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Links

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Society of Psychologists in Management Website

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Hello SPIM members,

In this issue, we have a report from our presidents, information about WE/SPIM and the Foundation, an interview with Ted Rosen on communications, and information from our own Roger Cooper about nominations. I hope you will find something of interest to read.

Have a great summer. And, stay tuned for the next SPIM newsletter where I will start highlighting some of the great plans Marlene Thorn has for the 2012 conference.

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Note from the Presidents: 2011 First Quarter Report

The focus for 2011 has been on restoration of SPIM's fine reputation among psychologist-managers and recovery of the organization's financial condition.

The year kicked off with SPIM's excellent conference in Napa, California which was well-attended and well-presented. Those attending gave the conference resounding kudos as well as a thumb's up to the SPIM organization on its efforts to recapture and reestablish prominence.

We are very pleased to report that the year is continuing in the same positive manner. Several important advancements have been undertaken. One is that we have been more focused on supporting our membership and in attracting new members. As an advantage to both current and prospective members, a new webmaster has been appointed and the SPIM website has been redesigned to accommodate greater ease of use as well as to contain a members-only section. The goal for the website is to provide useful information for prospective members, as well as to offer added value to current members through provision of members-only materials

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

SPIM has two directories of members. One is a printed directory distributed by Connie Schroyer

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

Please check your web address on the website to make sure we have the correct address. If you want to make a change, contact

and information. All sections of the website have been updated, including the resource section containing books that have been authored by SPIM members. When new information is available for website sections, please contact Liz Woodward: liz@lrieff.com.

Regarding membership, we should note that there has been steady application of new members from February until the present and strong membership renewals of continuing members. Special thanks are in order for John Martello and Sarah Early for their efforts in membership support.

Ancillary to the website changes and other membership efforts has been a redesign of the SPIM logo. We've been pleased to be able to select a professional design that represents the organization in its present and future operations. And for the first time this year, we will have a booth at the APA conference in August and will be able to display our new face with new logo, new materials and representation of a revitalized membership.

We should also mention that the organization is enjoying renewed financial health. Conference planning in 2011 and again for the 2012 conference has been done with strong attention to cost-savings while retaining good member value and benefit from the conferences. As well, Rich Ponton has done an exceptional job of helping to shepherd the organization's finances.

We are very pleased to be working with highly competent and dedicated board members, and we look forward to the coming months that will bring continuing efforts for SPIM's strong recovery and the reestablishment of a presence of excellence.

Billie Blair, Ph.D. & John Langhorne, Ph.D.
Co-Presidents

Foundation for the Advancement of Psychology in Management: Getting Ready for the Annual Campaign

SPIM is a volunteer based organization that most members participate in through reading these newsletters and The Psychologist in Management Journal, and attending the annual meeting. Over the course of its nearly three decades of existence, the succession of volunteer leaders has kept the enterprise afloat financially, the benefits of membership growing, and the opportunity for members to continue to develop alive. The dedicated members work steadily all year to ensure that the organization thrives.

Connie Schroyer.

If you would like to share any news about yourself: publications, new job, etc., please send me the information and I will include in the next newsletter

You might check out "Linked In" to connect with SPIM members – go to the Group section.

A core question for any organization to address is how can it sustain itself across time and through generations of leadership. The Foundation was brought into existence as a vehicle to assist the Society in assuring its future. To accomplish that, another group of SPIM volunteers has been working year round to create an effective organization that will create additional sources of financial support to help underwrite initiatives for psychologists in management. In past Newsletters, we have reported on the significant progress being made by the Foundation. Last year, the Foundation launched its first annual fund raising drive. We reached out to SPIM members late in 2010 and early 2011 to ask them to consider including the Foundation in their charitable donations plans. The Foundation will be sending its second canvass to members this Fall. So, as you think about the charities to which you want to donate in 2011, consider adding the Foundation to the list. It is easy to make a gift and any amount will be helpful. If you want to consider making a bequest or including the Foundation in your estate planning or will, just contact Dick Kilburg (dickkilburg@comcast.net) and he will put you in touch with a member of the Foundation Board to work out details. Stay tuned for more information in the next SPIM Newsletter.

WE/SPIM - An Endowment Fund

The **Women's Endowment for SPIM (WE/SPIM)** was created as a fund within the Foundation for the Advancement of Psychology in Management, to ensure that the critical roles and contributions of women psychologist/managers will continue to be recognized over time by SPIM. SPIM members Judith Albino, Kathleen Civiello, Connie Schroyer, Lisa Tedesco, Marlene Thorn, and Mary Zahner began the fund in 2009 with their personal contributions totaling more than \$5,000. More recently, John Reed pledged his support as well. These individuals now are inviting others who share WE/SPIM goals to add their support and financial contributions. The group also seeks ideas and proposals about how best to use endowment resources to support SPIM programming focused on women's issues in management, special challenges for women psychologist/managers, and the participation of women – especially younger women psychologists in SPIM.

For more information, please contact Judith Albino at Judith.albino@ucdenver.edu

Interview with Dr. Ted Rosen on Communication

In the March, 2010 issue of Review of International Comparative Management, **Dr. Ted Rosen** wrote an article entitled "Improving

Communications: Awareness and Management of Perceiving Disagreement.” Below are some questions I asked him about his article:

Question: Can you briefly summarize the article?

Answer: The article is about effective communications - listening to what we say and making sure it communicates the intended content to someone else who might not know anything about the topic. The key word is ‘awareness.’ Being aware of what one is saying and the recipient’s understanding of the intended content communicated is the focus of the article. I have been using the content of the article as core material for a lecture to MBA and other graduate classes with positive results regarding the awareness factor. Some of the success of the article is due to an exercise that goes along with the lecture that clearly describes the phenomenon I call ‘perceiving disagreement.’ There are no formulas in the article, or elsewhere for that matter, for correcting yourself when communicating. The intended outcome of the article and in-class exercise is the increased awareness of one’s own communications activities and the need to ensure proper transfer of the content as desired. The article gives examples of problems we face with inexact or undefined content and challenges the reader to make sense of those unknown terms. It also cautions the reader to pay close attention and be aware and wary of such communications.

Q: Talk to me about what you mean in terms of ‘awareness.’

A: Awareness of one’s own behaviors is quite often the first point executive coaches or mentors or executive development people want to get understood by their charges. This is an important point to the individual. It is emphasized early so there is an understanding of why people react to us the way they do. Others’ behaviors are reactions and responses to our behavior. That understanding is accomplished through feedback. That feedback creates an awareness of our own communications behavior and enables us to determine whether it is successful or not. As we witness their responses and body language (i.e., feedback), we need to be alert to translate their behavior to what we are doing to cause that response to occur. A particular response is either because of what we are saying, how we are saying it, or what we are doing while communicating. One of the issues in computerized learning – especially without any video component – is that you lose out on intonation, expression, emotion in the voice, and other factors of communications we call body language.

Q: Talk about using ‘awareness’ in leadership development?

A: Coaches in leadership development have instruments and activities for their charges that are observed or scored. Those results are fed back to the individuals so they can better understand

why people respond to them as they do. The individual can then alter his/her behavior or try a different style and be aware of others' changed responses to the individual's changes. This is important since the coachee/mentee now experiences how his/her own behavior affects others. Some coaches videotape someone giving a speech and then critique the videotape. The individuals in group exercises, such as leaderless groups, are also videotaped and given feedback. The trainee sees the results of his/her behavior as listener/observer watching it on tape. Sometimes we then want to adjust the style or content of the speaker for clarity. I know a trainer, for example, who trained executives on making speeches. A good example of his feedback guidance was: Women should never wear distracting jewelry while on camera, because of movement or reflection of the sparkle of jewelry is very distracting to the watcher and gets in the way of the message. It is all about feedback and if you are aware of the cause of negative feedback, then you can adjust in advance or on-the-fly.

Q: What got you interested in this topic?

A: When I started doing management workshops – not only training, but facilitating strategic planning, performance management, etc. – I partnered on several assignments with an experienced trainer who introduced me to the exercise. I knew how important effective communications are to a successful leader and organization, but in those days of Total Quality Management (TQM), he noted that one of the tenets of TQM was improved communications and measurement. This exercise we used really caused people to pay attention to their words since they readily volunteered their 'disastrous' or poor communications stories about their organizations. That experience also caught my attention and made me aware of the issues of perceiving disagreement. I continue to use the exercise since entering academia a few years later. I collect data in class using the exercise and feed it back to students. Their light bulbs go off, because in a group of 25 people, the possibility of 25 different responses to a single inexact or undefined phrase could reach 100%. The point is made and the students get excited.

Q: What is the exercise?

A: This exercise is presented on a single sheet of paper to participants. At the top of the page is the direction to respond to each item by answering the question: 'What does it mean to you?' For example, one item states: 'My neighbor bought an expensive car.' Participants write down their answers to the question of: 'How much did the car cost?' The range of interpretations of 'expensive' can be anywhere from \$13000 (Hyundai) to \$100,000 (Mercedes). Yet, everyone is reading and responding to the same word (i.e., 'expensive'). Now take the same concept to the business world where the manager says "We are going to be buying some expensive

equipment.” How the term ‘expensive’ is interpreted could vary by department, or work unit, or even the individual responding to budgetary pressures to save money and cut the budget. When the staff reconvenes to determine budget amounts from their estimates, they are amazed at the variance in the amounts of money they have to negotiate. A \$100,000 system to a \$4 million organization is 2.5% of that budget. However, that same \$100,000 system to a \$1.5 million organization is 6.7% of that budget. If the staff reconvenes without any indication of how much the new system costs, there can be some very diverse reactions to such a purchase. The impact of that undefined cost is apparent and affects decisions made on the undefined costs.

In the article, I spend a large amount (sorry for that inexact quantity) of time discussing the use of the terms ‘overwhelming’ and the ‘landslides’ while referring to votes. Other words are often used to describe voting results: vast majority, wide majority. How are these different? I don’t know. In the paper, I discuss the impact of policy votes, or the public relations and political impact of using the different terms in governmental elections.

There are major implications for a change management process to implement those policies depending on if 90 - 100% are in favor of a new policy versus if the vote is down in the 55 - 60% range. Change occurs faster when you need to address only 5 – 10% of those not liking it, versus 40 – 45% of people who were not in favor of it. So your change management process has to be more intense if dealing with 45% of people not in favor versus 10% not in favor.

Other words or terms I have asked participants to interpret include: ‘What is...”

Recently = 6 months ago? 2 weeks ago?

Older man = 50 years old? 30 years old?

Near future = 1 month? next few weeks? two to four months? 8 hours? 2 months? 2 weeks? 1 week?

When we get these inexact words we put on our own heuristics and biases to create our own interpretation. When you take in data you start labeling it and organizing it in your own unique way. Hence, due to our diverse heuristics, experiences, education, etc., we perceive a common term of object differently. Because we are now a global economy, there is the challenge of interpreters who add even more complications to our communications.

These issues have an increased impact on our decision making and understanding related to organizational issues.

Q: What would you want SPIM members to take away or

learn from this topic?

A: We need to be very careful in how we communicate in all media. Academic writing can be passive with many modifiers. It is sometimes hard to understand what the author is really talking about! Reading the *Wall Street Journal* and *Harvard Business Review*, and other B-schools publications, their writing often utilizes the more active case, they are more direct in their styles, and often, more succinct in their sentence structure. We need to be more precise in our communications, and be more aware of our target's reactions and responses to what we communicate so further communications for clarification can be conducted if perceived to be necessary. Asking follow-up questions about the content of your communications can also ensure more effective communications.

If you would like to send a comment to Ted about his thoughts, please contact him at: throsen@umbc.edu

Report from Past-President, Roger F. Cooper, Psy.D. on SPIM Nominations

The immediate Past-President has a reduced workload, compared with that in his/her terms as President-Elect and President. The Past-President's chief task is to oversee the process of nominating SPIM Members to serve as Officers (when there are vacancies) and as Board Members (normally two each year).

Next December members of SPIM will have the opportunity to elect a President-Elect, a Secretary and two Board members who will assume their responsibilities beginning with the Incoming Board Meeting in Charleston next February.

The necessity for succession planning has been a perennial topic for discussion at SPIM Board Meetings. SPIM By-Laws specify that there be two nominees for each vacant position. In the immediate past it has not always been possible to find two persons for each position. The economic/financial crisis that began in 2008 exacerbated the problem.

Looking ahead to the upcoming election, we are fortunate to already have a number of persons who are willing to serve as Officers and Board Members. Some persons have indicated a willingness to serve but could not do so for a year or two. I am creating a "reserve list" of those persons to be passed on to my successors.

Every healthy organization contains three kinds of members: Those venerable ones who remember how it was; Those in their prime who know how it is; Those recent members who know what it can

become.

In my opinion, in order to grow in a way that will create and maintain a steady supply of willing and enthusiastic leadership, we need to focus on two fronts: aggressively pursue psychologists who are managers and work hard to retain current members. We will be staffing a booth at the next APA Convention in Washington, attracting the attention of attendees who are psychologists/managers and inviting them to join SPIM.

Looking at SPIM from a demographic perspective, ours is an aging organization. In order to retain our senior members, especially our retired members living on limited incomes, we need to see that they are not "priced out of the market." Some simply cannot afford the combination of annual dues, conference registration fees and housing costs. At the 2010 Conference in Tampa, one of our senior members, a presenter, stayed at another hotel in order to save money. SPIM provided him with minimal air fare to make his attendance possible.

While we have a number of eminently qualified persons who are willing to serve as Officers and Board Members, the floor is still open for additional nominations. Don't hesitate to nominate yourself! Proverbs of Hezekiah 22:2: "He who tooteth not his own horn, verily I say unto you, it shall not be tooted!"

Roger F. Cooper, Psy.D.