

# { Executive *Memo*

› Excellence by Association

› FALL 2007

## Managerial Courage

## Form 990

## CSAE Sings a Fresh Tune



VOL. 1, ISSUE 4

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*Executive Memo* is published for the **Colorado Society of Association Executives**  
 2170 S. Parker Rd., Suite 265  
 Denver, CO 80231  
 303.368.9090 / fax 303.368.4222  
[www.csaenet.org](http://www.csaenet.org)

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**Published by:**  
 The Publishing Group Int'l, Inc.  
 3900 E. Mexico Ave., Suite 614  
 Denver, CO 80210  
 303.753.6334 / fax 303.756.8841

**Publisher:** Veronika Clark  
[veronika@pubgroup-intl.com](mailto:veronika@pubgroup-intl.com)

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*Executive Memo* is the quarterly publication of the Colorado Society of Association Executives (CSAE) and is provided as a benefit to members. Submit your article by e-mail to [veronika@pubgroup-intl.com](mailto:veronika@pubgroup-intl.com). Deadline for all material is six weeks prior to issue date. Submissions are edited and published as space allows. Letters to the editor, suggestions, comments and encouragement are welcome. Expressed opinions and statements in this publication do not necessarily represent the opinions of the CSAE board of directors or its membership.



## Make plans now to attend the **CSAE Annual Conference**

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# From the President



**Lois A. Rice, CAE**  
President, CSAE  
Colorado Gaming  
Association  
303.237.5480  
melrose53@prodigy.net

As we celebrate the holiday season, I am reminded of the many things I hold dear such as family and friends. I am particularly grateful for the wonderful friends and colleagues I have known over the years in the "CSAE family", who have provided me with support and help with issues within my association, and in Colorado's association community.

As you enjoy the swirl of holiday events, take some time to think about what CSAE has provided to you in meeting your personal and professional goals. Don't forget what an important resource CSAE can be for you through the listserv, the educational programs, the monthly networking luncheons, the Executive Circle, and a host of other opportunities to expand your association management knowledge. CSAE has been particularly proactive this year in identifying topics for educational programs that can enhance your abilities as an association executive. In January, CSAE will be offering an important program so that you can develop an effective management team, not just with your association staff, but your elected volunteer board members as well. An important thing we must all consider when thinking about our associations is that there is a distinct difference between "management" and "leadership." Most people can manage people and tasks, but it takes unique vision and capabilities to be a true leader.

Our program, led by our member Judy Robinson, will address the challenges we, as association executives and elected officials face in the 21st century. These issues include attracting new members from the Generation X cohort, dealing with competition from other associations and the internet, recycling leadership, and motivating volunteers. Leadership has never been more important than now!

Please make plans to attend this important January program, engage other members of your staff or association in issues that are important to you, attend a luncheon and make a new contact, and above all, enjoy the holiday season and think about the things that make you grateful to have CSAE as a resource for you and your staff!

# Managerial Courage

## What Do You Want to be Known For?



> BY JUDY GRAY, PRESIDENT & CEO, FSAE

*The following article was written by Judy Gray to the membership of the Florida Society of Association Executives in 2005 shortly after signing on as Executive Director. When Judy shared this article with her counterparts nationwide, we all applauded her courage and have come to realize that Judy lives by the words she writes in her poetry and various speeches on Managerial Courage.*

*As 2007 comes to a close, I asked Judy if she would allow me to dust off her original article and share her message with you in recognition for the many true Association Executives that I encounter every day in CSAE. Your actions speak to the “Managerial Courage” that Judy writes about so eloquently. You are the unsung heroes that inspire members, motivate staff, and shore-up your peers during the tough times. So, during this holiday season, stand and be recognized for what you do each and every day! Like Judy, you are the leaders who live and breathe “Managerial Courage”.*

—jt

### { Managerial Courage }

**I** came upon this phrase recently when I was asked to participate in a survey about leadership.

We were asked to choose five from a list of about 50 characteristics. The predictable ones were all there: vision, decision-making, risk taking, but the one that stopped me in my boots was the phrase “managerial courage.”

The phrase hit me like a foul ball in the stadium . . . what a perfect way to describe one of the hardest parts of our jobs. And one that’s rarely recognized. Managerial courage means doing what is right for the organization when you know it’s going to be crushingly hard to deal with the repercussions.

See if any of these opportunities for demonstrating managerial courage sound like déjà vu to you:

- Refusing an overbearing board member because they wanted you

to do something that you believed was not ethical or good for the organization.

- Firing an abusive manager who just happens to be the keeper of valuable working knowledge about your association—your technology guru, lobbyist, or your comptroller.
- Telling it like it is to unrealistic chairmen driven by ego or their own agenda.
- Inheriting an ineffective employee who has never received an honest performance appraisal.

Now it’s your turn.

Biting the bullet for unpopular, but necessary, organizational change is tough. It’s where the phrase “lonely at the top” must have originated! Our jobs are so much harder nowadays because everyone wants only good

news, ever-increasing value with no additional resources, and to be the exception to the rules. Sometimes we just have to say “no can do.”

While having to play with the hand we’re dealt, we’re also expected to stay ahead of the pack. Unfortunately, the rules don’t let us yell “Misdeal” when we realize things are not what they seemed when we signed the employment contract.

There’s a distinct correlation between managerial courage and the success of our organizations. What do you want your association to be known for, to be remembered for? Let’s take an objective look at your situation.

How do your members finish this sentence about your association? “The return on my dues investment is \_\_\_\_\_.” What would you want their answer to be?

And now let’s get personal. When your name comes up in conversation, what characteristics do you want to come to your staff or your colleagues’ minds? Responsible, fair, creative, resourceful, smart... what would it be for you? Like it or not, people form their opinions of us by our actions, not our words.

You may be one of the lucky ones who have gotten it all together. If so, you’ve found it’s a lot easier to get



on with life and work every day if you’ve taken the time to figure out, in advance, what you want to be known for. It’s good to think about that early. There’s a Chinese proverb that fits here: Dig the well before you are thirsty.



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*“UMMMM, Let me see, I think I’ll become a power hungry, selfish prima donna.”*

When you give conscious thought to what you want to be known for, it becomes second nature . . . your character and values will be reflected consistently in your decisions. No one starts out early in his or her career saying, “UMMMM, Let me see, I think I’ll become a power hungry, selfish prima donna.” Or, “I’ll work hard toward becoming a nondescript, ineffective plodder.” Those people are probably unaware that somewhere along the line, they have become known for being those awful caricatures.

If we let hard decisions slide without repercussion to those abusing the organization, it looks like unprofessional behavior is being rewarded.

We must decide early in any situation what our boundaries are and then stick to them. We spend so much of our lives at work: it’s no wonder that our experiences in our professional lives continually shape who we are.

As leaders, we have to make difficult decisions about personnel issues,



volunteer leadership, and the direction of our organizations. If we put off, or avoid dealing with problem situations, people up and down the line get confused and lose respect for us. If we let hard decisions slide without repercussion to those abusing the organization, it looks like unprofessional behavior is being rewarded. And we become known for that.

So, managerial courage means tough decisions in tough times. We have to want to be respected more than we want to be accepted or liked. We have to do what is right for the organization even though we dread the hard times that can follow. It’s the elephant in the office that no one talks about, but every executive deals with regularly.

Put this variable on your performance agreement with your board. You deserve credit for handling those difficult situations wisely and well. You’ll be known for it! ■

An advertisement for Raft Masters. At the top, a yellow silhouette of a person's head is shown with a white brain inside. Below it, the text "RAFT MASTERS" is written in large, bold, yellow letters, followed by "THE NAME SAYS IT ALL" in smaller yellow letters. Underneath, it says "Corporate &amp; Group Outings" in white. The central image shows a group of five people in a red inflatable raft on a river with white water rapids. They are wearing yellow helmets and life jackets. At the bottom, the phone number "800.568.7238" and the website "www.raftmasters.com" are displayed in large yellow and white text. Below that, two locations are listed: "Arkansas River Cañon City, CO SW of Colo Spgs" and "Clear Creek Idaho Springs, CO West of Denver".

CONTRIBUTED BY JUDY GRAY, PRESIDENT & CEO, FSAE,

# Member SPOTLIGHT



**D**ebi started the firm in June 2004 with her husband, Phil, who oversees the management of the firm. Debi is very involved in the business community. She also keeps busy with her community and service commitments where she is President Elect of the Denver Cherry Creek Rotary Club and on the board of her synagogue.

Debi worked in the cable TV industry for almost ten years before starting a family. She has 3 children of elementary school age. She had her own website development business until she started CMIT Solutions in the Spring of 2004.

**Debi Bush,**  
Owner and Chief  
Marketing Officer  
(CMO) for CMIT  
Solutions of Denver.

If you want to engage Debi in a long conversation, just ask her about Italy. She lived in Florence, Italy and loves just about anything Italian.

Debi is a networker extraordinaire which is beneficial to her in working with CSAE and her other endeavors. ■

## Q & A

**What is the function of your business and what do you do?**

CMIT Solutions of Denver is part of a nationwide IT services and support company. I am the Chief Marketing Officer (CMO). I oversee all marketing activities for my office and work with the Colorado and Corporate offices on marketing initiatives. CMIT Solutions is the technology team for small and medium-sized businesses and organizations making sure that computers are running smoothly and in a stable, secure and maintainable manner.

**What is unique about your job?**

My role is very exciting. My team is able to make a difference in the productivity and security of a business. We have received feedback from membership organization executives that “now they can sleep at night”. CMIT is able to setup and monitor computer networks plans (because hardware will fail, the question is “when”) and allow everyone (not just the organization execs but us too) to sleep at night.

**What trends are affecting your industry?**

Currently, for many businesses (at least in Colorado) the economy is allowing them to invest in their technology and infrastructure. At the same time very proactive maintenance tools and processes are being developed in the IT Services industry. In a break fix mode the business would call us and request “get here

now, the system is down, my employees cannot do their work. With these new trends that becomes a “call of the past”. Now systems are being repaired before the effects are seen.

**What do you like best about your job? Why?**

I love networking. I enjoy meeting new people and learning about their organization which leads to developing and maintaining long-term working relationships. How great is it to have fun with the whole process!

It’s also fun touting that CMIT Solutions Denver was named “CMIT Solutions Franchise of the Year 2007” to clients, prospects, alliances and vendors.

**Why did you join CSAE?**

IT was always so welcoming. My firm has become an active member including participation on the Membership Committee. We have several clients in the non profit world including AST (a CSAE member) and I wanted more exposure and involvement with an association comprised of high caliber associations like AST that value the role of technology in the daily functioning of an association.

**Do you have a hobby or passion for any special activity in your personal life?**

Family (husband and 3 young children), Italy, walking.

# Regis, I would like to use my IT Lifeline:

## The Basics of Why Your Association Could Be At Risk

> BY DEBI BUSH, OWNER/CHIEF MARKETING OFFICER OF CMIT SOLUTIONS OF DENVER

**I** am the non-technical person at my firm yet I talk technology every day with clients, prospects, friends and family. My default question always is: "So, what is your backup solution for your 'I would be in big trouble if I lost this' data?" At that point, I often notice that heads bow down and there is some hemming and hawing. WHY is this my default and probing question?

The data stored on a network, servers, individual computers and more is the lifeline of any business and membership associations ARE not exempt from answering this question. HOW IMPORTANT is your membership database? What would happen if the data disappeared permanently through a system crashing or even being unavailable for use for a couple days? How would that affect the

productivity of your staff and the revenue generation for your association? Not trying to scare you, but even our friends at Microsoft recently wrote that "you have more to fear from bad data back-up habits" than from hackers. "Without regular data back-ups, hardware failures, accidental deletions, and floods and fires can permanently wipe out all your sales records, customer contact information and order history - the data that is the core of your business."

As an IT support firm, CMIT Solutions recommends an annual review of data protection and disaster recovery plans coupled with implementation (if one is not yet in place) of a stable and dependable back-up solution AND a disaster recovery plan. Often I hear from businesses that they have daily, weekly and even monthly back-ups happening and that is fantastic. Yet, when I ask them WHEN was the last time they restored some or all of the data to a test location and confirmed that it worked, the hemming and hawing response happens. Just because your business has a back-up solution in place and it is being adhered to, doesn't mean it is working properly and that a restoration of that critical data will be successful.

Another issue to review with your IT support people (internal IT staff and/or outsourced IT support firm) is "what method is being used for



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data back-up and how is it being implemented and monitored.” Is your association using tape backups, external hard drives, remote/online backup or even jump/flash/thumb drives? Microsoft has drilled into us that 1 form of data back-up = ZERO data back-ups, 2 forms of data back-up = 1 data back-up and so forth. This means that your data protection plan has to have Redundancy:

- Do your servers have multiple hard drives (e.g. RAID 5 array)?
- Do you have external hard drives with an off-site rotation schedule?
- Do you have a full image of your network (that means data and settings) so, in case of a system crashing or lost data, your IT support

people can retrieve the most recent data and get you set up within hours on another computer instead of days? (we like the tried and proven Symantec Backup Exec System Recovery 7.0 for servers or desktops)

We have learned that tape back-ups and tape drives, although convenient, are less reliable and more expensive than the external hard drive solutions we recommend. External hard drives are fast, large and inexpensive. If a system fails, the hard drive can quickly be connected to an alternative system to see the files. When a system fails with a tape drive, it is more difficult to either move the tape drive to

another system or to find a new tape drive. The new smaller external hard drives are very portable and can be easily swapped off-site as needed. Coming full circle, I know as a non-technical professional that the moral of the story is: Do what you should do TODAY to protect your data, and it will protect your association’s livelihood. If your business is not quite sure what you have for data protection or if it is the best scenario for how your business works, contact your internal or outsourced IT professionals to have a review of this critical aspect of your business. ■

CONTRIBUTED BY DEBI BUSH , OWNER/CHIEF MARKETING OFFICER OF CMIT SOLUTIONS OF DENVER

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# Form 990

EXECUTIVE COMPENSATION REPORTING – PREPARE FOR CHANGE > BY PATRICIA MCDERMOTT, PARTNER

## GENERAL BACKGROUND

In June the IRS issued a discussion draft of a redesigned Form 990, the annual information return filed by tax-exempt organizations. In a background paper accompanying the redesigned form, the IRS described the Form 990 as the “primary tax compliance tool for tax-exempt organizations.” The IRS noted that States rely on the Form 990 for oversight and tax-filing purposes. Moreover, the public, media, researchers, and policymakers rely on it to obtain information about the tax-exempt sector generally and individual organizations specifically. Therefore, according to the IRS, the redesigned Form 990 is intended to:

- › Enhance transparency to provide the IRS and the public with a realistic picture of the organization;
- › Promote compliance by accurately reflecting the organization’s operations, enabling the IRS to efficiently assess the risk of noncompliance;
- › Minimize the burden on filing organizations by requiring additional information based only on specified indicators.

The redesigned Form 990 consists of a 10-page “core” form, including an initial summary page, and 15 possible schedules. The schedules required for each particular organization depend on the organization’s characteristics and activities.

The redesigned form is proposed for use in reporting for the 2008 taxable year (filings made in 2009). However, the IRS specifically asked for comments on the transition period for moving to the new form.

## Executive Compensation Reporting

**C**ompensation paid to executives of tax-exempt entities is a perennial topic of interest to the press and the public. In addition, since 2004, the IRS has focused on this area through the Exempt Organizations Division’s Executive Compensation Compliance Project. In March the IRS issued a report on the first two phases of this initiative. See Report on Exempt Organizations Executive Compensation Compliance Project – Parts I and II, March 2007, available through link at [www.irs.gov/charities/article/0,,id=169100,00.html](http://www.irs.gov/charities/article/0,,id=169100,00.html).

Compared to the existing Form 990, the redesigned form generally requires more information on the core form with respect to the compensation of officers, directors, and key employees, but uses a simpler measure of compensation, referred to as “reportable” compensation. In the case of an employee, reportable compensation means Medicare wages reported on Form W-2. In the case of other service providers, such as directors, reportable compensation means nonemployee compensation reported on Form 1099-MISC. Reportable compensation from the organization and from any related organization must be listed.

Based on certain triggers, an organization might also be required to file a new Schedule J, showing additional detail on both taxable and nontaxable compensation. Schedule J must be filed, for example, if an executive has over \$150,000 reportable compensation or \$250,000 total compensation, or if any person listed on the core form has compensation from a source other than the organization or a related organization. Schedule J requires a seven-part breakout of compensation: (1) base compensation included in reportable compensation, (2) bonus and incentive compensation included in reportable compensation, (3) severance or change of control payments included in reportable compensation, (4) other amounts included in reportable compensation, (5) nonqualified deferred compensation not included in reportable compensation, (6) nontaxable welfare and fringe benefits, and (7) nontaxable expense reimbursements or allowances. In addition, Schedule J asks whether certain types of compensation arrangements are used, including supplemental nonqualified retirement plans, equity-based compensation, compensation based on revenues or net earnings, first-class travel, club dues, or use of a personal residence.

FORM 990 EXECUTIVE COMPENSATION REPORTING  
COMPARISON OF REQUIREMENTS

Whose Compensation Is Reported	CURRENT FORM 990		DISCUSSION DRAFT FORM 990	
	Who Must Report	What Must Be Reported	Who Must Report	What Must Be Reported
Current officers, directors, trustees, and key employees	All organizations	(1) Name and address; (2) three-part breakout of compensation from organization <sup>1</sup>	All organizations	(1) Name and city/state of residence; (2) "reportable" compensation <sup>2</sup> from organization and related organizations; (3) loans and other amounts owed to organization or related organizations <sup>3</sup>

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Attached to this Alert is a chart comparing the executive compensation reporting requirements for the current Form 990 and the redesigned Form 990. Although the IRS may make further changes to the Form 990 during the process of finalizing the redesigned form, tax-exempt organizations can expect expanded reporting of executive compensation, along with the additional recordkeeping required to comply with the enhanced reporting obligations. ■

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# CSAE Sings a Fresh Tune



> BY MIKE FABER, CSAE MEMBER

**W**hat would your Association’s membership look like in a perfect world? Chances are, your members would reflect a broad diversity of age, personal and professional background, upbringing and economic circumstances. The “beauty” of a truly diverse association would be that you could leverage a vast reservoir of creativity as you work to retain current membership and turn prospective members into dues-paying members. The “beast” of such a diverse group of members is that the vast reservoir of creativity would have a multitude of opinions on how things should be done—and how leadership should run the Association! Sound familiar?

It’s not a perfect world. If it were, the Beatles would still all be alive and producing new music. And our kids would listen to it. Just like the “perfection” gap that exists in all of our lives, the pursuit of perfection in leading an association can only lead to frustration. When CSAE hosted the “Learn With Leaders Luncheon” in September, a panel of experts shared their diverse experience in building associations that appeal to diverse memberships. Sharing their perspective were Jerry Bowman, a 35-year executive director of multiple associations, Dina Alengi-Storz, Executive Director of Interactive Management,

and Lu Anne Garvin, Director of Membership Benefits, Colorado Dental Association.

Recruiting new members within the multiple generations represented in today’s workforce is a critical and challenging task facing every association in today’s marketplace.

Delivering tangible value to those members, while appealing to Gen Y, Gen X and Baby Boomers means association leaders walk a tightrope in their recruitment efforts. While there is no “how to” booklet with step-by-step instructions for creating a broadly diverse association, several quotes from the CSAE panel may provide the key.

**“People support what they create”**  
 Involving current membership in appealing to new members is one key to maintaining a robust and vibrant

association. The National Speaker’s Association runs a promotion that delivers tangible value to current members who recruit new members. Discounts on upcoming meetings, plus a free MP3 player to those who bring in a new recruit are powerful incentives.

**“Members love being special”**  
 As Dina Alengi-Storz stated in her remarks at CSAE recently, “Members know when they call we’ll either have the answer, or we’ll get the answer!” Top-notch service to current members makes them feel good about recommending association membership to their industry colleagues.

**“Hitting them early and hitting them often”**  
 Jerry Bowman’s theory may sound a bit violent, however it’s always a great

idea to remind members of the benefits of expanding membership. More dollars in the membership “kitty” allow an association to take on a higher profile in the community. Your association shown doing good in the headlines means greater exposure and more members.



**“The globe has changed,  
times have changed”**

Lu Anne Garvin’s wisdom is apropos for every association executive. What worked a generation ago may sound as dated as the Beatles’ “Yesterday” does to a new age of listeners. Get current, and then realize that your association is competing for interest and membership dollars from a multitude of sources.

Growing competition for your audience’s time and money mean any Association should strive to stretch and reflect a more diverse array of potential members than ever. That way, you’ll always be singing “Here comes the Sun”. ■

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# Using Humor



> BY SCOTT FRIEDMAN, CSP

## for a Change

**W**ith restructurings, takeovers, and layoffs sweeping the world of work, employee insecurity and fear are at record levels. The definition of an optimist in America today is an employee who brings his lunch to work. Change has become a daily activity with no end in sight. Anxiety reverberates throughout the entire organization. During these times, we need some sort of antidote for stress. Many organizations see a dose of humor as a remedy to reduce tension and motivate workers. By coming to our senses of humor, we find truth in the statement that he or she who laughs, lasts.

Does a sense of humor translate into dollars and cents? While the savings won't show up on your balance sheet under comic credits or laugh assets, humor does add an intangible but real benefit.

Humor creates bonds in the workplace. It's the shortest distance between two people. Humor helps establish a feeling of camaraderie and sets the tone for cooperation rather than contention.

To use humor positively at work, people must take themselves lightly, while taking their jobs seriously. Humor is much more than just telling jokes. Humor is the ability to find something funny in your predicament. A comic vision helps people tolerate change in the workplace and get along better with others.

The health of any organization is in direct proportion to that organization's ability to laugh at itself. Many organizations are just too darn seri-

ous. Their structure and formality inhibit open communications and stifle creativity. If organizations would loosen up a little, they would realize that informality and spontaneity foster open communications and stimulate creativity. What setting is more informal and spontaneous than one with good humor, fun, and play? Humor is a technique that can be learned, practiced, reinforced and internalized just like other skills. Where do you start? First, remember that you don't need to be a stand-up comic, you just need to add some spirit to the work environment.

The first ten minutes of the morning set the 'attitude' for the rest of the day, so start light. Here are some ideas:

*"If you're **too busy** to laugh, you're just **too busy**."*

## “Laughter is contagious—Why not infect your whole association?”

- Start every morning by greeting everyone in the office with a big smile and a hearty hello. They will wonder what you're up to.
- Place funny cartoons, appropriate jokes, or postcards on a company bulletin board. Sign your name with a note saying, "I thought you might enjoy this." Not only are you giving them an opportunity to laugh at this cartoon or joke, but people are saying, "I'll be darned, he's a real guy. What a surprise, he has a sense of humor just like us!"
- Sprinkle internal communications with humor. Add a cartoon or funny

one-liner to memos and you would be surprised how many people start reading those little devils.

- To get meetings off on a productive foot, serve everyone ice cream or suckers at the start of the meeting. Communication is guaranteed to improve.
- Inject humor into meetings. Have a dress-up theme meeting once a quarter. Share fifteen minutes of jokes at the start of every meeting.
- Have a positive party funded by negative people. Every time someone in the office is caught being negative, they throw a dollar in a

positive pot, and once a quarter the pot buys pizza, happy hour, or humor props for the office.

- Wear amusing buttons. One executive wears one that says, "Save time, see it my way." Walk into your next meeting with a button that says, "God is watching, give her a good show." Try "Start each day with 'PMS'- a Positive Motivating Smile." Or "If you're too busy to laugh, you're just too busy."
- Give rewards for the worst mistake of the week. This will encourage employees to share and learn from their blunders.
- Spike your environment. Place positive and appropriate humor props around your office. How about a red clown nose on your fax machine?



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*The highest form of laughter is to **laugh at yourself.***

- Send out cartoons with your correspondence. Put your clients in a receptive mood before reading proposals.
- Have one "call in well" day a year. Instead of calling in sick, you would call up and say, "I'd really love to come to work today, but I just feel too good. 'Love ya! Bye!'"
- Keep it light. If an employee is frustrated with a new computer system and can't figure out the manual, a boss may sympathize by saying, "How's that new mystery book you're reading? Can I help?"
- Use Aikido to defuse tension. As Tom Crum reminds us in his book "The Magic of Conflict" Aikido literally translated means "the way of blending energy." It's blending with the aggressor instead of choosing to be aggressive or defensive.



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When an irate member asks, "Have you been incompetent your whole life?" your response could be, "Not yet I haven't." Or when a customer comes in and says, "Okay who is the idiot in charge here?" say, "I'm head idiot. What can I do for you?" An unexpected non-threatening response absorbs and redirects the anger in a harmless way without putting the other person down. It may be almost impossible to control others, but you can always control yourself.

A quick warning—Be careful when using Aikido. There is a fine line between positive and negative humor. The first thing is to ask yourself the question, "Where am I coming from?" If you're coming from a hostile place, it could very well be reflected in your humor for humor mirrors the truth. Anger or bitterness many times comes

out as sarcasm or humor with a biting, caustic edge. You do more harm than if you had said nothing at all.

The most effective humor has its roots in kindness and affection. The highest form of laughter is to laugh at yourself; the lowest is to laugh at someone else. Making fun of yourself creates instant rapport and creates bonds with workers.

One executive was quoted as saying, "There are two ways to develop self-esteem at the office. The first is to share positive humor, and the second is to take all mirrors out of the washrooms."

A healthy sense of life's absurdities can help us forget our problems and put a smile on our faces. With humor we can sit back, detach ourselves from the situation, and laugh at ourselves for becoming so reactive at life's afflictions. And we can ask ourselves, "Why am I taking life so seriously? It's not permanent." No one gets out of it alive anyway. In a hundred years, what difference will it make. So lighten up! So if a tornado blows off your roof, be like the guy who put up a sign saying, "Open House Today."

"Laughter is contagious—Why not infect your whole association?" ■

CONTRIBUTED BY SCOTT FRIEDMAN, CSP IS THE AUTHOR OF 2 BOOKS AND CO-AUTHOR OF 4 OTHERS. AN INTERNATIONALLY RECOGNIZED PROFESSIONAL, SCOTT SPEAKS ON A VARIETY OF TOPICS INCLUDING EMPLOYEE AND CUSTOMER SERVICE, CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT AND PERSONAL BRANDING. HE CAN BE REACHED AT (303) 671-7222 OR VISIT [WWW.FUNNYSCOTT.COM](http://WWW.FUNNYSCOTT.COM)

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# BOOK Review



**Leave the Office Earlier®: The Productivity Pro® Shows You How to Do More in Less Time...and Feel Great About It**  
by Laura Stack

Available at  
[www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com)

**L**ong hours. Juggling family and work. Deadlines. High stress levels. Today's professionals are feeling more overworked and overwhelmed than ever before. Yet you CAN get more done than you ever thought possible-and still get home to your real life sooner. Laura Stack, "The Productivity Pro,®" shows you how. Leave the Office Earlier® explores the ten key factors that improve results, lower stress, and save time in today's workplace. Fun, interactive quizzes speed you

to exactly the advice and techniques you need the most. You can tailor this information-loaded book to your own needs by focusing on your problem areas-such as time-wasters, distractions, email overload, or poor organization-and by following the easy-to-implement solutions. With Laura Stack's help, you'll work more efficiently and be more productive in every area of your life, so that you can really live according to your priorities. Don't just work faster. Work better, reduce stress, and leave the office earlier®!

## Calendar of EVENTS

- 11:00 a.m.** | New Member Orientation, Spotlight Series, or Networking
- 11:30 a.m.** | Lunch
- 12:00 noon** | Program
- 1:00 p.m.** | Wrap Up
  
- Thursday** | January 10, 2008
- Friday** | February 1, 2008
- Thursday** | March 6, 2008
- Friday** | April 4, 2008
- Thursday** | May 1, 2008
- Friday** | June 6, 2008
- Thursday** | July 10, 2008
- Friday** | August 1, 2008
- Thursday** | September 4, 2008
- Friday** | October 3, 2008
- Thursday** | November 6, 2008
- Friday** | December 5, 2008

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# Beyond Spellcheck

**FIND COSTLY AND EMBASSASING MISTAKES IN EVERY DOCUMENT YOU WRITE!**

**Sue was arranging a meeting. She did what meeting planners do: arranged all the details, contracted space, speakers, equipment and more. The annual business meeting was announced and personnel, vendors and speakers scheduled their travel to get there. Business as usual.**

## Not exactly. . .

There was a typo in the published meeting dates. By the time the mistake was found and everyone was notified, more than \$25,000 had been spent in airline change fees, additional airfares, and other penalties . . . not to mention the wasted time and embarrassment this mistake caused Sue and her association.

**An ad for the rental house read:**  
*“Three bedrooms, two baths, fenced yard, and mice eating area.”*

**An email to a top executive at a Fortune 500 Company said:**  
*“Management was the driving farce behind the project.”*

You want to find mistakes before your readers does, before they erode your credibility, and before they cost you and your organization time, money, and embarrassment. No one is immune to striking the wrong key, so it is important to find those potentially costly and embarrassing mistakes.

Here are some proven strategies for finding more mistakes in text:

### Do not rely solely on Spellcheck.

Spellcheck alone is not enough. It will not find mistakes that flag as words (e.g., “mice” for “nice” or “farce” for “force”), number problems (the meeting planner’s debacle), left-out letters, or missing words (such as “The budget is available” when you mean “The budget is not available.”)

### Use multi-sensory proofreading.

Your eyes alone are not enough. Say words out loud and point to words as your eyes move across text. Your eyes alone are poor proofreading tools

because your brain pushes your eyes ahead, skipping words, anticipating the meaning that’s coming. If your eyes don’t look at every word, you will miss some of the mistakes inside of words, such as misspellings and typos. When you look at, listen to, and touch words in the text, you create a “checks and balances” system of proofreading. What your eyes don’t see, your ears might hear, or your finger may touch.

Know that it’s easier to proofread someone else’s writing than it is to proofread your own.

When you try to proofread text you’ve looked at too much and too long, you tend to see what you meant, not necessarily what you wrote. Create distance from the familiar text by taking a break. Don’t try to proofread right after you’ve finished your draft. If there’s someone, at home or at work whose skills you trust, ask him or her to proofread for you. We do a better job at finding mistakes in other people’s writing than we do in our own.





### Change the way familiar text looks.

The reason we struggle with proofreading our own writing is that we're seeing and processing the same story, over and over again. That is not only tedious, it tempts us to skip words, to rush through the text because we're tired of it, and we know what's coming next. When we're tired and we're rushing, we miss mistakes. There's nothing we can do about the familiarity of the message; that will not change. But we can change the way the familiar message appears to our tired, nonobjective eyes and brain.

So if proofreading on the computer screen change the background color of the screen or change the font before you check it one last time. If proofreading on paper (always recommended as a screen is harder on the eyes), use a different color paper, change the font, formatting, something to make the document look different from the way it looked all the times you looked at it before. When you change the color, background, texture on which familiar text sits, you trick your tired, nonobjective eyes

and brain into thinking they're looking at something new . . . and you'll do a much better job at finding those mistakes.

### Prioritize the potential problems and spend whatever time you do have finding and fixing the mistakes that, if not found could cost you the most time, money, or credibility.

When time does not allow you to proofread thoroughly and repeatedly, search for the two potentially most costly and embarrassing mistakes: proper names and numbers.

Using a comma incorrectly or using the wrong word (such as "less" for "fewer") is not good, but your reader may not even notice it, and even if the reader does notice, it may not be a big issue. However, if you spell the reader's name incorrectly, that will pop off the page, and it will be personal to the reader. Bad form. People are sensitive about their names, especially if you're asking them for their time, money, business or a job.

Sending out the wrong date, time, phone number, or dollar amount is far worse than using "less" for "fewer" or misusing a comma. When time is tight, and you can't look for every possible grammar, punctuation, or usage mistake, always scan for proper names and numbers, and spend whatever time you do have finding and fixing those potentially destructive mistakes in the text.

Ensuring mistake-free text requires a combination of finding what spell checkers cannot find, not depending solely on your eyes when you proofread, and knowing what to look for (proper names and numbers) when time is tight, too tight to do it right. Whether in a memo, e-mail, letter, report, proposal, resume, or contract, mistakes can cost you, so find them – before your reader does! ■

RONNIE MORE, SPEAKER AND TRAINER, IS THE AUTHOR OF "WHY DID I SAY THAT? COMMUNICATING TO KEEP YOUR CREDIBILITY, YOUR COOL AND YOUR CASH!" AND "TRICKS THAT STICK," A WRITING COMPANION. A NATIONALLY KNOWN EXPERT ON SPOKEN AND WRITTEN COMMUNICATION SHE HAS WORKED WITH COMPANIES SUCH AS IHOP, HYUNDAI, THE US DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE, THE EPA, CITY AND STATE GOVERNMENT AGENCIES, AND MAJOR UNIVERSITIES. HER WEBSITE HAS NUMEROUS TOOLS FOR IMPROVING COMMUNICATIONS. FOR MORE INFORMATION, CALL (909) 229-4755, OR RONNIE.MOORE@RMOORECOMMUNICATIONS.COM OR VISIT [WWW.RMOORECOMMUNICATIONS.COM](http://WWW.RMOORECOMMUNICATIONS.COM)

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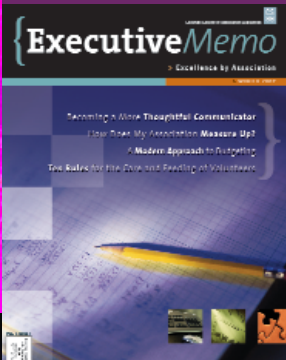
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