

NORTHEAST REGION (FEW)

Proudly serving Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont,
Massachusetts, New York, Connecticut,
New Jersey, Rhode Island, Europe, Puerto Rico,
and the U.S. Virgin Islands

Around the Table...



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Are you a member of the T.E.A.M.?

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Regional Manager's Message

Happy New Year, everyone! May 2009 be a good year for all of us. It is certainly off to a good start with the peaceful transition of power from former President George Bush to President Barack Obama. I hope that all of you were able to watch as much of the Inauguration as you could and were as inspired by the skillful blending of past and present to begin the work of crafting a better future as I was.

Now that we have enjoyed the holidays and Inaugural festivities with family and friends, let us turn our attention to making 2009 a good year for the Northeast Region, too. We have accomplished much since we became the Northeast Region in August 2008, but there is always more that we can and should be doing.

To that end, a project that was initiated in 2008 to contact heads of agencies in the Northeast states is continuing. Letters to agencies in Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, and Massachusetts will go out first. These will be followed by letters to agencies in Connecticut and Rhode Island, and finished up with letters to agencies in New York and New Jersey. The purpose of the letters is to introduce Federally Employed Women (FEW) to managers and employees who may not have heard about FEW before, encourage agency visits by members of the Northeast Region Board, and encourage development of chapters within their agencies. We are doing this in support of President Sue Webster's goal of "A Chapter in Every State."

I am planning to travel to Atlanta in February to participate in Regional Manager training and the National Board of Directors meeting. I will keep you informed about this semi-annual meeting and training as plans develop.

Regional Manager's Message (cont.)

Plans continue to go forward for the Spring 2009 Regional Training Program. Jayne Cousins and Lisa Lombardi, of the Greater Merrimack Valley Chapter, are co-chairing the spring RTP, and will be keeping their column updated with confirmed developments. Keep watching!

The National and Regional Awards cycle will be coming up in April. Now is the time to start building your awards files so that when the time comes to submit the paperwork, the task will not be onerous.

I continue to seek to fill Regional Board position vacancies. Key positions to be filled are Secretary, Treasurer, Awards, and Compliance. If you can take on one of these positions, please contact me at Dawn.M.Nester@irs.gov (work) or Histrylady@yahoo.com (home), or by phone at (603) 433-0560 (work) or (603) 978-8361 (cell, any time). You would be doing a real service to your Region and giving yourself an opportunity to perhaps stretch or learn new skills. It can be a win-win situation for both of us. ☺

Membership Report by Kelly Badzo

This month we welcome:

Roma Amundson, Kerri Ann Fielding, Corrie MacDougall, Michelle Miller, Christine Pong, Kelly Rousseau, Laura Taveras, Kristina Tiedke, and Kristi Tilton to the Greater Merrimack Valley Chapter!

We are approaching the time when those of us with a March renewal date will be encouraged to do so on-line. However, if you do not wish to renew on-line using a credit card or do not have access to a computer, you may still send in your renewal via check to **FEW, P. O. Box 75551, Baltimore, MD 21275**. Make your check payable to FEW for \$45.00.

2009 Regional Training Program by Jayne Cousins and Lisa Lombardi



"The future belongs to those who believe in the beauty of their dreams." – Eleanor Roosevelt

If you would like to be a member of the RTP Committee, please let us know that, too. Jayne can be reached via e-mail at Jayne.M.Cousins@irs.gov; Lisa at Lisa.T.Lombardi@irs.gov. We would be delighted to have you working with us on this important committee.

Stay tuned to this column for all the details as they become confirmed.

Greater Merrimack Valley Chapter Update by Tina Gray, President

In December, we started a four-part series to discuss FEW's Four Focus Areas. We began with Legislative.

Kudos to Jayne Cousins, Executive Vice President, for her appearance in "Bride Wars." "Bride Wars" opened on January 9, 2009. Jayne sent around a still shot where she can be seen behind Anne Hathaway and Kate Hudson. Lisa Lombardi, Vice President for Lowell, coordinated a "Movie Premiere" night with snacks at her house before going to see the movie. Congratulations, Jayne! We look to see your smiling face in other movies in the future.



Jayne Cousins (center in red) and members of the Greater Merrimack Valley Chapter, family, and friends, attend the opening of "Bride Wars" in Lowell, MA

Greater Boston Chapter Update by
Valerie Foxx, President

The Greater Boston Chapter has been busy these past few months.

In November we installed our new Chapter officers. Mary Beth Williams, Senior Staff member of USPS, administered the Oaths of Office.

We also revitalized the chapter newsletter and issued an "inaugural" edition. The newsletter will be issued on a quarterly basis.

In addition, we presented information on Diversity. Valarie Briggs, a chapter member, attended the Greater Boston Federal Executive Board's Diversity Day. She brought back and shared information from this event.

In December, Mary Hahnen, Catherine Colon, Dale Stafford, Janet Nibbs, Lillian O'Neal, chapter members, assisted at the Northeast Region's FEW booth. We all had the opportunity to attend a workshop, luncheon, and the keynote speaker address.

My highlights were meeting Holly Robinson Peete (*21 Jump Street*) and Marianne Williamson, motivational speaker. I purchased two books and had them autographed. I also attended the Networking Session at the end of the event with Dale and Catherine.

Our December chapter meeting focused on Financial Tips and Resources and was followed by a Wills, Trusts, and Estate Planning presentation in January. Both presentations evoked excellent discussions among members and the presenters.

Legislative Report



Cecelia Davis
Vice President for
Congressional Relations

Hi, everyone. I have some great news for you all. The House of Representatives passed two pay equity bills which are Tier II issues on FEW's Legislative Agenda. The Paycheck Fairness Act (H.R. 12) and the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act (H.R. 11) passed on January 9, 2009. To learn more about both bills, go to FEW's website (www.few.org), select the "Legislative" focus area, select "CAPWIZ" and select "Current Legislation" for information. This was one of the first actions by the new Congress. This is a great start for the 111th Congress!!!!

In addition, FEW was in the news recently in both the *Washington Post* and GovExec.com. President Sue Webster was quoted in the articles.

Here is an excerpt from GovExec.com:

"Federally Employed Women, a Washington-based advocacy group, pointed to an August 2008 Equal Employment Opportunity Commission [report](#) that found only 50 percent of federal departments and agencies submitted timely MD-715 reports in fiscal 2006, down from 68 percent in fiscal 2005. The reports, which detail agency employment by race, national origin, sex and disability, are required under law to be submitted, reviewed and approved annually by EEOC.

"These reporting requirements are an important indication of how well agencies are

Legislative Report (cont.)

achieving equal employment for all federal workers," said FEW National President Sue Webster. "With only half of the agencies submitting reports, the public, federal workers and potential applicants have no way of knowing which agencies are working the hardest to ensure the employment and advancement of women and minorities."

I encourage you to read the full article at http://www.govexec.com/story_page.cfm?articleid=41765&dcn=e_gvet.



Diversity Corner



Cathy Fletcher
Vice President for Diversity

Transforming Awareness into Action: Ideas for Developing a Culture Which Values Diversity

Diversity training often results in increased awareness for participants. They appreciate subtle differences they didn't notice before. They recognize things they do and say which might create communication barriers. And they get frustrated because they're not sure what they could be actively doing to support diversity initiatives in their organization.

Tracy's Top Ten Tips for Organizations

- Establish an employee hotline for questions or complaints.
- Sponsor dialogue groups.

- Identify 1-3 distinct priorities.
- Recognize positive role-models.
- Link cultural competence with compensation.
- Make it fun.
- Include diversity in every meeting.
- Focus on finding successes rather than highlighting mistakes.
- Provide options for continued personal development.
- Identify and support internal champions.

Transforming your organization's diversity awareness into diversity action is not hard to do.

Start today!

© Copyright Tracy Brown, www.DiversityTrends.com. Tracy Brown is the President of Person To Person Consulting. She works with organizations that want to use diversity as a strategic advantage and with people who want to be successful in multicultural settings.

January 19th is the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Birthday Observance from USA.gov News, January 5, 2009

On January 19, Americans will observe [Martin Luther King, Jr. Day](#), an annual federal holiday that commemorates the [life and work of the American civil rights leader](#). Recipient of the 1964 Nobel Peace Prize, Martin Luther King, Jr. advocated for social change through nonviolent action.

A [national memorial](#) to King is planned for construction in Washington, D.C., adjacent to the FDR Memorial and in line with the Lincoln and Jefferson Memorials.

Diversity Corner (cont.)

Dates to Remember in February 2009:

1-28	National Black History Month
2	Groundhog Day
4	Rosa Parks' birthday
12	Abraham Lincoln's birthday
12	NAACP founded
14	Valentine's Day
16	President's Day
17	League of United Latin Citizens (LULAC) founded
22	George Washington's birthday
24	Mardi Gras
25	Ash Wednesday

Compliance Report



Michelle Crockett
Vice President for Compliance

The following press release is from the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission's web site (www.eeoc.gov).

CHIEF HUMAN CAPITAL OFFICERS COUNCIL TRAINING ACADEMY FOCUSES ON ASSISTING AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES IN JOINING THE FEDERAL WORKFORCE *OPM and EEOC Partner to Co-sponsor Session*

Washington, D.C. – The U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) and the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) today [12/11/08] co-hosted a meeting of the Chief Human Capital Officers (CHCO) Council Training Academy focusing on how agencies can provide assistance to Americans with disabilities who want to join the Federal Government. Presentations were made from four agencies, including OPM, EEOC, the Department of Treasury and the Department of Veterans Affairs.

“Persons with disabilities are valued, contributing members of the American workforce, but we know they often face challenges in finding jobs,” said Acting OPM Director Mike Hager. “OPM is committed to helping Federal agencies better understand how to hire and retain persons with disabilities.”

EEOC Chair Naomi C. Earp said, “We are grateful to OPM for arranging this meeting to help advance opportunities for a key segment of the workforce. While the decreasing participation rate of people with targeted disabilities in the Federal Government is troubling, programs like the CHCO Council Training Academy provide Federal agencies with the knowl-edge and resources necessary to reverse this trend. Through outreach and enforcement work with projects such as the CHCO Council Training Academy and the Commission’s LEAD Initiative, EEOC will continue to ensure that individuals with disabilities are fully included in the Federal workforce.”

The CHCO Council Training Academy provides training to Federal human resource professionals, helping them to improve their skills, gain optimal guidance and share best practices as they confront major challenges in human capital management. Today’s session provided both a refresher for agency human resource employees on Federal disability hiring policy and highlighted programs developed to carry out the policy.

OPM and EEOC officials reviewed hiring policies and procedures designed to enable people with disabilities to participate fully in the workplace. The Department of Veterans Affairs showcased its unified policy guidance and selective placement practices for individuals with disabilities. The Department of Treasury detailed the development of a strategic and tactical alignment of their human capital and EEO practices. Treasury representatives also discussed their recent Disability Summit and Career Fair.

The CHCO Council Training Academy sessions provide a valuable platform for highlighting and

Compliance Report (cont.)

showcasing agency human capital practices. In FY 2007 and 2008, approximately 700 staff members from CHCO Council agencies attended the twelve sessions.

OPM has developed a number of initiatives to help Americans with disabilities seeking Federal jobs. Among these is development of the website <http://www.opm.gov/disability/> which provides information related to organizations that focus on the needs of persons with disabilities. It has proven to be a valuable tool for job applicants and employees with disabilities, Federal managers and supervisors and human resources professionals. Through its USAJOBS television recruitment campaign, OPM has featured disabled Federal employees to highlight exciting career positions available to persons with disabilities. The agency also is assisting disabled veterans interested in Federal civilian employment through three Veterans' Outreach Offices it has established.

The EEOC enforces Federal laws prohibiting employment discrimination. Additional information about the Commission is available on its web site at www.eeoc.gov. LEAD stands for Leadership for the Employment of Americans with Disabilities.

Training Report



Arlena Fitch-Gordon
Vice President for Training

From time to time, we are all called upon to make a presentation of material, whether it's on the job or for FEW. The following tips can be useful when you are next called upon to "share what you know" in a meeting. This material came from the website, www.managementhelp.org.

Basics of Presentation Skills, written by Carter

McNamara, MBA, PhD, Authenticity Consulting, LLC. Copyright 1997-2008. Adapted from the Field Guide to Leadership and Supervision.

Leaders make presentations to a wide variety of audiences, for example, Board members, employees, community leaders and groups of customers. Usually there is a lot that can be quickly gained or quickly lost from a presentation. A little bit of guidance goes a long way toward making a highly effective presentation.

Note that meeting management skills are often helpful in designing an effective presentation. Also note that the following guidelines are intended for general presentations, not for training sessions where your presentation is to help learners to gain specific knowledge, skills or attitudes in order to improve their performance on a task or job.

Basic Guidelines For Designing Your Presentation

1. List and prioritize the top three goals that you want to accomplish with your audience. It's not enough just to talk at them. You may think you know what you want to accomplish in your presentation, but if you're not clear with yourself and others, it is very easy - too easy - for your audience to completely miss the point of your presentation. For example, your goals may be for them to appreciate the accomplishments of your organization, learn how to use your services, etc. Again, the goals should be in terms of what you want to accomplish with your audience.
2. Be really clear about who your audience is and about why is it important for them to be in the meeting. Members of your audience will want to know right away why they were the ones chosen to be in your presentation. Be sure that your presentation makes this clear to them right away. This will help you clarify your invitation list and design your invitation to them.

Training (cont.)

3. List the major points of information that you want to convey to your audience. When you're done making that list, then ask yourself, "If everyone in the audience understands all of those points, then will I have achieved the goal that I set for this meeting?"
4. Be clear about the tone that you want to set for your presentation, for example, hopefulness, celebration, warning, teamwork, etc. Consciously identifying the tone to yourself can help you cultivate that mood to your audience.
5. Design a brief opening (about 5-10% of your total time presentation time) that:
 - a. presents your goals for the presentation.
 - b. clarifies the benefits of the presentation to the audience.
 - c. explains the overall layout of your presentation.
6. Prepare the body of your presentation (about 70-80% of your presentation time).
7. Design a brief closing (about 5-10% of your presentation time) that summarizes the key points from your presentation.
8. Design time for questions and answers (about 10% of the time of your presentation).

Basic Guidelines About Presentation Materials

You might be handing out supplemental materials, for example, articles, reports, etc. along with making your presentation. You might also be handing out copies of your presentation, for example, handing out copies of your slides that you will be referencing during your presentation. You might be using transparency slides or showing slides from a personal computer onto a project screen.

1. If you plan to project your slides from a computer onto a projection screen, then be sure to check out the computer system before people come into the meeting room, if at all possible.
2. Use a consistent layout, or organization of colors and images, on your materials.
3. If you use transparencies on an overhead projector, then allocate one slide for every 3-5 minutes of your presentation. Include 5-8 lines of bulleted phrases on each slide.
4. If you provide the supplemental information during your presentation, then your audience will very likely read that information during your presentation, rather than listening to you. Therefore, hand out this information after you have completed your presentation. Or, hand it out at the beginning of your presentation and ask them not to read it until you have completed your presentation.
5. If you hand out copies of your slides, be sure that the text on the slides is large enough that your audience can read the text on the table in front of them without having to hold the handouts up to their faces. Be sure to leave space on the handouts for the audience to make notes on them.

Basic Guidelines About Your Delivery

1. If you're speaking to a small group (for example, 2-15 people), then try to accomplish eye contact with each person for a few seconds throughout your delivery.
2. Look up from your materials, or notes, every 5-10 seconds, to look into the audience.
3. Speak a little bit louder and a little bit slower than you normally would do with a friend. A good way to practice these guidelines is to speak along with a news anchor when you're watching television.

Training Report (cont.)

4. Vary the volume and rate of your speech. A monotone voice is absolutely toxic to keeping the attention of an audience.
5. Stand with your feet at shoulder-length apart.
6. Keep your hands relatively still.



<http://www.fewfoundation.org>

FEW Foundation for Education and Training

by Patricia
Wolfe,
President

The Board of Trustees for the FEW Foundation for Education and Training is pleased to be recommending the following individuals for consideration to the Foundation's Board of Trustees. By our bylaws, the FEW National Board of Directors must approve our nominees for the Board of Trustees. Our nominees thus far are:

Linda Fresh, D.C. Metro Region, for Vice President

Judy Mullis, Great Lakes Region, for Secretary,

Jean Christiansen, D.C. Metro Region, for Member-at-Large

Dawn Nester, Northeast Region, is running for President. Carolyn Kroon, Western Region, and Beatrice Squire, D.C. Metro Region, have been contacted for their interest in serving as Members-at-Large, as well.

Once the National Board has approved our slate of nominees, the FEW Foundation will hold an election.

National Training Programs

Future NTPs will be held:

2009 – Orlando, FL, at the Orlando World Center Marriott

2010 – New Orleans, LA, at the New Orleans Marriott

2011 – Philadelphia, PA, at the Marriott

2012 – Detroit, MI, at the Marriott at the Renaissance Center

Keep these dates in mind when talking with your manager about training needs.

Management Tip – Say No to Yes Men by Brian Friel, GovExec.com, December 17, 2008

Everyone does stupid things -- some more stupid than others and some more frequently than most. People make mistakes, bad decisions and poor judgment calls. Managers and leaders are not immune to this human condition. So it behooves good leaders to surround themselves with people who are willing and able to tell them when an idea just isn't up to snuff.

For an extreme example, look no further than the criminal complaint outlining the federal government's case against Gov. Rod Blagojevich, the Illinois Democrat who aimed to sell the vacant U.S. Senate seat of President-elect Barack Obama. The government's wiretaps captured Blagojevich proposing various schemes to profit from his appointment authority for the Senate seat. They also captured his employees and advisers largely playing along with him.

At one point, the criminal complaint describes a two-hour conversation. Blagojevich discusses a convoluted scheme in which he would get a cushy union job in return for the Senate appointment. The advisers question

Management Tip – Say No to Yes Men (cont.)

details only. "One of Rod Blagojevich's advisors said he likes the idea, it sounds like a good idea, but advised Rod Blagojevich to be leery of promises for something two years from now," the complaint explains. A variety of similar schemes come and go, some weirder than others, such as an idea to convince Obama to get billionaires Warren Buffett and Bill Gates to help set up a foundation for Blagojevich to lead. The employees and advisers promise to follow up on the ideas.

In the criminal complaint, Blagojevich's subordinates come off poorly as they plot with him. Such yes men generally fall into two categories. The first set -- quite common in politics -- consists of sycophants who view their jobs as constantly assuaging their bosses' egos and doing as they're told. The second -- common throughout the working world -- is made up of normal people with good heads on their shoulders who have learned not to challenge their bosses. They go along to get along. If Blagojevich's advisers fell in this camp, then they may have known that his ideas were bonkers, but they saw no point in raising objections because they believed the governor would not respond constructively.

Indeed, Blagojevich confirmed such suspicions when he revealed that two consultants had recommended that he just appoint whomever Obama wanted and expect nothing in return. Through a string of F-bombs, Blagojevich made it clear that he wouldn't be taking that advice.

Egocentric bosses such as Blagojevich naturally attract yes men of both varieties. Normal managers don't, but it's still important for leaders to guard against any tendency to squash dissent. The idea is not to encourage dissent for dissent's sake, but to encourage subordinates to share their thoughts on the potential pitfalls of various approaches -- or to strongly object when they know an idea crosses ethical or legal boundaries. In the

short term, it can hurt to hear one's ideas get beaten down. In the long term, listening to dissenting opinions that kill bad ideas is in a leader's best interest. Just ask Blagojevich.

Regional Manager's Note: I depend on the Regional Board members to ask questions, vote "No" on issues they can't support, and bring issues to the Board for discussion. Thank you for your feedback, everyone!

Tips for Charting Your Course to Administrative Stardom from Office Dynamics, Ltd., 2004

Reach out and be courageous. Don't be afraid of rejection; being different; crossing the line; stretching beyond what you think you are capable of doing. As human beings, we have great potential.

Live in the moment. Many people think the faster they go, the better they are - the more successful they become. Not so! Sailing to Success is about self-management. While you need to think about your future, focus on now.

Place your problem on the back burner. Sometimes you are so close to a problem or working your brain so hard to figure "it" out, that you can't solve the problem. Place it on the back burner for awhile. Come back to it when you are refreshed.

Engage all your senses at work. I know you physically show up for work, but are you mentally engaged throughout the day. Use all your senses.

Swim out and get what you want. Don't wait for life, others, or work to bring you what you want.

News You Can Use



This segment has moved to the Northeast Region web site. Check the “News You Can Use” link frequently as new articles are posted almost daily. Information about health care, retirement, the Thrift Savings Plan, and more is posted on this page of the web site. Check it out at <http://www.nerfew.org> and click on the “News You Can Use” link.

Sympathy to a FEW Sister by Dawn Nester

Iris Seals, a past member of the National Board, lost her father recently. Expressions of sympathy may be sent to Iris Seals, 7515 Back Nine, San Antonio, TX 78244-2131.

Note of Appreciation from Massachusetts Conference for Women dated December 19, 2008

“We would like to extend a personal thank-you for your support of the 2008 Massachusetts Conference for Women. Many forces are involved in bringing the Conference to fruition each year, but it simply would not have been possible without your support.

Your participation as an exhibitor provided the Conference attendees with magnificent products and services of interest to women. Thanks to your contribution, our Conference welcomed nearly 5,000 women who were able to experience an incredible day of personal and professional growth.

The outpouring of gratitude and praise from attendees throughout the Commonwealth has been overwhelming, and with your help a strong foundation has been laid to ensure we build on this year’s success.

We look forward to working with you at next year’s Conference on December 10, 2009.

Together, we will ensure that the Massachusetts Conference for Women continues to be the premier educational and networking event for the women of Massachusetts of all ages and backgrounds.”

Regional Manager’s Note: The letter was signed by the eight conference coordinators. Valerie Foxx, President, Greater Boston Chapter, lead the effort to ensure FEW had a presence at the 4th annual 2008 MCW on December 11th. I add my appreciation to her and the team who supported her! Thank you, everyone, for working on FEW’s behalf!

Note of Appreciation from Rosa L. DeLauro dated December 3, 2008

“Thank you for your kind words of congratulations on my re-election. It is an honor and I am grateful for the opportunity to continue to serve the people of Connecticut’s 3rd Congressional District.

I also want to thank you for sending me the information on the FEW and I look forwarding to working with you in the coming Congressional session. Again, thank you for thinking of me. With my very best wishes and warmest regards,

Sincerely,
/s/ Rosa L. DeLauro
Member of Congress”

Regional Manager’s Note: Shortly after the National Presidential election, I sent letters to all newly elected and re-elected female Members of Congress. Representative DeLauro is the only one I’ve heard back from to-date.