

proActive

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THE ART OF CO-OPERATION



teamwork and co-operation!

Foster a culture of teamwork : Energy, Purpose, Vision !

Our previous issue was dedicated at length to «management» and «leadership» at the workplace.

As hidden leaders, as individuals, as employees and as women, Management Assistants possess precious tools to display their hidden power to influence and demonstrate interpreneurial attitudes.

Team spirit is at the core of these tools for we cannot act alone to bring about success. Co-operation stems from team spirit and it is an art and like any art work, it requires skills, patience and wisdom. It also implies long-suffering attitudes and resilience because we have to communicate with others and those around us.

Thus, our challenge lays in our ability and that of our team to make do with whatever is at hand, to improvise the solution to a problem, to imagine possibilities for action, even in the face of an obvious lack of resources !

*Odile Huchet
Editor -in-Chief*



IN THIS ISSUE:

Chairman's message	Page 3
EUMA Business	Page 4 -5
Brief Encounter : Friday Rountree	Page 6
The Art of giving and receiving feedback	Page 7-8
Contact List	Page 9

THE THEORY OF OPENING TWO DOORS !

At home I have piles of magazine articles and newspaper clippings which I have saved believing that their information might be useful some day when I again need to write an article or a speech as EUMA Chairman. I was searching for ideas on what to write this time and checked one of the piles. In one interview I paid attention to an Executive's "theory of opening two doors". According to the experience of this young man it is very important that opening the door to your office in the morning brings a smile to your face and a feeling that an interesting and challenging day is ahead. Likewise, the same must happen in the evening when you return home. It should be pleasant to open the home door, step inside and start relaxing.

Isn't it true that the door to our work place is very important to most of us? Behind it we can find an identity and a purpose to our lives not to speak of the fact that it provides us with a living. The content of work varies according to our personal life situations. Most of EUMA Members are still active in working life. Some have worked for years or decades and some are new-comers. Mentoring is something that we really need to develop within EUMA. Experienced Members can share their knowledge and those new in the profession can bring ideas from other fields and professions or the latest developments and trends from training institutes and schools. Mentoring has not necessarily to do with age. A younger person with experience can mentor an older one who is new in the profession.

In addition to mentoring also 'tacit knowledge' has become a key word in many work places especially now that employers are worried about early retirement. Fruitful co-operation is needed between the young and the old in the offices and within EUMA. We can share our knowledge and benefit from other people's examples and mistakes. There is no need to reinvent the wheel again nor to make all the errors ourselves. We have within EUMA many retired Members. They want to stay as Members because of their respect for and interest in the profession and because of the many EUMA friendship bonds. We have to be thankful for

their commitment and take advantage of their advice. What about the home door? Isn't it also very important that it is a pleasure to come home and enjoy the harmony of your own place and time – whether in the company of your family, your friends or just by yourself?

Most of all, at home we should have a place where we can leave the daily office duties behind us, where we can do other interesting things, where we can relax and be idle without any specific role.

Quite often doing nothing at all can be very useful not only for our body but for our brain too. Idleness gives room for creative thinking and our subconscious mind works gathering energy and ideas for coping with the duties and challenges in the outside world. A family friend of mine has been writing very popular columns for a tabloid twice a week for more than 30 years. He works lying on the

sofa, thinking of the topic and developing the story. When he is ready he gets up and opens his PC. When his daughters were still small their mother used to ask them not to disturb father because he was working. The girls got quite an odd impression of what working actually meant.

The Chinese have a lot of wise sayings and proverbs. One of my favourites is the following: "When I hear I forget, when I see I remember, when I do I understand." This is an invitation to EUMA Members to bring added value behind their office door and their home door. By opening the many EUMA doors and coming to see what we actually do, you will understand the joy and strength of co-operation. You are welcome and will benefit from your EUMA membership.

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FINNAIR flies EUMA Executive Chairman

32nd Annual General Meeting

Saturday 23rd September 2006 – Malmö, Sweden

Details of candidates standing for election to the Executive

Committee as :

DEPUTY EXECUTIVE CHAIRMAN

Daniela BRECKO



Daniela was born in 1968 in Slovenia and joined EUMA in 1999. She lives and works in Ljubljana where she is managing director in the company Planet GV, Business training Ltd. Daniela studied at the University for Philosophy in Ljubljana and holds a doctorate (Ph.D.) in Education and Career development. She is a lecturer at the University and teaches in Ljubljana and abroad. Her specialisation is Adult Education and she is author of several books on the subject. Her work involves her in several specialist magazine editorial boards in the domain of adult education and HR management. This year she is working on the new project of a High School for Secretaries in Ljubljana. Daniela is one of the founder members of EUMA Slovenia and is Education Co-ordinator for the group. If elected, Daniela would like to develop and define the Competencies Profile of Management Assistance in the global environment, promote quality professional development through conference and training day themes, develop a certification programme and give EUMA access to her professional academic network contacts as well as expand the social network of EUMA in South East Europe. At present she is especially helping Croatia to establish a new EUMA group. She was an active member of the organizing team for the Spring Council and Training Day event in 2005 in Slovenia. See Daniela's application on the website for further details.

Maria LAZAROU



Maria was born in 1965 and joined EUMA Cyprus in 1990. She lives and works in Nicosia, Cyprus. While studying in the United States, she worked as a PA in New Jersey before returning to Cyprus. Her career has focused on the teaching and training of secretaries, and she is an Office Administration Instructor in the Management and Marketing Department of the Ioannis Gregoriou School of Business at Cyprus College. She is especially involved with the design and implementation of seminars and workshops for secretaries and management assistants in co-operation with Cyprus College Training School as well as the Cyprus Human Resource Authority and has lectured on Office Productivity topics. She is also co-ordinator and member of numerous committees at

Cyprus College and describes herself as being committed to the secretarial profession, which she believes should be recognized as an integral part of the management team. Working for Cyprus College – a member of Laureate International Universities (LIU), the largest global university network - she would like to see the Association strengthen its position in the business world by promoting links with Educational bodies across Europe in order to participate in EU projects. Maria has held various positions in EUMA Cyprus and is presently Cyprus' National Chairman. During the 30th Annual General Meeting in Athens, as a member of the Project Team, she presented the results of the Pearl Poll 2004 Survey. See Maria's application on the website for further details.

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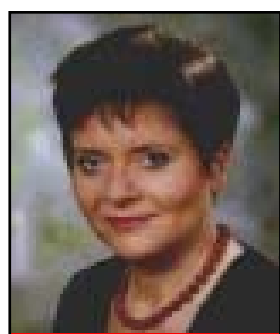
EXECUTIVE TREASURER

Björg JOHANNESDOTTIR



Björg was born in 1958 in Iceland and joined EUMA in 2003. She took the office of National Treasurer in 2004 and has supported the group at the European meetings. Björg graduated from college, Menntaskólinn við Hamrahlid, in the year of 1978, got married the year after and raised her four children. She has experience from the newsletter and translation environments, the cultural scene in art and art history, worked for the National Television with text television then as treasurer and management secretary for Iceland Genomics and is now with an insurance company, Tryggingamidstodin. There she is a personal assistant to the chairman of the board and the secretary for the administrative office. If elected, Björg sees working for EUMA as a challenge and would like to continue using and developing her professional and personal skills as treasurer for EUMA. She is confident that now the family has grown-up and flown from the nest she will have time to devote to EUMA. See Björg's application on the website for further details.

Theresia MOSER



Theresia was born in 1967 in Salzburg, Austria and joined EUMA in 1998. She lives and works in Vienna. She has held the office of PRO for EUMA Austria and is presently the National Treasurer. She works for the Austrian government in the accounting area since 2001 and held accounting positions prior to this at the Austrian Theatermuseum. Before that, Theresia was Management Assistant in industry, consultancy and on the cultural scene at the University for Music and Dramatic Arts in Salzburg. She foresees returning to full-time studies of Finance, Taxation and Accounting later this year, if possible. If elected, she would like to support the National Treasurers in their work on accounting, budgeting and financing the association on an European as well as on a national level and to re-enforce countries in their financial possibilities, bring new financial sources to the association in co-operation with the PROs, the Media & Advertising Team and keep stable the financial situation of the association. See Theresia's application on the website for further details.

My name is Friday Rountree, newly elected National President of the Association of Administrative Professionals New Zealand Inc and an overseas member of EUMA.



Tena koutou katoa ! Greetings everyone !

I am currently Personal Assistant to the Senior Partner at New Zealand law firm, Bell Gully, where I have been for the last eight years. I provide legal secretarial assistance to a team of four in our resource management team and personal assistant services to the Senior Partner who is involved in many outside organisations as well.

New Zealand is nestled in the South Pacific Ocean, 1,600 kms (1,000 miles) from Australia, our closest neighbour and friend. The population of New Zealand is just over 4 million. Maori and English are New Zealand's two official languages, although

English is the main written language.

Being in the Southern Hemisphere, our seasons are completely opposite to countries north of the equator. Winter is June through August and our Summer is between December and March. With majestic mountain ranges, sweeping plains, fjords, imposing native forests, crystal clear inland lakes, miles of golden sand beaches and numerous bays dotted around one of the longest coastlines in the world.

In New Zealand, there's a real recognition of the importance of work-life balance. As a result, there are more non-standard employment options available, giving us the flexibility (in negotiation with our employer) to choose the hours we work.

Flexible work arrangements, part-time work, job sharing, home-based work and paid parental leave all help workers in New Zealand to achieve a balance between our work and personal lives, so we can devote more quality time to family and to ourselves.

New Zealand's healthcare system is widely regarded as one of the best of the OECD countries. Our government-funded schooling system provides a comprehensive curriculum of academic, sporting and skills-based learning options, in a positive environment.

You can fly to New Zealand direct from Los Angeles, San Francisco, Singapore, Hong Kong, Tokyo and Kuala Lumpur, with Air New Zealand (national carrier) having flights from London via Los Angeles or Hong Kong.

To give you an idea of the distance between Auckland and Amsterdam when I attended the EUMA Conference in 2003, the travelling time one way was 27 hours.

Please check out www.immigration.govt.nz for further information if you are contemplating a move to New Zealand.

Friday Rountree AAPNZ (Fellow)

National President

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Ingrid Kuhlman

Feedback is one person feeding back his perceptions of another person so that the second person can make his social or work behaviour more effective. Sometimes, feedback is called «criticism», but this seriously limits its meaning. Feedback can help an individual become more effective in his interpersonal relations, on-the-job behavior, and task accomplishment. If we know how other people see us, we can overcome problems in how we communicate and interact with them. Without feedback, the impact of our behaviour on others may never be fully or accurately known. Of course, there are two sides to feedback: giving it and receiving it.

Receiving Feedback

Although feedback has many potential benefits, it also seems clear that it does not always work in practice. Some people experience feedback as pure criticism and don't want to hear it. Others see it as spiritually crushing; a confirmation of their worthlessness. Still others only want to hear praise, but nothing that might suggest imperfection; they may feel grateful because of the attention or intention to help but

also hurt and resentful because they sense that they are being criticized and that such a behaviour that is comfortable for them is being attacked.

That's not the case for everyone, of course. Some people are willing to accept feedback and seek it out, even if it is sometimes disturbing, because they believe they can grow from it.

It comes down to whether you believe feedback will harm you or benefit you. This is not to say that we should always have to accept feedback or the manner in which it is sometimes given. We all have the right to refuse feedback and we can expect feedback to be given in a respectful and supportive manner.

But for every positive and open way of accepting feedback there's an opposite; a negative and closed manner which pushes feedback away and keeps it at bay.

Negative / Closed style

Defensive: defends personal actions, frequently objects to feedback given.

Attacking: verbally attacks the feedback giver, and turns the table.

Denies: refutes the accuracy or fairness of the feedback.

Disrespectful: devalues the speaker, what the speaker is saying, or the speaker's right to give feedback.

Closed: ignores the feed-

back, listening blankly without interest.

Inactive listening: makes no attempt to really «hear» or understand the meaning of the feedback.

Rationalizing: finds explanations for the feedback that dissolve any personal responsibility.

Patronizing: listens, but shows little interest.

Superficial: listens and agrees, but gives the impression that the feedback will have little actual effect.

Positive / Open style

Open: listens without frequent interruption or objections. Makes eye-contact with the speaker. Asks questions to make sure he / she understands what is being said.

Responsive: willing to hear what is being said without turning the table.

Accepting: accepts the feedback, without denial. Take all criticism as «legitimate» and then move to assess its merit. Ask for more details on points he/she doesn't agree with.

Respectful: recognizes the value of what is being said and the speaker's right to say it.

Engaged: interacts appropriately with the speaker and asks for clarification when needed.

THE ART OF GIVING AND RECEIVING FEEDBACK

Active listening: listens carefully and tries to understand the meaning of the feedback.

Thoughtful: tries to understand the personal behavior that has led to the feedback.

Interested: is genuinely interested in getting feedback.

Sincere: genuinely wants to make personal changes if appropriate.

Giving feedback

The other end of feedback is giving it. How you deliver feedback is as important as how you accept it, because it can be experienced in a very negative way. To be effective you must be tuned in, sensitive, and honest when giving feedback. Just as there are positive and negative approaches to accepting feedback, so too are there ineffective and effective ways to give it.

Ineffective/Negative delivery

Attacking: hard hitting and aggressive, focusing on the weaknesses of the other person.

Indirect: feedback is vague and issues hinted at rather than addressed directly.

Insensitive: little concern for the needs of the other person.

Disrespectful: feedback is demeaning and insulting.

Judgemental: feedback is evaluative, judging personality or

attitude rather than behavior.

General: feedback is aimed at broad issues which cannot be easily defined. Use of words such as «all», «always», «never» etc.

Poor timing: given long after the prompting event, or at the worst possible time.

Impulsive: feedback is given thoughtlessly, with little regard for the consequences.

Selfish: feedback meets the giver's needs, rather than the needs of the other person.

Effective/Positive delivery

Supportive: delivered in a non-threatening and encouraging manner.

Direct and clear: the focus of the feedback is clearly stated, accurate and fair.

Sensitive: feedback is delivered with sensitivity to the needs of the other person.

Considerate: feedback is intended to not insult or demean. Use of «I» statements.

Descriptive: feedback focuses on behavior that can be changed, rather than personality or attitude. Don't try to guess why a person did something - concentrate on what they did or what has happened. Avoid all comments about him/her as a person. Make sure you are communicating a feeling rather than blaming.

Specific: feedback is focused on specific behaviors or events. Providing specific examples helps the recipient understand exactly what the issue is.

Good place: avoid giving negative feedback in public. It is a good rule to criticize in private and praise in public.

Healthy timing: feedback should be given as close to the prompting event as possible and at an opportune time. Avoid historical references. Present information on 'here and now» as opposed to «there and then».

Thoughtful: well considered rather than impulsive. Avoid undue emotion - don't lose your cool or patience - over reacting will produce defensiveness. Talk when you are calm and objective.

Helpful: feedback is intended to be of value to the other person. It refers to behavior that can be changed.

In summary, problems with the use of feedback stem from two sources; the difficulty in transmitting messages accurately and the degree of willingness of the recipient to use the transmitted information. Feedback is a must for people who want to have honest relationships. A powerful and important means for communication, feedback connects us, and our behavior, to the world around us.



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