



ALASKAN PURCHASER

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December 2014 **How to Make Purchasing More Fun**

By: Mark Miller, CPM, CIRM and Thomas Graddy, CPM, CIRM

Do you have fun at work? Do the Buyers in your department enjoy their jobs? At a recent department meeting, we asked buyers to fill out a survey that described the level of fun they were having at work. They reacted to our survey with frowns and puzzled looks. The survey results also showed that many of the Buyers did not consider work as being fun. These results were disturbing to us and it started us thinking about the relationship between work and fun. We enjoy our jobs so that we know these two are not mutually exclusive. It has been shown that promoting fun at work does work:

- “People who have fun on their job are more creative, more productive, better decision makers and get along better with co-workers.” (Abramis)
- “Research has shown that a 13 percent increase in morale can lead to a 40 percent increase in productivity.” (Still)
- “98 percent of 737 CEO’s preferred job candidates with a sense of humor over those without.” (Hodge-Cronin & Associates)

The following are our suggestions on how to make your work more fun.

Fun and Work

We separated our suggestions into two categories: fun at work and fun with work. Fun at work deals with the climate in your purchasing department and the environment in your company as a whole. The culture and climate of each company is different, so what works in some companies will be inappropriate in others. These are ideas that you, as a manager, can use to make work more fun for everyone.

The Pep Club

Many companies have an employee, volunteer group whose mission is to organize fun events in the office building. Activities of the Pep Club can include: an ice cream social hour during noon hour on the front lawn, leave a Halloween/Valentine treat on each desk, a Christmas luncheon pot luck buffet with a visit from Santa, a summer luncheon cook out, with the management staff doing the cooking

A monthly raffle for a reserved parking spot in the first place in the lot, decorate the fork lifts and have a parade in the factory, junk food days. Or even an annual golf outing or contests like baby pictures, trivia, ugliest drivers license photo, ugly tie contest, ugly shoe contest, pumpkin carving, paper airplane flying, etc. Hold a talent show with prizes. Or hold dress up days like beach days, Halloween costumes, sports team or even a pajama party.

THURSDAY 4 DECEMBER 2014

**NAPM-ALASKA
PRO D MEETING**

See Page 5 For More Information

TIME: 5:30 p.m. Networking / 6:00 p.m.

Cost \$28.00* Includes Dinner.

VISA and MasterCard Accepted

No-Shows Billed

**Location: Coast International Inn,
3450 Aviation Avenue. Anchorage Alaska**

RESERVATIONS REQUIRED

Contact- Pamela Iverson

email: piverson@cookinlethousing.org

no later than 5 P.M. on Wednesday 12/3/2014

PRESIDENT MARIANNE BECKHAM

Happy Holidays everyone! Much of the world is in chaos, if not outright war today, so it behooves us to take a few minutes promoting peace and harmony. That is not easy when there is so much stress and angst. Recently I began to read an insightful article, “How Successful People Handle Toxic People” by Dr. Travis Bradberry, coauthor of Emotional Intelligence 2.0 and President at TalentSmart. Although I am not finished studying it, I found pearls of wisdom to share.

Toxic people do not follow the normal logical sequence of a, b, c, then d. They tend to defy the logic of routine processes. They fail to recognize their own toxicity. They seem to derive joy from instigating discord and being the constant contrarian. Whatever the case, their negative behavior creates unnecessary complexity, strife, and worst of all, stress.

Years of studies reveal stress has a lasting and negative impact on the brain. Even a short intense burst can cause loss of effectiveness to reason and recall. Long-term stress results in permanent brain loss of neuron functionality. Sources are easy to identify and how we handle them makes all the difference. Managing your emotions to remain calm in the face of chaos directly impacts performance. Research indicates 90% of top performers are skilled managers of their emotions in times of stress in order to remain calm and in control. They are skilled in neutralizing toxic people and use well-honed coping strategies to keep them at bay.

We all have toxic people affecting our lives, both professionally and privately. How do we keep these negative influences from derailing our success? Dr. Bradberry provides thirteen constructive strategies, and I hope to capture the essence of his message albeit condensed for space available. Here are the first five:

1. Establish Boundaries—setting limits on how much time the complainers and naysayers take up is an effective control point. Otherwise, the “pity me, pity party people” will suck all the oxygen out of the time available. Clearly, listening to legitimate concerns and problems are important and we all want to be supportive of those in distress, however, unchecked emotional tirades spiral out of control. One way to set the limits is to put the question back to them and ask, “What do they intend to do to change the situation?” In M. Scott Peck’s book *The Road Less Traveled*, he asks “What do you intend to do about it?” The next time your faced with this, erect the boundary.

2. Chose to Fight Another Day—When you check your emotions you free yourself to chose the battle to fight and wait until the time is right to stand your ground. Unchecked emotions compromise your ability to pull up and regroup, validate the strategy, and neutralize the toxicity of the other party. When we negotiate, we know its critical to harness the emotion and keep the goal in sight; otherwise, we could lose the deal on a minor point. Know when to fight.

3. Keep Your Head Above Water—Getting dragged down into the whirlwind of irrational behaviors drives you crazy! Just being around these people can suck you down until you are drowning in their circuitous rationale. Recognize their game and refuse to play. Stick to the facts and refuse to respond to the emotional chaos. Remember, wrestling with a pig only makes the pig happy and you muddy. Rise above the turmoil so you can keep a clear vision of the situation and positive outcomes.

4. Identify and Control Emotions—“They just push my buttons!” Whether it is your cousin from Toledo or the Warehouse Foreman, recognizing when they are doing it and your role in the foray enables the successful person to step away and regroup, plan, and prepare the address the real issue. Easier said than done since they have successfully done it to you before. This time, you chose your reaction.

5. Stay Joyous and Be Positive—Keep a positive attitude and rejoice in your accomplishments and successes. If other’s opinions set your self-image, then you abdicate your power to your own happiness. Remaining happy and feeling good about yourself is a core trait of emotionally intelligent people. This applies equally to your business self and your personal self. You cannot turn off your reactions to other peoples opinions, but you can take them for what they are worth—nada. They think you are horrible; you are probably not. They think you are fabulous; you are probably not. But you do deserve joy and happiness. Take it, keep it, live it, and as Wally Amos says, “Be positive anyway.” Remember, what other people think if you is none of your business.

I believe it is fitting to be joyous and being positive during this Holiday season both professionally and personally. I hope you find this insightful article as helpful as it has been for me.

Respectfully,
Marianne Beckham, President

2014/2015 Officers

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PAST PRESIDENT

MARLYS HAGEN, CPM, CPPB, CPPO

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

Northwest Purchasing Education Council

No update from the NPEC other than to get next year's conference on your planning calendar. The conference will be held in the Portland-Vancouver area but will be hosted by NAPM-Spokane.

The dates are October 26-28, 2015, so save these dates on your calendars and put in your budget requests. We are now working on a host for the 2016 conference.

DECEMBER PRO-D SPEAKER

Dave Harbour

Our speaker tonight brings an interesting perspective to us. He will address the future of our careers and the organizations that employ us. His topic is, "The Outlook For Alaska Supply Management Services".

Dave Harbour is former Chairman of the Regulatory Commission of Alaska. During his term as Commissioner, he served as vice chairman of the gas committee for the National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners. The national association named him "Commissioner Emeritus" upon completion of this term of office. Dave is former Chairman of the Anchorage Chamber of Commerce, the Anchorage Downtown Partnership and the Alaska Council on Economic Education. He is former President of the Alaska Press Club, the National Bald Eagle Foundation and Common Sense for Alaska. He was instrumental in founding the Alaska Support Industry Alliance and Consumer Energy Alliance-Alaska. He has served as a university vice president, an oil industry executive, Army officer, CEO of a statewide security company and director of the municipal parking and garage agency. He has owned a commercial fishing boat, a construction fabric supply business and an erosion control contracting firm. Dave's wife, Nancy, is President of the Alaska Center for the Performing Arts and they have three grown children. Dave now spends much of his time writing and photographing in South America.

DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION BEN MILAM, CPPM, C.P.M.

It doesn't happen very often, but I find myself at a loss for words to describe our last meeting. November was our "plant tour" on the calendar since July. Normally our plant tours are among our most popular events and well attended. However something went terribly wrong this year. Our gracious host, the Alaska Railroad, was well prepared. They had the tour well planned, tables set up for dinner, and a full staff on hand to answer questions. They had a great tour planned and no one (almost) came. Despite the low attendance, they insisted that we proceed as planned. Needless to say those of us there had a very personalized tour. Alaskans are extremely fortunate to have such an outstanding resource for our use. Did you know that our little railroad has 51 locomotives; that they haul almost 500,000 passengers and over 5 million tons of freight last year? WOW. While I was personally embarrassed by the low attendance, I did enjoy a great tour that was both interesting and educational. Hopefully we can figure out what we did wrong so it never happens again.

PRO-D MEETING AND DINNER DECEMBER 4, 2014.

Due to numerous other Christmas parties scheduled, the Board of Directors has elected to discontinue the NAPM Alaska Christmas party for this year. Instead we will focus on our primary mission of providing professional education for members of our profession. Our speaker Dave Harbour will address "The Outlook for Alaska Supply Management Services." Dave has a very unique background that should result in a very unique perspective on Supply Chain Management. We meet at 5:30 p.m. at the Coast International Inn near the airport.



71st Annual Pacific Northwest Purchasing Conference

From all reports our conference was a great success. Overall we had great reports on the quality of the education, the food and the entertainment and trade show. As Co-Chairs for the event, Marlys and I want to personally thank the many volunteers who worked long hours to make this event a success. We can all pat ourselves on the back for a job well done and step back for a well-deserved break.

CPSM CERTIFICATION BOOT CAMP

My guess is we will have a lot of new CPSMs in the near future. This event was a success beyond our wildest dreams with 28 people attending and I have already received inquiries about the next event. It is too early to announce a firm date, but we are working on another Certification Boot Camp for the coming summer. **Just a reminder to 28 people (you know who you are). Schedule your test now!** You spent a lot of money on training. Don't let it go to waste.

LAST DAY TO REGISTER FOR CPSM BRIDGE EXAM is December 31, 2014. If you have a C.P.M. you only need to take one exam, not 3, but you must register NOW. After you register you still have one year to complete the bridge exam. A college degree is no longer required for CPSM certification.

SAVE THE DATE

While it is not yet firm we are scheduling our spring seminar for March 5 and 6, 2015.

Ben

“How to Make Purchasing More Fun”

Continued from page 1

The company can have a limited budget to the Pep Club, but most of these ideas require no or limited budgets. The team can plan activities during lunch hour.

Make Meetings Fun

Meetings are often dull with agendas that review financial statistics and speeches on technical subjects. The following ideas are to make your meetings more fun. **Good news**—Everyone likes to be recognized in front of their peers, so we look for reasons to have employees stand and be applauded. We recognize people for birthdays, company anniversaries, training courses completed, promotions, and engagements. We have a traveling trophy that is presented to the employee who is expecting a new arrival. We also give awards for people who don't bring a treat for their birthday, and give a “sandbag” to anyone who reaches their annual cost reduction goals too quickly. Celebrate everything possible. **Contests**—We have a contest at each meeting with a silly prize for the winner. I have had a spelling bee, brainteasers, word games, etc. A good source for these is “100 Training Games” (Kroehnert). **Hats**—Wearing a silly hat (cowboy, cheese head, cat in the hat), tie our outfit can liven up a meeting. **Jokes/Cartoons**—**Jokes or cartoons** (Dilbert, Born Loser) are good ways to make your meetings more fun. Extreme care must be taken to avoid off color, offensive jokes. We have found that telling jokes that are not very funny and having the audience “groan and boo” can be more fun than truly humorous jokes. **Bring food**—Bring popcorn, candy, fruit, rolls, or even Cracker Jacks to your next meeting.

Many fun events can also promote community service. The following ideas have been used by General Casualty Insurance: Blue jeans for donation—for a one dollar donation let employees wear blue jeans on select Fridays to benefit breast cancer awareness, Toys for Tots, etc. These are just some of the ideas that can be implemented so the environment in your office is more fun.

Make Time for Number One

Many of us get trapped by the piles of daily work. Take some time to analyze which day to day activities

You like to do the most. Then plan your day so you do some of your favorite tasks each day. Financial advisors tell us to pay ourselves first. When you do plan your day use this same principle. Make time for things you want to do. You will enjoy your job more. The following are two of our favorite job related tasks that we make time for each day. Learn Something new—we try to learn something new each day. We may establish a new spreadsheet program, read a chapter in a professional book, map a process or attend a seminar. We always feel that we had a successful day if at least one new thing was learned. Network—we like to talk to co-workers, suppliers, engineers or customers. Some mornings we spend fifteen minutes visiting others Buyers' offices just to chat. Other days we take a supplier out to lunch.

1. **Have an adventure**—be an adventurer. Look at each day as an opportunity to do something different. Some adventures we have had included: hold supplier workshops, start a supplier advisory council, visit a major customer, or work on a cross functional team. An adventure can advance your career and make your job more fun.
2. **Remember this is a great job**—There is a Buyer in our department who tells us often that, “This is a great job and fabulous place to work. Thank you for letting me work here.” We should all have this attitude. Try to start each morning telling yourself that you love your job and that you can't wait to face today's new adventure. A positive attitude is contagious.
3. **Have fun at and with work**—Successful companies have found that the attitude of its employees is key to financial success. Southwest Airlines carefully screens its employees and look for an employee with a profile that is happy and fun loving. As a manager, make your office more fun by trying some of our fun at work ideas. As an individual try the fun with work ideas. It is each person's responsibility to have fun at work. Form a **Pep Team** and start having some fun events in the office. Make your **meetings more fun** by having good news, contests, wearing hats, telling jokes or bring food. Plan fun events that also encourage **community service**. Leave time in your days to do the tasks you enjoy—**make time for #1**. Try something new—**have an adventure**. Remind yourself each day that **you love your job** and have a positive attitude.

December 2014



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WHAT'S HAPPENING!

**THURSDAY,
4 DECEMBER 2014**

**PRO-D MEETING
"THE OUTLOOK FOR
ALASKA SUPPLY
MANAGEMENT SERVICES"**

**COAST INTERNATIONAL INN
ANCHORAGE, ALASKA**

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The Alaskan Purchaser is published monthly (September to May) by NAPM-Alaska, Inc., an educational organization committed to providing purchasing and material management practitioners the opportunity to enhance their professional skills and knowledge. If you have an item you would like to contribute to the newsletter, please contact:

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