



KANSAS MGMA NEWSLETTER

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Kansas Medical Group Management Association

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President's Message

by Jim Lockhart

A word to the membership

The spring meeting promises to be a very worthwhile experience for all. The Breakout sessions will present some very timely topics. Golenski, Annison and Weisberg are all excellent and entertaining speakers. Hope to see you there!



to remember that all of us deal with illness and death in different ways. It becomes a very personal matter. I would encourage all my fellow managers to re-visit your Personnel Policies and look at your formal policies for benefits continuation for the terminally-ill / non-working employee, benefits for family members, Long-Term / Short-Term disability, life insurance and health insurance, funeral and bereavement time for fellow employees and grief counseling. If these policies do not exist, you may want to seek legal advice and incorporate these policy ideas into your personnel policy manual.

Our organization also conducts yearly training seminars on Estate and Personal Financial Planning which have been most helpful for employees.

As for my own situation, I am learning to be sensitive to the needs of my fellow employee knowing that this individual is making every effort to perform her job responsibilities despite her debilitating illness.

A Note From The Editor

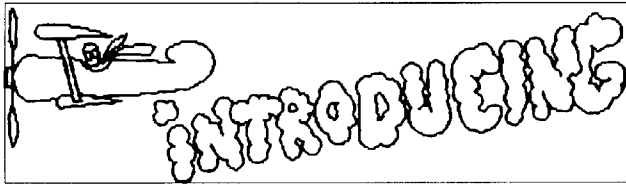
by Meg Payne

An Editorial - The Terminally-Ill Employee

A few weeks ago, I learned that a fellow employee was dying of cancer. That same day I received a survey from a fellow MGMA member asking for information about how our clinic deals with the terminal illness and the death of an employee. Faced with this situation, I began to realize that for 15 years I have seen all kinds of illness and even death of a patient - but never a fellow employee. I am fortunate to work for an organization that has formal policies regarding this situation. Our organization also has a crisis debriefing and counseling team available for all kinds of traumatic situations. It is also important



Directories will be
available at the
Spring meeting for
distribution.



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Versatility packs punch in today's workplace

Contrary to the old proverb, you can be a jack of all trades—and still have a mastery of many. In fact, in today's climate of downsizing, belt-tightening, increased competition, and the quest for greater productivity, *versatility* is a prime workplace virtue.

"The more things an employee can do for the company, and by that I mean competence in a variety of tasks, the more valuable that worker is," says Chicago-based workplace-productivity consultant Howard Clauser. "Few of today's offices, shops, classrooms, and factory floors are closed-loop systems, and not many positions occupy narrow-range niches. Nobody just pushes the same button over and over for eight hours. Almost every job description encourages worker versatility."

"The requirement might be something as basic as using both a typewriter and a computer, or acting as backup for a colleagues," Clauser continues. "Or a job might demand skills in separate disciplines, such as preparing annual budgets, reports, and presentations."

Even if you're already versatile, he suggests constant expansion of skills and tasks. "Being able to handle many different tasks in your department might not make you indispensable," he says, "but it will make you important. Versatility will make you a well-regarded resource. And it will show up in your performance reviews." Versatility also:

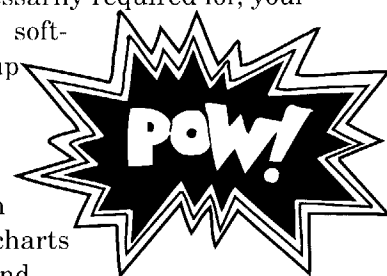
- **boosts morale and combats boredom.** For some workers, just knowing that they have extra skills provides a feeling of security. Actually putting those skills into practice enriches performance and adds to one's personal productivity.

- **makes job changes and promotions easier.** The demonstrated ability to perform a variety of tasks makes you a likelier candidate for promotion. It facilitates upward and lateral career moves.

- **enhances efficiency.** The ability to switch, share, and trade tasks makes teams more efficient and enhances quality control. This principle is even recognized on today's auto-assembly lines, where few workers repeat the same task shift after shift.

Here are some tips to increase your versatility:

- **Take advantage of training.** With your boss's approval, take company-sponsored courses that are related to, but not necessarily required for, your current job. Learn new software programs. Read up on market trends. Although basic word processing is all that your job requires, learn how to use and create charts and spreadsheets. Attend lunchtime lectures and other seminars sponsored by your human resources department.



- **Learn.** Most local community colleges offer low-cost classes on everything from time management to auto repair. Check out the local library, too. It has hundreds of books on a myriad of topics from which you can teach yourself.

- **Volunteer.** If you have time, ask if you can help coworkers on projects that you'd normally not be asked to tackle. If a coworker is taking vacation or extended leave, ask to handle tasks in their absence.

- **Network.** Use coffee-break time, lunch hours, and informal conversations to share ideas with coworkers and learn about what they do best. Then, follow their lead.

- **Advertise.** Show your willingness to learn new things. Let your boss know that you want to expand your horizons. Suggest areas where your expertise might help.

Embracing the values of versatility will allow you to get out of the "same-old, same-old" rut and enhance your stature and productivity. If you do, the sky's the limit.

—Charles Pratt

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Kansas Medical Group Management Association

