Session: 3
Date: January 8, 2020
Title: Improving Communication in Your NAWIC Region
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Emily Herndon, Past South Atlantic Region Communications Chair

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*This series is OPEN to all NAWIC members.
NAWIC

IMPROVING COMMUNICATION IN YOUR REGION
FIND YOUR FOCUS
"Great leaders are not the best at everything. They find people who are the best and get them all on the same team."

- Ellen Bistrisky

BUILD YOUR TEAM
LEVERAGE YOUR STRENGTHS
IMPLEMENT
DUTIES

BUILD BRAND
DEFINE DELIVERABLES
CONSISTENCY IS KEY
REGULARLY SCHEDULED INTERACTIONS
CLARITY
CUSTOMER SERVICE MENTALITY
EMERGENCY PLAN

WEBSITE
CONSISTENT WITH BRAND
EASY TO USE
KEEP PERSONAL INFO PRIVATE
SECURE
A PICTURE IS WORTH 1M WORDS
LOW MAINTENANCE

COMMUNICATIONS
GENERIC EMAILS
CLOUD-BASED SHARING
SUCCINCT, PLANNED MEETINGS
ACCESSIBILITY
PHONE OR EMAIL?
NEWSLETTERS THAT ARE CONSISTENT WITH BRAND

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QUESTIONS?
N.U.G.G.E.T.

AUDIT

CAPACITY

NAWIC'S Unique Groove for Gaining Extra Tidbits

Improving Communications in Your Region
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Improving Communication in Your NAWIC Region

A critical component to any successful organization is communication. As Director, I had a vision for our region chapters to actively collaborate and share by providing more information from the top of our organization, highlighting successes and initiatives across the region, and promoting engagement through competitions and direct campaigns. Our region communications success was driven by an overall framework initiated by the Leadership Task Force’s structure and execution. We enhanced our region chapters by encouraging more collaboration and engagement with each other; in return, our region membership grew by leaps and bounds. I evolved as a Director and the Leadership Taskforce improved their own individual leadership skills. Two of the task force members are now currently serving in chapter leadership positions using the experience they gained. Process improvement and development, strategic delegation, and overall engagement were the catalysts for the success of this initiative.

As part of the leadership task force Emily do you have anything to start off our conversation….

Emily: The leadership taskforce was one of the first items of business for Kristey as Region Director. She started talking to specific individuals early on to gage interest for committee roles. She strategically targeted specific individuals due to her previously established relationship with them and her understanding of their individual skillsets.

The Leadership Taskforce was comprised of the PD&E, Marketing, Membership, and Communications Chairs. The Communications Chair was a new committee for our Region. Kristey was responding to what she and others saw as a gap between National (RD is a representative of the National Board) and the chapter members. A lot of members complained that they did not know very basic information regarding the organization; new members were not getting the information that seasoned members and officers already knew or did not share.

What are your goals as Director? Maybe you want to obtain better presentation skills, gain new experiences, or just sharpen your leadership skills. For example: One of my goals was to help give our committee chairs and chapters a starting point & direction. I focused on what I deemed to be the strongest committees with constant crossover between each other… Membership, Professional Development & Education, PR/Marketing and our newest committee Communications. By forming the Leadership Task Force the team leaders came together and formed a collaborative team that begin working on ways to expand NAWIC in our region and increase the influence and effectiveness of the SAR Chapters.

Whatever your goals are make sure to have the 5 elements of a SMART goal. Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time based. There are 3 types of goals: Outcome, process and performance. Each of the 3 types differ based on how much control we have over it. We have the most control over Process and the least over Outcome. Setting SMART goals as a Director can get you ahead in your region.
Emily: Whether you’re cognizant of this process or not, the most effective change is driven by a focused plan. Think about how you achieve small goals on a day-to-day basis. You may write down what you need to accomplish, prioritize what the most important is (either it is the most significant or it is time driven), you collect the tools/information you need to implement, and then you put your head down and work. You check for accuracy and you move on. If you don’t have a focus from the beginning, you’re just spinning your wheels and achieving nothing.

4th Slide (Build Your Team) – Kristey explains how to leverage relationships, follow leads, and advertise positions within the chapter and your region to get the best team together for your specific duties. Use personal stories/examples of interactions with the Leadership Taskforce.

I have a knack for building effective teams. It is a highlight of experience on my resume. It is difficult to tell you how I built my team so I think it’s most important to share so basic key ingredients…

Know your members, leverage relationships, follow leads, make connections and connect others lastly advertise positions. Get your leaders to help you recruit. As Directors we all have more than 400 members within our region, it’s impossible to know each member and their resume, your members can help connect you with rock stars you may not even know are in your region.

A few characteristics of a highly effective team are:
- Each Team Member Has Emotional Intelligence
- A Good Mix of Introverts and Extroverts
- They Share and Understand Their Common Goals
- They Make Time to Laugh
- They Communicate Proactively
- Strong Leadership at the Helm (example of strong leadership our national board, these Ladies are doing a fantastic job this year working together to improve our association)

Google Studies have shown “What matters most within teams: TRUST.”

Emily: I’ve had the opportunity to witness Kristey build effective teams at the chapter and regional level. She was the Durham Chapter President when I joined NAWIC in 2013. I was immediately placed on the Board due to an opening mid-year. As Director, I had the opportunity to observe and learn about the organization; the roles, the mission. I stepped in where I felt like I could provide the most service. Kristey may have chosen me out of necessity, but she saw what I could bring to the Chapter – potential leads for engaging the next generation of women in the industry, a different perspective (I was new to the industry), and design skills.

She was great at building relationships and using those relationships to bring people together and build others. She was no doubt successful at the Regional level, by bringing together women from various chapters with different interests and skills who wanted to work together as a duty to each other and for the betterment of the organization. She gave just enough push and oversight for us to find our own way.

If your team is not working together, you may want to bring them together for an event outside of NAWIC. Build comradery; people will be more inclined to work with each other if they feel
invested in the team. Get to know what piece of the puzzle you are providing based off of what you know about everyone else.

5th Slide (Leverage Your Strengths) – Kristey explains that you need to learn the strengths and weaknesses of your team. What is this person good at? Are they in the right role? What tasks may be delegated? What tasks can be deleted? What tasks can be consolidated for efficiency? What can technology help with? Use personal stories/examples of interactions with the Leadership Taskforce.

Knowing your members superpowers and shortcomings are KEY. Learning the strengths and weaknesses of your team are important, their likes & dislikes, their day-to-day operations in their career. Ask yourself about streamlining, what tasks are important, what could be deleted to save time…Take time to research process improvement within volunteer organizations, be in the know about technology and how it can you’re your region, you may choice to delegate and or work with a member that is great at research…

A few ways to Leverage Your Strengths…
• Keep reinventing yourself…Don’t settle…KEEP GOING
• Identify what you LOVE to do and what you do when you lose track of time. Know the difference and when you need to do more or less of it.
• Learn and study – find someone who already is doing what you want to do and ask for their help. (I am a strong advocate for mentoring personally & professional…Reverse mentoring has taught me a much more than I could learn from a book. Asking someone else for help can also be a learning potential if you are open to it.
• Avoid those who tell you not to move forward. Don’t let anyone hold you back. There are other women that will hold the ladder for you IF you do not know any…CALL ME I’ll be glad to spot you on your way up.
• Find others who share your beliefs. Do you know your TRIBE?

How many of us know why finding our tribe is important? A tribe harbors an environment for generating new ideas for work and life while also fostering a sense of community which is vital for a healthy productive life. These groups can provide a sense of purpose, a reason to interact with others and even provide health and wellbeing benefits. If you don’t know your tribe you should find them, they are what makes up part of your strength!!

Emily: Kristey challenged me with new ideas and tasks. When she showed me the chapter website in 2014, which had outdated information, virtually no graphics, no editing capabilities, and was being hosted on a private server, she asked me, “do you know someone who can fix this?” My response was, “maybe someone I went to school with, but let me try first.” We looked into paid hosting platforms, got approval from the board for the expense, and I went to work on creating a new website with an online website builder (WordPress.) This was an example of Kristey recognizing my assets.

Other women I was introduced to had backgrounds in HR, accounting, business development, management, etc. HR skills are perfect for parliamentarian, VP, and CAD positions. They work with a wide range of people. They know how to solve personality problems and misconduct issues. They know if your chapter is compliant. Accounting is great for treasurer, NEF, or scholarship (they dot their I’s and cross their T’s); business development is good for
membership; and managers and assistants are good for President, director, and secretary as they move through the ranks.

**6th Slide (Organize)** – Kristey explains that your team now needs to organize. Set meeting dates, figure out how to get everyone into the conversation, invest in new technology/programs to facilitate changes or share information more efficiently, set measurable and attainable goals. Use personal stories/examples of interactions with the Leadership Taskforce. (i.e. we had quarterly meetings with all involved and set a new goal, assigned duties, implemented.)

The definition of ORGANIZE: Arrange into a structured whole order.

The leadership task force team met quarterly to discuss the upcoming initiatives for each quarter. Together they determined what’s next. How to add value for our region members through the ideas they shared; initiatives with chapters that helped expand NAWIC in our region and increased the influence and effectiveness throughout our region.

**Emily:** We started with a google account and google drive folders to easily share information. We determined when we were going to meet, how often, and defined a purpose. When we brainstormed ideas, we made sure they aligned with our purpose. We established action items at the end of each conversation, delegated tasks, and held people accountable. Quick tip: People will be more consistent and contribute if you make them feel like they are a part of the project. (LEAN construction.)

**7th Slide (Implement)** – Kristey explains that you JUST DO IT. Build confidence and accountability by letting your team lead. Step in as necessary. Oversee. Make changes as you assess and improve based on what is working and what is not. Be patient. Use personal stories/examples of interactions with the Leadership Taskforce. (i.e. the online payments on the website took some tweaking.)

Implement-To put your plan into operation. You have built your team, set your goals, organized and now you are ready to JUST DO IT. Let your team leaders take the lead. You will help build their confidence by letting them lead. Don’t drop it on them and forget them. Make sure to ask for updates periodically to ensure accountability but don’t micro-manage. This is where the trust comes back into play… **Trust** yourself that you have done the previous steps and that the team you have built is ready to step up and out for the task.

A few examples of implementation within our region were:
1. “Google Drive – the setup of the google drive folders for each chapter and committee for the purpose of sharing information has helped in a reduction of time for our volunteers.
2. A regional PayPal account has helped us accept various payment types and streamline online registrations. This has helped to increase our attendance at regional events and added value to our regional fundraising efforts as well as increased our corporate sponsorships as many companies are moving towards online transactions.
3. A regional newsletter via mail chimp has helped communicate directly to the members instead of through a board of officers and directors again time reduction.
4. A dashboard “app” for regional events, saves on printing and promotes our members to use technology.

**Trust each other!**

Inspire confidence and learning.
8th Slide (Duties) – Discuss duties of communications chair and shows examples through hyperlinks.

Kristey: Emily assisted with many things; two of the top skills were: Her Eye for Design and Creative Writing Skills. Two characteristics I feel are important in your communication chair. She designed our regional website; dashboard app for our regional events; newsletters and most all my correspondence. Having someone give your writing a second set of eyes is large! IF you are a do it yourselfer Please Please Please use “Grammarly”, it’s a free writing app that millions trust to make sure everything you type is effective and mistake free. It is available on computers and mobile devices. It scans your text for common grammatical mistakes (like misused commas) and complex ones (like misplaced modifiers) so you and your communications chair can write with confidence.

Emily: Being creative boils down to inundating yourself with information and finding a precedent or inspiration. Look outside of your industry to find newer and different ways of doing something to be the breath of fresh air in your industry. What is your differentiator? With all of the resources that are available to women in construction now, it is easy to get lost in the shuffle. Women can attend co-ed organizations now that employers may see as having a higher ROI. What does NAWIC do differently? How can you exploit that to build your brand and your membership?

9th Slide (Stats) – Show stats and discusses significant achievement rates.

Community Outreach overlapping Social Media - another static from Facebook. Our team designed the artwork and worked together the information to share with our chapters for WIC Week billboards in their areas. We increased our page likes by 21% in the last two years and increased our individual post reach by 4% with an all-time high of 1.7 million people reached on one post. (WIC Week post about WIC Week Billboard in Columbia) see attached information (we can show this on the screen if you think it’s useful)

Our leadership task force put together a week of webinars that received national attention with publication in the NAWIC Today magazine page 18. These were stolen with pride from a couple other regions and shared with their members.

Numbers can tell you a lot if you want to listen…..Membership numbers may drive our association but our members drive the numbers.

10th Slide (Questions)

11th Slide (NUGGET: Audit Capacity) – Anne

All NAWIC members can attend National Board meetings in an audit capacity. Audit Capacity means you can attend to observe but not vote or speak (unless recognized by the National President). Currently National Board meetings consist of Pre-Conference, Mid-Year and Post-Conference. Pre and Post Conference meetings take place before and after our Annual Conference. Mid-Year typically takes place end of February or beginning of March at the location of that year’s conference. For example, this year’s Mid-Year is taking place February 29th in Houston, TX at the same location as Annual Conference in August.
If at any time during the meeting the National President or any Board Member feels conversations are being hindered by the presence of guests, the meeting can be moved to Executive session. In Executive session guests are not present. Once Executive session is concluded, guests may come back in audit capacity. Another reason for Executive session may occur if a sensitive topic arises.

If you are interested in attending any board meeting in Audit Capacity, contact the National President for permission to attend. It’s important to request permission to attend well in ADVANCE (not the day of) so everything is prepared for your attendance. All travel and hotel expenses are your responsibility.

Closing - Kristey

Thank you all for taking the time to join us on this call tonight. You have made an investment in your NAWIC future. I hope that everyone heard something of interest and gained a takeaway from the discussion. As always, I am available to anyone that wishes to continue our conversation or has additional questions on this topic. Enjoy the rest of your evening.

Notes to Remember:
• Put difficult questions back on the person asking.
• Everyone is a volunteer – sympathy and sharing are key.
• Don’t assume someone understands what you are talking about. Check for active listening and understanding.
• Embrace your differences!
• Ask how other regions do this? What have been their successes? Their shortcomings?
• Collaborate with each other as Directors
• Trust each other!
• Inspire confidence and learning.