



NACOP NOTES

December 2007

Message from the Co-Chairs

By: Patricia Berry, HQ
Drusilla Fratesi, MSA

The holiday season is upon us and it is so easy this time of the year to get bogged down with what all we have to do. Try to find time to just relax and enjoy this time of year. Also, this a good time to reflect on the past year and what you might want to incorporate or change in 2008. The Council is looking forward to another productive year of working together and accomplishing our goals—ensuring that ARS has highly skilled office professionals in partnership with management to meet the needs of the Agency. Happy Holidays!!



National Christmas Tree 2007.

Squeeze the juice outta your life

You MAY HAVE HAD "in-between" times in your life: in-between jobs, in-between relationships, in-between the old you and the new you. Such times can make you feel uncomfortable and insecure, but that's a good sign, says life coach Gail Blanke. It means you're growing and you're on the verge of making a major leap.



"That's where the juice is," she says, "That's where fulfillment lies."

Ways to embrace the unknown, even when you're not "in-between":

- ✓ Sample new, exotic foods. Every couple of weeks, go to a different ethnic restaurant or use exotic ingredients in your own cooking. Catch yourself before you can say "But I don't like curry," and try it anyway.
- ✓ Listen to new music. Buy some music you've never heard or liked before, from Gregorian chants to salsa. Idea: Ask a teenager in your family if you can borrow a CD or swap MP3 players for a week.
- ✓ Jump into a new sport. No need to enter an Ironman competition. Simply put yourself out there to feel the discomfort of learning something new and doing it anyway.
- ✓ See yourself as a student. Your objective is to learn. You'll soon go from fearing insecurity to thriving on adventure.

—ADAPTED FROM "THRIVING ON INSECURITY," GAIL BLANKE, REAL SIMPLE.

Are you Adding Value to the Research?

By: Ruth Treat

SPA Program Analyst

Before you quickly say that you aren't a scientist or technician and thus don't have anything to do with the research, think about it. What are you doing that enables the quality of the research at your location to be enhanced? I'll bet that you find that it's actually quite a lot. At least it should be. Every person at the location is there to support the research effort in various ways, but not always directly.

How do you add value? I can easily think of two broad categories.

Do you find ways to relieve the scientists from having to deal with some of the administrative and program details? When you requested info for the Meeting Attendance Plan, did you request all types of travel plans as well, so that you could start drafting the ad-202s for the year? Did you note plans for papers and presentations at the meetings on the MAP and start your ARS-115 file? Do you keep each scientist's publication list and update it when a new publication comes out? Were you able to locate the FY07 milestones for the scientists in preparation for the annual reports and include them in draft reports? How about the publication that could be reported? Did you review the ARMP and note plans for adding funds to the SCAs during the coming year, and then make tickler notes to remind the ADODRs so that they aren't rushing to add funds in the last weeks of the FY? Do you maintain the RPES case write-ups, and have you made notes about presentations and meetings and other things that should be included the next time it's due? Do you know when the projects will be peer reviewed again and do you have current COI lists for the scientists? Do you assure that you get the necessary information to provide accurate ARIS work the first time? Obviously every detail that you can manage for the scientists frees up time for them to focus on their research.

The other way that you add value is by providing grammatical expertise. Do you review manuscripts and reports? Do you read the interpretive summaries and abstracts that you

input into ARS-115s? If your scientists are not bringing documents to you to look over, why not? Not every program assistant/secretary is capable of editing for content, but every one of you should be able to proof for typos, punctuation, spelling, sentence structure, and grammar. Do you participate in pulling together the project plans? There you should be able to check for completeness and format. You should be able to see if the letters of collaboration really say what the collaborator is going to do. You should be able to verify that references in text are accurate and included in the Literature Cited section, and that a consistent format is used for all citations through the document. Again, the more that you can be responsible for in these documents, the more quickly the research gets planned, or published, or reported on.

Design your space so work can 'flow'

DOES YOUR WORK FLOW? Professional organizer Liz Franklin says we all handle paper in pretty much the same way:

1. We look at it.
2. We sort it.
3. We begin working (with computer, phone, making notes, etc.).
4. We input it or record it.
5. We may store it for further action (sometimes called "latering").
6. We print it out or fax it.
7. We eventually get rid of it by filing it, shredding it, recycling it or throwing it away.

If you arrange your workspace around those seven stations, you won't have to double back and cross paper over its old path. And paperwork will flow in an organized way.

Adapted from *Administrative Professional*, NIBM, April 2007.

Words to Remember

"If you don't like something, change it. If you can't change it, change your attitude. Don't complain."

Maya Angelou

Gain 'instant intimacy': 4 mingling tips

KEITH FERRAZZI, CEO of Ferrazzi Greenlight, is perhaps the best net-worker in the country; his personal contacts list includes head honchos in business and politics. His message:

We all need to find the courage to connect with people, even when we feel out of our league.

But as Ferrazzi told Inc. magazine, even he has moments when he doesn't feel worthy of mingling with, say, Rudy Giuliani or Jack Welch. He vividly remembers growing up poor among rich kids and being embarrassed of his dad's rust-spotted Nova while other kids were being driven around in Lincolns.

At times like those, he reminds himself of these simple networking tips:

1. Portray your basic personal brand, or the way you market yourself to others. Your brand might be "Curious About Everything" or "Passionate About the Technology Industry." Find a way to let your core attributes come across as you introduce yourself. Example: "I'm Jane Smith, and I'm in a key support role for a technology VP, which means I learn something new every day ... and I love it;"

2. Share your passions. The quicker you create "instant intimacy," as Ferrazzi calls it, the more successful you'll be at connecting. So skip the small talk. Instead, allow the other person to get to know you quickly. Example: "I'm excited to be at this conference, where so many people are also interested in learning and improving their professional lives. I found that last talk so valuable. And even though I miss my kids, I'm glad I'm here."

3. Invite the other person to share, too. Example: "What are you most excited about these days?"

4. See how you can be helpful to the person. Once you've exchanged a few ideas, you may decide to meet later for coffee and talk even more. He or she may offer to connect you with someone who shares your interests. You might offer to help the individual with something that he or she is working on.

And you'll be on your way to "instant intimacy."

Adapted from *Administrative Professional*, NIBM, April 2007.



GRAMMAR Repair Shop

Sales Department or sales department?

By Lynn Gaertner-Johnston

Yesterday in The Keys to Error-Free Writing someone asked about a topic that comes up often:

Do we capitalize department, as in "Finance Department"? And how about department by itself?

These sentences illustrate standard capitalization of words such as department, committee, team, unit, lab, division, and company:

- Jamie works in the Finance Department. (Finance is the name of a department. Both words are capitalized.)
- Jamie works in Finance. (Finance is the name of the department, group, or division.)
- Jamie works in finance. (Finance is Jamie's specialty but not the name of his or her team.)
- Have some finance people review this budget. (Finance refers to an area of expertise--not a specific group.)
- Jamie is joining the department. (Department, group, company, and similar words are lowercase without a specific name, but see below.)

Typically the word Company or Division, standing alone, is capitalized in legal documents when it stands for the company's or division's name.

The title of this post is "Sales Department or sales department?" When you write to a company and want to communicate with someone in sales or about sales, the correct rendering is lowercase. Capitalize Sales (and any similar word) only when you know it is the name of the unit.

I hope the information above is helpful.

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“Humor, Stress Relief and Mental Health”

Submitted By Diane Koch

Natalie Aranda writes about self improvement and health.

Stress is the biggest culprit that keeps us from enjoying our lives. However, that doesn't have to be the case even if you have a stressful life. There are many ways for stress relief that will help you relax and enjoy life. Humor is a great stress reliever that does wonders for your mental health. The following stress relief tips will really help you find peace while enjoying life.

Humor

Humor is a great stress reliever and just laughing out loud can make you feel more relaxed and happier. Any kind of humor will do and make you feel better. Jokes, comedies, caricatures, seeing a comedian, or just going out for dinner with funny friends is a great way to increase your mental health and to reduce stress. You might not believe it at first, but give it a try and you will see that when you laugh you feel much better!

Exercise

Exercise is a wonderful way to relieve stress and improve your mental health as well. When you are stressed it can be very difficult to live life, but exercise can help. Find a block of time, perhaps half an hour or more, and start walking, running, taking an aerobics class, or engaging in any form of exercise you enjoy. Exercise will stimulate endorphins, which will help erase your stress and make you feel better. So, whatever exercise you can muster get out and do it. You will find that you feel much better and will feel the stress just melting away.

Nutrition

Another important way to get stress relief is to eat properly. When you have good nutrition your body will be well prepared to handle extra stress. When you don't eat well then your body gets run down quicker and you will find yourself at risk for illness. So do your very best to eat vegetables, lean meats, and drink plenty of water each day. When you have a healthy body then you will be able to combat stress.

These are just a few tips that will help you relieve your stress and start enjoying life again. Even if you don't believe they will work just give them a try. You will find that in a week or two you will start feeling significantly better and will be better able to handle your stress.

Winter Safety Tips

Submitted by Diona Austill

Now that winter has officially arrived, it is important to remember that heavy snows, icy conditions and dangerously cold temperatures can occur at any time. To protect you and your loved ones from the effects of harsh winter weather, follow these safety tips:

- Keep an emergency supply kit in your home that includes a battery-powered radio with extra batteries, canned food and a manual can opener, flashlights and battery-powered lamps for power failures, wood for fireplaces, and rock salt to melt ice and sand to improve traction.
- Make sure your car is in proper working condition and includes blankets, warm clothing, booster cables and tools, bottled water, dried fruits and nuts, a first aid kit, a fire extinguisher, flashlights and batteries, a shovel and ice scraper.
- Wear layers to protect yourself from the cold. A hat, scarf and mittens are also essential protection against winter weather.

Adapted from

www.fema.gov/news/newsrelease.fema?id=4615

