

November 2011

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## President's Message

Few people take the time to stop and ponder how advances in technology are driving new knowledge on a global scale. Think of your job today. Now think of what you were doing fifteen or twenty years ago. More importantly, how were you doing that job so long ago? Children in grammar school are learning (and becoming proficient at) Word, Excel and PowerPoint, while high school students are becoming adept at Web design, digital audio and video creation, and a host of other new technologies.

For most of us, we work within organizations where there remains a group of individuals who have no new learning. What do I mean by this? For example, I mean the person who graduated college in 1978 and has not taken a class or gone to a seminar since then (except for those sessions which their employer has brought in house) – the person who has learned the bare minimum of “new skills” in order to get by. Some might say that it is politically incorrect for me to speak so frankly about this topic, but this is not meant to be mean – if it is the honest truth, then no one should be embarrassed by it. The reason I bring this up is the fact that many individuals who do not embrace new learning are unaware of how badly they hold their organizations back. Every time that a capable professional has to stop what they are doing to send emails and meeting planners, create documents, download data, assemble presentations, or work out pivot tables for those who cannot, it drags down the entire organization.

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## President's Message (continued)

Many business economists and labor experts today speak at length about the skills mismatch in the economy and the fact that the skills required at the beginning of a recession are often not the same skills that will be required coming out of the recession. Looking out to 2012 and beyond, one thing is certain – the job skills of 1978 are not going to get you very far.

The other unfortunate fact is that many organizations which have a large number of senior employees who have not kept their job skills current end up overloading their younger talent with multiple duties. Some may even mistakenly believe that this is a way to keep these up and comers involved and interested, when in fact it is just another reason pushing that person toward the door to seek better opportunities.

Why is new learning so important? There are many reasons why new learning is important, but I will focus on just two. They have to do with the personal characteristics that can help to drive your professional success. The first is optimism. When we accept the challenge to master new knowledge and information it improves our overall disposition. When we expend effort to attain our goals the sense of achievement that follows creates a positive disposition. Our outlook at work changes and we begin to view difficulties and setbacks as only temporary situations.

The second reason that new learning is so important has to do with self-efficacy. This refers to the confidence you have in your capability to mobilize the motivation, cognitive resources and courses of action required to meet the demands of a given situation. When we embrace new learning we are bolstering our self-confidence. We become more persistent and our problem-solving skills improve. Couple this with your optimism and you can take control of your professional life. You are the professional who “brings more to the table” every day, at every meeting. You are the professional whom others seek out for advice, direction and ideas.

The challenges you embrace now will create your opportunities for tomorrow. New learning increases your skills and abilities, and is vital for your employability today and promotion opportunities tomorrow – not to mention that it is healthy for you as an individual. The beginning of 2012 will be a very interesting time indeed. Companies will continue to hire people, and many will be willing to pay for improved skill sets. Whether you are actively seeking a new job or are perfectly content where you are, one thing is certain – this is 2011, not 1978 – you need to stay active.

Sincerely,

Tom Cantin

## Western Massachusetts APICS Programs 2011-2012

### **September 20: Plant tour DFF Corporation: Agawam**

Very sophisticated and state-of-the-art manufacturing operation, DFF provides design assistance, electro/mechanical assembly & test and contract manufacturing services to varied industries, including aerospace, defense, medical, and electronics.

### **October 18: Top Management Night**

**Paul Soderburg, Vice President of International Operations at Gerber Scientific Inc.**

Mr. Soderburg is an engaging speaker that has spent considerable time in China and will discuss issues involved in outsourcing in Asia. This is an evening for you to invite top managers from your corporation.

### **November 15: Written Business Communication**

**Holly Lawrence, Isenberg School of Management UMass**

Whether we are writing an email, letter or proposal, it is important to get our point across effectively. Dr. Lawrence will provide tips and methods to help us improve our writing.

### **January 17: Joint Purchasing Meeting, Improving Decision-Making and Leadership for Supply Chain Managers**

**David Liddell, Skye Business Solutions**

Extend your network by meeting with our purchasing colleagues. David Liddell presented at New England Supply Chain Conference and participants were excited about what he had to say.

### **February 15(Wednesday) Excel Pivot Tables**

**Jodi Welsh, CPIM, Yankee Candle**

Last year, Ms Welsh conducted a very well received talk on pivot tables. This seminar will be hands-on with participants asked to bring a laptop.

### **March 20: Improving On-Time Delivery (Afternoon seminar)**

**Tom Cantin, CPIM**

Last year Mr. Cantin spoke to APICS on this topic. This seminar is in response to our member request for more in-depth treatment of this important subject.

### **April 24: Building and Sustaining Transformational Supply Chain Capabilities**

**Edna Conway, Cisco**

Brilliant and Funny. She has an uncanny knack of being able to take high level strategic concepts and explain them with concrete examples.

**May:** Plant Tour, please let Mary Jo know of any leads you have.

APICS is your organization. Please contact Mary Jo Maffei , Programming Chair, with your ideas [mjmaj@aol.com](mailto:mjmaj@aol.com) or 413-259-1263

## Call for Speakers

Although we may be relatively small in size (compared to other chapters across the country in terms of overall population and number of members), the Western Mass. chapter has always been known for being extremely rich in both the breadth and depth of talent we possess. I can honestly say that I have experienced this first-hand, both with students in certification classes and during conversations with our peers at various meetings and seminars.

With that in mind, consider this to be an open invitation to each and every one of you to contact Mary Jo Maffei, Program Chair about speaking at one of our Professional Development meetings. What do you work on every day? What are your areas of expertise? What unique tools and insights do you have? As a subject matter expert, your peers in the chapter would be more than happy to hear what you have to say. No previous public speaking experience is required!

If you feel that you would like to find out more, please contact Mary Jo and let her know what's on your mind. Not only is this an opportunity to gain additional notoriety and recognition from both your peers and your employer, you can earn additional points toward your certification maintenance. If you are a member who has been looking for an opportunity to participate, but just didn't know what you could do, this may be it! You work hard every day and you are very good at what you do – please take a moment to share that knowledge with all of us. You'll be glad you did.

## *Academic Liaison*

We are seeking an Academic Liaison, Vice President of Student Affairs for the Western Mass chapter. This is a critical position that will involve establishing and maintaining contacts at area universities and colleges, as well as interacting with student chapter members. Working in cooperation with fellow Board members, the person in this position may very well be establishing the first face-to-face contact with many of our student members as they prepare to make the transition from academic studies to professional careers.

Take a moment and imagine if you were on the doorstep of college graduation, looking at a bleak and uncertain job market for 2012 and beyond. Wouldn't you appreciate someone who is already established in their career taking a few minutes to help you understand what is really going on? If you know that you can have an impact on young, eager minds who are exploring their opportunities (but don't know what they should do next), then become involved and make a difference.

It is always a good time to make new contacts and develop new talent, and the participation of these future professionals in our chapter will certainly benefit all of us.

Call Tom Cantin at (413)534-5325 or send an email to [thomascantin@charter.net](mailto:thomascantin@charter.net).

## Spectacular Season-opening Chapter Meeting!

Our program year began with a fantastic kick-off event on September 20. Forty of your fellow Western Mass. APICS members enjoyed a superb plant tour of DFF Corporation in Agawam, Massachusetts.

DFF provides design assistance, electro/mechanical assembly and test, and contract manufacturing services to varied industries, including aerospace, defense, medical, and electronics. Their manufacturing strategy features planned excess capacity and other built-in redundancies (e.g. their multiple 5-axis machining centers) so that they can promise both quick turn-around and reliable lead times to their clients.

We were shown through their 240,000 square foot facility which includes high tech manufacturing, engineering, and extensive inspection capabilities. DFF is ISO 9001-2008 certified and ITAR Registered. Many thanks to Nelson Goes and his staff at DFF for an informative and eye-opening tour of their state-of-the-art facility.

After the tour, about thirty four attendees gathered at Cal's Grill in West Springfield to enjoy socializing and discussion of what we had seen at DFF along with fantastic food and beverages. Based on results from the after-meeting survey, everyone who attended found the evening's activities valuable and enjoyable.

## More Members Recognized!

At the September Professional Development Meeting, three long-term members of the Western Mass. Chapter received pins and recognition for their years of continuous membership:

Paul Brose 10 years

Mark White 15 years

John Koski 20 years

Please take a moment the next time you see any of these members to congratulate them for their years of loyalty to our Chapter.

## Fantastic Presentation on China Outsourcing Issues!

On October 18, the Western Mass. Chapter held Top Management night, one of the highlights of the program year. Chapter 19 was privileged to have Paul Soderburg, Vice President of US Operations and Global Distribution for Gerber Scientific, Inc. as the featured speaker.

For the past 25 years, Mr. Soderburg has been working in the business of sourcing products globally and managing the manufacturing of capital equipment and spare parts in the United States, Europe, and Asia Pacific. In his current position, his primary focus has been on transitioning company strategic products to China.

Paul's presentation was very well organized and rich with insights into the process of outsourcing from China, with special emphasis on the key success factors of executive buy-in, development of an effective business model for the product migration, and the various levels of partnerships available with Chinese suppliers.

Mr. Soderburg graciously entertained a longer than usual question and answer session that provided the night's true added value. The dialog was both lively and educational, allowing attendees to ask questions about their issues and concerns get candid responses from someone who has "been there – done that" recently.

Everyone who attended this very special Professional Development Meeting experienced a unique presentation on a timely topic with relevant, real-life insights on this important subject

## Improved PDM Agenda!

In October, the Board of Directors conducted a quick, email-based survey on whether to adjust our Dinner Meeting agenda. We received many thoughtful responses and insightful comments from the membership. As a result, we intend to start and end the monthly dinner meetings earlier starting in January. Our revised agenda will follow this new timing:

Networking	5:00 – 6:00 PM
Speaker	6:00 – 7:00 PM
Business Meeting	7:00 – 7:15 PM
Dinner	7:15 PM

Please plan to attend in January and try out this new format.

## Events Calendar

### 2011

- October 18 PDM – Top Management Program, Yankee Pedlar
- October 23-25 APICS International Conference & Exposition, Pittsburgh, PA
- November 1 Board of Directors' Meeting, Delaney House
- November 11-12 APICS District 1 Meeting, Albany, NY
- November 15 PDM – Business Communications, Yankee Pedlar
- December No BOD Meeting or PDM - Happy Holidays!

### 2012

- January 3 Board of Directors' Meeting, Delaney House
- January 17 PDM – Joint Meeting with Purchasing Group, Yankee Pedlar
- February 1 Board of Directors' Meeting, Delaney House
- February 15 PDM – Excel Pivot Tables, Yankee Pedlar
- March 6 Board of Directors' Meeting, Delaney House
- March 20 PDM – Improving On-time Delivery, Yankee Pedlar
- April 3 Board of Directors' Meeting, Delaney House
- April 24 PDM – Building Supply Chain Capabilities, Yankee Pedlar
- May 1 Board of Directors' Meeting, Delaney House
- May 15 PDM – Plant Tour
- June 5 Board of Directors' Meeting, Delaney House