

Cascadia Board / Chapter Officers Meeting
MINUTES

August 27, 2008 / 5:00 – 9:00 PM / Hank Ball's residence / Tacoma, WA

Attendees:

Steven Paget (SP) – President
Blane Long (BL) – Vice President
Andrea Ball (AB) – Secretary
Tricia Butler (TB) – Board member
Hank Ball (HB) – Host and Committee co-chair

The following comments were captured during the above reference meeting. These are not a verbatim transcript, but rather a narrative summary of the overall conversation. -AB

I. Review of SAVE Chapter meeting, Ron Tanenbaum's comments and thoughts on making an effective chapter

SP: Ron's key message was that it takes a dedicated, core group of individuals to make sure things happen. We seem to have that. For the future, however, we need to think about how to set things up so the chapter is sustainable.

HB: Historically, meetings have just been presentations. We've tried the "short shots" – dinner – presentation format, fieldtrips to the new Federal building and others, pro-bono and mini VE studies for non-profits (Habitat house), etc. Need to determine what type of program will be of interest to the members.

BL: Meetings also have to be of enough interest to justify travel. This includes identifying where members are located and if we're timing the meetings right – is it the right day, the right week, the right hour?

HB: Previous core members were Seattle-based and did not travel much for work or most of their work was local. Now members are more scattered and seem to be doing more travelling.

BL: I'll be in the following locations in the next couple of months: Spokane, Wenatchee, Yakima and Vancouver (WA). We could think about having a Cascadia meeting with local members in one or two of these locations to supplement the regularly-scheduled meetings.

TB: We're talking about convenience, but the bigger question is "what is the value?" To learn, to meet folks, to hear other opinions/methods, etc. For example: "How do you institutionalize knowledge / lessons learned?"

AB: Are you thinking of following one topic throughout the year?

SP: How to have value analysis be the focus of a year-long topic?

NOTE: At this point in the conversation the attendees began a deeper discussion around the development of a central idea to be carried throughout the year – one that focused on the issues of capturing, retaining and disseminating corporate (or project) knowledge.

AB: How about a 'basic function' as the focus of the year? To play off of Tricia's idea, what if we made "share knowledge" as our basic function / central theme for the year? The higher order functions could be 'attract members' and 'retain members'.

TB: To put it into a problem statement, how about "How do you prevent knowledge loss?" I think this is a very practical and real problem that managers have to confront in companies of any size. It is certainly very true here at Boeing.

In Boeing the complaint one often hears is how come "we have to relearn this?" when it was figured out on a program "I worked on three years ago?" Another example of losing knowledge is when people with a lot of experience and tribal knowledge retire or no longer are active due to working for other companies or illness, or whatever the reason, as being why that knowledge is no longer available.

There are "a million examples" of losing knowledge - the function to address is how to capture and imbed knowledge.

So, our discussion is heading towards some combination of sharing knowledge and avoiding the loss of knowledge.

SP: We're on to something – looking at how to use this as an anchor.

BL: Thinking along the same lines – you could work through a 5-step VA Job Plan over the course of the year, with one step covered at each meeting.

TB: The key is to pose this as a problem that everyone can relate to.

AB: We can also use this central theme as a charge to the committees – what can you do to 'share knowledge', for example.

SP: A lot of these ideas can be combined; we need to define the problem statement.

TB: Synthesize and present the statement to the membership; include attributes so it's bounded.

BL: Maybe pose 3-5 problem statements, send them out and discuss them at the September meeting.

SP: That would be a good way to engage the membership.

AB: Right - this is the year to engage the membership now that we've re-energized things.

BL: We're setting goals for ourselves – some are attainable and some will be a stretch.

AB: Do we decide the problem statement tonight or ask for a vote from the membership?

HB: What's the goal here?

SP: Engage participation – the basic function with other higher order functions.

AB: Perhaps a word of caution about timeline – suggest using Sep/Oct/Nov to initiate engagement with the Board. There is only one Board member present and they will need to be involved for this plan to work.

SP: Better to not set a deadline of one year – this is something that can keep going.

ACTION: Continue to flesh out this idea (of a unifying problem statement as a focus for the chapter over the next year and beyond) over the next two weeks; get the meeting minutes to the Board and get them informed.

II. Programming

BL: September's meeting will focus on sharing this idea and gathering input. We'll start having programs at the October / November meetings.

AB: Let's give December's meeting a "fun" focus.

BL: If we have a meeting in Olympia we could try for a program on the Columbia Crossing progress.

HB: Would also like a follow up on the Bright Water project.

BL: We should also celebrate the fact that the Cascadia chapter earned two of the nine new CVS' this past year.

III. Other areas of focus: Manufacturing and VA in Puget Sound:

SP: What's the opportunity for looking at VA in a manufacturing setting in this area? Who's doing it other than Boeing? Who else has in-house VE programs?

TB: Not sure.

BL: How many of our members are owners other than Blane and Harvey – who else?

TB: Let's invite owners to certain meetings more for education than for fishing for work.

AB: Maybe look at the common ground – we're all businesses.

BL: But how do we get the business leaders to attend?

SP: Need to define the problem / question in terms that will mean something to them.

HB: Just don't present VE/VA as another methodology. Have the owner articulate their problem.

IV. Board elections

BL: Do we need to have elections in the spring?

NOTE: AB checked the Bylaws. Officer and Board Member terms begin June 1. Elections will need to be held next April/May.

V. How to spend our money

BL: We have over \$2,000 in our account – how can we use this to encourage/engage members? Pay for meeting rooms/food, cover the membership of an officer, raffle off an annual meeting registration, have a BBQ in the spring, are just a few ideas.

TB: We could have a spring BBQ to celebrate the conclusion of the previous year's work.

VI. Other action items

AB: Draft the meeting minutes and send out for review; finalize minutes and send to Board.

AB: Begin drafting membership survey: meeting logistics (location, day/week, time); format (topics, structure, ideas); communication preferences (email, web, telecons, webinars).

AB: Send membership demographics to BL for remote meeting possibilities.

VII. Thanks

SP: Many thanks to Hank Ball and family for hosting this productive meeting. We appreciate your generosity both with the food and drink but also with sharing your fabulous view of the Sound!

VIII. Adjourn