

Officer's Message

By Lisa A. Brien, Immediate Past President



It is amazing how quickly a year can slip by. It seems as though it was just a short while ago that I was writing my introduction as the new president to our

membership. This, my fifth officer's message, will probably be my last so please bear with my sentimentality. It has been my great pleasure to serve this board and this society. It has been a remarkable experience and one I will never forget.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the individuals responsible for getting me through this term.

To my board: You were always there,

without fail, volunteering your weekends and spending quality time with me instead of your families. You opened my mind and kept me focused. Your many, many opinions challenged me at every corner and kept our meetings alive. Thank you.

To association headquarters: You were as new to this as I and yet somehow we worked through it. Your patience and time spent learning how "we" do things is appreciated more than you will ever know. The commitment you place in serving our membership is commendable.

To the NSIPA membership: Most of all, I wish to thank you, the members. You have given me advice, suggestions and constructive criticism. You have offered your many years of wisdom and

professional experiences to assist me in my endeavors. Your support and encouragement will always be remembered.

Our professional fellowship is an ongoing and integral part of who we are and what we do. Through this fellowship, we become better premium auditors, better managers and better leaders. I am proud to have served on the NSIPA board. I hope I made some small contribution and I wish the incoming board the best of luck in the coming year.

"The art of leadership dwells a good deal in the future, in providing for the future of the organization in planting and growing other leaders who will look to the future beyond their own."

-Max DePree 🐦

Eleven Commandments of Good Business ...

Author Unknown

- I. Policyholders are the most important people in our business.
- II. Policyholders are not dependent on us - we are dependent on them.
- III. Policyholders are not an interruption of our work - they are the purpose of it.
- IV. Policyholders do us a favor when they call - we are not doing them a favor by serving them.
- V. Policyholders are part of our business - not outsiders.
- VI. Policyholders are not cold statistics - they are flesh and blood human beings with feelings and emotions like our own.
- VII. Policyholders are not people with whom to argue or match wits.
- VIII. Policyholders are people who bring us their wants - it is our job to fill those wants.
- IX. Policyholders are deserving of the most courteous and attentive treatment we can give them.
- X. Policyholders are the people that make it possible to pay your salary.
- XI. Policyholders are the life-blood of this business. 🐦

Want a direct line to NSIPA

Want more membership benefits

Want your opinion known

Check out the NSIPA online survey. Each month NSIPA is posting on www.NSIPA.org a new set of questions regarding your association. Check out the site, complete the questions, and let us know your thoughts.

NSIPA Online Survey

New Membership Application

Name _____ Designations _____
 Company _____ Position _____
 Address _____
 City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____
 Telephone (____) _____ Fax (____) _____ E-Mail _____
 Referred to NSIPA by _____

Annual Dues: \$75.00

Check/Money Order
 Charge To:
 MasterCard VISA American Express
 # _____
 Exp. Date _____
 Signature _____

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Sponsor _____
 Region _____
 Type of Company _____
Years in Auditing Profession:
 1 - 4 5 - 9 10 - 14
 15 - 19 20 or more

PAAS – Upcoming Events

November 11-14, 2001
ISOTech

November 14-15, 2001

PAAS – Premium Audit Forum

November 14-15, 2001

E&S – Loss Control Management Forum

All three events will be held at:
Adam's Mark Hotel
400 North Olive Street
Dallas, Texas 75201

ISOTech is the Technology Conference for Insurance Professionals. It will offer more than 50 thought-provoking seminars and presentations, all focusing on technological advances that can help you improve your business.

PAAS – Premium Audit Forum will be capitalizing on opportunities in today's business environment. The conference is an essential opportunity for executives to receive the latest updates on the insurance industry. A key focus will be on

today's mobile business environment. To succeed in today's environment we have to work efficiently, be Internet-savvy, and provide the highest level of security, all while we remain competitive in a fluctuating market. They will also present an in-depth panel discussion on the benchmarks you can use to measure productivity and employee performance.

E&S – Loss Control Management Forum, the presentations will educate you about emerging industry issues and concerns, such as privacy, toxic mold, food safety, and construction defects. A top official from the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OHS) and some key state regulators will discuss future legislative and regulatory activities.

For more information, check out the website: www.iso.com. Click on Conferences, then click the ISOTech banner or call the conference registration desk at 1-800-856-7730. 📞

NSIPA Complete



The National Society of Insurance Premium Auditors is pleased to announce a unique partnership opportunity for service and product suppliers to insurance premium auditing professionals. We are calling the program *NSIPA Complete*. This is an exclusive program since only a select few companies will have the opportunity to take advantage of this offer. No other program offers credible exposure and access to insurance premium auditing professionals at this level or this frequency.

NSIPA Complete will give you exposure to the most qualified decision makers in this field, differentiating your company from others and significantly enhance your visibility. *NSIPA Complete* binds your company, auditors, clients and our Association together in important ways that will help all of us to reach our goals. *NSIPA Complete* is a partnership for success. To facilitate your review of this program, NSIPA's Brad L. Feldman, M.P.A., Executive Director, is ready to take your questions and will assist you in developing the program that best fits your marketing goals.

Please contact Brad Feldman at:
NSIPA
5008-16 Pine Creek Drive
Westerville, OH 43081-4899
Phone: (888) 846-7472
Fax: (614) 895-3466
NSIPA_exec@NSIPAnet.org

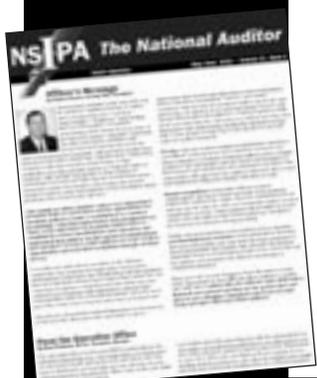
Advertise In NSIPA Newslines

The National Auditor (Newslines) is a newsletter published six (6) times a year with a circulation of 850 copies.

Size	1X	3X	6X
1/2 Page	\$225.00	\$215.00	\$200.00
1/3 Page	\$125.00	\$120.00	\$110.00
1/6 Page	\$50.00	\$47.00	\$45.00

In order to receive 3X or 6X rates, commitment for number of issues must be stated at submission. NSIPA Members receive a 20% discount on display, banner & button advertisements.

For more information on this and other advertising opportunities, to request a sample of any publication, or to mail an advertisement, contact: Brad L. Feldman, M.P.A., Executive Director, National Society of Insurance Premium Auditors, 5008-16 Pine Creek Drive, Westerville, Ohio, 43081. www.NSIPAnet.org



Customer Service Visions

"If you can dream it, you can do it." Walt Disney

By Diane Washe, AU, APA

At the Central States 2001 Conference, Charlie Gruschow of the MidAmerica Development Group, Inc. presented a session on customer service. He started out with asking the audience their definition of customer service. Then he asked them to define quality service. Charlie told the audience that they must create a customer service vision. You must start with asking yourself the following questions:

- What are we good at right now?
- Would a refocus of vision make us a quality service leader?
- What should our vision statement be?

One way to answer those questions is to use an internal customer service survey. Charlie provided a list of possible categories of questions that could be used in the survey. The categories provided were:

- Vision
- Leadership
- Management Actions
- Recruitment and Selection
- Performance Expectations
- Orientation and Training
- Accountability
- Continuous improvement
- Bonding Communication
- Being Up-Front
- Quick and Complete Response
- Making it Right
- Not Products or Services
- Taking Care of Each Other
- Remaining Paranoid
- Dazzling Customers
- Feedback
- Partnering

As a service oriented industry, we all have had to deal with customer complaints. Some of us are better at it than others. At times, I am sure we wonder if we could improve in how we deal with the customer and take care of their complaints. Anyone who has had to deal with an unreasonable customer can use advice on how to improve the way we deal with that type of situation or customer. At the conference, Charlie provided an easy ten-step process to resolve customer complaints. They are:

1. Listen.
2. Remain calm.
Five reasons customers attack:
 - They feel attacked by you or by another employee.
 - They believe you won't reason with them and that they must fire all their cannons to get through to you.
 - They are interpersonally incompetent. They may have been raised in environments where they weren't allowed to express their true feelings freely.
 - They are hurt; they feel pain.
 - They are fearful or deeply insecure.
3. Prove that you listened.
4. Validate the customer.
5. Ask questions. Reversing your way to the problem:
 - Questions shift the focus from you to the customer, where it belongs.
 - Questions show customers you are interested in them and in their problems, thus building your credibility.

- Questions help customers to think and to clear up in their minds what their real issues are without undue pressure from you.
 - Questions help you to gather the information you need to provide customers with helpful solutions.
 - Questions don't box you in a corner the same way statements can.
6. Apologize when you've come up short.
 7. Be politely powerful with customers in error.
 8. Deliver a solution.
 9. Be politely assertive with unreasonable customers.
Here are some examples:
 - "What would you like me to do?"
 - "What will make you happy?"
 - "If you had a magic wand that could produce the ideal solution to your problem, what would it be?"
 - "If you had your druthers, what would you ask for here?"
 10. Thank the customer and check back.

His presentation went on to provide the audience with the Ten Commandments of **Exceptional Customer Service**. They are:

1. Treat every customer as though he or she is your first of the day.
2. Treat all customers equally well.
3. Learn the names of your customers.
4. Be patient with customers.
5. Communicate thoughtfully.
6. Respond immediately.
7. Be polite.
8. Don't leave a customer you're with to serve another customer.
9. Use good judgment when serving many customers.
10. Accept total responsibility for care of your customers.

At the end of his presentation, Charlie provided the attendees with a way to succeed at Customer Service.

Sense of Direction/Purpose

Understanding Others and Yourself

Courage

Charity

Esteem

Self Confidence – Not Arrogance

Self Acceptance of What You Can and Cannot Do

I suspect that we all could improve our customer service skills. To quote Biggie Munn, "The difference between GOOD and GREAT is just a little extra effort."

This article is being published with the permission of Charlie Gruschow. Should you want to contact him, here is the information:

Charlie Gruschow and Midamerica Development Group, Inc.

Mission Statement is "Business Development Through People Development." They are associated with the Sandler Sales Institute, an international business consulting group that specializes in sales training, sales management training and customer service training. Their philosophy of training is ongoing reinforcement, incremental growth and development. Charlie can be reached at 2800 University Avenue, Suite 183, West Des Moines, Iowa, 50266. Phone: (515) 327-0108; Fax: (515) 221-9745; Email: Charlie_g9@yahoo.com. 🐦

Techi Tips

By Connie Dopierala

Hardware Hiccups

The most vulnerable part of a computer is the keyboard because it gets the heaviest wear and tear. It takes a physical pounding as we type, is exposed to dust, dirt and occasional spills. Fortunately, modern keyboards can take a lot of abuse before malfunctioning. The best way to avoid malfunctioning is to maintain it by cleaning it periodically by either turning it over and tapping it gently to remove built up dust, using a commercial can of air to blow dust particles out from between the keys, and/or dipping the ends of an index card in cleaning fluid and working it around the keys. Even if you do this on a regular basis, sometimes keys stick or fail to respond when you press them. Don't always be so quick to go out and purchase a new keyboard, because it may just be a faulty connection or, more rarely, a software error.

If the whole keyboard isn't responding, you should first check to see if your PC has crashed. Try moving the mouse to see if the pointer moves. If it moves as usual it probably is your keyboard. Check the connections to ensure that it hasn't come partially disengaged. It is possible to plug your keyboard into the mouse port, so check for the proper connection. Dust can also partially block a true connection. See if the cord has become crimped. After checking and/or cleaning the connections, reboot your computer. If a key won't respond, try blowing compressed air to remove any blockage or using the cleaning procedures mentioned above. As a last resort, gently lever off the offending key to see if dust has built up under it. If you spill something on your keyboard – don't panic! *Unplug it* and use soap and water with a sponge to clean it. Let it dry for a day or two and it should be okay. If all of these ideas fail, purchase a new keyboard because that is far cheaper than repairing one.

If you have difficulty using your keyboard because of a disability, Windows 98 has a special Accessibility function that will make it easier. You can set your PC so that you don't have to press more than one key at a time (StickyKeys). You can also set it up to ignore multiple presses of the same key (BounceKeys), or to warn you when you have pressed an important key, such as Caps Lock (ToggleKeys). To arrange this, go to the **Start** menu and select **Programs**, the **Accessories**, then **Accessibility** and finally **Accessibility Wizard**. Click **Next**, then **Next** again. Click the *"I have difficulty using the keyboard or mouse"* box, then **Next** to view your options.

Don't be alarmed if something goes wrong with your mouse. The two most common reasons are that the inside of your mouse needs to be cleaned or that your mouse isn't properly connected.

To clean your mouse, turn it over and open the trap door by turning it. Remove the "mouse ball" and clean it by gently rubbing it with a lint free cloth and rubbing alcohol to remove built up grease and dust particles. The inside area of your mouse has levers that will become coated as well. Using a Qtip dipped in rubbing alcohol, clean each of the rollers until it is free of dirt, grease, etc. Blow out any dust that may have accumulated inside of your mouse and replace the ball and cover. Check your connections and reboot your computer. The third possibility is that one of the mouse rollers has worn out, which you could see while cleaning. If this is the case, replacing the mouse is the best bet. The final, and least likely, reason for a fault is a software conflict. This means that your computer does not recognize the mouse. A software conflict is only likely to occur with an older PC that uses a serial mouse. Fortunately the problem can usually be resolved by using the mouse in another serial port. 🐦

Betty Gerdes Distinguished Service Award

By Diane Washe, AU, APA

The Betty Gerdes Distinguished Service Award was established by the NSIPA board to recognize the special efforts of a NSIPA member in furthering the goals of the national society and increasing the professionalism of the insurance auditing profession.

This is the Auditor of the Year award on a national basis! For your information, this award is not given out every year. So if you are nominated for this award, you should feel very honored.

Since I joined NSIPA six years ago, I did not have the pleasure of meeting Betty Gerdes. So I asked around to find out some information on Betty Gerdes. One thing that I did find out is that she had accomplished a great deal for NSIPA and the insurance auditing profession.

Betty Gerdes is living in Omaha, Nebraska. Since Betty is in her 80's, I am sure she is not conducting premium audits. Betty continues to remain active in her local and regional auditor associations. In 1982, Betty Gerdes was the treasurer of NSIPA. Other NSIPA positions she held were the executive secretary and editor. When Betty Gerdes accepted the position as the first executive secretary in 1991, one of her biggest accomplishment was organizing the first national conference held in conjunction with a regional conference. The meeting took place in Milwaukee, Wisconsin in 1992. We certainly came a long way from then, but to develop and organize a conference of this degree is no small task.

Each time this award is presented to a NSIPA member, it is given out at the annual conference. The 2001 recipient of the Betty Gerdes Distinguished Service Award was presented at the national conference in Honolulu, Hawaii. The recipient is me, Diane Washe, AU, APA.

To give you a little of my background, I started in the insurance auditing profession in 1979. I worked for Home Insurance Company for 10 years. In 1989, I started working for the Erie Insurance Group. During my career in the insurance profession, the majority was in the premium audit area. I have also held underwriter and policy/endorsement processor positions.

It is hard for me to describe how I felt when they announced my name as the recipient of the Betty Gerdes award. For someone who likes to talk, teach, give speeches and so forth, I was speechless. For the first week, I just stared at the plaque and could not believe that the NSIPA board had chosen me over the other nominees. I consider it a great honor to be considered in the same light as Betty Gerdes and all of the previous recipients of the award. My love for the insurance auditing profession is very special to me and I cannot think of a higher honor than to be recognized by my peers for the things I have been able to accomplish. 🐦

Quote to Ponder

"Either write something worth reading or do something worth writing." –

Benjamin Franklin

NSIPA Problem Clinic

By Jim Marks, Chair, Education Committee

We are changing the **Problem Clinic** section of the *Newsline*. In the past we would publish both the problem and the answer in the same issue. Starting with this issue we will publish the **PROBLEM** only and next month we will publish the answer. In addition we begin a contest with this issue. Each issue two- (2) prizes will be given out to members that submit correct answers. If more than two correct answers are received, the names of all entrants will be placed in a hat and two winner names will be drawn.

Problem:

You are doing an audit on a general contractor who builds detached private dwellings that are 1 and 2 story homes. He currently is working on 3 subdivisions in different communities. You have both the Workers Compensation and General Liability Audits to complete.

Upon investigation you find that the Insured's employees do all the work and there are no subcontractors, contract employees or casual labor.

The policies reflect the following information:

Policy	Code	Estimate
WC	5645	\$ 1,000,000
	8810	430,000
	8742	150,000
GL	91340	1,000,000

The maximums for your state are WC-\$1,500/wk and GL \$36,900

There are 3 officers and their duties are:

President - Administration work as well as sells houses.

Vice-President - Most work is office work dealing with scheduling and purchasing. She does go out to each of the 3 subdivisions at least once a week sometimes more to check on progress of the homes. Any problems she finds she relates to the job site superintendent to correct.

Secretary/Treasurer - Is the controller. All work is either accounting or finance in the office.

The Payrolls are as follows:

Aluminum Siding	\$80,600
Sidewalks	24,500
Cabinets	47,500
Trim Work	65,000
Concrete-Baseament	81,500
Superintendent (3)	225,000
Electrical	54,500
Office Staff (3)	100,000
Flooring	32,500
Estimators (2)	90,000
Framing	75,600
Sales Persons	150,000
Masonry	42,500
President	175,000
Painting-Interior	54,500
Vice-President	150,000
Plumbing	60,000
Secretary/Treasurer	150,000
Roofing	90,500

Maximums are WC is \$1,500/wk and GL is \$36,900. There are no overtime records.

Complete the Audit and send your entries by mail postmarked by 9/30/01 to:

NSIPA Problem Clinic
5008-16 Pine Creek Drive
Westerville, OH 43081-4899

Or email by 9/10/01 to nsipa@nsipanet.org 📧

NSIPA CPD Program

Apply Now - Deadline December 1, 2001

Do you want professional recognition by your colleagues for your professional development credit? If so, participate in NSIPA's Continuing Professional Development Program. To be recognized, you must complete and return an Application of Recognition verifying you have earned 100 points in three years. Applications are due by December 1, 2001. Please contact the NSIPA Executive Office at (888) 846-7472 for an application.

AuditEd by Ed Dennis & Kelly Crowell

Man vs. Machine



Editor's Corner

By Diane Washe, AU, APA

Each year, the Editor chooses an article published in the NSIPA *Newsline* to receive a \$50 prize and a certificate for being the "Best Original Article Published in the NSIPA *Newsline*."

Just a note that we are always looking for articles to publish. Take out your pen, pencil or PC and create a masterpiece to share with the membership.

The Best Article of the Year award winner is:

All In a Day's Work - An Auditor's "Tail"

By Nancy Little, RLD Associates, Inc.

I had a rough time getting the insured to keep our appointment; she was a no-show the two previous visits. So I made arrangements to conduct the audit at 8:30 a.m. When I pulled into their driveway, three dogs greeted me. They appeared to be nice dogs, tails wagging as they followed me into the house. Inside the house, I smelled a horrible odor, like something died, which I tried to ignore. The insured offered the kitchen table as my workspace. One of the cute little doggies came over and began to give me hugs and also started to nuzzle under my elbow, etc. As I set-up my laptop, the insured was busy gathering the necessary books and records when all of a sudden, she exclaimed, "Oh my god!, what stinks? What did you roll in?" I wasn't sure whether she was speaking to the dogs or me! At that point she put the dogs outside and, of course, the smell did not go away since the dog had rubbed all over my legs and arms. I asked if she could give me something to clean my suit. She offered only a paper towel, which was of no use. I forged ahead with the audit hoping the odor would subside. However, it did not and I requested a rag and some soap. The insured walked down the hall and opened doors along the way, apparently in search of soap and rags. She was unable to locate a rag and soap so she returned to the kitchen and stood behind me, motionlessly, apparently deep in thought. All of a sudden, I heard this loud sound - thump, thump, thump, that seemed to shake the floor. I turned and looked up and standing next to me, in a boxer's stance, was a kangaroo!

During this encounter, the insured was still standing behind me. I had the distinct impression that she was playing games with my mind. Rhetorically, I very calmly and sweetly said, "Oh, what is that?" She explained that it was a wallaby and would not bother me. It stood there and looked at me for quite some time as I played the dedicated auditor and finished the audit,

with one eye on this kangaroo with a very long tail, fearful that at any moment this huge animal would punch me or thump me to death! However, just as quickly as it appeared, it suddenly hopped back down the hall to its bedroom!

I still did not have anything to clean up with and the foul smell persisted. Finally, she brought me a washcloth and I helped myself to the soap beneath the kitchen sink. I had a full day of audits scheduled and I could only imagine what people would think of the putrid smell that followed me. For the remainder of the day, I would ask each contact at the insured's office; "Do I smell?" Each one assured me I did not, but their body language suggested otherwise, as did the speed at which they left the room.

As I drove home that evening, I thought to myself, just another normal day in an auditor's life. 🐨



NSIPA



5008-16 Pine Creek Drive
Westerville, OH 43081-4899
(888) 84-NSIPA (846-7472)
Fax: (614) 895-3466
NSIPA@NSIPA.org
www.NSIPA.org

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Diane Washe, (814) 870-4850

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