



GRC News Flash, Volume 6, Issue 1

GRC News Flash, Volume 6 Issue 1

June, 2011

2010-2011 Meetings

2010

- July—Dark
- Aug 18—Microsoft Office 2007 Tips & Tricks
- Sept 15—An Administrative Professional through the Eyes of An Executive
- Oct 20—Communication 101
- Nov 17—Community Service Program and GRC's 9th Anniversary
- Dec—Dark

2011

- Jan 19—Project Management for Administrative Professionals
- Feb 16—Accelerating the Success of Your Project Team
- March 16— Writing Tips to be Right On
- April 20—GRC Cocktail Reception "Invest in Yourself with IAAP" and Exercise Your Imagination with Passion & Purpose
- May 18—Do Temperaments Match?
- June 15—Writing and Office Organization

Meetings May Change Without Notice

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President's Corner, by Linda Martin

June has been a whirlwind month. First, I was honored to attend the **Annual Education Forum/California Division Meeting (AEF/CDM)** in San Diego as your delegate. Please see highlights later in this newsletter.

I barely finished unpacking and then prepared for our June 15th chapter meeting where we learned about gadgets, pens, and various supplies to make our **Writing and Office Organization** more efficient. Afterwards, we were pleased to have Debra Burruss, CPS/CAP, Division President for 2011-2012, install our **new Board**. Thank you, Debra, for your innovative "candy" theme. **Congratulations and welcome** to the incoming board:

Linda Martin, President
Theresa Souza, Vice President, Membership
Terry Barragan, Secretary
Kathleen Smith, Treasurer

We concluded the evening with a token of appreciation (zip coin pouch inscribed with "making the difference") presented to each of these members for actively participating in our small but mighty chapter during the 2010-2011 year. **Many thanks to the outgoing board and each of you.**

- Joy White Keeler – for serving as Vice President of

Membership

- Linda Cook – for serving as Secretary and attending all chapter meetings.
- Theresa Souza – for serving as Treasurer, keeping us financially balanced, earning her MOE, and attending all chapter meetings
- Kathleen Smith – for obtaining great speakers, serving as RTF Chair, coordinating our fundraisers and community service participation, chairing events like Bunko and Professional Development Seminar, and earning her MOE
- Susan Robinette for taking the lead as our Webmaster, helping co-chair Bunko, earning her MOE, and attending all chapter meetings
- Cheri Miller for helping with the Membership Recruitment Drive, serving on the Audit Committee, always providing great suggestions, earning her MOE, and attending all chapter meetings.
- Terry Barragan for being one of our newest members and who jumped in with both feet right off the bat by volunteering to help at the KVIE phone bank, and attending all chapter meetings since joining
- Bobbette Wells for being the first chapter member to earn her CPS since our chapter's inception
- Linda Martin - so she can save

her coins to buy an actual gavel.

And, of course, we couldn't forget Debra Burruss, our mentor, who has always been so encouraging and a great example of leadership.

May you have a wonderful 4th of July celebrating Independence Day and enjoy a relaxing summer. Our Board will be retreating to Lake Tahoe the end of July to discuss ideas to provide the best educational programs, support our community, as well as marketing and recruiting initiatives. Your suggestions and ideas are always welcome.

I look forward to representing the GRC as President for a third term (I think I'm getting the hang of this now), continuing with our traditions, and, with your help, taking our chapter to remarkable new heights. May we embrace the 2011-2012 theme – **"Making the Leap to Remarkable - Step Up, Think Big and Lead the Way."**

"Think big thoughts but relish small pleasures." –H. Jackson Brown, Jr., *Life's Little Instruction Book*

Linda

Linda S. Martin
IAAP Greater Roseville Chapter President,
2009-2011

Member of Excellence 2009-2010
**Passion & Purpose -
Everyone Makes a Difference!**

Division News!

New Officers Installed
The California Division of IAAP elected and installed a new slate of officers in June. The new officers are Debra Burruss, CPS/CAP, President; Murphy Jones, CPS/CAP, President-Elect; Barbara Rambow, CPS/CAP, Vice President; Ida Martinez, CPS/CAP, Secretary; and Cherylinn

Nicklas, Treasurer (biographies on website). The new officers serve July 1, 2011, through June 30, 2012.

International Event Set for Anaheim in 2013
The International Education Forum and Annual Meeting, IAAP's premier event which draws a

crowd of about 1,800 people each year, will come to the Anaheim Convention Center July 28-31, 2013. Get ready...2013 will be here before we know it!

Check out the "Notable" items from our 2010 California Division Meeting and Annual Educational Forum at: <http://www.iaap-ca.org/news.shtml>

Headquarter News!



Registration Open for Fall Conference

Summer may be new, but it's time to "fall forward."

Registration is now open for the International Association of Administrative Professionals' [2011 Fall Conference Oct. 9-12 in San Diego](#). The theme of this year's conference is "Fall Forward: Hot Topics for Tomorrow's Workplace."

Participants will get the skills they need to negotiate a rapidly changing workplace. The conference will include sessions of increasing efficiency with web-based Microsoft Office; attention grabbing design; social media as a tool for business communication; deal making; responding to and reducing workplace violence and harassment; and improving emotional intelligence.

In addition to informative sessions and great networking opportunities, this year's fall conference participants will get to enjoy the beautiful San Diego Bay at the Sheraton San Diego Hotel and Marina.

Fall Forward - Hot Topics For Tomorrow's Workplace - Oct. 9-12, San Diego

The workplace is changing at such a rapid pace that it's hard to know what skills, programs and knowledge you need to attain to achieve success in tomorrow's workplace. We've done the work for you for the 2011 Fall Conference. Fall Forward: Hot Topics For Tomorrow's Workplace.

Join us for the final Fall Conference and walk away with training on

what's hot. You'll impress your boss and your co-workers when you improve your efficiency by using Microsoft on your desktop and Google on the cloud. Whether you're creating a newsletter or pulling together information for an event, learn how simple design techniques can turn your project from ho-hum to hot. Expand your communication skills by understanding social media and what's hot and what's not for yourself and your company. After the conference you'll have confidence in your skills to become the go-to person in the workplace.

Find your voice by learning how to effectively negotiate inside and outside the office. At our Hot Topics conference, educate yourself on harassment and violence in the workplace. You'll walk away with essential skills that will set you apart today...and tomorrow.

Fall Conference Schedule

- Sunday, Oct. 9
 - ◇ 8:30am - 11:45am: [The 21st Century Office: Microsoft Office Meets Google](#) (Optional Session)
 - ◇ 11:45am - 12:45pm: Lunch on your own
 - ◇ 12:45pm - 4:00pm: Session Continued
 - ◇ 4:30pm - 7:30pm: General Registration
- Monday, Oct. 10
 - ◇ 7:30am - 8:00am: Registration
 - ◇ 8:30am - 11:45am: [How to Create Attention Grabbing Design](#)
 - ◇ 11:45am - 12:30pm: Networking Lunch*
 - ◇ 12:45pm - 4:00pm: [Social Media: The New Business Communication Tool](#)
- Tuesday, Oct. 11
 - ◇ 8:30am - 11:45am: [The Art of Striking Great Deals](#)
 - ◇ 11:45am - 12:30pm: Networking Lunch*
 - ◇ 12:45pm - 4:00pm: [Violence & Harassment in the Workplace](#)

- Wednesday, Oct. 12
 - ◇ 7:30am - 8:15am: Networking Breakfast*
 - ◇ 8:30am - 11:45am: [Improving Your Emotional Intelligence](#)
 - ◇ 11:45am - 12:00pm: Closing Remarks

*Included in registration

Fall Conference Hotel Information

Sheraton San Diego Hotel and Marina—The Sheraton San Diego Hotel and Marina is located on Harbor Island overlooking a marina and San Diego Bay. Most of the rooms have spectacular views of the bay or the marina. Many of the area's most popular attractions are within a short drive, including the San Diego Zoo, Sea World Park, Old Town and Balboa Park. Shops and restaurants abound at nearby Horton Plaza.



Sheraton San Diego Hotel and Marina



IAAP headquarters
website:
www.iaap-hq.org

California Division
website:
www.iaap-ca.org

Greater Roseville Chapter
www.iaap-roseville.com



June Recap & Upcoming Meeting

“Office Organization and Writing” presented by Richard Scogin, NewellRubbermaid—This presentation was more than just educational; it was also a hands-on product demonstration.

Everyone enjoyed hearing the latest in office organizational products and the efficient ways to use them, plus, the latest in office writing implements. Products reviewed: Dymo Label Series, Sanford Correction Tape, Sharpie Gel Highlighter and more.

There were a lot of samples/handouts for everyone!

Installation of the 2011-2012 GRC Board of Officers—Thank you again to Debra Burruss, CPS/CAP, Division President Elect, for

performing our Greater Roseville Chapter’s installation of Board Officers for 2011-2012.

2011-2012 GRC Board Members

- Linda Martin, President
- Theresa Souza, Vice President, Membership
- Terry Barragan, Secretary
- Kathleen Smith, Treasurer

GRC’s JULY Training/Meeting—NO MEETING.

Even though we will not have a chapter training/meeting session in July, keep your eyes and ears open in case there is a special event.

The first 2011-2012 Professional Development and Networking Forum (formally known as Leadership

Forum) will be:

When: July 9, 2011

Time: 9:00 a.m - 12 noon
(Doors open at 8:30 a.m.)

Where: Dublin San Ramon Services District Office - 7051 Dublin Blvd, Dublin (remember we always carpool)

Cost: NO COST TO ATTEND!

Where else can you get a deal like this...continental breakfast, hot lunch, time with friends, great training and networking?

GRC’s Board Retreat—July 30th—The incoming board (outgoing board optional) will hold their retreat at South Lake Tahoe. An update will be provided to all.

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Uncap what's inside.
sharpieuncapped.com



Sharpie® Gel Highlighter

Defeat International Bylaws Amendment #1, by Linda Martin, GRC Member

Discussions were flying at the Division business session held in San Diego on June 11, 2011, about the International bylaws Amendment #1, which will be voted on in Montreal next month. If it passes, it will affect our chapter. See amendment #1 restated below.

I was very touched by the overwhelming support our chapter received from members of the California Division and other chapters in attendance at the AEF/CDM. Many delegates who will be attending the Montreal Education Forum and Annual Meeting (EFAM) on July 24-27 assured me they would be voting against this amendment. They recognize that though our chapter may be small (currently under 15 members), it PARTICIPATES and is very active.

If you are going to International EFAM as a delegate, please oppose Amendment #1 for the following reasons:

1. Although Greater Roseville Chapter (GRC) currently has less than 15 members, it is a very active chapter. Our chapter is not a “social club” where only two or three people attend. Our meetings are not held for the purposes of socializing. They are held to provide attendees with educational programs, most of which earn recertification points.
2. GRC has earned Chapter of Excellence the last two years and will earn its third in a row by the application submittal due date this year.

3. Greater Roseville Chapter has consistently been recognized for: Community service. RTF support, and Many members who have obtained Member of Excellence.
4. GRC meetings also are networking opportunities for those who are seeking employment.
5. Many of our members have attended the Division Leadership Forums on a regular basis. This illustrates their commitment to leading the chapter and taking their professional development to the next level.
6. GRC has consistently maintained at least a President and Treasurer.

If you still feel strongly about voting in favor of Amendment #1, may we suggest to amend Amendment #1 (in bold): “As of January 1, 2012, chapters failing to meet the minimum standard of 15 members for six consecutive months **and failing to meet Chapter of Excellence criteria**, will be disbanded.”

IAAP Proposed Amendment 1

ARTICLE V—CONSTITUENTS, page 7-10/1; Amend ARTICLE V—CONSTITUENTS, Section 2. paragraph B by adding information regarding minimal chapter size. Section 2. Definition.

Present Wording

- B. Chapters.
1. A chapter shall be a group of members chartered by IAAP, located within a division and district, which must have a president and a treasurer.

2. A chapter-at-large shall be a group of members chartered by IAAP and located outside the United States, its territories, Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands of the United States or Canada, which must have a president and a treasurer.

Proposed Wording

- B. Chapters.
1. A chapter shall be a group of members chartered by IAAP, located within a division and district, which must have a president and a treasurer and at least 15 members. As of January 1, 2012, chapters failing to meet the minimum standard of 15 members for six consecutive months will be disbanded.
 2. A chapter-at-large shall be a group of members chartered by IAAP and located outside the United States, its territories, Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands of the United States or Canada, which must have a president and a treasurer and at least 15 members. As of January 1, 2012, chapters-at-large failing to meet the minimum standard of 15 members for six consecutive months will be disbanded.

All 2011 proposed bylaws amendments for the International Association of Administrative Professionals can be found at HQ’s website under Resources.



AEF/CDM—GRC Takes Home Awards, by Linda Martin, Prsident

What another exceptional event...dynamic speakers, high-quality educational topics, and fun surprises. Attendees received "Lucky" – a musical CD from talented singer/musician and Saturday's speaker Randi Driscoll, a key-shaped charm engraved with "key to success," and a loose "diamond" (to represent the strength and power we have to resolve conflicts) Plus we went home with a bag full of goodies from participants at the vendor fair. There were a lot of raffle prizes, but sadly, I didn't win any this year. It was wonderful connecting with members of other California chapters and even some from other states.

There were interesting debates at the Division business session. Division bylaws Amendment #1 (proposing that Division secretary be a two consecutive-year position), which we voted against, was defeated. International bylaws Amendment #1 (to be voted on in Montreal next month), which we strongly oppose, will affect our chapter significantly if it passes. See details on page 3.

What stirred within me even more "passion and purpose" (and tremendous pride) were the numerous awards our chapter received. Thanks to your support and active participation, I was proud to accept the following awards on behalf of GRC:

In the 25 to Fewer Member Category:

Certificate of Achievement for having 1 member and 8.33% of the chapter membership receiving their Certified Professional Secretary (CPS) Certification (thanks to **Bobbette Wells** for helping us earn this recognition).

Certificate of Appreciation for most contributions to the **RTF**. We also received a **\$50 cash award**.

Certificate of Achievement on meeting the Pathways to Excellence requirements and becoming **Chapter of Excellence**.

Community Service Award for continued support to multiple community volunteer projects.

Individuals awards:

Certificate of Achievement presented to **Linda Martin** for meeting Pathways to Excellence requirements and becoming **Member of Excellence**.

Certificate of Appreciation to **Kathleen Smith** for her service as **Member North of the Retirement Trust Foundation** for 2010-2011.

Congratulations to GRC! **You should be very proud of your chapter.** This recognition proves that, "**Everyone** makes a difference!

The slogan for the 2011-2012

year was unveiled..."**Making the Leap to Remarkable - Step Up, Think Big and Lead the Way.**" So let's start thinking about how we're going to make that leap so that GRC members will have a remarkable experience.

Mark your calendar now for next year's **AEF/CDM in San Mateo on June 8 – 10, 2012**. They will be offering the stimulus plan again, and intend to keep registration fees the same (early registration rate of \$380 for complete package OR \$195 just for AEF and \$205 just for the CDM). San Mateo Marriott hotel room rate will be \$99/night (plus tax). If you buddy up, that's only \$49.50 plus tax/night. Free parking for attendees, discounted breakfast, and beautiful weather. Start saving now; talk to your employer about covering some or all of your costs (talk to them soon so they can work it into their 2012 budget); recognize that you cannot put a price on the value that you will receive from attending this conference.



New Name: Professional Development and Networking Forum

California Division will be changing the name of the **Northern California Leadership Forums** to **Professional Development and Networking Forums**.

Following are the tentative dates for the upcoming term.

2011
July 9—training for Board positions on responsibilities; attendance is strongly encouraged. The new California

Division board will be in attendance as well.

Sep. 10—TBD

Nov. 5—TBD

2012

Jan. 14—(AEF/CDM site visit at San Mateo Marriott)

Mar. 10—TBD

May 12—TBD

Remember ladies, we always carpool to these training sessions. Plus, it's a wonderful networking

opportunity with other chapter members from Northern California.



Harvard Business Review Article: The Case for Executive Assistants—by Melba J. Duncan



Artwork: Xavier Veilhan,
Man on the Phone,
2006, painted polyester resin,
27.25' x 11' x 7',
permanent installation,
Cité Internationale, Lyon.

Among the most striking details of the corporate era depicted in the AMC series *Mad Men*, along with constant smoking or mid-day drinking, is the army of secretaries who populate Sterling Cooper, the 1960s ad agency featured in the show. The secretary of those days has gone the way of the carbon copy and been replaced by the executive assistant, now typically reserved for senior management. Technologies like e-mail, voice mail, mobile devices, and online calendars have allowed managers at all levels to operate with a greater degree of self-sufficiency. At the same time, companies have faced enormous pressure to cut costs, reduce head count, and flatten organizational structures. As a result, the numbers of assistants at low corporate levels have dwindled in most corporations. That's unfortunate, because effective assistants can make enormous contributions to productivity at all levels of the organization.

At very senior levels, the return on investment from a skilled assistant can be substantial. Consider a senior executive whose total compensation package is \$1 million annually, who works with an assistant who earns \$80,000. For the organization to break even, the assistant must make the executive 8% more productive than he or she would be working solo—for instance the assistant needs to save the executive roughly five hours in a 60-hour workweek. In reality, good assistants save their bosses much more than that. They ensure that meetings begin on time with prep material delivered in advance. They optimize travel schedules and enable remote decision making, keeping projects on track. And they filter the distractions that can turn manager into a reactive type who spends all day answering e-mail instead of a leader who proactively sets the organization agenda. As Robert Pozen writes in this issue: A top-notch assistant "is crucial to being productive."

That's true not only for top executives. In their zeal to cut administrative expenses, many companies have gone too far, leaving countless highly paid middle and upper managers to arrange their own travel, file expense reports, and schedule meetings. Some companies may be drawn to the notion of egalitarianism they believe this assistant-less structure represents—when workers see the boss loading paper into the copy machine, the theory goes, a "we're all in this together" spirit is created. By a management practice, the structure rarely makes economic sense. Generally speaking, work should be delegated to the lowest-cost employee who can do it well. Although companies have embraced this logic by outsourcing work to vendors or operations abroad, back at headquarters they ignore it, forcing top talent to misuse their time. As a longtime recruiter for executive assistants, I've worked with many organizations suffering from the same problem: There's too much administrative work and too few assistants to whom it can be assigned.

Granting middle managers access to an assistant—or shared resources—can give a quick boost to productivity even at least well-run companies. Firms should also think about the broader developmental benefits of providing assistants for up-and-coming managers. The real payoff may come when the manager arrives in a job a few levels up better prepared and habitually more productive. An experienced assistant can be particularly helpful if the manager is a new hire. The assistant becomes a crucial on-boarding resource, helping the manager read and understand the organizational culture, guiding him or her through its different (and difficult) personalities, and serving as a sounding board during the crucial acclimation. In this way, knowledgeable assistants are more than a productivity asset: They're reverse mentors, using

their experience to teach new executives how people are expected to behave at that level in the organization.

Getting the Most from Assistants—Two critical factors determine how well a manager utilizes an assistant. The first is the executive's willingness to delegate pieces of his or her workload to the assistant. The second is the assistant's willingness to stretch beyond his or her comfort zone to assume new responsibilities.

Delegating wisely—The most effective executives think deeply about the pieces of their workload that can be taken on—or restructured to be partially taken on—by the assistant. Triaging and drafting replies to e-mails is a central task for virtually all assistants. Some executives have assistants listen in on phone calls in order to organize and follow up on action items. Today many assistants are taking on more-supervisory roles: They're managing information flow, dealing with basic financial management, attending meetings, and doing more planning and organizing. Executives can help empower their assistants by making it clear to the organization that the assistant has real authority. The message the executive should convey is, "I trust this person to represent me and make decisions."

Not every executive is well-suited for this type of delegating. Younger managers in particular have grown up with technology that encourages self-sufficiency. Some have become so accustomed to doing their own administrative tasks that they don't communicate well with assistants. These managers should think of assistants as strategic assets and realize that part of the job is managing the relationship to get the highest possible return.

Stretching the limits—Great assistants proactively look for ways to improve their skills. When I was the assistant to Pete Peterson, the former U.S.

Harvard Business Review Article: The Case for Executive Assistants (CONTINUED)

commerce secretary and head of Lehman Brothers, I took night classes in law, marketing, and presentations to burnish my skills. Today I see executive assistants learning new languages and technologies to improve their performance working for global corporations.

In my work, I frequently encounter world-class executive assistants. Loretta Sophocleous is the executive assistant to Roger Ferguson, the president and CEO of TIAA-CREF; her title is Director, Executive Office Operations. She manages teams. She leads meetings. Roger says that he runs many decisions past Loretta before he weighs in.

Another example is Noreen Denihan, whom I placed over 13 years ago as the executive assistant to Donald J. Gogel, the president and CEO of Clayton, Dubilier & Rice, LLC. According to Don, Noreen fills an informal leadership role, has an unparalleled ability to read complex settings, and can recognize and respond to challenging people and circumstances. "A spectacular executive assistant can defy the laws of the physical world," Gogel says. "She [or he] can see around corners."

Trudy Vitti is the executive assistant to Kevin Roberts, the CEO, Worldwide of Saatchi & Saatchi. Often when you ask him a question, he'll say, "Ask Trudy." He travels for weeks at a time and says that he has utter confidence in Trudy to run the office in his absence.

Compared with managers in other countries, those in the United States do a better job of delegating important work to their assistants—and of treating them as a real part of the management team. Outside the United States, educational requirements for assistants are less intensive, salaries are lower, and the role is more typically described as personal assistant. You can often tell a lot about an executive's management style—

and effectiveness—from the way he interacts with his assistant. Can the executive trust and delegate, or does he micromanage? Do assistants like working for her, or does she have a history of many assistants leaving quickly or being fired? Not every boss–assistant relationship is made in heaven, but an executive's ability to manage conflicts with an assistant can be an important indicator of his overall ability to manage people.

Finding the Right Fit

Hiring the right assistant can be a challenge. In some ways, it's trickier than filling traditional management positions, because personal chemistry and the one-on-one dynamic are so important—sometimes more so than skills or experience.

Expert assistants understand the unspoken needs and characteristics of the people with whom they work. They have high levels of emotional intelligence: They respond to subtle cues and react with situational appropriateness. They pay close attention to shifts in an executive's behavior and temperament and understand that timing and judgment are the foundation of a smooth working relationship. A good assistant quickly learns what an executive needs, what his or her strengths and weaknesses are, what might trigger anger or stress, and how to best accommodate his or her personal style. Good matches are hard to come by: That's the reason so many good assistants follow an executive from job to job.

After many years of debriefing assistants who've been fired, I've identified several factors that make for bad relationships. The most common missteps an assistant makes are misreading the corporate culture, failing to build bridges with other assistants, failing to ask enough questions about tasks, agreeing to take on too much work, and speaking to external parties without authorization. Bosses

usually contribute to these deteriorating relationships by not being open in their communications or not being clear about expectations.

There's an assistant I placed recently who's having trouble developing the right relationship with her boss. The executive called me and said, "Melba, I expected her to read through these memos and then get them out very quickly to my managers. But left them on my desk, didn't call me over the weekend, and didn't send them out." I asked the assistant about it, and she said, "He didn't tell me it was important—I can't read someone's mind." But in fact, in this job you're supposed to be able to read minds—or, at the very least, you're supposed to ask questions.

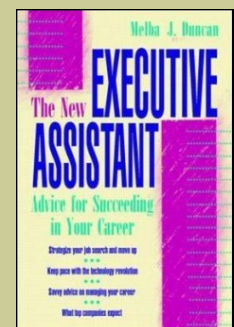
Simply put, the best executive assistants are indispensable. Microsoft will never develop software that can calm a hysterical sales manager, avert a crisis by redrafting a poorly worded e-mail, smooth a customer's ruffled feathers, and solve a looming HR issue—all within a single hour, and all without interrupting the manager to whom such problems might otherwise have proven a distraction. Executive assistants give companies and managers a human face. They're troubleshooters, translators, help desk attendants, diplomats, human databases, travel consultants, amateur psychologists, and ambassadors to the inside and outside world.

After years of cutting back, companies can boost productivity by arming more managers with this kind of help—and executives who are fortunate enough to have a skilled assistant can benefit by finding ways to delegate higher-level work to him or her. Executive–assistant relationships are business partnerships: Strong ones are win-wins between smart people. In fact, they're win-win-wins because ultimately the companies reap the benefits.



Melba J. Duncan

is the president of The Duncan Group, a retained search and consulting firm specializing in senior management support resources, and the founder of the Duncan Leadership Institute, which offers training for administrative support staff. She is the author of **The New Executive Assistant**.





2010-2011 GRC Board

**President
Linda Martin**

**VP Membership
Joy White-Keeler**

**Secretary
Linda Cook, CPS**

**Treasurer
Theresa Souza**

TO CONTRIBUTE
ARTICLES OR
SUGGESTIONS TO
THE GRC NEWS FLASH,
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Is Efficiency Overrated?, by OfficePro Express, 6/23/2011

“Why Efficiency is Overrated – and What to Do About It”--An awful lot of time-management techniques show an obsession with efficiency. And being efficient – getting tasks done quickly – is certainly important. But efficiency for its own sake is worthless.

Sure, you *could* spend three hours implementing a new system that lets you automatically tag every email as it comes in. But *I doubt that you're going to look back in ten years' time and say, "Wow, my inbox was always so well organized."*

If you pay too much attention to efficiency, you might actually become less effective. You'll stop focusing on the things that really matter – the “great work” in your life, the projects that really would make a difference in ten years' time.

Here's how efficiency is damaging:

Playing the Numbers Game

Efficiency tends to reduce everything to numbers:

- How many emails did you answer this morning?
- How many words can you type per minute?
- How long did you take to make those phone calls?

Now, I'll be the first to agree that paying attention to metrics can help you with your time management. But *not everything can be reduced to a number.* For instance:

- What about that long, heartfelt email from an old friend? Should you try to answer *that* in under two minutes?
- What if you're writing the copy for your company's new product? Is it

better to knock it out as fast as possible – or to take the time to make it really good?

How about that potential client who had a lot of questions? Should you cut them short to get all your calls done – or spend the time because you're hoping that they'll put in a big order?

Change It: Cut yourself some slack, and remember that there are many situations that can't be reduced to numbers. When you're interacting with other people (clients, colleagues, friends or family), try to honor them as important and worthy of your time...don't just think about the results you might get from them or the time that you're spending.

Shying Away From Challenges

Becoming obsessed with efficiency can make us cowardly. If you're focused on being as efficient as possible – getting through tons of work, never making mistakes – then you'll be afraid to take on new challenges.

When we tackle something new, we might fail – or only partially succeed. We make mistakes, or do things badly. But this is how we learn and grow. *Taking on that new project at work might give you the confidence to ask for a raise, chase a promotion or even change careers.* Tackling something new at home – like learning to cook – might take time and involve some initial hiccups, but it could open up a whole new source of joy in your life.

Change It: Try saying “Yes” to one new opportunity this week. Don't dismiss it because you think it could be a waste of time, or because you're worried you won't do it very well.

Inability to Enjoy Life

Efficiency doesn't have much to say about relaxing, recharging and simply having fun. Sure, you'll come across some tips along the lines of “take frequent breaks so you can focus better while you're working” – but you won't find much that helps you really live a richer life.

People who become obsessed with efficiency can become rather joyless. They might find it hard or impossible to “switch off”. They may be constantly worrying about the utility of a particular aspect of their life. Efficiency says “keep doing more.”

On a broader level, focusing too much on efficiency may mean that you ignore what you *really* want from life. You might be keen to take a sabbatical or make a substantial commitment of time or energy as a volunteer. You might want to change to a new career that you'd love – but that would bring in less money.

Change It: Instead of trying to be efficient, think about being **effective**. How can you make a difference in the world? What would you really love to do with your life?

Of course, efficiency does have a role to play. If you're doing work that you enjoy, you'll want to do it well. You'll also have chores to complete that might not be fun or fulfilling, but which need to get done – and so you'll want to find ways to get these out of the way as quickly and efficiently as possible.

Be careful, though, to keep efficiency in its place. Don't let it become an end in itself – just a means of supporting the rest of your life.

Easy, Tasty, Apple Crisp, by Janine Smith, daughter of GRC Member

No matter what season it is, this Apple Crisp recipe will win over anyone—sweet tooth or not!

Prep time is 30 minutes, bake time is 35-40 minutes (yield: 10 servings).

Ingredients:

8-10 Granny Smith apples
2 packages Jiffy yellow cake mix (9 oz. each)
2 tablespoons granulated sugar
1 tablespoon ground cinnamon
1/4 cup butter or margarine, softened
1/2 cup chopped walnuts
1/2 cup oats
(Vanilla ice cream or thawed, frozen whipped topping is optional.)

Directions:

Preheat oven to 350°F. Peel, core and slice apples. Cut slices in half; Set aside,

Using one of the cake mix boxes, sprinkle a thin layer of dry cake mix in bottom of 9x13 baking pan/dish. Place a layer of sliced apples on top, sprinkle more dry cake mix; continue layering until the last layer of apples are on top.

Combine the other box of cake mix, granulated sugar, cinnamon, butter, nuts and oats in mixing bowl. Mix until crumbly using a fork. Evenly sprinkle mixture over top layer of apple

Bake for 35-40 minutes or until apples are tender. Serve warm with ice cream or cooled with whipped topping, if desired.

Nutrition per serving: 240 calories, 33g carbohydrate, 12g fat, 3.5g saturated fat, 2 protein, 15mg cholesterol, 210mg sodium; 2g fiber.

