



CHIPS & PUTTS

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POCONO TURFGRASS ASSOCIATION

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PROFESSIONAL IS AS PROFESSIONAL DOES

"I get no respect," whines Rodney Dangerfield. As medical laboratory personnel, we often harbor this same feeling. We are chastised by physicians when an analyzer has been down all morning and the results of their laboratory requests are not complete when they

As many definitions
of professionalism
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it....

need them, harassed by nurses when "the lab lost the blood specimen," and reprimanded by patients when we awaken them at 4:00 AM to obtain a timed blood glucose level.

Laboratory personnel are prime candidates for such encounters. Because we are often isolated in the facility's basement where other health care staff members cannot see the work we do, it may be easy to imagine that we are idle, instead of rapidly processing specimens and making meaningful contributions to the work of the health care team.

How can medical laboratory personnel loosen the bonds of isolation and lack of understanding by our fellow health care workers? How can we be treated like the professionals we are? How do we gain respect?

As many definitions of professionalism exist as there are people to define it, but many of the same defining characteristics surface time after time. For example, a specific demeanor, a certain knowledge level, and pride in one's work may be characteristic of professionalism. Efficiency, proficiency, and creativity are also important attributes of a professional. Recall your most recent encounter with someone whom you believe demonstrated professionalism. Regardless of whether it was at the grocery store, dry cleaners, or work, that person probably demonstrated one or more of

the previously described characteristics.

Professionalism may or may not denote some degree of higher formal education: Some formally educated individuals do not behave professionally; conversely, some individuals with little or no formal education are professional in many respects. Professionalism, therefore, is not defined by the degrees we possess or what we know, but by what we do and how we act.

Broadcasting our professionalism has little meaning to those we may be trying to impress if they do not see us behaving professionally. We have to look within ourselves for change. Only then can we try to change their perception of us. To accomplish this, we must focus our efforts on getting rid of the "old baggage" related to ourselves and our profession.

Increasing Our Public Visibility. We must refrain from pitying ourselves and viewing our work as the "unseen profession." For better or worse, this common perception is changing with the current shortage of technologists and technicians. Increased public visibility will be not only necessary to improve our image, but will be a deciding factor for the next generation of laboratory personnel. Although the majority of laboratory personnel may prefer little or no patient contact—one of the reasons some of us

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- *Patterson Scholarship Info*
- *Meeting Results*
- *Fall Cleaning*



President's Message.....

As many of you know, this past July Mr. Bill Lansdowne, C.G.C.S., passed away quite unexpectedly. Hopefully, you read the tribute in the last *Chips and Putts* issue. This letter was sent to all Country Club of Scranton members soon after his departure. The letter was given to me by Andy Davidson, a former employee of ours. Andy was fortunate enough to spend the past few years working for Bill at C.C. of S. He had expressed to me many times over the past few years the amount of respect his staff and the members at Scranton had for Bill. Bill was a major influence in developing this Association and the *Chips and Putts* newsletter. We as a Board of Directors extend our condolences to his family and friends.

We have not had a President's message in a few issues, and with that I would like to thank our past months hosts for being generous enough to allow us to come onto their property and play their courses:

July Meeting - Stonehedge Golf Course. Thanks, Dan Kenia. We must also thank Scott Andre for picking up over 50% of the tab. The Kenia's set the course up great for us and were great hosts as always. We hope to come back again next year.

August Meeting/Clambake - Pocono Farms. Thanks, Gene Huelster. I was fortunate enough to be on the winning team. I have to thank my teammates, Tony Grieco, John Chassard and Kelly Kressler. Thanks for putting up with me for the day. Gene, you did a great job...a real homerun of a day!

September Meeting - Mountain Valley. Thanks Bob Kaufman. Unfortunately, Mother Nature did not cooperate with us and only a few daring souls attempted to brave the conditions. Many thanks must be extended to the entire staff that worked things out for all those attending. Thanks to Mr. Terry Laurent for his fine talk and slide presentation.

See you at the next meeting!

From the Editor's Desk.....

As the editor of *Chips & Putts*, I have been given this honor with not a lot of thought put into it on my part. But a seriousness about this job bestowed upon me is existent. And I apologize for not getting *Chips & Putts* out to the membership in a timely fashion. No excuses, but by day I have a paying job and by night I am a father, husband and friend. It's a tough situation that most of us struggle with, trying to juggle job, family, association, and personal matters. But it is one that with some more effort I know can get done. Well, I guess what I'm getting to is that improvement on my part is and will happen. I got involved with the PTGA because I felt that I would not complain unless I was willing to do something about it. So basically I'm here to see this through and improvement is at hand. What I'm asking from you, as a member, is help. Help by letting me know what your thoughts, ideas and observations are about *Chips & Putts* and how you can help me to improve it. As with any thing related to this Association, it is here for the members. So please take some time out of your day to contact me with your thoughts.

As always, we try to give you, the reader, timely information and "food for thought" so that you may reflect upon your daily management efforts on the golf course. The lead article does the aforementioned in a number of different ways. Please read and enjoy!

Darrin Batisky



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CHIPS & PUTTS STAFF

EDITOR

Darrin Batisky

Managing Editor,

Melinda Wisnosky
R.R. 1, Box 219
Harding, PA 19643
570-388-2889
Fax: 570-388-2167

EDITORIAL COMMITTEE

Jim MacLaren
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(Continued from page 1)

remain in the profession as long as we do—this kind of isolation can prove detrimental. When decision makers don't know us or what we really do, it is easy for them to decide our fates, a prime example being the current federal agency regulations, such as the Clinical Laboratory Improvement Amendments of 1988. Although their intent—to improve the quality of health care—is commendable, the current regulation are so extensive that they may prove stressful (for personnel) and financially impractical for some laboratories to implement.

Increasing Pride in Our Work. We must undergo a metamorphosis—that is, change our attitudes from, "I don't know. I just work in the laboratory," to, "I don't have that information, but I'll be happy to find the answer and get back to you." Medical laboratory personnel are highly trained and knowledgeable people. At times, however, we choose to conceal this knowledge and consequently lose it as time passes. Medical laboratory personnel are trained to think and act analytically and logically. We are investigative by nature. Discrepant laboratory results are always reviewed in the context of other diagnostic information. We perform many quality assurance steps that are taken for granted. We should take pride that our knowledge is always useful.

Maintaining a Professional Image. The perpetuation of the "unprofessional" myth may be difficult to overcome for some, yet easy for others. If we work below established performance standards or below our customer's expectations, or don't take pride in our tasks each day, then we are less than professional. It might be helpful to remember that it is often small things, such as poor phone etiquette, that produce major negative consequences and prevent us from appearing to be the professional that we believe we are.

Improving Our Skills and Knowledge. To be considered professional, we must challenge ourselves to review seriously our behavior as medical laboratory personnel. We should accept personal responsibility for maintaining our immense knowledge base. In these times of change, we should be flexible, not waiting for change to occur and overwhelm us, but facilitating its occurrence. We must envision our goals as medical laboratory personnel and propose a model of how to achieve them.

Changes in external recognition and respect must begin with internal recognition and respect. This is determined not so much by what we say as by what we do. Although it won't happen overnight, we can obtain the recognition we so strongly desire and deserve by looking within ourselves. It just might be time for us to get busy!

Article taken from December, 1992 issue of *LABORATORY MEDICINE* and is written by Freda S. Brown, M.T. (ASCP).

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MAKE THE MOST OF E-MAIL



Communicating via e-mail is so easy that it can lead to sloppy habits. Manage email efficiently with these techniques:

Keep it simple. Limit e-mails to plain text unless others request graphic data that requires advanced formatting. Sending slow-to-download files can also irritate recipients.

File e-mails. After you read incoming e-mails, archive them in designated mailboxes on your PC. Label them for ready reference later. Warning: Don't assume you need a hard copy of every e-mail; printing each message wastes time and paper.

Check messages regularly. Establish a daily routine to scan incoming e-mail, and tell colleagues and clients when they can expect your reply. Example: Promise to check e-mail before 9 a.m., at lunch and before heading home.

Maintain a professional tone. E-mail's informality can be a curse if you share inappropriate jokes or write impulsive comments. Rule of thumb: Before sending your message, imagine it will appear on the front page of your organization's internal newsletter.

Source: *Communication Briefings*, as adapted from *Leadership for the Front Lines*, Bureau of Business Practice, (800) 243-0876.

REFRESH YOUR TEAM



Sometimes, you'll find that simply removing team members from their usual routines will unleash their energy and creativity. For example: One morning, many Hewlett-Packard team members awoke to find "subpoenas" under their doors. They were summoned to "jury duty" that day instead of to their usual duties. The company had planned an elaborate "trial" to determine the fate of its new business plan.

One team of employees argued against the plan, while another group defended it. A third group sat in the "jury box." After each side made its argument in a two-day trial, the jury reached a decision, and every employee present returned to work excited and talking about the company's new direction.

1001 *Ways To Energize Employees*, Bob Nelson. Workman Publishing, 708 Broadway, NY 10003.



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IT'S TIME FOR FALL CLEANING!

Are your filing cabinets stuffed so full that it's difficult to retrieve and file papers? If you're like 80 percent of the people in the audiences to whom I speak, your answer is "Yes." Are there things in your filing cabinet you could probably throw out? Once again, most answer, "Yes." So what's the problem?



Certainly, a major stumbling block is time. Some may say cleaning out the filing cabinet won't make you money. My response is, "Really?" Research shows the average person spends 150 hours each year looking for misplaced information. What would happen to your bottom line if you added that time to getting new customers or selling new products or services to old customers?

Frequently people say to me, "It never fails. Every time I throw out something, I need it the next day." To which I reply, "Can you give me an example?" Mostly I get silence.

Determine whether you want to keep each piece of paper at all by asking yourself these "Art of Wastebasketry" questions:

Does this require any action on my part?

Just because you receive information, even if it's from your boss, you don't necessarily need to keep it! If it doesn't require action, file it or toss it right away! If it's just an FYI, read it and toss.

Does this exist elsewhere?

Is it in the library? Do you know an expert on the subject who'd be certain to have more complete information if you really needed it? Is the original filed elsewhere? Is it necessary to keep a hard copy if it already exists in the computer?

Is this information recent enough to be useful?

Today, information becomes outdated very quickly. Would you want a customer to decide whether or not to choose your services based on a three-year-old brochure? The information in a six-month-old magazine article about computer software has undoubtedly been superseded, as has a downloaded product review from an online service. In many cases, it is more appropriate to keep track of the source of the information, so you can get the latest version, rather than keeping the information itself.

Can I identify specific circumstances when I'd use this information?

Usually, "just in case" is not good enough! Files labeled "Miscellaneous" are of little value, because there's nothing to trigger you to look there. If you can't identify how you'd use the information, at least well enough that you can file it for future reference, it's unlikely you'd remember you have it, let alone be able to find it later.

Are there any tax or legal implications?

Here's where "just in case" works. Unfortunately, we're frequently required to resurrect paper that we'd much rather forget. Sometimes, having outdated information in your files can create unnecessary problems. A client of mine was sued. When the company's files were subpoenaed, the prosecuting attorney found my client's unsigned contract proposal and used it to prove wrongful intent. My client lost the suit and had to pay \$147,000. Had the files been properly cleaned, I don't believe that would have happened.

If you answered "No" to all the above questions, but are still uncomfortable throwing something away, ask one last question:

What is the worst possible thing that could happen if I didn't have this information?

If you can live with your answer, toss it and live happily ever after. For years, I have orchestrated "File Clean-Out Days" with companies. I used to live in fear that someone would come back to me afterward with a horror story of something we threw out and they needed later. In 20 years, it's never happened!

Recently, a woman told me that one of the big frustrations in her advertising company was staff spending time looking for materials from previous projects. I suggested a plan. Why not establish a company policy: "We keep client materials for three years." At the end of each year, you send a letter to the client saying, "We have the following materials from the project we did together. Our policy is to keep client materials for three years. If we don't hear from you in 60 days, the materials will be destroyed."

What's the worst possible thing that could happen? I can think of three possibilities: (1) You won't waste valuable time looking for something that brings back nothing to the company; (2) Your policy makes you look very professional; (3) Your letter reminds the client of your availability, and you get a new contract! Who says using your wastebasket doesn't make money?

Barbara Hemphill is president of Hemphill & Associates, Inc. in Raleigh, North Carolina, and author of: "Taming the Paper Tiger at Home," "Taming the Paper Tiger at Work," and "Simplify Your Workday."





PATTERSON SCHOLARSHIP

We are now accepting applications for the Patterson Scholarship. This scholarship is awarded annually, the recipient chosen is awarded \$500 and given honorary membership to the Pocono Turfgrass Association.

The requirements for consideration are:

- ◆ Applicant must be a second year student in a two-year program, or a fourth year student in an undergraduate program in a turf related major.
- ◆ Applicant must submit in writing why he/she feels that he/she should be considered for the scholarship.
- ◆ Applicant must include what he or she feels his/her contribution to the turfgrass field will be.
- ◆ Applicant must submit a letter of endorsement from his/her employer in the turfgrass field. This endorsement may come from an employer from an internship program.
- ◆ Applicant's request for consideration and his or her employer endorsement must be submitted together on or before January 1st, 2001.
- ◆ Applicants requesting consideration for the Patterson Scholarship should send requests to:

The Pocono Turfgrass Association
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Any questions Please call Jason Barndt at: (570) 759-6480.

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POCONO ROUNDUP

NEWS AND VIEWS FROM THE POCONO
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Congratulations!



...to Pete Coughlin and his wife Sharon on the birth of Ashley Bryn (6 lbs., 13 oz.)
and...

Ryna Rockovits and his wife Suzzane on the birth of Brynne Hayley (7 lbs, 13 oz.)

Also...

Congratulations to..



Charlie Kitchnefsky, Elmhurst Country Club. He took the big step into marriedhood!

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Condolences to:

We would like to express our deepest sympathies to Tom Wilchak on the loss of his father. Our thoughts are with you.



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