

Connecticut Technology Transfer

Winter 2014



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Training: What's In It for Me?

The T2 Center staff has been working very hard to finalize the 2014 training calendar; we are excited about all of the wonderful training opportunities it will provide to the Connecticut transportation community. Wondering why training is important? OK, let's take a few minutes to talk about that: In today's job market, the difference between two people competing for a job often comes down to which person has more experience and training. Yet some employees avoid training at all costs. Training is not a waste of time and money; it's a smart investment in oneself. Here are some of its benefits:

Knowledge

Knowing everything about your job is nearly impossible. Knowledge is power and it will assist you in obtaining (and keeping) a job.

Advice

Many obstacles occur while designing, constructing, repairing, and transporting. Asking questions from others with a different point of view can solve a tough problem or simply provide insight for a new solution. Problems cannot be solved without asking questions.

Seeing Is Believing

Learning how to operate equipment and machinery can save money and time. This is an efficient method for your agency's funds and for your sense of accomplishment.

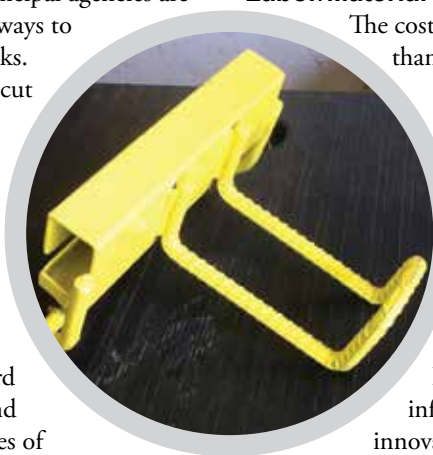


Please see TRAINING on page 7



Innovative Idea - Sign Base Carrier

Across the country, municipal agencies are finding new and better ways to accomplish everyday tasks. Each year, the Connecticut Technology Transfer Center hosts a contest to recognize creative ideas from our state and local agencies. The reason we have this annual contest, the Connecticut Creative Solutions Award Program, is to collect and share real world examples of best practices and tips from the field. This new feature of the newsletter will highlight one of these innovations in each issue.



Labor/Material Cost:

The cost of this solution is less than \$50.00.

Benefit:

Easily moveable from one truck to another, this device allows crews to safely transport sign bases and crews.

If you would like more information about this innovative idea, you can contact: Jeff Robatille, Town of Hebron, 550 Old Colchester Road, Anston, CT 06231, (860) 228-2871, kkelly@hebronct.com

This idea was one of our 2013 Creative Solutions Award Winners submitted by the Town of Hebron.

Problem Statement:

When two public works employees are in a truck, there is no place to safely carry the sign bases.

Solution:

The Sign Base Carrier hangs on a standard truck ladder rack.

2 www.t2center.uconn.edu

Does your Agency have a creative solution to an everyday problem? Why not be recognized for your innovative idea and share it with your peers?

Here is the link for the Creative Solutions Award (CSA) program application form and our full catalog of previous CSA winners, we look forward to hearing from you:

<http://www.t2center.uconn.edu/solutionsaward.php>

Connecticut Technology Transfer

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A Word to the Wise

By Dr. Rockie Blunt

During one of the final exercises of a “Succeeding as a Foreman” workshop hosted by the Baystate Roads Program (Massachusetts’ LTAP), Dr. Blunt asked the participants the following question: “What advice would you give to someone who was just promoted to foreman (or working foreman, truck foreman or supervisor) to help them become successful as a leader?”

The following are the top ten pieces of advice provided by Dr. Blunt, along with a brief summary, that can help anyone who is in a supervisory or leadership position.

1. Make them want to come to work.

Create a cooperative, supportive atmosphere on the job that puts people at ease and looking forward to the work day.

2. Have a positive attitude.

You’ll get a lot more out of your crew if you don’t intimidate them or make them feel fearful or resentful. People are more productive if they are in a good mood.

3. Give and get respect.

Respect is a two-way street. In order to be treated the way you want to be, treat others as they want to be treated.

4. Listen and talk.

Keep the lines of communication open in both directions: let them know what your expectations are, make sure they know how to perform their tasks, and listen to their questions, ideas and suggestions.

5. Treat them as you want to be treated.

Remember, the Golden Rule—“Do unto others as you would have them do unto you”—also applies to the workplace.

6. Don’t ask them to do anything you wouldn’t do.

One important way to motivate individuals is to work alongside them. Don’t act as though you’re “above” them.



7. Throw them a bone everyone once in a while.

Quite simply, don’t forget to show your appreciation for a job well done. Even a simple “thank you” goes a long way.

8. Have strong principles:

What does your department stand for? What are your values? Honesty, trustworthiness and integrity were mentioned in the workshops.

9. Be a teacher.

Helping people learn is a more important part of your job than you may realize. Take as much time as necessary to train your crew.

And perhaps the most important piece of advice to new foremen:



**Remember, the Golden Rule—
“Do unto others
as you would
have them do
unto you”...**

10. Be a good leader

Establish specific goals for your department, communicate them clearly, and motivate everyone to work toward them.

Dr. Rockie Blunt, president of West Boylston-based Blunt Consulting Group, has worked with municipal and state agencies for many years.

Reprinted with permission from the Mass Interchange Newsletter – Summer, 2013 issue.

Jumping Into the Social Media Pool



Social media sites first gained popularity among private users, but over time, local, county, and state government agencies have also jumped into the social media pool. Social media is defined as a form of electronic communication through which users create online communities to share information, ideas, personal messages, and other content.

Two of the most commonly used social media are Facebook and Twitter. This article discusses some key advantages, disadvantages, and general things to be aware of if your agency chooses to adopt social media, specifically focusing on Facebook and Twitter.

Advantages

Establishing a social media site in the workplace is an easy, efficient, and quick way to communicate with others outside of your agency. Adopting social media into your agency or municipality could enhance communication between you and your audience. According to CNN Money, in October 2012 Facebook gained more than one billion users. In December 2012, the American Public Works Association reported that nearly 500,000 users are joining the Twitter world each day. A large advantage is that signing up to create a Facebook page or Twitter account is free, so it is a communication tool that can help stretch your communication dollars. Another advantage is timeliness. You can post or tweet information concerning announcements, events, meetings, policies, transportation accidents and reroutes, weather conditions, disaster relief procedures, etc., in a timely manner, from anywhere you have access to the internet,

using a variety of electronic devices (smart phone, laptop, desktop computer, etc).

Unlike a traditional web page, users don't have to go searching for information; they can receive updates and important notices on the go through their mobile devices. Users can provide their thoughts, ask questions, or post additional information back to you by posting a comment on your Facebook wall or tweeting at your Twitter account.

Because social media can target a large number of people, it is useful for reaching out to new members. New members simply click "Like" on your agency or municipality's Facebook page or click "Follow" on your Twitter account. Allowing who likes or follows your social media page can be approved by whoever is monitoring your social media site(s). You can approve new members before they can post or see your page under your account's privacy settings. Approved members can re-post Facebook posts by your agency to their page or retweet your tweets to their Twitter page.

Disadvantages

A disadvantage with adopting a social media site for your agency is the potential for followers, or even employees, posting or tweeting negative comments on your page, or posting inappropriate images. Additionally, some social media users have hundreds or even thousands of connections called "Friends" on Facebook or "Followers" on Twitter. Seeing your posts on a friend's newsfeed on Facebook can get lost or overlooked due to other's posts. (A Facebook newsfeed is the center column of your home page that is constantly updating new posts from all of one's Facebook friends.) On a Twitter home page, too many updated tweets can lead to the same issue; tweets overlooked due to sheer volume. Another possible disadvantage is getting people to access your page. Many companies, both private and government, limit access to social media sites from work computers.

Please see SOCIAL MEDIA on page 7

Town Crier

Stories from our CT Local Agencies



Town of Middlebury Public Works participates in the Boy Scout Pack 6 Pinewood Derby

One of the Middlebury Public Works employees volunteers as a Boy Scout Leader in a local cub scout troop. In an effort to help educate young people on the role of public works in our communities, the troop visited the DPW facility and the Transfer Station and learned all about what they do.

To provide further support for the troop, a few of the public works employees volunteered to make cars to enter into the 2014 Pinewood Derby. The Middlebury DPW entries won the following honors:

Best Engineered - The "Stump Grinder" designed and entered by Chief Mechanic Jay Hamuka and 2nd Place in the Best Engineered Category – The "Road Grader" – designed and entered by Crew Leader Drue Greene.

What a great educational effort Town of Middlebury DPW, Congratulations!





T2 INFO TO GO is a regular feature of the Connecticut Technology Transfer newsletter that highlights selected materials and resources you might like to take away with you. In this issue, we invite you to join us in the Leadership Reading Room for resources that focus on enhancing your leadership and supervisory skills.



Online Resource Collections

AMA ARTICLES AND WHITE PAPERS SOLUTIONS

American Management Association
<http://www.amanet.org/individualsolutions/parameters-solution1.aspx?SelectedSolutionType=Articles+%26+White+Papers>

APWA LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT RESOURCES

American Public Works Association
<http://www.apwa.net/ResourceCenter/Category/Leadership-and-Management>
<http://www.apwa.net/Topics/Leadership-and-Management>

ASCE LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT TOOLS

American Society of Civil Engineers
<http://www.asce.org/Leadership-Resources/Leadership-Tools-and-Resources/ASCE-Leadership-and-Management-Tools/>

MIND TOOLS TOOLKIT

Mind Tools Ltd
<http://www.mindtools.com/fulltoolkit.htm>

Online Workbooks

BASIC SUPERVISION

Technical Learning College
<http://www.abctlc.com/courses/Super.PDF>

EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION SKILLS FOR HIGHWAY AND PUBLIC WORKS OFFICIALS

Cornell Local Roads Program
http://www.clrp.cornell.edu/workshops/manuals/communication_skills.pdf

MANAGING PEOPLE

Cornell Local Roads Program
http://www.clrp.cornell.edu/workshops/manuals/managing_people.pdf

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Suggested Leadership Reading

(check your local library or book vendor for these titles)

1001 Ways to Reward Employees – Bob Nelson

1001 Ways to Energize Employees – Bob Nelson

30 Reasons Employees Hate Their Managers: What Your People May Be Thinking and What You Can Do About It – Bruce Katcher

Confessions of a Public Speaker – Scott Berkun

Overcoming the Five Dysfunctions of a Team: A Field Guide for Leaders, Managers, and Facilitators – Patrick Lencioni

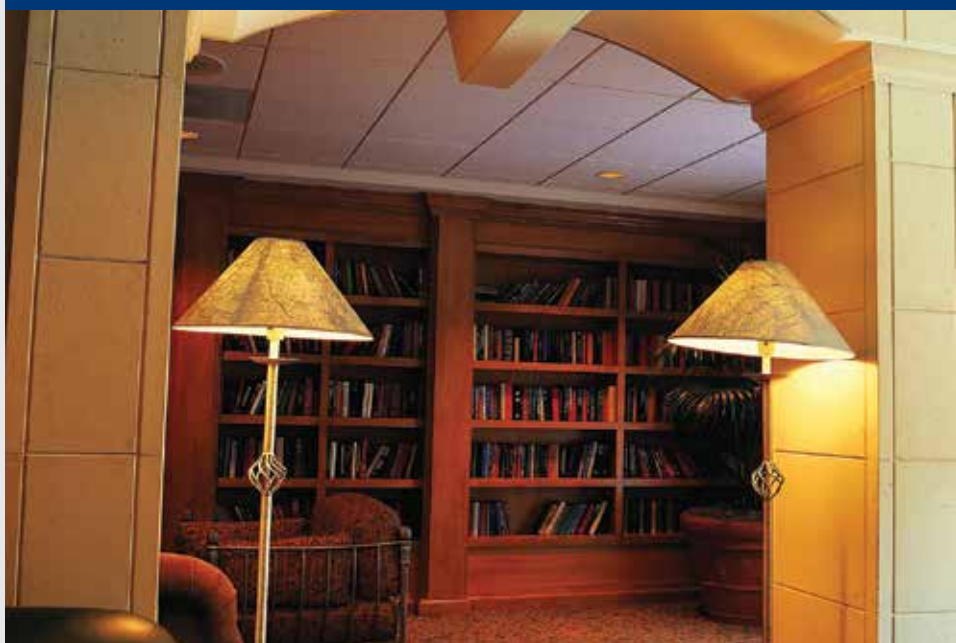
Presentation Skills 201: How to Take It to the Next Level as a Confident, Engaging Presenter – William Steele

Team Building That Gets Results: Essential Plans and Activities for Creating Effective Teams – Linda Eve Diamond and Harriet Diamond

The Exceptional Presenter and The Exceptional Presenter Goes Virtual – Timothy Koegel

The Five Dysfunctions of a Team: A Leadership Fable – Patrick Lencioni

The Speed of Trust: The One Thing That Changes Everything – Stephen M.R. Covey



Social Media

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How to Control Your Page

Facebook and Twitter accounts provide several options for managing and controlling your page through various privacy settings. If your agency decides to establish a Facebook account you can choose who can post on your page and allow who sees these posts. On Facebook you can control who sees your posts by using the audience selector tool. You can also control who sees posts when they are posted by other people under the “who can see what others post on your timeline” setting. Both of these are found under timeline privacy. If your agency adopts a Twitter account you can click on “protect my tweets” beside “tweet privacy” under your account settings. The Twitter options to protect your tweets are the public tweets and protected tweets settings. If you choose the public tweets setting anyone can see them regardless if they have a Twitter account. If you choose the protected tweets setting your tweets can be viewed by Twitter followers you approved.

Questions to Ask Before Implementing Social Media

Social media is a great communication tool

when properly used as part of an overall public relations/marketing and customer service strategy. There are, however, several items to consider to see if social media is a good fit for your agency. Some questions to ask are:

Should your agency establish the use of social media?

Think about your target audience. Are they using social media? How often do they use it? Do they access it on their smart phones, or work and/or home computer?

Does your agency have a social media policy?

Before you begin using social media, make sure your agency has a written policy outlining your rules and processes.

Who will be responsible?

Setting up a social media page may be easy, but with no strategies and goals in place your page may not be successful. Also, do not give the responsibility of monitoring your agency or municipality's social media page to every employee; this could get messy. When adopting a social media page give the responsibility to one or two people who have good communication skills and are aware of your audience. Let them control posts, tweets, and responding to outside members.

How much time will you invest in your social media page?

Remember, you should post new events, announcements, pictures, videos, etc. and spend the time reviewing and reposting to comments and questions from your followers.

How are you going to respond to negative feedback from followers and maybe even employees?

While any agency would rather get positive recognition and feedback, negative feedback is sometimes even more valuable. How will negative feedback be addressed? Privately or through an open message? Will the message be deleted? Will you ignore it? Does the message pertain to a safety issue? In which case, you definitely don't want to ignore it and want to make sure the appropriate person(s) and department(s) are made aware of the issue and it is appropriately addressed. Remember that one of the benefits of social media is the two-way communication it provides.

By Ashley Collins, WV LTAP. Reprinted with permission from the WV LTAP Newsletter – Summer, 2013 issue.

Training

Continued from page 1

Friends and Contacts

At training and workshops, strangers become friends and acquaintances. Also, talking with others from a similar area helps to generate new ideas.

Help in Career Advancement

For one reason or another, the day may come when you will leave the agency you are currently with. If that happens, as mentioned above, training is a great asset to add to your resume and can sometimes be the deciding factor in who gets the job.

Confidence

Being able to answer a question and explain things to others builds your confidence level, both professionally and emotionally.

Safety

A well-trained staff saves time, money, and concern. It makes a huge difference when everyone on the staff knows exactly how to do their jobs safely. If you are still hesitant about attending a certain workshop or training event, ask yourself: What needs do I have and how can this workshop meet those needs? If you can answer that question and are being encouraged to attend by your supervisor, consider the reasons mentioned above and attend the workshop with an open mind and a good attitude. For all you

know, the workshop could lead to better wages, a better work environment, or even open doors to a promotion or new jobs down the road. Education regarding your job is never a waste of time. Even if you learn things in a workshop that don't directly affect you, the information can always be passed on to another who could significantly benefit from your experience.

For an updated T2 Center 2014 Training Calendar and a link to our online registration, please visit our website at: www.T2Center.uconn.edu.





Hard Hat Area — Blind Spots

Blind Spots are hazardous because workers on foot often perform tasks near moving equipment and vehicles, or walk by equipment en route to another destination. When they enter a blind spot, the worker is virtually invisible to the operator.

Truck drivers and equipment operators should become familiar with the blind spots surrounding each piece of equipment he or she operates and should be sensitive to the fact workers and other objects cannot be seen in certain areas.

Construction equipment is typically large and has an enclosed cab. These characteristics can make the blind areas very large and difficult for the operator to see. Also, the size of construction vehicles and equipment often place truck drivers and equipment operators high above the ground. They cannot see workers on foot crossing close in front of them. Items placed on the dash board or



attached equipment can create even larger blind spots and reduce visibility. There are several basic actions workers can take to avoid hazardous blind spots:

- Workers should not cross directly in front of, immediately behind or in close proximity to large heavy equipment or trucks.

- Workers should communicate with an operator (verbally and/or by confirming signal) before entering any area near heavy equipment or large trucks.
- If workers are required to be near parked equipment or trucks, they should stand in a location (ideally, on the operator's side). If equipment comes into use, the operator can see them, and they can see the operator.
- Drivers should use spotters, cameras or other devices when backing near workers on foot.
- If a vehicle has not been in motion for more than two to three minutes, the driver/operator should walk around the vehicle and check its surroundings before moving it.

Reprinted from the Missouri LTAP Newsletter – Fall, 2013 issue