented by internal vigilance. You have control of the opportunities that an embezzler has to defraud you. Take away the opportunities and take away the crime.

Prevention begins when you're hiring new employees. You can nip a potentially devastating problem in the bud by paying close attention during the hiring process.

Do good background checks.

Half of all job applications misrepresent their credentials

Do a criminal history check.

45 percent of applicants lie about their criminal history

Employment Application Red Flags

When reviewing an application or interviewing an applicant, be aware of these danger signs:

- Irregular work history
- Several jobs within a short period of time
- Questionable reasons for leaving
- Poor relationships with coworkers or supervisor
- Long periods of unemployment
- Misrepresentations of education or previous employment

Of utmost importance is to conduct a good, thorough interview. Identifying embezzlers or past embezzlers is difficult. Why? In most cases when an embezzler is caught, the employee is quietly fired and dumped back into the employment pool. They then become someone else's problem. Don't let them become yours! Take the time to be thorough when hiring new employees.

Prevention on the Job

Stop providing opportunities for embezzlers. Make sure you put these business practices into daily use:

- Employees writing checks and/or making deposits SHOULD NOT balance the bank statements.
 - ◊ Split responsibilities among several employees with adequate segregation of duties.
- Bank accounts should have at least dual control.
 - ◊ Allowing one person to have complete control over a bank account may give the embezzler an opportunity.
- Open bank statements and look at the checks to ensure they are *bona fide* and signatures are not forged.
- Do not let employees write checks for cash.
- Destroy obsolete check stocks in dual control.
- Shred all documents that contain personal banking information in dual control.
- Rotate personnel in financially sensitive assignments periodically.

I cannot emphasize enough that embezzlement is a highly preventable crime. Most of your employees are trustworthy. It just takes a little common sense and a lot of vigilance over the details of your business to avoid putting that trust in the wrong place. Isn't your business worth the effort?

About the author:

Don Krohn joined First National Bank Alaska as Security Officer in 2002. During his first three years at the bank, he developed and implemented programs that resulted in an 80 percent reduction in criminal attacks against the bank and its customers.

Krohn began his career in law enforcement more than 30 years ago with a four-year stint in the Air Force. From there, he joined the U.S. Customs Service in Chicago, serving nine years, working mostly on narcotics interdiction. In 1979, the Customs Service transferred Krohn to Anchorage. After five more years working in intercepting drug traffic, he joined the Anchorage Police Department.

Krohn worked for several years at the department as a detective specializing in white-collar crime. He then was promoted to the major crimes unit. Krohn finished his 18 years at APD working as a homicide detective.

Mr. Krohn received his Bachelor of Science degree from Wayland Baptist University in Texas, majoring in criminal justice.

OKAY, ONCE AND FOR ALL— WHAT IS A REVERSE MORTGAGE?



by Michael Gruley, CSA

The answer is, I can't tell you that until I tell you the "why" of a Reverse Mortgage. The "why" is the part that most people forget when discussing Reverse Mortgages, and that is the reason I begin there—because it is the most important part.

Imagine yourself at the age of 75, living in a home that you purchased some 45 years prior. The mortgage balance on the home is either paid off or very low. Your kids are grown and raising their own families, perhaps in some other part of the country, and you see your grandkids as often as you can because they remind you of what you value most in life—family and home.

You remember your days of rising early to punch a time clock, attend PTA meetings, coach athletic teams, arrange girl/boy scout trips, work in the community, mow the lawn, unplug the drain, prepare dinner, help with homework, read a bedtime story, say a prayer, and occasionally wipe away a tear.

All of these days, all of these things happened over many, many years in a place you called home. And 45 years later, you still call it home. In fact, it seems more like home today that it ever has, because you feel surrounded and lovingly embraced by the memories of the rich life you have lived.

To many older Americans, this is the American dream. For this, they fought in wars, stood in ration lines, and sacrificed most of their lives. They have lived the American dream, and they still feel they are living it, because they are at home. To so many, home is the alpha and the omega of life—the beginning, the end and everything in between. Home represents freedom, independence and quality of life.

Now, let me ask you, If you were this typical American senior proudly living the American dream, would you want the dream to end? Of course not, but to many seniors, moving from their homes is like ending the dream. You may think that this is all a bit dramatic, but if you listen to seniors who value their freedom and independence, you will find a great many who feel that moving from home is the end of a dream.

Why a Reverse Mortgage? I think the answer is clear why. Now, lets learn how Reverse Mortgage actually work with the “why” in mind.

What is a Reverse Mortgage?

A Reverse Mortgage is a special type of mortgage loan that enables seniors who are 62 or older to convert part of the equity in their homes into tax-free income without ever having to make a monthly payment as long as they live in the home. There are no income, asset, employment, credit or health requirements to qualify for a Reverse Mortgage, and the borrower always retains title to the home. The borrower is never required to make any payments whatsoever to the lender until the property is no longer occupied by the borrower. Until that time, any interest costs or fees associated with the Reverse Mortgage are simply added to the outstanding balance

that will be paid at a later date when the borrower no longer occupies the home.

What can the money be used for?

The funds received from a Reverse Mortgage can be used for any purpose such as:

- Every day living expenses
- Home repairs or modifications
- Paying of debts or mortgages
- Paying property taxes or insurance
- Medical expenses or in-home care
- Any use at all

There are several types of Reverse Mortgages, however, the most commonly used ones are the Home Equity Conversion Mortgage (HECM), which was developed by the U.S. Department of HUD, and the HomeKeeper, which is Fannie Mae's version. These days, most seniors prefer the HECM Reverse Mortgage (95 percent nationally), because it usually offers more money to the borrower and the interest rate is typically the lowest of all Reverse Mortgages. The U.S. Government also insures the payments on the HECM loan, and many seniors take comfort in that provision.

How does someone qualify and how is the amount determined?

To qualify for any of these loans, someone just needs to be 62 or older and own a home that is in good condition. The amount a borrower can receive on a Reverse Mortgage is not determined by the borrower's income or credit. The amount is determined by a formula that was created by the federal government that takes into consideration three factors:

- The age of the youngest borrower
- The appraised value of the home
- The current interest rate

The older the borrower is and the higher the home's value, the more money a borrower can get. The reason for this is simple. An older person will not typically occupy a home for as long as someone who is younger, therefore, there is less time to accrue interest costs. As a result, older people will typically pay a lot less interest over time, and the lender is able to offer more equity up front.

How is the money paid to the borrower?

Once it is determined how much a borrower may receive on a Reverse Mortgage, he/she can choose to receive the funds in several ways:

- A Lump Sum
 - The borrower receives all funds right up front at closing
- A Monthly Cash Advance
 - Funds are received monthly by direct deposit
- A Line of Credit
 - The Borrower can request funds in any amount at any time as many times as needed up to the approved limit.

OR

Any combination of the above three choices

In any scenario, interest only accrues on funds actually taken by the borrower. For example, if a borrower has a \$50,000 line of credit, but chooses to use only \$10,000, then he/she only pays interest on the \$10,000. The credit line is then reduced to \$40,000 until the next draw.

In the case of a monthly advance, interest is only charged on the outstanding balance each month just like a regular mortgage loan. Each time the borrower receives another payment, the balance increases by that amount.

When must the loan be repaid?

A Reverse Mortgage only must be repaid if one of three things happens:

- The last surviving spouse dies
- The home is sold
- The borrower(s) permanently move from the home for more than 12 months in a row.

Are there closing costs for a Reverse Mortgage?

Yes, just like everything else in life, there is a price.

Generally, the cost to obtain a Reverse Mortgage ranges from 5-6 percent of the home's value. However, the Dept. of HUD has maximum value limits or caps that vary from state to state based on median prices. These maximum caps range from \$200,160 in lower valued areas up to \$362,790 in more high priced regions of the country (2006). If a home's value is higher than the limit, it doesn't mean a person can't get a Reverse Mortgage, it just means that the value used in the formula is capped at that maximum amount. The nice part is that the fees that are based on the home's value are also capped as well.

Typically, the closing costs for a Reverse Mortgage are added into the mortgage itself, so there is no out-of-pocket expense to the borrower.

What is the interest rate and who determines it?

The interest rates on Reverse Mortgage are similar to traditional mortgages or equity lines of credit. For the HECM loan, the Dept. of HUD determines the rate, and for the Home-Keeper loan, Fannie Mae determines the rate. Here's the interesting part. No matter what lender the borrower decides to use, the interest rates are exactly the same. The lender does not determine the rate.

Are Reverse Mortgages Safe?

Reverse Mortgages in the United States are insured and funded by the U.S. Department of HUD and Fannie Mae. The federal government insures HECM payments to borrowers, and HECM loans are only available through HUD-Approved lenders. Free, independent HUD counseling is required prior to taking a Reverse Mortgage.

Why is independent counseling required?

All Reverse Mortgage applicants are required to attend a free counseling session designed to assist the senior in the decision-making process. Counselors are independent, and trained to insure that each prospective borrower understands the pros and cons of a Reverse Mortgage before signing on the bottom line. Counselors are a good thing for borrowers and lenders alike.

Does a Reverse Mortgage affect Social Security or Medicare benefits?

Absolutely not. The money someone receives from a Reverse Mortgage is tax-free, because it is not income. It is simply a loan against the equity in the home. In some cases, Supplemental Security Income and Medicaid benefits may be affected. A qualified elder law attorney can assist anyone needing guidance in this area to avoid any problems.

Must the home be free and clear to do a Reverse Mortgage?

No, in fact many seniors use Reverse Mortgage simply to pay whatever existing mortgages and/or equity loans they currently have on their homes. With this strategy, they may not be "getting" money from their Reverse Mortgage, but they pay off the old loans eliminating the old monthly payments.

This offers relief to their budget by freeing up the extra monthly cash.

What if a borrower ends up owing more than the value of his home?

The U.S. Government guarantees that a borrower will never have to pay back more than the value of his/her home in any circumstance. While it is very rare for a borrower to "use up" all the equity in his/her home, if someone were to live longer than normal or if the home's value dropped causing the mortgage to exceed the value of the home at the time of sale, the federal government would be responsible to pay the difference without any recourse to the borrower. This is a government guarantee that protects all seniors taking Reverse Mortgages.

Can selling the home be a better option than a Reverse Mortgage?

In some rare cases it can be the best option. However, when you consider the "why" that we discussed earlier in this article, you know it really is a rare occurrence. One thing to consider also is that if the home is sold, there still are costs ranging from 6-10% of the sale price to sell, move, etc. Of course, this leaves out any emotional and/or physical burdens an elderly person may bear when moving from his/her home.

Is an equity loan better than a Reverse Mortgage?

That depends. Sometimes they are. Lets look at some pros and cons. Equity loans are usually faster to get and the costs are practically zero in most cases. However, the downside is that a person must qualify for the payments and have excellent credit. The worst part is that there are monthly payments that must be paid...or else. Equity loans work well for short-term financing (0-2 years).

Reverse Mortgages usually take a little longer to get (30-45 days), and the up-front costs are higher. However, the fact that there are no monthly payments is of great benefit to seniors on a fixed and sometimes declining income. Without monthly payments, there is no risk of foreclosure. Reverse Mortgages are often ideal for seniors who wish to remain in their homes for the longer term (2-30 years). Due to the higher up-front costs, Reverse Mortgages are generally not a good option if the borrower plans to move or sell within the first year or two.

How does one choose a good Reverse Mortgage lender?

If you have ever shopped a mortgage before, you will know that it is a daunting task, and you never know if you're getting the best deal. With Reverse Mortgages, the interest rates are the same from lender to lender across the U.S. The closing costs for Reverse Mortgages are practically identical from lender to lender as well due to HUD regulations. All the lenders must use the same formula, so the amount of money available to a borrower is exactly the same no matter who the lender is.

Since all the terms are basically the same, a lender should be chosen based on experience and reputation, but most importantly by the way they interact with the senior client. Here are attributes of a good Reverse Mortgage lender:

- Educated in senior issues and concerns.
Understands seniors.
- Is involved with local senior groups and organizations.
- Tries to help solve problems, not just sell something.
- Really listens to the needs of the client.
- Isn't afraid to say that a Reverse Mortgage is not the best solution.
- Includes children or trusted advisors in the process if needed.
- Spends time with the client and the family.
- Doesn't rush or pressure someone into making a decision.
- Visits the client's home if asked to.

- Only does Reverse Mortgages--specializes.
- Is patient, really listens, is patient, really listens....

I think you get my drift.

As you can see, a Reverse Mortgage is only one option among many for seniors who are looking to stay in their homes and "age in place" with freedom, independence and dignity. Always remember that Reverse Mortgages are not for everyone, but for some they are a godsend.

The key to making the right decision is education. There are many organizations that have free and accurate information about Reverse Mortgages. Some are:

- HUD
- AARP
- National Reverse Mortgage Lenders Assn.
- National Center for Home Equity Conversion
- Fannie Mae

Conclusion

Now you know how a Reverse Mortgage works, but more importantly you also know why they work. You can't have one without the other.

About the author:

Mike Gruley is founder and President of First Financial Mortgage Corporation in Northville, Michigan. First Financial is the largest independently owned Reverse Mortgage lender in the State of Michigan and ranks in the top 5 percent nationally. Mr. Gruley earned his Bachelor of Science in Finance from the University of Dayton, and he holds a nationally recognized certification as a Certified Senior Advisor. He has been in the home lending business for over 21 years. He is an expert who speaks regularly to senior groups

and organizations throughout the country about senior issues and the pros and cons of Reverse Mortgages as well as predatory lending. Mike has been quoted, interviewed and published in many forms of media over the years.

Mike is an active member of the National Reverse Mortgage Lenders Association and he is currently the Co-Chair of the ethics committee. Mike is also founder of the Michigan Aging in Place Council, a non-profit group of professionals that promotes free education for seniors who are making livability and quality of life decisions. He also serves on the board of the Chronic Illness Coalition, and is involved with many senior organizations both locally and nationally. He is a staunch advocate for the protection of seniors with regard to home financing and financial issues.

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WHAT'S ATTITUDE HAVE TO DO WITH LEADERSHIP



by Larry Olsen

For as long as I can remember, people have been talking about an idea called attitude. It seems to be something that affects many areas of our lives and for the most part, when people talk about someone's attitude, it is usually not positive. "I can't believe their attitude; they should definitely think about changing it." Have you ever asked yourself what an attitude is to begin with?

Psychologist tell us that an attitude is a predetermined response to a given stimuli. In other words, when you experience something, you react to it based on the attitude you've developed over time without needing to think about how you should react.

Condition: someone walks into your office—response or attitude: how you react to them before you even say hello or can I help you. Did you realize that your subconscious mind was made up about them before they came into the room? Attitudes are a product of our conditioning; they are not something we are born with. That's why they call them "learned behaviors".

The importance of this article lies with the power of attitudes and their role in our ability to move from a good to an incredible leader. What's your attitude about what you've read so far? How does it affect your understanding of the words you are reading? Does what you see, hear, or read make up your mind or is your mind already made up?

Studies have shown that attitudes play a large part in our performance—OK they play more than a large part, they actually dictate 100 percent of our performance. That's right, they dominate performance. And because of that, to improve performance in any area of your life you need to change your attitude rather than to do what 99 percent of the population does and that is to work on their behavior. "I won't let that person bother me." "I'm not going to eat those kinds of foods anymore," and on and on and on.

Working on behavior is short term at best and only covers up attitude like a cosmetic covers up a blemish. As a leader at work or at home, our number one job is to create an environment where our people can succeed. How do we hope to accomplish that when we've already developed attitudes about our people? For instance; this one has it and that one doesn't, she's always on time but you know how he is.

Here is an example of how powerful attitudes can be. A few years ago I was at a grocery store in Sugar Land, Texas. While I was waiting in line to check out my groceries, the cashier asked the woman in front of me if the cute little girl she was with was her daughter. The mother's reaction was a great example of our words and of the power of leadership. The mother turned to the little girl, who was clinging to her skirt, and said; "she's our shy one". Any idea what this little girl will turn out to be?

The chances are pretty good that the whole family calls her "shy". Her brain records that information as the truth and over time, if she hears it enough and then believes it, she will become shy. Imagine if the mother had said what a wonderful, bright and charming daughter she is; do you think mom's words would have

had a different impact on how her daughter begins to think about herself?

What psychologists and neurologists have discovered, which seems like common sense is this: words develop and shape how we see ourselves and then we act like it. How do you see and treat your people at work? How are you being treated? And, most importantly, how do you treat yourself? As Gandhi said: "be the change you wish to see in the world."

If you want to find out whether or not you've developed any attitudes about your people try this: Imagine you've been given a project that the outcome of which will determine your future success or failure. Then add this to the equation—you can't work on it. Now take a moment and decide which of the people whom you work with, not for, would you put in charge of the project that will absolutely determine your future success or failure?

Why did you pick them? What is it that you've learned about them that has caused you to pick them? You'll find that it wasn't what you read or heard about them. Your decision was based on your experiences with them. But not so much about the experiences you've had with them. What really formed your attitude about them was the belief system you had before you even met them. Just what does that mean? For the most part, we have our attitude about others determined before we even meet them, not for whom they could be but because of the relationships we've been in and whom they remind us of. The attitude you've formed about them through your experiences created your pick.

Now pick the person that would be in "no danger" of heading the project. What have you learned about them? What is it they have or haven't done that has kept them out of the running? How do you know this about them? That's right. It is based on the experiences you've had with them and now you treat them that way.

Let me ask you this. Think of the two people you've picked and answer this question—do you treat these people the same? If

you've answered yes to that question then, no matter how open you think you are, you are in denial. Please don't be offended by the denial comment. I know that we would all like to think that we, as leaders, treat everyone fairly. As a little child we learned about the unfairness of our teachers and parents picking favorites, so because of that we would never do it.

As adults, where less than one percent knows how they think and the other 99 percent just think about whatever is on their mind, this treating others differently is the norm, not the exception. Why is that? Why does the most open-minded person in the world typically associate with people they agree with or have many things in common with? Because you and I don't like conflict or being around people we have little in common with.

If you don't believe me, then ask yourself this question: when is the last time you asked your spouse or significant other: "hey honey, who don't we like and have nothing in common with that we could ask over for dinner tonight?" We surround ourselves with people we like or get along with. Great leaders realize that they must make their minds up about their people and their potential first or they will get to know them and then make their minds up. How have you done it?

To become a great leader we must first realize that we are all works in progress. We are all directed by our attitudes that were formed in the past. Our attitudes create the decisions we make and the results we experience. Once we make our minds up about someone, we continue to treat them that way whether it's good for them or not.

So how do we change our attitudes? Does it mean I have to start hanging around people I don't like or people I am uncomfortable with? Do I really have to ask them over for dinner? Sounds silly doesn't it? No, we don't have to do any of that. To become an excellent leader, spouse or friend we simply have to change the only person on this planet that we can change, and that is our self.

“But I don’t want to change, they’re the ones who need to change”. This is a very real dilemma many people find themselves in. “If I could just get them to do it this way or to just be on time or not to act like that, things would be great, go smoother, with less stress. Let’s face it; life would be a whole lot better.”

And life is a whole lot better. For the last 30 some years I have found that great leaders all have the same thing in common: they see more in their people than their people see in themselves. George Bernard Shaw’s *Pygmalion* is an example of this. The classic line in the play went like this, “I will always be a flower girl to Professor Higgins because he always sees me and treats me like a flower girl, but I will always be a lady to you because you always treat me and see me as a lady.”

Another power quote; “As a man thinketh in his heart so is he.” To accelerate performance and to become the leader you were intended to be when you came into this thing called life doesn’t require you to change, you simply need to learn how to change your mind.

Years ago I learned that, if I was going to be of value to the organizations I consulted with, I needed to make sure that I formed the proper attitudes about the people within the company that I met. Before my discovery of this simple yet profound concept I would simply study the company, meet the people and then form the attitudes as to what was possible for the organization.

With this approach, growth was mediocre at best. But when I discovered that all I needed to do was to find out what the company really wanted, what their vision of an incredible company actually looked like, to the point that everyone in the organization could clearly see and articulate it, the results were not normal—the results were spectacular.

In other words, I was able to form my attitude about the organization based on the vision of what was to be, rather than getting caught up in what it and its people had become. Do you see others

as you would like them to be and treat them as if they already are? How about yourself? If so, hang on for the time of your life.

About the author:

International speaker, author, educator and corporate/life coach, Larry Olsen has spent 30 years researching, adapting and teaching innovations in organizational psychology that lead to phenomenal performance. Anchored in scientific principles based on the cognitive function of the brain, his expertise, philosophy and approach are cultivated from years as an award-winning educator and the management of a multi-franchise company.

Larry counsels that organizational or corporate success is wholly manifested in its people. To succeed, its people must come first—without shortcut or excuse. His cognitive approach to achieving excellence is as unique as it is effective, dramatically elevating the individual belief system to empower and maximize an organization's most valuable asset: its people. The right prescription for dynamic business and personal success, his sky-is-the-limit outlook and engaging teaching methodology provide a clear path to realizing vision and self-actualization.

The CEO of The Olsen Group, the corporate and personal success consultancy founded in 1995, Larry plays keyboards in a rock band and actively supports numerous charities, including Goodwill, the Special Olympics and the American Cancer Society. He vigorously pursues a healthy lifestyle and resides with his wife and five children in Phoenix, Arizona.

SEVEN STEPS TO LESS STRESS



by Cindy Gale, D.C.

What happens to human beings when too much stress is placed on their bodies, minds, and emotions? In today's stressful world, a person suffering from stress overload is on the verge of becoming unhealthy and diseased. Emotional, physical, and chemical stress leads to premature aging, panic and anxiety attacks, nervous breakdowns, strokes and heart attacks, all sorts of debilitating diseases, and to the extreme, death. Since it's almost impossible to avoid stress completely, there are some things we can do to lessen the stress we experience, and cause us to live healthier and happier lives.

Here are seven simple steps to less stress:

Step 1. Drink Plenty of Pure, Clean Water

Water is essential to life! Without enough water, we put an inordinate amount of stress on our bodies. Water hydrates us, from head-to-toe and fingertip-to-fingertip, including our muscles, organs, brain, spinal cord, discs, glands, connective tissue, and skin; basically, each and every one of our billions of cells needs

to be hydrated. Most people don't drink enough water, especially pure, clean water. One reason we get headaches is because we are dehydrated. Most people think it's the aspirin that "cures" the headache, when it's really the glass of water with which we take the aspirin that gets rid of it.

Not only is water necessary to hydrate our bodies, but it's essential to cleansing and detoxifying them as well. When our body becomes overly toxic, we cannot think properly. Many people develop kidney problems, such as kidney stones, because they do not drink enough water. Bladder infections are also another example of what can happen when we don't drink enough water. Denying yourself of the essential elixir of life will eventually lead to your body breaking down and cause your skin to age terribly. Dehydration can also lead to dialysis, which is a very unnatural, inconvenient, and expensive way to rid the kidneys of toxins. Without enough water, our blood thickens, which can cause high blood pressure as well! So, you might as well drink plenty of water, instead of suffering the consequences. Avoid flavored water, especially if it has chemicals in it.

Pure, clean, filtered water is a necessity in today's toxic world. Tap water contains fluoride, chlorine, other harsh chemicals, and even medication! Not only does it taste bad, it's also bad for you! You wouldn't want to give a baby a bottle of dirty water, right? Then don't drink it yourself. There are many water purification systems available; make sure to get one in your home and workplace.

Step 2. Eat a Healthy and Nutritious Diet

Proper nutrition is imperative to a healthy and stress-free life. The old adage, "You are what you eat," is not just a cliché. Everything we eat makes our blood, bone, and tissue. If we put in healthy food, we make a healthy body. If we put in junk, we make a junky body! It's that simple. As adults, we have the ability to choose to be healthy or unhealthy—it is up to us.

Step 5. Avoid and Eliminate Toxins

We are constantly and unknowingly ingesting, and being exposed to, harmful toxins! No one would deliberately live next door to a toxic waste dump, yet that is exactly what our own bodies are becoming. The stress that these chemicals put on our bodies is unimaginable, and causes us to become sicker and sicker at an alarming rate. Yet many people are unaware of the toxic and harmful products we consume on a daily basis, especially because we think that the FDA, and the manufacturers of food and household products, would never allow this to happen. Well, I hate to burst your bubble, but we are on our own. There is actually no one watching out for us, so we need to be responsible for our own health by educating ourselves. All it takes is reading the labels of everything we plan to purchase.

One simple rule to avoid toxins is this: "If you can't pronounce it, don't eat it!" Have you ever read some of the ingredient lists of most of our processed foods? Unless you're a chemist, would you know what these food additives really are, or what they do to us? Humans are not synthetic, we are organic, and therefore, we should consume and use organic products. Synthetic products are man-made in a laboratory, and toxic and harmful to humans. Organic foods are made by nature, and grow on trees or in the ground, using water, sunshine, and soil. Which sounds more appetizing, and healthier, to you?

Some folks think that synthetic chemicals used a little here or there doesn't seem like it could cause much harm, but when eaten or used on a daily basis, day after day, year after year, decade after decade, and not just in one product, but in a multitude of them, well, you can see why we are becoming sicker and sicker—because these toxic substances accumulate in our bodies and make us very ill.

When reading the ingredient lists on packaged foods, make sure that they don't contain: MSG (Monosodium Glutamate), Aspartame (NutraSweet and Equal), Sucralose (Splenda), hydro-

genated or partially-hydrogenated oils (like margarine), food coloring and dyes, canola oil (Canadian Motor Oil), trans-fatty acids, or anything that you wouldn't find in your grandmother's cupboards. All of these ingredients are synthetic and cause numerous toxic effects.

MSG, found in just about everything in a bag, box, can, and container, causes obesity and type II diabetes, both of which are on the rise in this country. MSG is classified as an "excitotoxin" because it overexcites neurons, to the point of killing them. MSG makes everything taste good and causes addiction, just like nicotine in cigarettes. Consumers of products using this chemical crave any "food" that contains this toxic and carcinogenic food additive. All fast food and chain restaurants use MSG in their foods, not just Chinese restaurants, which is why Americans are so fat!

Aspartame is also an excitotoxin and should be avoided like the plague! Because obesity is an epidemic in America, many of us have switched to diet products. Unfortunately, aspartame actually causes carbohydrate cravings, and therefore, makes its consumers gain weight, instead of actually losing it. But this is not the worst effect. Aspartame is a neurotoxin that causes brain lesions and destroys the central nervous system. (For a list of illnesses that these chemicals are implicated in causing, please contact me.)

Have you ever read your toothpaste tube? Look at it carefully. For instance, Crest toothpaste's label states: "Keep out of reach of children under 6 years of age. If more than used for brushing is accidentally swallowed get medical help or contact a Poison Control Center right away." That's because fluoride is poison! Sure, Fluoride MAY prevent cavities, but I'd rather have some cavities than be poisoned, wouldn't you? However, if fluoride really did prevent cavities, no one in America would ever have any—because fluoride has been in our toothpaste and drinking water for over 80 years.

What about what we put ON our bodies? I once read that, "you

shouldn't put anything on your body that you wouldn't put in your mouth." When I saw that, I thought to myself, "Gee, there are tons of things I put on my body that I would never put in my mouth—just because they taste so bad!" But many of the things we use on a daily basis are very toxic to our bodies, including nail polish & nail polish remover, hairspray, hair coloring, shampoo, body lotion & cleansers, make up, lipstick, perfume & cologne, shaving cream, and antiperspirants. All of these products contain many toxic ingredients and our skin absorbs them all.

In America, unless we smell like flowers or herbs, we are seemingly offensive to our fellow humans. Sweating, which is one way our bodies naturally eliminates toxins, is apparently repugnant and should not be allowed, even at the risk of our health. The primary antiperspirant ingredient, aluminum chlorhydrate, which prevents perspiration from occurring, clogs up the lymph nodes, which are necessary to cleanse the body of cancer cells and other cellular debris. Once these nodes become stagnant, cancer can develop. Most breast cancer occurs in the axillary region of the breast, which is near the armpit, and that's where some very important lymph nodes are located. Nowadays, men and women may both be more likely to develop breast cancer due to increased use of antiperspirants.

Step 6. Get Chiropractic Care for a Healthy Nervous System

Our nervous system, which consists of the brain and spinal cord, controls every system, organ, muscle, and cell in our bodies! If there is any interference with the communication between our brain and body, then ill health and disease occur. If a vertebra is out of alignment, and causes pressure on a nerve, we may not feel the effects immediately, but we will develop symptoms of disease eventually.

Think of the nervous system like a hose. If we step on a hose, some water may trickle out and reach the flowers, or the flow may stop completely; either way, the flowers will die, maybe not immediately, but eventually, because without enough water, they

will not be able to sustain life. It is the same with our bodies. If the life-giving energy from our brain to our bodies is impeded or interfered with, then eventually, we become sick and die.

Chiropractic care is a non-invasive, non-toxic, safe, and effective way to keep us healthy. The nervous system controls our immune system, and if our immune system is not working properly, we easily become ill. There are over 200 chiropractic techniques practiced today, and not all chiropractors adjust the entire spine or even the extremities. Whatever technique a Doctor of Chiropractic uses, the patient has an opportunity to become healthy, and prevent disease from occurring.

Many patients who were not helped by medical doctors have found Chiropractic to be a life-saving alternative to surgery and drugs. All drugs have side effects, and any surgery, whether major or minor, is traumatic on the body, and has inherent risks, especially from anesthesia. We've all heard the quip, "The operation was a success, but the patient died." Well, the only side effect of Chiropractic care is health!

Step 7. Have A Positive Mental Attitude

In the scientific community, it is a well-known fact that "our cells are listening to our thoughts." That being the case, if we have negative thoughts, we can have a negative impact on our lives. Conversely, if we have positive thoughts, we can have a positive impact on our lives, and that includes our health too. Doesn't it make more sense to create a positive lifestyle and attitude, instead of a negative, stressful one?

There are certain truths or laws in the universe, one of which is the "Law of Attraction." If we want to attract abundance, wealth, happy relationships, and health into our lives, then we need to think, feel, and believe that we already have abundance, wealth, happy relationships, and health. When we focus on the negative aspects of our lives, this only creates more unhappiness, illness, and depression. If we focus on the good things in our lives, and

we are grateful for what we do have—as opposed to obsessing about the lack in our lives—then we attract more of the things we want, instead of what we do not want.

Everyone has experienced at least one day in their lives when everything seemed to go well, from having no traffic, making every light, getting a parking spot, and arriving at our destination on time, to people complimenting us on our looks or a job well done, having a great meal for lunch, having someone else pick up the tab, joking and laughing with friends, hearing some good news, and by the end of the day, going to bed with a smile. We have all experienced having everything go wrong, too. Getting up late, missing the bus, or the car not starting, getting a speeding ticket, or not getting a parking spot, being reprimanded by a boss, spilling something on our shirt, hearing bad news, and stubbing our toe while getting into bed. Which would you prefer?

Just as negative thinking creates a downward spiral effect, positive thinking creates an upward spiral effect. When something we dislike occurs, instead of dwelling on it, shake it off, and expect better things to happen. If we know we are doing all the right things to take care of ourselves, then we should expect to be healthy. When we expect health, because we act, think, behave, and believe we deserve good health, then we should manifest good health and less stress.

I hope that these seven steps to less stress are helpful to my readers. If you are interested in being healthy, and living a relatively stress-free life, then follow these simple directions, and you will find yourself experiencing life at its optimum.

Yours in good health,

About the author:

Dr. Cindy Gale is on a mission: To help people reclaim their health and teach them how to be healthy in an unhealthy world! As a Chiropractor, educator, writer, professional speaker, and life coach, Dr. Gale devotes her time and energy to learning all she can about her patients' health concerns and supporting them in achieving their goals for optimal health. Understanding that various lifestyle choices may unknowingly lead to any number of health conditions, such as Candidiasis, Chronic Fatigue Syndrome, Fibromyalgia, headaches, insomnia, and obesity, just to name a few, Dr. Gale educates her patients on how to safely and effectively alleviate the many problems that can cause these and other serious illnesses.

Dr. Gale received her B.S. from Excelsior College in Albany, NY, and her D.C. from Life University School of Chiropractic in Marietta, GA, in June 2000. She taught Clinical Pathology for two years at Rising Spirit Institute of Natural Health in Atlanta, where she was honored with the "Outstanding Faculty Award" in December 2005. She has been certified as a Public Speaker and Personal Life Coach through Professional Income Solutions, and is involved with Mission Possible, the international, nonprofit organization that promotes awareness of toxic food additives. Dr. Gale is available for radio, TV, and magazine interviews, speaking engagements, writing articles for publication, and telephone consultations. Watch for Dr. Gale's book, How To Be Healthy In An Unhealthy World, which will be available in bookstores February 2007.

You can visit Dr. Gale's website at www.drcindygale.com or contact her directly via e-mail at Drcindyg@aol.com, by fax at (770) 499-0781 or phone at (404) 245-5342.

OUR FOUNDATION—YOURS AND MINE



by Martha Philip, CCCE

We have come a long way baby over the last eighteen years—from CERF to the FOUNDATION. The word Foundation according to the American Heritage Dictionary means the basis on which a thing stands or is supported, or established for the perpetual support of an institution. The Foundation is certainly a perpetual support of an institution, Credit Professionals International.

In 1988, as a member of the Board of Directors of Credit Professionals International, I cast my vote to establish an educational foundation for the purpose of providing credit education to consumers along with the rest of the Board. Incorporated in 1989, the Foundation received a tax deductible 501(C3) status from the Internal Revenue Service.

The mission of the Credit Education Resources Foundation is to provide credit education to the general public by utilizing and enhancing the combined talents, education, and expertise of Credit Professionals International.

You and I as members of Credit Professionals International are the delivery mechanism for credit education materials to recognize and address the credit problems and solutions unique to each age and income level within our society.

In order to carry out our purpose our foundation gets funding from the Annual Walk-A-Thon and the donations made by members and corporations to support our walk. The proceeds of this Annual event are shared with the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children. Why, you might ask? We felt that this was a very worthwhile organization after much research in making sure the funds are used to support the efforts of finding children. This also gave us the avenue for more publicity in getting our name in the press.

Over the years, we have had to find new ways to raise funds. We started the geographic auction and dollars-in-the-air at the Annual Conference for Credit Professionals International to increase our revenue. Another source of revenue is through our member certification program, which you the members requested.

A very generous gift from one of our members, Helen B. Sawyers, enabled us to develop a tool to provide our members with a credit education program for consumers. This "Take Chare of Your Life" program includes an excellent audio tape and CD along with an instructor's guide, all of which were developed by our members. In addition, a Power Point presentation also was produced and is available for your use.

Having personally known Helen B. Sawyers, I feel quite sure that she would have been pleased with another program that was made available to the members from her gift. That program, the scholarships for members to attend the International Conference, is one of my favorites.

In 1999, we dropped CERF and now it is known as the Foundation. You and I are the main building blocks of OUR FOUNDATION.

About the author:

Martha Philip, CCCE, is the President of the Credit Education Resources Foundation. She was the President of Credit Professionals International in 1991-1992. Martha retired from the banking industry after 46 years and is currently working for Weight Watchers International as a Service Provider. She is enjoying her retirement by exercising, reading and traveling. She can be reached at marthaphilip@prodigy.net.

\$\$ Take Charge of Your Life \$\$

This 73 minute audio program, available on tape or CD, covers the basics of money and credit management and is intended to help today's consumer learn to take charge of his or her financial future. It was designed by members of Credit Professionals International to be used in presenting credit seminars and for placement in public libraries and schools for consumer education.

Tape	1-5 copies	\$11.00 each
	6+ copies	\$8.00 each
CD	5 copies	\$15.00 each
	6+ copies	\$12.00 each
Instructor's Guide		\$6.50 each
		<i>(prices include shipping)</i>

The Instructor's Guide is available as an accompaniment to the tapes and CDs and contains pages that may be copied onto overhead transparencies or used as handouts. There is a 70-slide PowerPoint presentation available with the guide which includes notes and handout masters. Contact the Corporate Office for information on volume discounts or to place an order.

WHAT IS CPI?

The association now known as Credit Professionals International (CPI) was established in 1937 for individuals working in the credit industry. CPI's focus is on strengthening the credit industry and the individual through education and interaction. Our mission is to support our members by providing opportunities for networking, career development, and community involvement.

Membership benefits include this educational manual with articles written by outstanding members of the credit industry; a website—www.creditprofessionals.org—that has a special members-only section loaded with helpful information; local monthly meetings with educational speakers, programs and networking opportunities; and the opportunity to attend state, district and international seminars and conferences.

Members also receive *The Credit Professional*—an annual 40-page magazine filled with articles relevant to those working in the credit industry; the online CPI Membership Directory; the Pre-Conference and Post-Conference capsules; and the August issue of *The Credit Connection* newsletter. Members can subscribe (cost \$15) to receive the three additional issues of this quarterly newsletter, which contains a legislative update and valuable information of interest to every CPI member.

Credit Professionals International also offers a four-level certification program, which provides a vehicle for members to receive recognition for participation in continuing professional development through courses in the workplace, attendance and participation in seminars, conferences, college courses and activities at all levels of the association.

Visit our website at www.creditprofessionals.org

CREDIT PROFESSIONALS INTERNATIONAL

“IT’S A WHOLE NEW BALLGAME” WHEN YOU ADD NEW MEMBERS TO YOUR TEAM!

Announcing awards for the 2006-2007 Membership Campaign

INDIVIDUAL

Every member who recruits a new member will receive \$5.00. Please notify the Corporate Office when the new member’s dues are paid to receive your funds.

LOCAL

A Certificate of Appreciation will be awarded to each local association that:

- retains its membership
- adds new members
- increases its membership

A separate drawing for each of these three categories will be held at the 2007 International Conference. Locals will be entered in their respective category only. The local drawn in each category will receive \$50.00.

DISTRICT

The District with the largest percentage of local associations maintaining their membership will receive \$50.00. The District with the largest percentage of local associations increasing their membership will receive \$50.00.

The Corporate Office will retain the records and calculate the winners at the local and District levels. Campaign ends May 31, 2007.

Credit Professionals International

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