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A Mini-Course in Management

During a majority of my years in productive employment, prior to starting a collectible business, I did consulting work in the field of supervisory and management development. One of my favorite topics involved providing knowledge which could be used to propel organizations into the realm of *excellence*.

When I first started, which was precisely after the Pony Express went bankrupt and prior to the U.S.P.S. producing self-stick stamps, I was given some excellent advice by a mentor. He told me that people in organizations have little interest in text-book theory. Rather, they want practical and useful advice that is supported by real life examples, the more recent the better.

This month I would like to deviate from writing about stamps and, instead, drift back to my former career. In doing so I will cite a few attributes of excellent organizations and support them with real-life examples of what prevails in excellent organizations. To be noted are the following attributes:

- A vital key to success in excellent organizations is not necessarily to be found in the CEO or president, who is often merely a figure-head, but rather in the presence of a skilled and dedicated team of operations officers and staff experts.

Example: During 2005 the president of the Lancaster County Philatelic Society (L.C.P.S.) could probably be viewed as being a classic figurehead. However, an excellent year was realized through the time, effort, dedication, and skills of the other officers and leaders of various projects and activities.

- In excellent organizations minimal time is spent in formal meetings; however, a network of free-flowing communications keeps everybody in the loop and results in a smooth operation.

Example: The leaders of L.C.P.S. have a tradition of very few formal meetings; however, communications and coordination are excellent thanks to the newsletter, phone calls, meeting minutes, personal contacts, etc.

- Excellent organizations produce high quality products.

Example: The sharing of friendship and the conduct of high quality programs, at L.C.P.S. meetings, meets the criteria of excellent quality. To be especially noted are the creative program offerings of club members.

- **All members of excellent organizations are quick to pitch-in and help when something needs to be done to meet organizational goals and objectives.**

Example: The staffing needs required for L.C.P.S. projects have been regularly met by members who are quick to volunteer their help.

- **Excellent organizations have a well-developed program of leadership succession.**

Example: Talented people are in place or standing by to provide leadership to L.C.P.S. during the next year to two years.

- **Excellent organizations are quick to recognize and eliminate threatening weaknesses.**

Example: This is a challenge that needs to be addressed by L.C.P.S. The excellence oriented strengths, noted above, are to some degree rooted in the leadership contributions provided by a handful of club members. Except for a few dynamic, energetic, and youthful leaders, such as Marilyn Shirley, many of the club's leaders are getting old and tired. Very much needed is the leadership participation of many of the newer L.C.P.S. members who, very clearly, are talented people with a lot to offer L.C.P.

Having taken time to read this article, I'm impressed! Impressed by what? Impressed by what a great year I had as chief figurehead thanks to all that was done and achieved by those of you who did so much to make 2005 an excellent year for L.C.P.S. I am very appreciative of your contributions!

Minutes, LCPS Meeting, November 9, 2005

The meeting was called to order at 7:08 p.m.

The Treasurer reported a balance of \$2,712.92 and the report was accepted. The Secretary's report was accepted.

Our next meeting will be the Holiday Party on Wednesday, Dec. 14. Everyone is invited to bring a small gift, preferably philatelic and valued at \$3.00 to \$4.00. The gift should be appropriate for anyone – male, female, youth or senior.

Marilyn Shirley reported on the food being ordered. The cost is \$5.00 per person.

In case of inclement weather, members may call Al Schaub, Eleanor Wheeler, or Bob Noble to confirm if we are canceling.

Our next "swap meet" is on the 4th Thursday will be in January.

Election for a new vice president was held. We unanimously elected Bob Noble. We continue to plan for the bus trip to the International Stamp Show in 2006. The one day trip will be on Thursday, June 1. Chuck Kilgore is organizing.

Officers will meet on Saturday, Dec. 3 at 10:00 am to plan programs for next year.

Lou DeFilice asked members to consider presenting a program and Paul Peterson offered to help anyone prepare by taking photos to prepare slides.

Bill Snyder suggested planning a trip to the APS headquarters in Bellefonte, PA.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, Eleanor Wheeler, Secretary

From the Editor

- The USPS has announced rate increases that will take effect on January 8, 2005. The new first-class rate for a one ounce letter is 39 cents, a 2 cent increase, with the rate for each additional ounce going from 23 to 24 cents. The postcard rate will also increase, going from 23 to 24 cents. Behind the rate increases is a Congressional decision that forced the Postal Service to place some \$3.1 billion in an escrow account. Moreover, the long-term picture promises more, and possibly higher, increases! The revenue generated by first-class mail has traditionally paid the fixed expenses of USPS. With first-class mail volume declining, however, this revenue is no longer sufficient to cover fixed expenses. Hence, the expectation is that almost all rate classes will need to increase in the years ahead.
- Michael Laurence, the editor of Linn's Stamp News for the past 23 years has retired. Laurence's achievement at Linn's was converting a hobby publication run by journalists into a hobby publication run by hobbyists: "I wanted to create a stamp newspaper that I'd like to read myself. ...I recruited stamp collectors for editorial jobs, on the principle that it's easier to turn a stamp collector into a journalist than to turn a journalist into a stamp collector." As most readers would agree, Laurence's efforts have been successful: Linn's is the hobby's "newspaper of record." The new Linn's editor is Michael Schreiber.
- Stamp Show—The Baltimore Friendly Bourse. December 18th at the Holiday Inn, Timonium Plaza, 2004 Greenspring Drive. 10 am-4 pm. 1-800-701-7091.



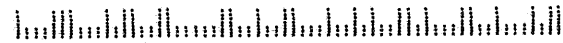
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Christmas Party

The December meeting is our annual Christmas party. The day and date is Wednesday, 14 December; the location--our usual meeting place. The cost of \$5 per person and spouses are especially invited.

The party starts at 7:00 p.m.—be sure to bring a philatelic gift, something in the \$3 to \$4 range. Marilyn is handling the food and we can expect there will be both good and plenty! See you there!