



03
Conference Recap



04
Member Of The Year



05
Upcoming Events

Extras



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Creating Lasting Memories

Happy Holidays! As we head very quickly toward the end of the year, it's often fun and helpful to reflect on the past year and start planning for 2019. From an economic standpoint it's been a pretty good year overall, but side effects to this prosperous economy many of us are experiencing include difficulties finding quality staff.

To offset this tough shortage, rethinking processes within our organization to gain a few extra hours seems to be a common occurrence.

Tools and resources abound for creating efficiencies, from mobile apps to the latest craze in office layouts. Over the years I've come to realize the greatest efficiency comes from working harder to develop great staff members. By our very nature, individuals respond to and recognize when someone commits the time in their day to work with them, talk with them, invest in them. This in turn helps people maintain a better attitude, become more motivated, and as a result, become more efficient. I've seen it in myself repeatedly. I am a self-motivated person, but I know I become more productive when certain factors are part of my regular culture: training, communication, and transparency.

Training seems like a pretty basic thing to do, but when we're busy, training may get reduced in scope or even completely pushed aside so we can "just get the work done". It can be rather stressful for a new employee to be put into a new situation without the knowledge of company policies or even fully understanding how to do the task at hand. . .then be told to "be safe" and "don't mess it up". Many of us can think of a time when we've been in a similar situation. How much time did you waste figuring things out? Now think instead of a time where you were fully trained for a job before doing it completely independently. Are there more positive memories in the second scenario?

There's a balance to the training needed, of course, and sometimes a little bit of "sink or swim"

we all need to experience, but there's a time and place for that. Taking the time to proactively make training part of our culture bodes well on efficiencies through completing the job correctly the first time, without injury, and keeping staff employed longer term. Time is also not wasted on rework, managing an injury, or hiring and training another new employee as a result of increased turnover.

"Communication is not about speaking what we think. Communication is about ensuring others hear what we mean", states Simon Sinek. On the flip side, communication is also understanding the question that isn't being asked. Because communication is a two-way street, it is important to convey and listen to the underlying messages.



Being clear in our communication is important and requires two parties, the messenger and the receiver. If these two are not on the same wavelength, it can create frustrations for both. It is your responsibility as a messenger to keep the receiver engaged. Consider the recipient when relaying a message, stating it in a way that he or she will hear it. Then confirm that your intentions, or message, has been heard.

Consistency of messaging is as important as clarity. The Marketing Rule of 7 states someone needs to hear the message at least 7 times before they'll take action to buy a product. We also only remember 50% of the things we hear! This applies to messaging in other areas of our lives beyond

marketing. Communicating repeatedly with a consistent message helps insure the conveyance across all facets of the company. Committing to messaging can be time consuming, but so very important and rewarding once the message is received.

Transparency, to me, pulls it all together. When everyone knows the plan, the process, or feels like they understand what is happening and why, they're less likely to feel left out and come to their own conclusions, right or wrong, on the happenings within the organization.

I think back to a company owner I worked with at the depths of the recession in 2009. She ran a manufacturing company with large automotive manufacturers as her main customers. When those customers cancelled their contracts and backlog reduced to almost zero, she was forced to look hard at all aspects of her business in an effort to keep the doors open. What she did was amazing. She held a company-wide meeting and let everyone know her plan...full transparency. Everyone understood the situation and, appreciating the shared information, stayed fully engaged to help the company not only survive, but thrive.

I think often of this experience and the overall importance of communication. Rolling these into a well-defined training program takes time to develop and embrace, but for me the outcome is well worth the investment.

I hope you have a wonderful holiday season!

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Chapter News (Past Events)

CFMA Annual Conference Recaps

With scholarship assistance from the CFMA Western Michigan chapter, I had the opportunity this past summer to attend the CFMA National Conference in Miami Beach, Florida. This was my first experience at one of these conferences, and I was very impressed with the event.

The conference offered a wide variety of classes to attend related to the construction industry and overall business and personal development. Each day was busy with classes and opportunities to network with other attendees at the conference. Attendees were open to discussion about their own business practices and offered experiences and advice that could be applied to businesses in our own community. I enjoyed my time at the conference and came home with knowledge that could be put to use in my daily work.

Thanks to the Western Michigan Chapter for making scholarships available to assist members in attending this event!

Danielle Pennings, CPA
Beene Garter LLP



Thanks to a scholarship from the CFMA Western Michigan chapter, I was able to attend the CFMA National Conference in June. This was my first time attending a national CFMA event and the conference exceeded my expectations. I was able to attend breakout sessions on topics such as taxes, cyber security, employee engagement, and more.

A couple of highlights for me were two of the keynote sessions: an economic update from Anirban Basu and “Why Winners Win” presented by Robyn Benincasa. Robyn shared many stories and video clips of successful (and not so successful) teams she has encountered in her career as an adventure racer. Over the course of the conference, I had the opportunity to network with other attendees from chapters all across the country and am looking forward to next year’s conference in Las Vegas!

Sarah Vlasblom, CPA, CCIFP
Beene Garter LLP

Chapter News (Past Events)

04 >

General Membership Meeting Recaps

As a reminder, we have started meeting at the Downtown Market for our general membership meetings.

At **September's General Membership** meeting, the CFMA West Michigan Chapter experienced a mini roundtable session. Each table had topics for discussion that were relevant to the construction industry and construction financial professionals. Topics included cash flow management, contract bullying, and data protection. We hope you had a great chance to meet other members and learn about the benefits of the roundtable groups!

October's General Membership meeting featured a presentation by Mayor Rosalynn Bliss on updates for the City of Grand Rapids. This was a great opportunity to learn more about our community. Thanks to Mayor Bliss for her presentation!

November's General Membership meeting featured a panel discussion on what banks and bonding companies look for in financial statements. Mark Mulville from Hartford Insurance and Andrew Miedema from Mercantile Bank participated in the discussion. Ann Plummer from Beene Garter also helped to facilitate the panel. Thanks to the speakers for their participation!

At the November meeting, the Chapter also presented a check to the Academy of Design and Construction from funds raised at our annual golf outing. In addition, members brought in tool donations for the students. We are excited to continue our relationship with this organization!



JENNIFER MURPHY

Member of the Year Award

Congratulations to Jennifer Murphy of Pleune Service Company who is the 2018

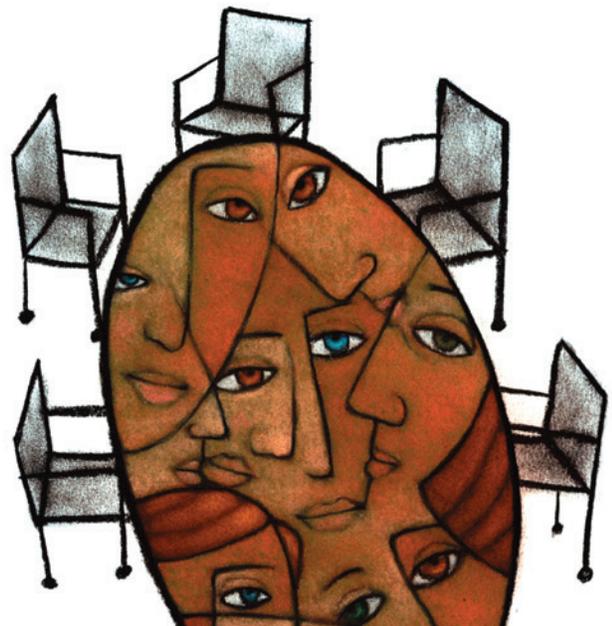
recipient of the LaForest Krantz Member Achievement Award presented at the September General Membership Meeting. Special thanks to Jennifer for all of her hard work and dedication to CFMA!

Roundtable Program

Thank you to those who are involved in the Roundtable program, a great networking and relationship building program. For further information, see Grace Silva.

Reminders

Anyone interested in joining one of our committees? We'd love to have you join! See page 2 for a listing of all of the Western Michigan Chapter committees and committee chairpersons.



Chapter Calendar

05 >



National Conference CFMA's upcoming national annual conference will be held in Las Vegas, Nevada June 1-5, 2019.

Volunteer Opportunities The CFMA is always looking for ways to connect its members to the community. Please let a Board or Promotion Committee know of any volunteer opportunities.

Social Media Remember to like us on social media!

1/17/19

General Membership Meeting

1/24/19

CFMA Fowling Outing

2/21/19

General Membership Meeting

3/8/19

CFMA Grand Rapids Griffins Game

3/21/19

General Membership Meeting

4/25/19

General Membership Meeting

5/16/19

General Membership Meeting



Student Members

We currently do not have any student members and are hoping to increase student involvement by offering an initial free lunch at our General Membership meetings. If you know any students or student groups that may be interested, please email Ann Plummer at aplummer@beenegarter.com

CFMA Western Michigan Chapter Mission Statement

As the source and resource of construction financial management in West Michigan, our Association unites individuals having financial responsibilities in the construction industry. We provide a forum through which the Association's members can meet to network and exchange ideas. We promote and encourage leadership within the construction industry, as well as our Association. We develop and coordinate educational programs dedicated to the purpose of improving the professional standards of the industry and enhancing the value of construction financial managers to their respective companies.

Membership Update

06 >

New General Members:

Nicolle Taylor-Sheafor / Hardman Construction, Inc. / Referred by Randy Zandbergen

Abike Bolaji / W. Soule & Company / Referred by Howard Dembs

Ben DeRyke / Bouma Corporation / Referred by Michelle Euker

Ashley Bowman / W. Soule & Company / Referred by Howard Dembs

Vicki Barnett / Victory21 Enterprises LLC

Andrew Newsted / Owen-Ames-Kimball / Replaced previous member

Terry Reese / Kent Power

Cathy Gould / Construction Specialties of Zeeland

New Associate Members:

Sean Jones / Beene Garter LLP / Referred by Sarah Vlasblom

Sean Teeples / Oliver VanDyk Insurance

Bryan Formsma / VTC Insurance Group / Referred by Ann Plummer

Allison Hancock / Beene Garter LLP / Replaced previous member

Steven Lauber / Trailhead Networks / Replaced previous member

Troy Stressman / Crowe LLP / Referred by Victor Sturgis

Welcome to all of our new members. Thanks to those who participated in our member profiles section. We look forward to seeing more profiles in next quarter's newsletter!

Membership Stats:

General Members	75 members	57%
Associate Members	56 members	43%

Total Chapter Membership 131 members

Know anyone who may like to join the CFMA Western Michigan Chapter? Click [here](#) for a membership application. Please invite a guest to an upcoming lunch—their lunch will be free! Contact Ann Plummer (aplummer@beenegarter.com) for details.



CFMA Member Spotlight

Welcome to some of our newest members:

07 >



Nicolle Taylor-Sheafor HARDMAN CONSTRUCTION

1) How long have you been with your company and what areas of the business do you work in?

I have been with Hardman Construction for a little over 3 ½ years. I serve as the Accounting Manager within our office. We have a relatively small front office which allows me to wear numerous hats throughout the day. Mainly I am responsible for setting up the budgets for jobs, tracking costs to communicate with the Project Manager, and financial statement preparation. In addition to these duties, I oversee annual audits, serve as admin for our benefits, including our newly formed ESOP, and manage the accounting processes within the office.

2) What do you enjoy most about working at your company?

I think at any other company I would say that thing I enjoy the most would be the challenges of accounting because it is always something that I have loved. However, Hardman is a game changer, I work with the most hardworking, caring, and fun group of people so I have to say that is the most enjoyable thing about working here.

3) What interested you in joining the CFMA West Michigan Chapter and what membership benefits do you hope to attain?

There are unique issues that face the construction industry, so I was looking for a network of professionals to discuss the similar issues and brainstorm resolutions. I reached out to the CFO of Pioneer Construction, Randy Zandbergen, and he told me that being a member of the CFMA West MI Chapter was one of the most helpful networks he has been a part of. I am hoping that the membership provides me with networking opportunities as well as educational opportunities that are pertinent to the construction industry.

4) What is your favorite hobby or activity to do when you're not working?

When I'm not working, I like to take advantage of Ludington's beautiful State Park, going hiking or kayaking.



Sean Jones BEENE GARTER LLP

1) How long have you been with your company and what areas of the business do you work in?

I have been with Beene Garter for 2 years. I work in the audit department and work primarily with construction contractors, manufacturers, and employee benefit plans.

2) What do you enjoy most about working at your company?

I enjoy working with local clients. Especially in the construction industry, it is nice to know that so many of our clients are involved in so many of the major building projects in West Michigan.

3) What interested you in joining the CFMA West Michigan Chapter and what membership benefits do you hope to attain?

When I came to BG, I started to work on a few construction clients and I immediately became interested in the industry. I have a few coworkers (including my mentor who just happens to be the editor of this newsletter...) that are members of CFMA and I thought it would be very helpful to gain additional knowledge and help build relationships with people working in the industry.

4) What is your favorite hobby or activity to do when you're not working?

I enjoy watching basketball games and going to MSU football games (except when we played U of M, that was less enjoyable than I had hoped).

CFMA Member Spotlight

Welcome to some of our newest members:

07 >



Sean Teeples OLIVIER VANDYK INSURANCE

1) How long have you been with your company and what areas of the business do you work in?

I have been with Olivier VanDyk Insurance 1 year. I work in commercial insurance.

2) What do you enjoy most about working at your company?

I love our approach with clients. We focus on education and product knowledge instead of price being a driving factor around insurance.

3) What interested you in joining the CFMA West Michigan Chapter and what membership benefits do you hope to attain?

I have heard some really good things from current members. I also like to stay current on issues facing this industry.

4) What is your favorite hobby or activity to do when you're not working?

I love to hunt!



Bryan Formsma VTC INSURANCE GROUP

1) How long have you been with your company and what areas of the business do you work in?

VTC Insurance Group asked me to open a Grand Rapids office in June of 2018, so I've planted the VTC flag at McKay Tower in downtown GR. We are the largest writer of surety bonds in Michigan and headquartered in Troy, Michigan with offices in Detroit, Farmington Hills, Oxford, Lapeer and Fort Myers, Florida. My specialty for the last 18 years is contract surety bonding and I have broad risk management experience in private equity & finance matters, infrastructure contracting and environmental construction.

2) What do you enjoy most about working at your company?

Often times playing a critical role in helping grow a client's business or shepherding them through the process of entertaining their largest job. It's rewarding to know that our work helps supports workers and their families and, ultimately, positively impacts our communities.

3) What interested you in joining the CFMA West Michigan Chapter and what membership benefits do you hope to attain?

Ann Plummer continued to harass me so I finally had to give in! Seriously, I've been involved with CFMA in West Michigan, Southwest Michigan and Chicago Chapters for years. I am glad to be back!

4) What is your favorite hobby or activity to do when you're not working?

I enjoy all sports, especially golf, and spending time at the gym. I'm active with local arts organizations as well.