

CHARLOTTE CONNECTIONS

Charlotte Chapter - International Association of Administrative Professionals

July /August 2011, Issue 36



International Association of
Administrative Professionals[®]
Charlotte Chapter



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From the President...

Happy July 4th!!!! I hope you all had a happy and safe celebration of our Nation's Independence. It was definitely a time to think, reflect and be grateful for those brave men and women who fought and died so that we can be here today doing what we want, when we want and the way we want with no interference from an oppressive government. It was also a time to be thankful for those men and women currently serving in our military so that we may continue to enjoy those freedoms.

It is time for the Charlotte Chapter to begin a new IAAP year and I am more than excited to be at the helm for the 2011-2012 year. Your Board of Directors and I are planning for a busy year of continued growth, superb programs and unsurpassed networking and camaraderie. I hope you plan to come along with us for one of the best years our Chapter has enjoyed so far in its 65+ year history. If you have any ideas or suggestions you want to share, please feel free to do so. This is your Chapter and this is your Board of Directors. You elected us to serve you and we can do this only if you tell us what you want.

I know Vanessa Jones, CPS/CAP, Certification & Education Director already has some fantastic programs scheduled for this year. You won't want to miss a single meeting because if you do, you'll miss a chance to learn something you can take back to your office that will help you in your job. She is also ready to assist any of our members interested in certification. Let me be the first to recommend that you seriously consider getting your certification if you don't already have it. It is one of the most rewarding things you can do for yourself and for your career. I know that the feeling of pride and self-esteem I feel when I write those six (6) little letters after my name makes the blood, sweat and tears required to certify worth every tense second I spent sitting in a college classroom wondering what on earth I was doing there at my age.



Carolyn Waddell, Membership Director, and her team will be reaching out to each of you during the course of this year. Please stand ready to lend a hand when she calls you. This is your Chapter and only you can make it great. There are a lot of administrative professionals in the Charlotte area who have no idea we even exist, much less who we are. We have to change that and make us the most talked about organization and the one to which every admin wants to belong.

Vicki Nobili, Community Service Director, will be sharing her ideas on community outreach. If you have a favorite outreach, share it with Vicki. If she can make it work, she will. She has some great ideas for our Chapter's involvement in our community and when she makes the call, be sure to answer. Who knows, you may even enjoy participating!

Molly Rose Nass, Media Director, has done a fantastic job with our newsletter this past year. So good in fact, it won the award for best newsletter in the state. Join me in congratulating Molly Rose for that honor. Share your ideas and pertinent articles with her. If you have pictures of members involved in a community project or at one of the IAAP events, share those with her as well. If you have a good time-saving tip we can use in our offices, I know she would enjoy sharing that with the readers.

Amber Smith, Bylaws & Standing Rules Director, will be preparing some changes in our BLSRs that will be shared with the membership later in the year. If you see anything you think needs attention, please share that with Amber. She will be happy to bring your suggestions to the Board of Directors for consideration and if the Board feels the change will be beneficial, it will also be brought to the membership. I highly recommend that you read the North Carolina Division Bylaws & Standing Rules and do the same thing. These articles are the rules by which your Chapter, your Division and your International Boards operate, and all three work for you, the members. If you see something you think needs to be addressed in any of these articles, write it down and get it to Amber.

We will have a new Hospitality Director this year and her name is Shari Cannon. Shari has a very heavy hotel, banquet and catering background and will be a definite asset to our Board as we deal with menus, contracts, etc. all of which concern our membership. Make her feel welcome and be available to answer any questions she may have. I want to thank Karen Roth for the fantastic job she has done for the past couple of years and I want to thank her for agreeing to work with Shari while she gets up to speed. That is what we are all about...helping one another and other admins in our workplace and in our Division.

All the ladies recognized above are the directors appointed to help make the workings of the Chapter run smoothly. If you have not already chosen a committee you think you would enjoy working on, please talk with any of these directors and get involved. You will get so much more out of your membership if you are actively involved in your chapter. There are no small parts or small tasks, only small people.

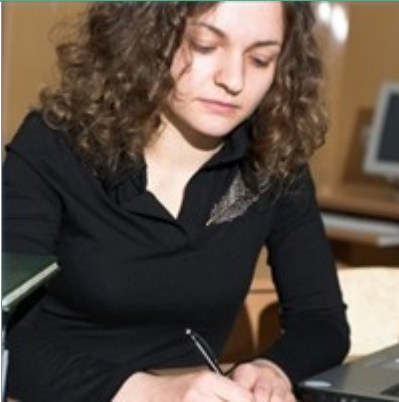
Thank you for the privilege you have afforded me by electing me your president. I am honored and humbled, and I am so looking forward to serving the membership to the best of my ability. The officers you elected and the directors who have been appointed are at your service. We all work for you, the Charlotte Chapter members, so join us as we continue ...

*Advancing Professionalism while Making the Leap to Remarkable in
2011-2012*

How to resolve 5 common grammar problems

By....

Submitted by Lori Westneat



Getting it right makes a difference.
writing image by Petro Feketa from Fotolia.com

Even an expert writer loses credibility and risks being misunderstood by making grammatical errors. It's or its? Blonde or blond? Bombs specialist or bomb specialist? Once-in-a-while or once in a while? Harry and me or Harry and I? Avoid five common grammatical errors in English.

Difficulty: Moderate

Instructions

1 Use a hyphen when combining two or more words to describe a word that follows. The combined words act as a single adjective: a ten-dollar bill, a three-year-

old boy, a once-in-a-lifetime experience.

2. Don't use the hyphen if the describing words come after the word being described: A well-done steak should be well done. An over-the-top presentation was over the top.

3. Use an apostrophe when a letter or group of letters is being left out to form a contraction. Remembering this **simple rule** will help avoid one of the most common grammar dilemmas: it's or its? Use the apostrophe when the word means it is. Leave it out for "The dog wagged its tail."

4. Don't be confused about when to say "Sally and me" or "Sally and I." The simple way to check is to leave the other person out of the sentence altogether. "He spoke to Sally and I" becomes "He spoke to I." "My friends and me went to the concert." becomes "Me went to the concert." If the sentence sounds wrong without the other words, it is wrong.

5. Adjectives are almost always singular. No matter how many dollars are involved, it's a twenty-dollar bill. No matter how many drugs he sells, he is a drug dealer, not a drugs dealer. The exception is when the meaning is unclear: The two countries are engaged in an arms race, not an arm race.

6. Be careful about words that have masculine and feminine forms. A man is blond; a woman is blonde. The man is a fiancé; his **girlfriend** is a fiancée. Francis is normally a man; Frances is a woman. Marion is most commonly a masculine form of the name; Marian is feminine.

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Download Mind Tools as a Printable E-Book: Enjoy Convenient Offline Access to Mind Tools Articles

Submitted by Lori Westneat

The Mind Tools website allows you to download the key articles from the Mind Tools site as an e-book in Adobe Acrobat format. This gives you convenient access to more than 140 career development and thinking skills articles.

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Charlotte Chapter Members are the Biggest Losers!

By Kathy Stewart

Great news! The Charlotte Chapter, IAAP Board of Directors, at their Planning Retreat on June 18, unanimously approved a motion to create the **Charlotte Chapter, IAAP Biggest Loser Team!** Now we can be a part of the lifestyle change for better health that you see, and perhaps envy, each season on the Biggest Loser! Emails have gone to Chapter members outlining the guidelines for the Team.

A request has been made to our NCD President, Sandy Stotesbury, CPS/CAP, to challenge other NCD chapters to join the Charlotte Chapter as we reap the benefits of improved health, relationships, and morale, shop for new wardrobes, experience general overall well-being, and receive the support and encouragement of our fellow IAAP members.

It is not too late to join the Team if you haven't already done so!! If you would like to join, or if you have any questions, please contact Kathy Stewart, CPS/CAP, Biggest Loser Team Coach, at kathy.stewart@goodwillsp.org or at 704.332.0263.

Chapter Celebrations

July

Birthdays

12

Marti Davis

17

Jeannie Strother, CPS

26

Carolyn Waddell

IAAP Anniversaries

2008

Lillian Taylor

2010

Ann Addis

Kay Comer

Molly Rose Nass

Angela Steed

August

IAAP Anniversaries

1985

Karen Burgess

2008

Kelly Hilton, CAP

*Charlotte
Chapter
Meeting*

Leadership is understanding people and involving them to help you do a job. That takes all of the good characteristics, like integrity, dedication of purpose, selflessness, knowledge, skill, implacability, as well as determination not to accept failure. ~Admiral Arleigh A. Burke

Five Most Important Leadership Traits

By Mark Steed

Submitted by Lucy Miller

Some sit and pontificate about whether leaders are made or born. The true leader ignores such arguments and instead concentrates on developing the leadership qualities necessary for success. In this article, we are going to discuss five [leadership traits](#) or leadership qualities that people look for in a leader. If you are able to increase your skill in displaying these five quality characteristics, you will make it easier for people to want to follow you. The less time you have to spend on getting others to follow you, the more time you have to spend refining exactly where you want to go and how to get there.

The five leadership traits/leadership qualities are:

1. **Honest**
2. **Forward-Looking**
3. **Competent**
4. **Inspiring**
- Intelligent**

These five qualities come from Kouzes and Posner's research into leadership that was done for the book *The Leadership Challenge*.

Your skill at exhibiting these five leadership qualities is strongly correlated with people's desire to follow your lead. Exhibiting these traits will inspire confidence in your leadership. Not exhibiting these traits or exhibiting the opposite of these traits will decrease your leadership influence with those around you.

It is important to exhibit, model and display these traits. Simply possessing each trait is not enough; you have to display it in a way that people notice. People want to see that you actively demonstrate these leadership qualities and will not just assume that you have them. It isn't enough to just be neutral. For example, just because you are not dishonest will not cause people to recognize that you are honest. Just avoiding displays of incompetence won't inspire the same confidence as truly displaying competence.

The focus of each of these five traits needs to be on what people see you do—not just the things they don't see you do. Being honest isn't a matter of not lying—it is taking the extra effort to display honesty.

Honesty as a Leadership Quality

People want to follow an honest leader. Years ago, many employees started out by assuming that their leadership was honest simply because the authority of their position. With modern scandals, this is no longer true.

When you start a leadership position, you need to assume that people will think you are a little dishonest. In order to be seen as an honest individual, you will have to go out of your way to display honesty. People will not assume you are honest simply because you have never been caught lying.

One of the most frequent places where leaders miss an opportunity to display honesty is in handling mistakes. Much of a leader's job is to try new things and refine the ideas that don't work. However, many leaders want to avoid failure to the extent that they don't admit when something did not work.

There was a medium size organization that was attempting to move to a less centralized structure. Instead of one location serving an entire city, they wanted to put smaller offices throughout the entire metro area. At the same time, they were planning an expansion for headquarters to accommodate more customers at the main site. The smaller remote offices were heralded as a way to reach more customers at a lower cost and cover more demographic areas.

After spending a considerable amount of money on a satellite location, it became clear that the cost structure would not support a separate smaller office. As the construction completed on the expanded headquarters building, the smaller office was closed. This was good decision making. The smaller offices seemed like a good idea, but when the advantages didn't materialize (due to poor management or incorrect assumptions) it made sense to abandon the model. This was a chance for the leadership to display honesty with the employees, be candid about why things didn't work out as expected, learn from the mistakes and move on.

Unfortunately in this situation the leadership told employees that they had planned on closing the satellite location all along and it was just a temporary measure until construction was completed on the larger headquarters building. While this wasn't necessarily true, it didn't quite cross over into the area of lying. Within a few months the situation was mostly forgotten and everyone moved on. Few of the employees felt that leadership was being dishonest. However, they had passed up a marvelous opportunity to display the trait of honesty in admitting a mistake.

Opportunities to display honesty on a large scale may not happen every day. As a leader, showing people that you are honest even when it means admitting to a mistake, displays a key trait that people are looking for in their leaders. By demonstrating honesty with yourself, with your organization and with outside organizations, you will increase your leadership influence. People will trust someone who actively displays honesty—not just as an honest individual, but as someone who is worth following.

Forward-Looking as a Leadership Trait

The whole point of leadership is figuring out where to go from where you are now. While you may know where you

want to go, people won't see that unless you actively communicate it with them. Remember, these traits aren't just things you need to have, they are things you need to actively display to those around you. When people do not consider their leader forward-looking, that leader is usually suffering from one of two possible problems:

1. The leader doesn't have a forward-looking vision.

The leader is unwilling or scared to share the vision with others.

When a leader doesn't have a vision for the future, it usually because they are spending so much time on today, that they haven't really thought about tomorrow. On a very simplistic level this can be solved simply by setting aside some time for planning, strategizing and thinking about the future.

Many times when a leader has no time to think and plan for the future, it is because they are doing a poor job of leading in the present. They have created an organization and systems that rely too much on the leader for input at every stage.

Some leaders have a clear vision, but don't wish to share it with others. Most of the time they are concerned that they will lose credibility if they share a vision of the future that doesn't come about. This is a legitimate concern. However, people need to know that a leader has a strong vision for the future and a strong plan for going forward. Leaders run into trouble sharing their vision of the future when they start making promises to individuals. This goes back to the trait of honesty. If a leader tells someone that "next year I'm going to make you manager of your own division", that may be a promise they can't keep. The leader is probably basing this promotion on the organization meeting financial goals, but the individual will only hear the personal promise.

An organization I was working with was floundering. It seemed like everyone had a different idea about what they were trying to achieve. Each department head was headed in a different direction and there was very little synergy as small fiefdoms and internal politics took their toll.

Eventually a consulting firm was called in to help fix the problem. They analyzed the situation, talked to customers, talked to employees and set up a meeting with the CEO. They were going to ask him about his vision for the future. The employees were excited that finally there would be a report stating the direction for the organization.

After the meeting, the consultants came out shaking their heads. The employees asked how the important question had gone to which the consultants replied, "we asked him, but you aren't going to like the answer". The CEO had told the consultant that, while he had a vision and plan for the future, he wasn't going to share it with anyone because he didn't want there to be any disappointment if the goals were not reached.

Leaders can communicate their goals and vision for the future without making promises that they may not be able to keep. If a leader needs to make a promise to an individual, it should be tied to certain measurable objectives being met. The CEO in the example didn't realize how much damage he was doing by not demonstrating the trait of being forward-looking by communicating his vision with the organization.

The CEO was forward-looking. He had a plan and a vision and he spent a lot of time thinking about where the organization was headed. However, his fear of communicating these things to the rest of the organization hampered his leadership potential.

Competency as a Leadership Quality

People want to follow someone who is competent. This doesn't mean a leader needs to be the foremost expert on every area of the entire organization, but they need to be able to demonstrate competency.

For a leader to demonstrate that they are competent, it isn't enough to just avoid displaying incompetency. Some people will assume you are competent because of your leadership position, but most will have to see demonstrations before deciding that you are competent.

When people under your leadership look at some action you have taken and think, "that just goes to show why he is the one in charge", you are demonstrating competency. If these moments are infrequent, it is likely that some demonstrations of competency will help boost your leadership influence.

Like the other traits, it isn't enough for a leader to be competent. They must demonstrate competency in a way that people notice. This can be a delicate balance. There is a danger of drawing too much attention to yourself in a way that makes the leader seem arrogant. Another potential danger is that of minimizing others contributions and appearing to take credit for the work of others.

As a leader, one of the safest ways to "toot your own horn without blowing it", is to celebrate and bring attention to team achievements. In this way you indirectly point out your competency as a leader. For example: "Last year I set a goal of reaching \$12 million in sales and, thanks to everyone's hard work, as of today, we have reached \$13.5 million."

Inspiration as a Leadership Trait

People want to be inspired. In fact, there is a whole class of people who will follow an inspiring leader—even when the leader has no other qualities. If you have developed the other traits in this article, being inspiring is usually just a matter of communicating clearly and with passion. Being inspiring means telling people how your organization is going to change the world.

A great example of inspiration is when Steve Jobs stole the CEO from Pepsi by asking him, "Do you want to sell sugar water for the rest of your life, or do you want to change the world?" Being inspiring means showing people the big picture and helping them see beyond a narrow focus and understand how their part fits into the big picture.

One technique to develop your ability to inspire is telling stories. Stories can be examples from your customers, fictitious examples from your customers, or even historical fables and myths. Stories can help you vividly illustrate what you are trying to communicate. Stories that communicate on an emotional level help communicate deeper than words and leave an imprint much stronger than anything you can achieve through a simple stating of the facts.

Learning to be inspiring is not easy—particularly for individuals lacking in charisma. It can be learned. Take note of people who inspire you and analyze the way they communicate. Look for ways to passionately express your vision. While there will always be room for improvement, a small investment in effort and awareness will give you a significant improvement in this leadership trait.

Intelligence as a Leadership Trait

Intelligence is something that can be difficult to develop. The road toward becoming more intelligent is difficult, long and can't be completed without investing considerable time. Developing intelligence is a lifestyle choice. Your college graduation was the beginning of your education, not the end. In fact, much of what is taught in college functions merely as a foundational language for life-long educational experiences.

To develop intelligence you need to commit to continual learning—both formally and informally. With modern advances in distance, education it is easy to take a class or two each year from well respected professors in the evening at your computer.

Informally, you can develop a great deal of intelligence in any field simply by investing a reasonable amount of time to reading on a daily basis. The fact is that most people won't make a regular investment in their education. Spending 30 minutes of focused reading every day will give you 182 hours of study time each year.

For the most part, people will notice if you are intelligent by observing your behavior and attitude. Trying to display your intelligence is likely to be counterproductive. One of the greatest signs of someone who is truly intelligent is humility. The greater your education, the greater your understanding of how little we really understand.

You can demonstrate your intelligence by gently leading people toward understanding—even when you know the answer. Your focus needs to be on helping others learn—not demonstrating how smart you are. Arrogance will put you in a position where people are secretly hopeful that you'll make a mistake and appear foolish.

As unintuitive as it may seem, one of the best ways to exhibit intelligence is by asking questions. Learning from the people you lead by asking intelligent thoughtful questions will do more to enhance your intelligence credibility than just about anything. Of course this means you need to be capable of asking intelligent questions.

Everyone considers themselves intelligent. If you ask them to explain parts of their area of expertise and spend the time to really understand (as demonstrated by asking questions), their opinion of your intelligence will go up. After all, you now know more about what makes them so intelligent, so you must be smart as well. Your ability to demonstrate respect for the intellect of others will probably do more to influence the perception of your intellect than your actual intelligence.

Summary of the Five Leadership Qualities

By consciously making an effort to exhibit these traits, people will be more likely to follow you. These are the most important traits that people look for in their leaders. By exhibiting them on a regular basis, you will be able to grow your influence to its potential as a leader.

Remember that everyone you meet is afraid of something, loves something and has lost something.

~H. Jackson Brown, Jr.

IAAP Charlotte Chapter Member Technology Tip

This Month's tip brought to you by Lucy Miller

Keep your numbers' leading zeros in Excel (2000/2002/2003/2004/2007)

If you need to enter the Zip code 02364 in your Excel spreadsheet, you'll probably throw your hands up when Excel automatically changes the value to 2364. Your Zip code must have five digits, but by default Excel doesn't display leading zeros.

Here's the solution: Create a custom number format with five digits. This custom format forces Excel to display leading zeros.

To create a custom number format that keeps leading zeros intact:

1. Select the cell(s) in which you must show leading zeros, such as the column in which you're storing Zip codes.
2. Press [Ctrl] 1 to open the Format Cells dialog box.
3. Select Custom from the Category list box.
4. In the "Type" text box, enter 00000. This forces Excel to display five digits.
5. Click OK to apply the change.

Now when you type a number in your newly formatted cells that starts with a zero, Excel preserves the zero instead of automatically hiding it.

Book Nook

The Soul of the Firm, by C. William Pollard

Submitted by Maryann Loiser

I had read this book a couple of years ago as part of my company's book club. Many times I did not get much out of the books, but I found great value in this book and thought it fitting to revisit it for this newsletter.

Bill Pollard (Chairman of The ServiceMaster Company) does a wonderful job of emphasizing the fact that running a successful business takes all team members working toward the same goal. "A firm that does not develop its people will not be able to care for its customers" is such a simple statement and yet it is a very powerful proclamation. We must feel good about ourselves and the jobs we are doing in order to have others feel valued.

"We must be people of integrity seeking to do that which is right even when no one is looking and staying committed, whether the test is adversity or prosperity" is another statement that I get a lot out of.

In this book, Bill Pollard predicts that the most successful firms of the future will be the ones that are as aggressive in selling their service as they are in selling their product. He states that unless we build relationships of trust with our customers, we will not establish an environment for long-lasting customer relationships.

Pollard also states that "As you care for your people beyond what they do, they learn to trust you as a leader. They also develop a loyalty to the firm, and they produce."

The book points out the fact that the most important people in any firm are those closest to the customer. The longer a person is with the customer, the better that person understands what the customer needs and wants, and the better able he/she is to fulfill those needs and achieve customer satisfaction.

Pollard states that we must never be too busy to respond to the customer's request, and we must never implement a system so rigid that it does not serve the customer's wants. He goes on to describe that the reality of future growth and opportunity in any firm is simply dependent on the performance of the people of the firm.

For growth to sustain itself, the people of the firm must also grow. We must learn to major in people's strengths. We must reward performance that benefits the customer and doesn't just please the boss. I believe that any performance that benefits the customer WOULD please the boss. He states that for empowered individuals to be effective in a common effort, they must also buy into the mission of the firm.

Pollard goes into detail describing how employers should not "cripple" a firm by not allowing decisions to be made, or ideas implemented.

We learn that we can't deliver quality service to the customer without motivated and trained people.

Pollard talks of leadership. He explains that people working together to perform a common objective need and want effective leadership – leadership they can trust – leadership that will nurture the soul. He tells us to "build on the ordinary and expect the extraordinary". He says to build your team of people around the talents and skills of the ordinary person, not just around the special skills and talents of those few extraordinary people.

I have taken away many valuable points from this book. I believe it will be a valuable tool to refer to for a long time. Sometimes in the "rush" of the day it's easier to just get things done because there are so many things to get done, but this book can serve as a reminder to always take the time to do things in the correct manner.

Chapter Photographs



Members being installed at the chapter meeting

Presenters Chelsea Stroker and Allison White

Announcements,
Articles,
Photographs,
Book Nook
recommendations and
upcoming events are always
welcome!

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