

Client Question

In each issue of our newsletter we select a question from one of our clients and provide the answer to everyone. We always protect the identity of our client, but our experience has shown that if one of you has a question, many of you have the same question.

The current question is: **I have sat through so many boring “training sessions” where I have learned absolutely nothing. How can I be sure to not be wasting my time when lining up training?**

CCS offers the following from our Staff Problem Solvers:

The two major factors that affect the results of training are the **content** and **instructor proficiency**. Other important, but less critical factors include whether the level of instruction is appropriate to the audience, whether there are external distractions, and whether the teaching methods align with the students’ learning methods. In a mixed group this is more difficult due to the variety of learning methods, but an excellent instructor can compensate for this.

At CCS we have conducted extensive research on adult education and tailor our materials and techniques to accommodate the broadest range of learning methods. Some learners are auditory – they learn best by hearing; others are visual – they need to see it. Some are detail oriented – they need to understand how it applies directly to what they do every day; others want the big picture – how do the parts all play together for the desired end result. Our classes are designed to maximize the learning and the retention.

For content, ask for a syllabus from the instructor, or alternatively provide a list of critical learning objectives to the instructor. Review the presentation charts and handout material to satisfy yourself that the content is both subject-matter and content-level appropriate to the intended audience.

Instructor proficiency is probably the most important factor, and often the hardest to verify. Far more people believe that they can teach than can actually do so. Students too often quote the old saying that “Those who can’t do, teach.” Teaching is an art and a profession. While many may be able to

share information, it takes a trained professional to teach.

So how can you tell if the instructor is capable? The best way is to speak to past students. Check the references and verify that students actually retained what they learned. One study found that those instructors who got the best “happy scores” – indicating that the students enjoyed the class, often had the worst retention scores. The training is wasted if no one learns anything.

One recent CCS client observed that they had wasted a great deal of money on so-called training classes that they deemed were ultimately a waste of money. “From now on,” they said, “if we can’t get CCS, and particularly Tom Reid to conduct the class, then we won’t even hold it. It’s simply not worth the time and expense to us. With Tom we know we are getting the best of the best.”

We thank you for that. We work hard at being the best and take pride in our work.

NOTE: CCS is not authorized to practice law or accounting. This information should not be relied on in any particular facts you may have without checking with a properly licensed professional.

Calendar of Events

Chief Problem Solver Tom Reid spoke at the NCMA World Congress on April 24 and 25 in Dallas.

His three presentations included:

Six Things Contract Managers Need to Know about Six Sigma

Advanced Negotiations Workshop – The Ethics in Negotiations

Sarbanes Oxley Internal Controls – Strong Contract

Management Disciplines Required for 404 Certification

These presentations will be posted on the NCMA website.

Upcoming Speaking Engagements

June 11-15 Leadership Development (private client in Chicago)

July 16 -20 Building High Performance Teams (private client in Chicago)

Did You Know?

- ♦ In the recent defective pricing case of Wynne v. United Techs. Corp., 463 F.3d 1261 (Fed. Cir. 2006), the government argued that it is never necessary to establish reliance upon defective pricing data to the government's detriment. The Government lost. The court rejected this argument, preserving this defense for contractors. *But to be safe, make sure your pricing data are current, complete, and accurate before you submit!*
- ♦ There appears to be an effort to put more 1102's into the system in this year's Defense Authorization Bill. (*Hurray!!*) For more information, check out the April 18 blog entry at: www.governmentcontractingsolutions.com/blog

Your Failure is a Success!!

According to a study conducted at University of Michigan's Ross School of Business, when more firms enter a market, the poorly performing established companies will disappear. This means that surviving companies, new or old, will have greater innovation and efficiency. More than 80 percent of new firms in the United States end up failing according to this research, but these failures provide real economic benefits and enhance social welfare. The first reason is that when new entrants flood the market, margins are squeezed for all, forcing all firms to innovate and find economies. Further, the "lessons learned" from these failed companies often find their way to the survivors. While that doesn't help the failed business owners, it contributes to the social knowledge in the industry. Does the gain exceed the loss? According to the two researchers, Hart Posen of Michigan and Anne Marie Knott of Washington University in St. Louis, the answer is "YES!"

This may be small comfort for the failed business person, but it is an important cog in our economic base. In a related vein a research firm in Europe

has released figures that suggest the world-wide business failure rate is also up. But while this may be a warning, there is no reason to panic. According to this report so many businesses fail because so many are created. And even they agree that this is a better situation than one where no new businesses are being created. Entrepreneurship does help drive our economy, even when it fails!

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GAO ADDRESSES ACQUISITION WORKFORCE SHORTCOMINGS

"Another example of the government's strategic human capital planning challenges involves its acquisition workforce. The government increasingly relies on contractors for roles and missions previously performed by government employees. Acquisition of products and services from contractors consumes about a quarter of discretionary spending government wide and is a key function in many federal agencies. We reported in 2003 that because of a more sophisticated business environment, most acquisition professionals would need to acquire a new set of skills focusing on business management. In a forum hosted by the Comptroller General in July 2006, acquisition experts reported that agency leaders have not recognized or elevated the importance of the acquisition profession within their organizations, and a strategic approach has not been taken across government or within agencies to focus on workforce challenges, such as creating a positive image essential to successfully recruit and retain a new generation of talented acquisition professionals."

GAO-07-45SP: Oct. 6, 2006.

Ed: Straight from the horse's mouth. We couldn't have said it better!

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Lagniappe

*In each newsletter, CCS offers clients and friends something free, a little something extra,
or for our N'awlins friends, lagniappe.*

This month – Prom Safety. This is prom season where many of our young people will be tempted to make a bad choice concerning drinking and driving – or riding with a drunk driver. To combat this and to help in opening a discussion with our young folks, we offer an electronic freebie this month – A Driving Agreement where you can both agree that no one will drive while impaired or with someone who is, and that a ride home will be arranged when appropriate. No matter what bad choices we have made, it is never too late to start making good ones!

For a free copy simply e-mail your request to Freeoffer@certifiedksolutions.com.
We will send a copy of the Driving Agreement to you right away.

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