

APICS Sacramento

The Educational Society for Resource Management

Issue 8 Volume 14

www.apicsacramento.com

March, 1999

"Career Management: What's Going On And Are You Prepared?"

Tuesday, March 16, 1999

Tony Winckowski – Executive Search Consultant

Each month, the EDD tells us we are at a record low for unemployment. While at the same time, we read or hear about another major downsizing in the Sacramento Area. What's really going on? How did we get here? What does the future hold?

This month, we take a look at unemployment trends, some tools and tips for job searches, and how to ensure that we as Resource Management Professionals are in control of our careers.

As a Search Consultant (a.k.a. Recruiter or "Head Hunter"), Mr. Winckowski has met hundreds of bright professionals who were simply unaware of how to market or "sell" themselves when it comes to looking for a job or making a career move. Usually, with some guidance and minor changes, these professionals can become premier candidates for future job opportunities.

Our speaker will address such issues as:

- ◆ Hiring bonuses, what are they and how do you get one.
- ◆ If you were told today that your position was being eliminated, what should you do?
- ◆ What are the best ways to market your abilities?
- ◆ How do you take charge of your career?

Additionally, our speaker will help you get that first interview by discussing:

- ◆ Resume writing
- ◆ Cover letters
- ◆ References
- ◆ Maximizing your job search

This informative presentation will try to take the mystery out of some of the most important, yet difficult tasks we all face, as well as provide tips to give you an edge over the competition.

ABOUT THE SPEAKER

Mr. Winckowski has more than 5 years experience in the professional staffing industry. From minimum wage temporary personnel to six-figure executives, Mr. Winckowski has been involved with every facet of the employment world.

Mr. Winckowski has seen literally thousands of resumes, interviewed hundreds of candidates, and performed thousands of reference checks. He has also provided numerous workshops for the unemployed.



RSVP by Friday, March 12, 1999

To RSVP for this dinner meeting, please call (916) 650-8660 and provide the attendee's name, company and telephone number or fax/email this information to Brenda Marsh at fax (916) 448-5847 email: brcben@aol.com.

5:30	Registration	\$22.00	Members
6:00	Dinner	\$25.00	Non-members
7:00	Membership meeting	\$18.00	Full-time students
7:20	Presentation	\$5.00	Speaker only

Presentation will be held at the Hungry Hunter Restaurant on Bercut Ave., Sacramento.
Please call the Hungry Hunter at 916-441-2844 for directions.



President's Message

As highlighted in last month's newsletter, there are many changes occurring in APICS. Several of these are: the relocation of Society headquarters; new pricing for certification exams; changes to the instruction materials; possible change in membership dues; and, as of April 1st, different testing sites for the certification exams.

While APICS Society hasn't yet published exact test sites, they have listed city locations. According to Society, there will be a site in Sacramento and we will notify you as soon as we learn the address. Additionally, Assessment Systems, Inc. (the new testing supplier), will be providing several convenient services such as Saturday and evening exam times and the ability to register any day of the week.

I wish to welcome our newest members: David Hall, Alan Holst, Crystal Howell, Jennifer Harrington, Anand Padhye, Henry Shen, Vinay Shenoy, and Rebecca Woodard. WELCOME! I hope to see you all at our next meeting. If I, or any of the board can be of assistance, don't hesitate to call.

Beverly Paul, CPIM
President

We're Achieving Our Productivity Targets, But Where Are Earnings?

By Ed C. Mercado, CPIM

It is unfortunate that many so called "incentive" or "motivation" systems are based on measures that produce different results from those originally intended. For example, many companies have productivity measures such as labor hours per ton which are used to determine bonuses or raises for employees. These companies frequently establish elaborate computerized reporting systems to then track productivity and dispense incentives as required. Personnel are made aware of the importance of the measure and its' affect on their pay. Daily, weekly, monthly and year-to-date reports and charts, analyzed by department, supervisor, manager and plant are posted for all to see. In time, everyone is duly indoctrinated on the importance of hours per ton. However, in the process of focusing on just one measure, other measures are overlooked. Also forgotten is the fact that a measure is meaningful only in concert with other operational measures.

When excessive focus is placed on one measure, other measures tend to suffer. For example, over emphasis on a single productivity measure such as labor hours per ton may result in excess waste and rework because workers are expected to work too quickly. Preventive maintenance of production equipment may be repeatedly postponed in a misguided attempt to bolster productivity. Interdepartmental conflict may also increase as workers shortcut established procedures in order to make the numbers look good. Labor hours and product volumes are soon watched so closely that workers are laid off at the slightest hint of a slow down. Stockrooms become confused and cluttered as they struggle to ship product while disregarding normal housekeeping protocols. Eventually employee morale deteriorates and chaos reigns as the organization drives to increase productivity by reducing labor hours per ton. And it may indeed succeed...for a time.

But wait! Why are orders still being shipped out incomplete or late? Why are some materials constantly misplaced, lost or damaged in the stockroom or at the staging area? Why are some inventory items piling up while we regularly run out of needed material? Why are accident rates increasing? And why are earnings way below target?

The answer is that eventually the blind pursuit of a single measure takes its toll on the organization as gains initially realized are soon reversed. Indeed, pursuit of a single measure without complementary measures will do more harm than good to the organization as a whole.

Organizations need not work to tens or hundreds of measures to be successful, but they shouldn't focus on only a single measure either. A meaningful blend of 10 to 15 measures should be more than adequate to track the health of the organization and provide a solid foundation for a realistic and effective incentive program. Such an approach will help guide the organization into the future with much less pain and stress on the part of the employees who are, after all, the firm's most valuable assets.

Board Of Director Elections

If you're interested in participating in the Sacramento chapter of APICS, now's your chance! Nominations will be accepted between now and May 1st with elections being held May 4th. To nominate someone (or yourself), simply contact any board member and indicate the position title and name of the candidate. It's that simple. We look forward to hearing from you soon!

Maybe Amtrak Could Learn A Few Things From APICS

By Karen Hess, CPIM, CIRM

Two or three times a year, I travel from Sacramento to Fresno to do APICS-related presentations for the San Joaquin Valley Chapter. In trying to keep costs to a minimum, I ride the Amtrak San Joaquin.

For a \$48 round trip price, Amtrak can deliver me from point to point taking only 15 minutes longer than if I drove myself.

The problem is that while the throughput time is great, the on-time delivery leaves something to be desired.

In January I had the opportunity to travel round trip via Amtrak on two consecutive weekends. Out of 4 trips, 3 were late leaving by anywhere from 30-60 minutes.

Is Amtrak managing to the right metrics? Apparently not.

An editorial in the Fresno Bee in September, 1998 spoke to the dismal performance in the on-time delivery category and the public's desire for a more dependable mass transit solution.

With the performance issue well documented, I put on my APICS hat and observed the operations to see what types of issues were affecting on-time performance.

One of the late trips was due to a late arrival from Martinez to Stockton. Since I didn't have any way to look back upstream to figure out what went wrong, I couldn't strategize on that one.

But, when I came back on Sundays, I deliberately chose the first train out in the wee hours of the morning. My family and friends can attest to the fact that waking up in the morning is not the highlight of my day so this was the right frame of mind I needed to be in to examine the process failures with a critical eye.

On both Sundays, the train leaving Fresno was delayed due to a late bus connection. On the second Sunday, the train was further delayed at Merced with a late bus connection from Yosemite.

OK, I've got something here. Why were the busses late? Nope, the weather was fine. Negative on a major accident too. So, it boils down to either the bus was late getting to the pickup point, or the driver waited for someone else who was late.

Well, experience and intuition tell me that the most probable answer is that the bus was late getting to the pickup point. Now, let's drill down further.

Amtrak subcontracts connecting bus service to local bus companies. Do they have too many subcontractors to manage the program effectively? Are they measuring their subcontractors on a regular basis and making sound contracting decisions based upon performance? Is the payment schedule pegged to performance?

Of course, I don't know the answers to those questions. But if the management and scheduling staff at Amtrak were members of APICS, they could access the vast educational resources APICS provides and implement proven techniques to manage the business better.

They would learn about performance measurement, establishing customer service objectives, scheduling techniques, integrating systems and technologies, using statistical techniques to measure variability and establish safety leadtime, managing suppliers, tools to solve complex logistical problems, evaluating the cost of alternative solutions, and more.

As I waited for the train on the final leg of my last trip to Fresno, I ducked between the phone booth and newspaper vending machines to light my cigarette out of the wind. I happened to look down and notice that someone (not a dog) left a calling card sometime during the night. "My thoughts exactly" I said to myself.

But then I had a better thought. On my next Amtrak trip, I'll leave some APICS literature.

Latest CPIM Test Statistics

The following are the pass/fail percentages from all CPIM exams (national and international) taken between July 1, 1998 and September 31, 1998.

	<u>Pass</u>	<u>Fail</u>
Basics	87%	13%
Inventory Management	73%	27%
Just-In-Time	73%	27%
Master Planning	78%	22%
Material & Capacity Planning	66%	34%
Production Activity Control	74%	26%
Systems & Technologies	84%	16%

The Cover Letter

By Tony Winckowski, Executive Search Consultant

Last month we talked about the importance of having a strong resume. This month we take a look at the "Cover Letter" that should accompany your resume.

What is a Cover Letter? It is a one-page document that allows you to tailor your resume and market yourself to the specific job you are interested in. When done correctly, the cover letter allows you to focus the attention of the reader to your strengths. "I have 10 years of Production Planning experience in the Electronics Industry." It also allows you to explain what is not on the resume. "My last two positions were eliminated due to company restructuring after being purchased." Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute said it best, "Remember that your cover letter is, in a very real sense, a schematic of yourself. It reflects your personality, your attention to detail, your communication skills, your enthusiasm, and your intellect."

The Basics:

Cover letters are broken down into The Heading, The Body and The Conclusion. Remember, that in some cases you will need to expand an area, but a good rule of thumb is "**Simple is Better**". Be clear, be concise and remember to focus on the needs of the company or hiring manager, not you own.

The Heading: It is very important to address your letter to a specific individual, preferably the hiring manager. You may have to do some research, but this is very important and well worth it. **Always** ask for the proper spelling of the contact. I know of some hiring managers who will place candidates that misspell or incorrectly identify the contact person into the "Do not interview" pile.

The Body: The first paragraph should mention the job you are applying for and how you came to learn about the opening. A general qualification statement can also be included. The next one to three paragraphs should focus on the most relevant items and strengths. Remember to focus on what is going to benefit the company. The more specific and relevant you are, the stronger the cover letter.

The Conclusion: A brief call to action, requesting an interview or further contact, without making demanding statements. If you make a comment about following up, then make sure you do it. I can not tell you how many people fail on this promise.

The Errors:

Here are some of the most common blunders... avoid them and strengthen your cover letter.

Appearance: Not using a standard business letter format, not using a word processor/printer.

Stationary: The use of inappropriate stationary is rampant. Use white or ivory with no graphics.

Typos: Especially in the age of spellchecker, it is easy to have 'asses', instead of 'assess'. Proofread!

Erroneous Information: Always verify the accuracy of your information. Bad info will knock you out.

Misrepresentation: Never misrepresent yourself, it could be grounds for termination.

Self-centered: Keep from shouting "Me, Me, Me" and keep the sentences starting with 'I' to a minimum.

Confessed Shortcomings: Focus on your strengths, do not emphasize your weaknesses.

Cliches: Be clear and concise. There is no room for fluff, and it is usually unwelcome.

Jokes or Anecdotes: Avoid unless you know the person and know it will be well received or appropriate.

Personal information: Leave it out unless it is relevant for the position. Do not invite discrimination.

Next month, we take a close look at "References."



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Tony Winckowski, Executive Search Consultant
(916) 771-6886 • fax (916) 771-6808
tonyw@certified-personnel.com

Newsletter Editor: Adam Thomas CPIM, CIRM

APICS Sacramento Calendar

March

- 2 Board meeting at Lyons on I-5 & Richards Blvd.
- 23 Professional development meeting. Presenter and topic to be announced.

April

- 6 Board meeting at Lyons on I-5 & Richards Blvd.
- 20 Professional development meeting. Presenter and topic to be announced.

May

- 4 Board meeting at Lyons on I-5 & Richards Blvd.
- 18 Professional development meeting. Presenter and topic to be announced.

CSUS Materials Management Certification Class Schedules

The 1999 Spring and Summer classes for the Certificate program are as follows:

- ◆ Inventory Management – Feb. 24 – March 24
- ◆ Production Activity Control – April 12 – May 5
- ◆ Just In Time – May 24 – June 21
- ◆ Systems & Technologies – July 7 – Aug. 2
- ◆ Purchasing – Aug. 16 – Sept. 13

For more information, please contact Jackie Branch at (916) 278-4433 ext. 115.

1999 Examination Schedules

Basics of Supply Chain Management:

- ◆ April 3rd - May 15th 1999
- ◆ Aug. 21st – Oct. 2nd 1999
- ◆ Nov. 22nd – Dec. 30th 1999

All other CPIM modules are offered throughout the year.

CIRM exam schedules (excluding IEM) are:

- ◆ March 6th – April 2nd 1999
- ◆ July 17th – Aug. 14th 1999
- ◆ Oct. 4th – Oct. 30th 1999

IEM schedule:

- ◆ May 21nd – May 22nd 1999
- ◆ Nov. 19th – Nov. 20th 1999

All CPIM exams are offered at Sylvan Technology Centers (see inset).

Sylvan Technology Center
11715 Fair Oaks Blvd.
Fair Oaks, CA
(916) 961-7323

CPIM Certification Corner: 5th of a Series

By Ed C. Mercado CPIM

You can improve your psyche when sitting for the exams by becoming familiar with the various question formats used in the tests. Running into an unfamiliar question format while sitting for the exam can be a real shocker. To avoid this, spend time reviewing the Sample Test (per subject). These booklets are good to have as they present a variety of question formats, test your knowledge of the subject matter and are about as close as you can get to the real exam questions.

Here are several examples of question formats you should be familiar with before taking the exams:

1. The incomplete statement or question followed by four possible answers.

Example: The key to a successful production plan is

- (A) capacity requirements planning
- (B) material requirements planning
- (C) dynamic priority planning
- (D) adequate production capacity

(The correct answer is D)

2. All but one of the answers are correct.

Example: Group technology identifies the similarities among all of the following EXCEPT:

- (A) costs
- (B) parts
- (C) shapes
- (D) processes

(The correct answer is A)

3. Questions that ask for an evaluation of the most or least appropriate answer. The correct answer being the accepted choice according to the APICS body of knowledge.

Example: Which of the following lot-sizing calculations would be LEAST sensitive to changes in unit cost?

- (A) least total cost
- (B) Period order quantity
- (C) Part period balancing
- (D) Lot-for-lot

(The correct answer is D)

More information and tips in the next issue. In the meantime, if you need any other information before the next issue, contact me at: emercado@wr1000.mbg.com. We'll endeavor to give you an answer or point you in the right direction within 24 hours

APICS Sacramento Board Members

PRESIDENT	Beverly Paul, CPIM	916/984-9554	
EXECUTIVE VP	Karen Hess, CPIM,CIRM	916/785-8292	karen_hess@hp.com
VP EDUCATION	Ree McLaughlan	916/574-2265	rmclaugh@dgs.ca.gov
TREASURER	Randy Beck	916/783-5267	beck@garlic.com
SECRETARY	Melanie Hoots, CPIM	916/785-0875	melanie_hoots@hp.com
DIR at LARGE	Glen Lewis	209/466-9011x442	dmwrpro1@ix.netcom.com
PROGRAMS	Brenda Marsh, CFM	916/447-8205	BRCBEN@aol.com
MEMBERSHIP DIR	Ed Mercado, CPIM	209/727-5504 x13	emercado@wr1000.mbg.com
COMPANY COORD	Tony Rushing	530/533-2738	
PUBLICITY	Adam Thomas, CPIM,CIRM	916/645-4980	adamt@artesynsolutions.com
JOB OPPORTUNITIES	Lee Miller	916/315-5021	javalee@ns.net
STUDENT LIAISON	Bill Lodholz	530/666-2493	lodholz@dcn.davis.ca.us
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SOCIETY WEB SITE: www.apics.org

CHAPTER VOICE MAIL: 916/650-8660
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PO BOX 13249
SACRAMENTO CA 95813