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## Links

[www.apa.org](http://www.apa.org)

American Psychological Association Website

[www.spim.org](http://www.spim.org)

Society of Psychologists in Management Website

Contact Us

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To SPIM members:

Hi everyone! In this newsletter there is a great note from Cathleen, more information about the exciting **2009 SPIM Conference** from Dee, the soon to be held SPIM election, a compelling request from Bill Siegfried about submitting to the journal, and an interesting article on Employee Engagement.

As we move into the holiday season, I hope everyone enjoys the next few months with all the festivities – and begin to look forward to the conference in February. I will get one more newsletter out before that conference, and so if there is any news any of you would like me to add, I would be happy to. In the next newsletter I will have information about the Regional Conference in Washington and more about the annual conference in February. The website for registration to the conference is now active: [www.lrasecure.com](http://www.lrasecure.com).

Mary Zahner, Ph.D.

Newsletter Editor

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## Note from the President

Dear SPIM members and friends:

SPIM's been very busy. As always, it is the many volunteers who keep SPIM running. Most of those volunteers are **not** listed below. These are just some hi-lights of recent SPIM activity, but all of our volunteers have my sincere thanks.

### APA CONVENTION ACTIVITIES

*Reception:* On Saturday, 16 August, SPIM co-hosted a reception with the Society of Consulting Psychology (Division 13). It was well attended. Many thanks to Dee Ramsel who handled the organization, in collaboration with Division 13.

*Board:* Our summer SPIM Board of Directors meeting was held that Saturday morning. Much of the time was spent discussing the 2009 conference, described elsewhere in this newsletter. John Fennig from Division 13 (and a SPIM member) joined us for the discussion of the conference and stayed for the rest of the meeting. He has worked very hard to "get" SPIM. His efforts show in the great collaboration that we see between Dee Ramsel, our President-elect, and John. Speaking of Dee, she is amazing. It's apparent why the VA recently promoted her to a new position and dramatically expanded her responsibility. She has the SPIM aspect of the conference thoroughly organized and has my thanks! John Reed has also been working closely, and very effectively, with Dee and with Division 13 on the fundraising activities for the conference.

The Board also discussed a number of other topics. These included:

- *SPIM Journal* – In addition to serving as Editor, Bill Siegfried at the Board's request convened a small committee to, based on the previous journal survey, consider how *The Psychologist Manager Journal* might

- Please consider holding a Regional SPIM meeting in your area. In the past Marlene Thorn and others have been successful in planning such meetings.

be changed to enhance its effectiveness. The group includes two former editors, three members of the editorial board, and three other SPIM members who had expressed an interest in the journal. Anyone interested in the survey results or other work of this committee should contact Bill directly.

- *Finances* – Treasurer Henk Ruck provided an update of the report he provided to the membership at our 2008 conference. He focused on the financial outcome of the 2008 conference. The most important issue dealt with our decision to allow the conference sponsors to donate money to the foundation. The board decided to continue that practice.
- *Foundation* - President Dick Kilburg provided a brief summary of the progress of the foundation. The foundation's board has been expanded to 9 members and they are working hard to move the foundation forward. They will have an offsite in October and will provide a formal report to the membership at the 2009 conference.
- *Membership* – Dana Ackley and his membership committee continue to do wonderful work. They have started to attract international psychologist managers. For example, one new member who joined shortly before the board meeting is in London and another is in Milan. We reported on the membership survey results in the last newsletter. Based on those results, the board decided to suspend our student member pilot.
- *SPIM Records* – A side benefit to the activities of the foundation board has been a discussion of our SPIM records that came as a result of trying to put together a history of our membership over the years. That has been far more difficult than we expected, thus Mary Zahner's request to all of you for any old membership lists or lists of those who attended past SPIM conferences. If you have such information, please send it to Ed Johnson. Much information has been lost over the years, but much remains. While at APA, I discussed our records with David Baker who directs the History of American Psychology Archives in Akron, OH. He is interested exploring the possibility of whether the Archives can serve as a home for SPIM's historical records. Ed Johnson (SPIM Secretary) and I will continue these discussions. Any suggestions are most welcome.

The next SPIM Board meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, February 4, 2009, 5:00 – 7:00pm Pacific Time in San Diego, CA (at the 2009 conference). All SPIM members are welcome.

### **REGIONAL MEETING(s?)**

I would like to personally thank Connie Rath, Connie Schroyer, and Marlene Thorn for organizing the upcoming regional meeting for the DC/VA/MD area. Thank you also to Mike Gelles who offered to serve as the speaker. It will be held at 530 p.m. on 13 November at Gallup in DC. In the late summer, Mary Zahner sent information on the session to all SPIM members to give those of you who may be in the area at that time, but who don't live in the area, the opportunity to attend. Division 13 has a small regional group that meets in the same geographic area and the organizers also invited them.

If you would like to hold a regional meeting in your area, Marlene Thorn has offered to share her lessons learned. She has a new e-mail address: thornmarlene26@gmail.com

### **A PERSONAL NOTE**

Many of you know that my husband, Michael, and I have been trying for more than a year to downsize and move into a condo. It looks like we may finally be able to do so in the next couple of months. We will do our best to keep the same computer account and to stay connected but it looks like there may be a month or so when we may be in

FYI:

SPIM has two directories of members. One is a printed directory distributed by Edgar Johnson [edgarmj@bellsouth.net](mailto:edgarmj@bellsouth.net).

The second is the website listing of members. Names and emails on the website are only posted when the member approves the posting by checking the boxes or emails Ed will send out asking if one would want his/her name listed.

Please check your web address on the website to make sure we have the correct address. If you want to make a change, contact [edgarmj@bellsouth.net](mailto:edgarmj@bellsouth.net).

temporary housing. Also, during the last two weeks of October, I'll be out of the country with no connectivity. If you need something and can't reach me, please reach out to any member of the executive committee. They and their contact information are listed at [SPIM.org](http://SPIM.org).

Warm regards,

*Cathleen*

Cathleen Civiello  
SPIM President  
[clcpd@earthlink.net](mailto:clcpd@earthlink.net)

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## 2009 SPIM Conference Update

There are so many exciting things to tell you about the SPIM 2009 conference, that it's hard to know where to begin. I hope that you have all received your save-the-date postcard by now and know that this upcoming conference is a joint conference with the Society of Consulting Psychologists (Division 13). It has been a pleasure working with John Fennig and Melanie Flanders, SCP conference co-chairs, to plan this conference.

The conference will be held at the beautiful San Diego Hilton Resort & Spa. The pre-conference Institutes will be held Wednesday, February 4<sup>th</sup>. The conference itself will be held Thursday and Friday, February 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup>. You will then have the opportunity to join SCP programming Saturday, February 7<sup>th</sup> and the morning of Sunday, February 8<sup>th</sup>. Finally, SCP will offer post-conference workshops Sunday afternoon. All together, there will be more than 40 CEUs offered. And we have maintained very low pricing (about \$450 for early member registration and \$75 for additional half days of SCP programming). This is only possible due to our very generous sponsors. Special thanks go to our platinum sponsors (LWF and RHR) and our gold sponsors (Saville Consulting and YSC).

Your conference planning committee (J. Rick Day, Adam Jacobs, John Reed, Robin Graff-Reed, Charles Fogelman, Robert Lowman, Roxanne DuVivier, and Dee Ramsel) have many stimulating presentations and exciting events planned. We incorporated feedback from last year's conference which recommended half-hour breaks for networking and socializing and also more interactive presentations. Friday afternoon, when SCP members join us, the conference will feature Norman Anderson, CEO of APA, and John Hofmeister, Founder and President of Citizens for Affordable Energy and Former President, Shell Oil Company. We have five workshops available on Wednesday and six other excellent presentations during the rest of the conference. Registration should be available online in mid-October.

Besides the outstanding conference content, SPIM will also be celebrating its 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year. Join us for a special banquet the evening of Thursday, February 5<sup>th</sup> to celebrate this momentous occasion. Of course we have maintained the welcome circle on Wednesday evening and organized dinners on Friday evening. Finally, and very importantly, this year we have a website describing the details of the joint conference. Check out [www.excellenceinleadership2009.org](http://www.excellenceinleadership2009.org) and get ready for a great event.

San Diego in February, hotel on the beach, excellent presentations, 40 CEUs, low cost, 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary banquet. All this while enjoying the friendship of your SPIM colleagues – it doesn't get much better than this!

Dee Ramsel, Ph.D., MBA  
President-Elect

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## Upcoming SPIM Election

Ed Johnson, Secretary of the Board and John Bruckman, Past President have announced the slate of candidates for the upcoming Board election. The election will be held by the middle of October, with the results announced in November.

The following candidates have been nominated by the Board of Directors to stand for office starting in 2009.

The following members have agreed to be part of the slate of candidates for the Board of Directors. There are two open seats with three year terms.

- o Ed Pavur
- o Mary Zahner
- o Les Krieger
- o David Bracken
- o Wayne Baughman
- o John Martello
- o Michael Gelles
- o John Reed

• Connie Schroyer: Secretary.

• Roger Cooper: President Elect.

Please keep an eye out for the ballot in your email.

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## Sharing your expertise with The Psychologist Manager Journal!

The journal was created as a way for us to share our experience in applying psychology as well as being a forum to publish the research that will advance our knowledge. One finding from the membership survey last year was that SPIM members said that they would like to see more case studies so that we can learn from each others' experiences. I would like to publish more examples that illustrate how we have applied our knowledge – especially those written by SPIM members – but I can't do that if people don't submit them.

**I am encouraging you to share some of the wisdom that you have built up by submitting a case.**

The official "editorial scope and audience" for our journal is:

*The Psychologist-Manager Journal* (TPMJ) is a scholarly publication for members of the Society of Psychologists in Management (SPIM) and others with similar interests. Conceptualized as a hybrid between a journal and a professional guide to good managerial practice, it is directed at the practicing psychologist-manager. Submissions are invited for the following areas:

**Management Principles: The Theory of Management:** Full-length articles (typically 20 double-spaced typed pages, including references) discussing a particular theoretical application. The relevance for the practice of psychology in management should always be clear.

**Live from the Firing Line: The Practice of Management:** These brief articles (typically under 15 double-spaced manuscript pages) should be lively, well-written, firsthand experiences illustrating particularly effective management techniques or methods, difficult situations or failures. The experiences should hold general appeal to the readership and should clearly communicate the learning that came from the experience.

**Research Tools for the Psychologist-Manager:** Original empirical research relevant to the practicing psychologist-manager. Studies of applications of management to psychology or psychology to management are welcome, provided they have clear and direct implications for the psychologist-manager. These articles are normally 25 pages or less, including all figures and tables.

**Book Reviews and Other Submissions:** Innovative contributions of value to psychologist managers are encouraged.

It would be great if the cases were related to articles that have appeared in the journal. Our last issue was devoted to "work-life effectiveness" – has anyone tried to implement a work-life program in an organization? If so, how did that work out and what did you learn? You will receive the next issue soon, and you will find John Bruckman's presidential address on change, Shelley Taylor's talk on supportive environments, Bob Lee's presentation on coaching, an article on managing disasters that includes many of our members as authors, and an article on how workaholism affects work-family issues. What have you done to help organizations with these concerns?

I am sure there are many other successes you could share, but "success" is not a requirement. We also can learn by hearing about those times when things didn't work out as hoped. I am contemplating starting a section titled "What I learned from that" or "If I knew then what I know now" where we can share the more painful lessons that have encouraged our growth. The important thing is to persuade you to share your wisdom by writing. I look forward to hearing from you soon!

Bill Siegfred, Jr. Ph.D.  
Editor, *The Psychologist-Manager Journal*  
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## Employee Engagement by Doug Nierle

Like many organizations, the Federal Government is facing fierce competition to attract talented new employees to replace an increasing number of retiring baby boomers. So I was surprised when an interviewer asked me recently how managers could usher older employees out of an organization when their skills got a little rusty or their performance began to slip. I would argue that now is the time that managers should be focusing on precisely the opposite strategy—engaging their workers (no

matter their age) to improve organizational results and employee retention.

In the upcoming report, *The Power of Federal Employee Engagement*, the U.S. Merit Systems Protection Board (MSPB) emphasizes the role that employee engagement plays in improving Federal agency outcomes. Although there may not be consensus about what employee engagement means as a psychological construct, practitioners have run full speed ahead with the concept. This exuberance may be explained by the practical message behind most definitions of engagement—employees who have a heightened connection to their work or their organization may invest greater effort, resulting in better organizational outcomes.

MSPB developed a scale to measure the engagement level of Federal employees based on 37,000 responses to a 2005 government-wide employee survey. We performed a factor analysis on this data and, informed by a careful literature review, identified 16 questions that form the basis of our employee engagement scale ( $\alpha = .926$ ). These 16 questions cover 6 topic areas that are important for fostering employee engagement. These areas include pride in one's work or workplace, leadership, the opportunity to perform well at work, appropriate recognition, prospect for future growth, and a positive work environment with some focus on teamwork.

The widest disparity we found in levels of engagement was based on where employees work. In some Federal agencies nearly half of the employees were fully engaged while in others, only about one-quarter were engaged. This finding enabled us to explore the relationship between the engagement level in different agencies and agency outcomes. The importance of employee engagement is illustrated by the significant relationship we found between it and the following agency outcomes:

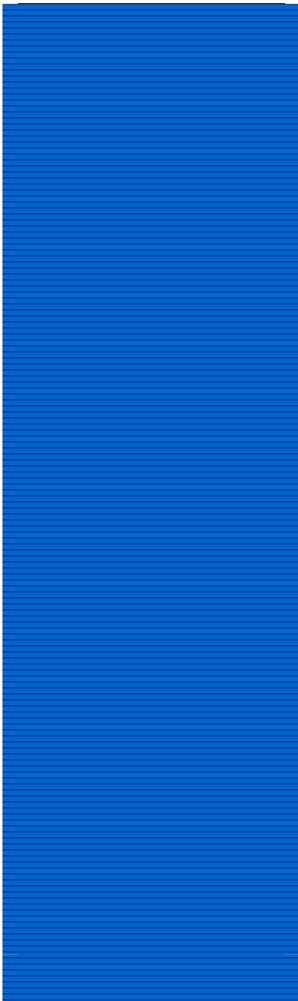
(1) Agency programmatic results as measured by the Office of Management and Budget's Program Assessment Rating Tool: Higher levels of employee engagement correlated to higher scores on the program results and accountability portion of this tool. ( $r = .519, p = .007$ )

(2) An agency's average sick leave use: Higher levels of employee engagement correlated to fewer average days of sick leave used ( $r = -.609, p = .002$ ).

(3) Level of equal employment opportunity complaint activity: Higher levels of employee engagement correlated to fewer equal employment opportunity complainants as a percentage of the total workforce ( $r = -.487, p = .016$ ).

(4) The rate at which employees miss work time because of work-related injury or illness: Higher levels of employee engagement correlated to a lower rate of lost time cases ( $r = -.498, p = .013$ ).

One of the variables that did not seem to affect an employee's level of engagement was age. There was no significant difference in the percentage of employees in various age groups who were fully engaged, somewhat engaged, or not engaged. Similarly, we found little difference in engagement levels based either on the length of an employee's tenure with his or her current agency or with the civil service.



In addition, of employees eligible to retire, about half (52%) who said it was *unlikely* that they would leave their agency in the next year were fully engaged. In contrast, only about one-third (30%) of retirement-eligible employees who said it was *likely* that they would leave their agency in the next year were fully engaged. It appears that employees who are eligible to retire but plan to remain at work have high levels of engagement that may play a factor in keeping them on the job.

Instead of encouraging older workers to leave, as some would apparently advocate, managers should find ways to continue engaging these employees. Among the strategies we recommend to do so include maintaining a focus on the fit between a person and a job, effectively managing employee performance, embracing a competency-based approach to managing employees, and selecting first-level supervisors based primarily on their supervisory-related abilities or potential.

*Doug Nierle is a Senior Research Analyst in MSPB's Office of Policy and Evaluation (OPE). OPE conducts research to assess the soundness of Federal merit employment systems and offers recommendations for their improvement to the President, the Congress, and other Federal decision makers. When released, "The Power of Federal Employee Engagement" will be available on MSPB's studies page at [www.mspb.gov](http://www.mspb.gov).*

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