

July 22, 2010

Conference Session Reports



Time Management in the Electronic Age
Presented by Margaret Spencer Dixon, JD
Synopsis by Cindy Hague, CLM

One of the most practical and immediately beneficial sessions I attended at the ALA Annual Conference concerned managing time. Those of you who have worked closely with me may disagree, but I CAN BE extremely organized. And then there's the normal busyness of the week and the piles that develop, the [hundreds of] emails that accumulate in my In Box, the Post-Its on my desk and monitor and the general cluttered condition of my office. The same type of thing happens at home, but I'm only going to address organizing work life for now.
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The Way of Adventure
Presented by Dr. Jeff Salz
Synopsis by Cindy Rush



How do we redesign both our attitudes and our work environments so that our daily work is experienced as a precious opportunity to make a difference in the lives of those around us? One of our keynote speakers at the ALA National Conference in Boston this year was Dr. Jeff Salz, Cultural Anthropologist, Explorer, Mountaineer (I especially enjoyed listening to him as he told of some of the adventures of his life. He was a captivating speaker and had some inspirational points from his journeys that I noted as follows:

- Life is not a destination. Life is not a journey. Life is a dance.
- You have to have a map. On the way from point A to point B, stuff happens.
- Adversity is your friend. It wakes you up.
- The true gift of your life is the gift you give to others.

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Newsletter Name Update

Our newsletter naming contest garnered very few suggestions. One was deemed worthy, but a decision was made to wait until the website committee has finished its re-design, and then coordinate the newsletter design with that new look. Thanks to those who participated ... and stay tuned!

Catch us on the web
www.walanet.org

Upcoming events

July 28, 2010

"Health Care Reform"

Speaker Karen Vines from IMA of Kansas will talk to us about the recent Health Care Reform Act and how it impacts our society and more specifically how it impacts our business. She'll give us an overview of the many new regulations and the ways that they affect us as providers of healthcare options for our employees and owners.

August 25, 2010

"Stress Management"

Each of us faces pressures, deadlines, angry clients, and difficult situations. How can we remain calm in pressure-packed situations? How can we make the stress we face turn into opportunities for growth? Gordon Rogers of Employee Assistance Consultants will help participants:

- Identify stress in ourselves
- Recognize thoughts which create stress
- Employ thoughts which bring relaxation
- Explain the advantages of treating others respectfully
- Form strong support networks
- Practice self-care
- Develop an attitude of gratitude
- Participate in relaxation exercises

Your Kind of Connection... ALA is

ALA Region 3 Conference
and Exposition
October 15-16, 2010
The Drake Hotel
Chicago, IL

Questions or comments? E-mail the editor at jwaltman@gh-wichita.com. To remove your name from this mailing list, you may reply with "Remove" in the subject line.

Time Management in the Electronic Age (continued from page 1)

Ms. Dixon is a technology ambassador. That's a nice way of saying she's a technology freak. She loves everything about technology and she has applied it to the organization of her life and her consulting business. But she has some great ideas. The things I will mention are specific to Microsoft Office (I'm using 2010), but should exist in some form in other office suites.

The number one rule and what this is mostly about is USE YOUR TASKS!!! I have always used my task list for certain things but found I was utilizing my calendar more and more for tasks. It was always open on my desktop so it was easier to enter appointments than tasks. It's very hard to see where you're at on your tasks when you use your calendar. Once you've passed the date (come on now - you snooze your task appointments too), they only appear when the reminders come up. So if you have a spare 15 minutes good luck finding a 15 minute task...and most of my "free" time is in 10-15 minute increments.

The second rule is HOW to use your Tasks. These are best outlined in bullet form:

- Use the "due date" field as the date you want the task to appear on your daily to-do list (i.e., the date you want to do the task or to consider doing the task). She recommends not using the "start date" and I have adopted this. It streamlines your task entry as well as your task list.
- Customize the view to include only the fields you prefer. I use the following:
 - Task Subject
 - Due Date (normally my sort field)
 - Categories
 - In Folder
 - Complete

Checking the box under "Complete" is the satisfying act of crossing something off of your physical paper list.

- Use the category function to create categories for different projects. Create as many categories as you need. Assign categories by clicking on the Category button and selecting the category from the Master List. You can sort on Category and get your project overview quickly.

- The actual task description should begin with a verb (call, review, email, draft, analyze, F/U, revise, work on, etc.). In other words, decide on your next action in connection with the project. This is important...as you complete one task, be sure to enter the next task immediately into the system.
- Decide on your very next action. Keep asking yourself, "Is there anything I need to do first?" Sometimes we procrastinate at starting a task because there's really another task that must be done first.
- Include all tasks, including personal items such as send birthday card, pay taxes, etc. (I haven't implemented this yet but plan to.)
- If the task description is long, continue it in the text box below the subject field. Use ... at the end of the subject field to indicate there is text in the text box.
- Move emails into tasks to keep information together.
- Insert the task as soon as something occurs to you (or whenever you receive a task).
- If you are away from your computer:
 - Insert it as an event into your PDA calendar so it will remind you to enter the task
 - Send an email to yourself
 - Leave a voice mail for yourself
 - Or insert it directly into your task list on your PDA
- Use the task function for follow-up self-reminders. If you're expecting to hear back from someone or to receive a document by a certain date, insert a task on the follow-up date such as "F/U _____" She suggests "Contact if Haven't Heard" (CIHH) but I would have difficulty remembering what CIHH means.
- Use the task function to remind yourself to follow-up with delegates.
- Use the task function for your longer-term task list as well as your daily plan. You can easily differentiate between shorter- and longer-term tasks by simply not assigning a due date to longer-term tasks. That way, your daily to-do list won't be cluttered up with longer-term tasks, but they will still be easily accessible within one of the pre-existing views in Outlook.
- Review your longer-term task list every week or so. When you're ready to

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work on one of your longer-term tasks, simply add a due date for the task.

- You can also use the task function to keep track of things to “keep in mind” but which do not yet require a definite action on your part. You might preface by “KIM.”
- Insert contact information into the task to make it easier to complete the task.
- Don’t forget you can create repeating tasks for monthly, quarterly, yearly, etc. tasks.

In addition to the simple, but different way to utilize Tasks, she suggested you create a couple of folders to store information:

- “How To” folder
- “Where to Find” folder

I think these would be beneficial for everyone. Then when someone needs to fill in for a secretary for example, they have a sort of road map to their responsibilities. I have improvised with that and have started using Microsoft OneNote to collect information. It is very versatile and user friendly. It comes with the Microsoft Office 2010 Suite so something to look forward to when you upgrade.

I felt this was one of the most useful sessions I’ve attended. My desk is now clean and Post-It Note free. It took a little while to implement but now that I have, my In Box hits a maximum of 10 emails and my Tasks are organized and easy to access. In fact, one of the reasons I actually wrote this article is due to my “Write newsletter article re managing time” task that is due today. If you would like a copy of the handout, just let me know and I’ll send it to you.

By Cindy Hague

The Way of Adventure (continued from page 1)

- In times of change, don’t stop giving all you’ve got.
- How much you get determines your living. How much you give determines your life.
- Work is love made visible.
- There is nowhere to go; there is nothing to do except to be of service.
- Craft your words so that they become actions; craft your actions so that they become habits; craft your habits so that they become character; craft your character so that it becomes your destiny.
- The extraordinary individual never stops learning, building and serving.
 - E - Energy/Passion
 - X - Examine/Be Realistic
 - T - Time Management
 - R - Risk/Resiliency through Failures
 - A - Action

He also wrote a book which I purchased at the ALA Bookstore entitled “The Way of Adventure – Transforming Your Life and Work with Spirit and Vision.” The outline of this book identifies his thoughts on the six steps to having adventure in your life and why we need adventure. He says that adventure is an inside job and helps the reader learn how to start the quest for adventure in their life. Through this book you will learn that our greatest joy comes not from self-seeking but in “other-serving.”

So, if this appeals to you, take a look at this book and yourself and learn his six steps for adventure which are:

- 1) Leap Before You Look,
- 2) Aim Higher Than Everest,
- 3) Give it All You’ve Got,
- 4) Work Some Magic,
- 5) Keep On Your Bearing and
- 6) Enjoy the View

By Cindy Rush