



COLUMBIA BASIN SECTION 614 NEWSLETTER

Serving Central and Southeastern Washington
and Northeastern Oregon

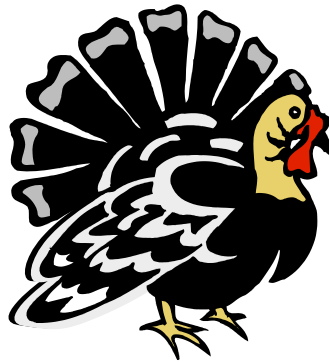


Issue 07-12

December 2007

CHAIR'S CORNER

Happy Thanksgiving! I hope everyone will have a joyous holiday season this year.



November's dinner meeting had a great attendance. There was a lot of interest in Kellie Hamblin's topic on health care. Seemed like we hardly let her get through her prepared notes, there was a lot of interaction, questions, and discussion. Kellie did discuss new government initiatives striving to improve quality of health care in the nation, and I know I found that discussion to be news to me.

The December meeting will be a holiday meeting, held jointly with the National Management Association and other professional societies. Last year's get together was fun, and was good to network with the large number of attendees with varied interests and backgrounds. I hope you will join us in December.

We've settled into a routine of posting this newsletter to the Section website (www.asq614.org). We will send out an email notification to all members letting you know that a new newsletter is available. You will also receive each month an email dedicated to announcing the next month's meeting topic and location.

The Quality Progress magazine is being revamped starting in January to improve its look and feel. Content is promised to remain of a similar nature. The QP will also be available in a specific internet version, on a new website of its own. There will also be a new feature in the electronic version, with "Experts" answering various questions raised by readers. For more information, please see the ASQ website at www.asq.org.

Our Regional Director, Tim Koester, has announced that ASQ will be cooperating with the Washington State

Quality Award (WSQA). The four Washington ASQ sections (including our own) has been asked to help spread the word about WSQA. We've had dinner meeting topics about WSQA in the past, and some informal spreading of the word, but Tim would like us to name an "ambassador" from the section to formalize the relationship. Here is a good opportunity for a volunteer job for a Section member to join in on, and it is of well-defined scope and you don't have to necessarily live in the Tri Cities to fulfill the role.

As I related last month, the time for nominations for Section Officers for next year is upon us. If anyone is interested in being Section Chair, Vice Chair, Treasurer, or Secretary, please drop me an email or let any officer know, or let Dennis Arter (the "Auditguy") know. Dennis is our nominations chair.

Again, have a Happy Thanksgiving.

-Steve Prevette
509-544-9475
Prevette@owt.com

VICE CHAIR'S CORNER

Jo Haberstok
Fluor Hanford
Vice Chair, ASQ Section 614

Tell me about it, huh? I'm referring to the transcript from Fred & Lyna's radio show. I can really relate to the topic of customer service and, probably like most of you, have been on the receiving end of some very good customer service and some very poor customer service.



I had one of those experiences at a local retail store recently that makes a person go "You've got to be kidding me!?!". (I won't reveal the name of the store, because I have provided feedback to them, and I'm planning on giving them another chance to show me they're worth going back to.)

I was shopping in the Yakima area a few weeks ago and I saw something I felt I really needed for the upcoming colder months of winter. It was in a color I really wanted (navy blue) and it was on sale for \$40. I picked it up and was going to buy the item, but found a very long line of frustrated-looking customers at the customer service/cashier area and only one sales associate working there. I didn't have the desire or patience to wait in that long line, and I figured since they also had a store in the Tri-Cities I would be able to purchase the item locally. I went in to the local store a few days later to buy the item, but I couldn't find it or anything like it in the store.

The next day, I had a bright idea and decided to call the Yakima store to see if they could have the item I wanted either sent to the local store where I could pick it up or else directly to my home address. The woman I spoke with on the phone was very friendly and helpful and said they could do an intra-store transfer and have it brought to the Tri-Cities store very easily, but that I would need to go to the local store and pay in advance. So I made a trip back to the store after work that day. I explained what I needed and what the Yakima associate had told me about the intra-store transfer process. The local associate said she did not know anything about such a process; I gave her the Yakima person's name and she called the store there, but the other woman had already left for the day. She then called for assistance within the local store. Another associate came over, and he told me "we don't do intra-store transfers." He said they *could* get the item brought from the Yakima store to the Tri-Cities store, but that they would have to charge me an additional \$65 to do so. (The price of the item I wanted was \$40, and it was about the size of a small blanket.) He apparently saw the look of amazement on my face, as he then said that I might be able to find the item on the company's website and could order it that way, where the shipping costs wouldn't be quite so high.

Although not at all happy with what had transpired so far, I gave it some more thought a few days later and, because I really liked the item, I checked the website and found it was available there. It was available in three different colors, including the one I wanted (navy blue). I placed my order for the item. I figured it was still worth the price, even though I had to pay about \$6 for shipping and handling costs and it would take a while to receive. (A lot better than \$65 or having to make an unplanned/unnecessary trip back to Yakima again, right?) The confirmation message indicated the shipment should arrive within 5 to 7 business days.

I got home from work about a week later and the package had arrived. At this point, I had pretty much decided to let go of my earlier frustrations, and I was really excited to open the box and finally be able to enjoy my purchase. I opened the box. And there was the item I had been waiting for - waiting for over two weeks for.

Yes, there was the item ... in bright red. The packing/order slip in the box clearly said "navy blue" but what I received was bright red.

The return policy indicated that items could be returned to the local store, but that shipping costs would not be refunded, so I then had to send a message to website's customer service center to get something in writing about how to get my shipping costs refunded, since this was clearly their error. Of course, nothing ever seems to be easy, at least not for the customer. They told me that after returning the item to the store and getting the item cost credited back to my account, I would then need to contact them (the website) again and then they would credit the shipping cost.

I took the item back to the store the following weekend. And it was another near-nightmare experience. None of the sales associates at the customer service desk could figure out how to credit my website purchase back to my account; they called over the store loudspeaker several times for "assistance" but no one came to help. They then called by telephone to what I assume was the main office of the store, and were told someone would come to help. We all waited. And waited. After a considerable amount of time, their phone rang - someone had finally been found who might be able to help. But to get that help, I (reminder - the customer) would have to traipse through the whole store to get to their office area and then into their Human Resources office. Then, after another 5-10 minutes, with three of them using what I think was just plain old trial and error methodology, they finally figured out how to credit my account for the purchase price. I later sent an email to the website folks and eventually got everything credited back properly.

As I indicated at the start of this column, I am still waiting to see what (if any) further response I will get concerning the feedback I have provided to this company about communications, associate training and customer service overall.

By the time you read this, the holiday shopping season will be well underway. But, never fear ... I am ready once again to face the many challenges out there!

Happy Holidays!

-Jo Haberstk

"Although your customers won't love you if you give bad service, your competitors will."

- Kate Zabriskie

EDITOR'S RANT

Rich Higgins

CH2M HILL, Hanford Inc.

I apologize for being tardy with the newsletter, again. It's a long story, but I have been traveling around the country on a special project. Things should return to "normal" now that it's over.

-Rich Higgins



What Ever Happened To Customer Service?

by: Fred Hueston

NOTE: Fred Hueston and Lyna Farkas host a show titled "Growing Your Business" which can be heard on the Las Vegas based All Talk Radio Network. This article/transcript is from one of their shows.

The other day I went into drug store and was standing at the counter to ask the gal where I could find a certain type of aspirin. She was on the phone, apparently talking to someone she knew. She looked up at me and didn't even acknowledge I was there waiting. The pharmacist was busy filling an order and totally ignored me. I waited until she was off the phone, and she walked over to the pharmacist and then left out the back door, leaving me standing there. Needless to say, I will never go back there again. My question is; "What ever happen to customer service?"

Fred: You're not alone, my friend. I have seen this same trend over and over again, not only in retail stores but throughout the business world.

Lyna: I have too. Just the other day I was getting a cup of coffee at one of those fancy coffee shops and the guy behind the counter couldn't even get my drink order straight.

Fred: Gone are the days when you would walk into a store and they would fall over backwards to help you out.

Lyna: You can say that again, Fred.

Fred: I know I have been starting to seek out businesses that are more customer friendly. A good example of this is a little drug store in town that I now visit. When I go in there they call me by name and go out of there way to be friendly.

Lyna: This is just the type of service that needs to be brought back into business.

Fred: And if one is smart they will make sure that they implement this type of service.

Lyna: We all like to be recognized and treated with respect

Fred: And the business that provides this type of service is one that will succeed.

Lyna: It's a great way to grow your business and doesn't require a lot of effort.

Fred: I don't care if own a restaurant, a retail store or even if you do business over the internet, good friendly customer service is key and you will be growing your business in no time.

Lyna: What are some of the things business can do to make sure they are providing great customer service?

Fred: The first thing would be to listen to your customer. Don't make assumptions, and learn to develop a good ear. Don't be afraid to ask the customer what they need or what you can do to improve.

Lyna: Remember your customers don't purchase a product or a service - they purchase what makes them feel good.

Fred: This is true, you don't buy a type of car because it's practical, you buy it because it makes you feel special.

Lyna: I would also make an effort to learn your customers' names.

Fred; Nothing is more impressive when you walk into a store and they know you by name. That makes me feel special almost all the time.

Lyna: Constantly strive to improve your product, the services that you offer, etc.

Fred: And remember to always give more than expected, and the return will be reflected in your bottom line.

Lyna: There are several excellent books out there on customer service and I would suggest that you Google "customer service books" to find them.

Fred: And if you don't do anything else, make sure to thank your customers. Be sincere with your gratitude.

About Fred & Lyna: Fred Hueston and Lyna Farkas host the popular radio show called "Growing Your Business.," which can be heard at www.growingyourbusiness.net. Fred Hueston has written over 30 books and hundreds of articles for nationally recognized magazines, such as This Old House. He has also appeared on HGTV and the Discovery Channel. Lyna Farkas began her career path working as a customer service agent for a corporate airport. She now runs her own decorative painting business and has authored two books on the subject, as well as various magazine articles. She is an experienced promoter and event organizer. Lyna has appeared on radio and TV, including PBS and local news stations, and has taught in various schools around the southeast.



December 12, 2007 Meeting American Society for Quality Columbia Basin Section 614



**NOTE THE DAY/DATE
& PLACE!**
Wednesday,
December 12, 2007



LOCATION:
Red Lion Hanford House
802 George Washington Way
Richland, Washington

5:00 p.m. - Check in / Social /
Silent Auction
with no-host cocktail service

6:30 p.m. - Dinner

7:30 p.m. - More fun - including
silent & live auction and table
gifts)

DINNER BUFFET MENU:

To be announced ...

Cost:

\$ 20 ASQ members
\$ 25 non-members / guests
(Note: there is no charge for
members of MCLDA/NMA;
please indicate at time of
reservation)

NOTE: Costs are a bit more at the
Red Lion in Richland, and our section
is being charged \$25 per dinner. In
the holiday spirit, our section is
picking up the tab on a portion (\$5) of
these costs for **ASQ members**.

Reservations are requested by
December 4. Send an email to
prevette@owt.com with your name,
phone number, company affiliation,
and type of reservation, or call Steve
at 373-9371.

NOTE: All no shows will be billed
unless canceled 48 hours in advance.
For more information about ASQ, our
section, and other upcoming events,
be sure to check our web site at
www.asq614.org/.

Holiday Social Event

*joint meeting with other local organizations
at the Red Lion Hanford House-Richland*

Mid-Columbia Leadership Development Association (NMA Chapter 395)

Project Management Institute (Columbia River Basin Chapter)

Entertainment by Curtis Nettles ... Buffet Dinner ... Silent & Live Auctions

You and your spouse or special friend are cordially invited to join us December 12 for a lively holiday get-together at the Red Lion Hanford House.

The evening will begin at 5 pm with an opportunity to network and meet new people or renew past acquaintances with members of the local MCLDA (formerly NMA) and PMI organizations.



Special entertainment will be provided by vocalist
Curtis Nettles for your listening pleasure during the social hour
as you browse through the many items available and place your
bids on gift baskets, books, gift certificates, and more at the
Silent Auction.*

This is a great opportunity to shop for your friends, co-workers, and family members. Proceeds from the auction fundraiser will go to a local charitable organization.

The buffet line for dinner will open at about 6:30 p.m. Following dinner, there will be more entertainment and possibly a "live" auction of some of the larger donated items.*

Mark your calendar now (and make your reservations soon) for what is sure to be a very enjoyable evening!

* NOTE: The auctions are a fun way to raise money for a worthwhile cause. Proceeds from all items donated by our members/friends and purchased at the auction, will be donated along with monies raised by MCLDA and PMI, to a local charitable organization. If you have connections with any local businesses and are able to obtain some donations for the auction or if you have some items of your own to donate, please contact Jo Haberstock at 509-376-9685 by November 26, so that all items can be included on the bid sheets.

WEBSITES FOR OTHER ASQ SECTIONS

Seattle Section (#606): www.asq-seattle.org
 Spokane Section (#619): www.spokaneasq.org
 Southwest Washington – Vancouver Section (#627):
www.asqswwa.org
 Portland Section (#607): www.asqpdx.com

PUBLICATION INFORMATION

The ASQ Columbia Basin Section 614 newsletter is published on a regular basis to inform members (and potential members!) about Section 614 activities and other news/information we feel may be of value to quality

professionals. To be considered for the next newsletter, input must be received by the 22nd of the month. Publication/Editorial Staff: Rich Higgins (Rich_Higgins@charter.net).

CAREER CONNECTIONS

To be considered for posting in the newsletter, announcements must be submitted by an ASQ member and be of potential service to other members. Announcements may include job postings, training opportunities, or requests for assistance. Due to space limitations, please keep them brief.

2007-2008 SECTION 614 LEADERSHIP TEAM

Section Chair and Publicity	Steve Prevette	Audit	Dave Sandoz
Vice Chair and Programs	Jo Haberstock	Division Liaison, Web Team Lead, Section Historian, and Examining	Dennis Arter
Secretary	Howard Rew		
Newsletter Editor and Treasurer	Rich Higgins	Certification/Recertification	Howard Rew

You can find out more about Section 614, including contact information for Leadership Team members, on our website at www.asq614.org. If you are interested in helping with any of the Section teams, please contact the team lead or an officer. We are always looking for willing volunteers!