

# HFTP



## Greater Houston Chapter

Gateway to HFTP \* <http://www.hftp.org>

Greater Houston Chapter Website <http://www.hftphouston.org>

March 2009

### Officers and Directors 08/09

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### March Meeting

**The Briar Club  
2603 Timmons Lane  
Houston, TX 77027**

#### Directions:

<http://visitor.thebriarclub.com/Default.aspx?p=DynamicModule&pageid=220391&ssid=65778&vnf=1>

#### Subject:

**Combined meeting with CMAA  
GM's versus Controllers**

**\*\*Make checks payable to Texas Lone Star Chapter CMAA\*\***

**Cost is \$50 Members**

**\$55 Non-members**

**Students \$20 per person**

**Cancellations accepted 48hrs from Events Start time  
Otherwise you will be billed**

**\*\* NOTE NEW DATE AND TIME \*\***

**Date: Thursday, March 26, 2009**

**Time: 6<sup>pm</sup> - 7<sup>pm</sup> Cocktails Hors d'euvres**

**7<sup>pm</sup> - 8<sup>pm</sup> Dinner & Discussion**

**8<sup>pm</sup> -9pm Panel**

#### RSVP:

<http://www.hftphouston.org/Calendarlist.asp>  
or email Eric Ehsan at [President@HFTPHouston.org](mailto:President@HFTPHouston.org).

Dear Colleagues,

March is upon us, for some of us it is the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter of our fiscal year and 1<sup>st</sup> quarter for others. The year is racing by and we have to keep up with it. This said, our Regional Conference, which is scheduled to be held on July 17 & 18, is closer than we think. I encourage all of you to fully participate in this conference to make it a successful event for 2009 and many years to follow. May I remind you that the last Regional Conference held here in Houston way back in 1992? We'll be sending you more details regarding this conference.

In our last Board of Directors meeting held at Bentwater Country Club, we selected John Smith (Immediate Past President) as the Chairman and Bret Myers (President Elect) as the Co-Chairman to head this Conference. They are responsible for contacting other chapters in Texas and Louisiana for greater participation. Additionally they will be selecting topics with the help and input of other members and selecting speakers from industries which are related to Hospitality. I urge you all to participate and communicate with John and Bret with your input and suggestions. After all, this conference is held for all of us. In this conference, we are also targeting topics which will be helpful for your accounting staff, who normally does not get a chance to attend regional or national conferences due to funds and venues. This conference is going to be held at The Conrad Hilton College located in the University of Houston which is in our own backyard for most of us, even for the members from other Texas and Louisiana chapters. The timing for this conference (Friday and Saturday, July 17 & 18) is such that it will require only a minimum overnight stay (for members outside Houston) thus reducing the out of office time and travel expenses. Details of the timing of this conference will be communicated to you in April.

In the February Meeting, held at Bentwater Country Club on the 19th, we welcomed our newest chapter, The Texas A&M chapter, and its members. This meeting was an informative orientation-like meeting where we all introduced ourselves and answered any questions Texas A&M chapter members had. I'd like to thank James Doolittle for hosting this meeting on short notice. The next meeting is a combined meeting with CMAA (Club Managers Association of America) held at "The Briar Club" on Thursday, March 26, 2009 which is the fourth Thursday. This meeting is an opportunity for all of us to sit, face to face, with our General Managers and ask any questions we would like. The theme of this meeting is "What do General Managers want from their Controllers and What do Controllers need from their General Managers". Come prepared to discuss and ask questions. I encourage all members from Hotels and Country Clubs to bring their General Managers to this meeting to show the value of HFTP.

Please RSVP on our website, [www.hftphouston.org](http://www.hftphouston.org) or send an email to Ursula Cornish, at [payables@thebriarclub.com](mailto:payables@thebriarclub.com) or myself at [controller@thebriarclub.com](mailto:controller@thebriarclub.com), so we can tell our host how many members will be attending. If anyone is having a login issue or needs a new login, please contact Ursula Cornish. See you all at The Briar Club on Thursday, 03/26/2009.

Best Regards,  
Asif Ehsan (Eric)

# **No Promotions, no raises; Motivating without money**

## **Keeping workers engaged during tough times**

Motivating employees is a never-ending part of a manager's mission. And it gets really tough when the economy puts a crimp on promotions, raises and bonuses. That's the situation manager Jane Harris found herself in when morale and productivity began slipping among her best employees.

### **Hard to Keep Spirits Up**

"You don't look so happy." Jane said when fellow manager Rich Mason entered her office.

"I'm just so frustrated!" Rich said. "It's tough to get people motivated these days."

"Whoa," Jane said. "I've never seen you so down before. You're usually the upbeat and perky one around here."

"Things are tight," Rich said. "I've been trying to keep people's spirits up, but I'm not having much success. "Folks could use some of those bonuses we used to give out around here. Or at least a decent raise or promotion. But we can't swing anything right now."

### **'Not challenged enough'**

"I know what you mean," Jane said. "One of my best employees, Annie, has been in a major slump lately."

"I asked what was up, and she answered she didn't feel challenged anymore. She was hoping to be considered for a promotion or at least a raise."

"So what did you tell her? Rich asked.

"I said that I didn't see any promotion opportunities coming anytime soon, but I'd keep her in mind," Jane said.

### **Need another way**

"Yeah, it's frustrating!" Rich said. "We have good people we can't promote or even recognize right now."

"Some of them really deserve something," Jane agreed. "There's got to be some way to motivate them and let them know we value them...without breaking the bank."

"But how?" Rich wondered.

### **The Big Question**

Jane usually didn't have much trouble motivating her best employees. But now with no opportunities for promotion and no money for other kinds of recognition, it was even tougher to boost morale and productivity. She knew they had to come up with something to add spark back to the workplace. If you were in Jane's situation, what would you do? One of the ideas offered below might provide you with some guidance.

### **WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW**

- To motivate employees without spending money:
  - Write e-mails or notes to thank them for a job well done, and
  - Give them new tasks or assignments to challenge them in different ways.

# How Two Managers Would Solve the Above Communication Problem

## 1 Show'em management cares

In my experience, helping workers feel secure is the best motivator. So I would look for ways to make them feel more involved in the company and its mission. There are easy things we can do that are cost-free – like meeting more with employees to talk about job security. As far as times being tight, I'd make sure to let them know how the company was performing, and what changes we're planning to make and why. I'd listen to them if they were concerned about their jobs or the economy. In this kind of environment, it's critical to show your people you care. And if you do that, I think that'll motivate them.

*Richard Emery, Facility Manager  
Jet Aviation, West Palm Beach, FL*

## 2 Put recognition in their hands

I'd come up with a way for employees to motivate each other. This can be done by giving out slips of paper on which employees can write about a coworker who's done something well. And each time we'd receive a slip like this, it would be posted on a community bulletin board. This way, employees are not only appreciated for their efforts by one person, but by the entire community. It's a great way to get employees to think positively and appreciate one another – and it also motivates them to perform well enough to attract their peers' recognition.

*Jacqueline Boone, Patient Services Director  
Core Center, Chicago*

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## When Employee Won't Do Anything Without Asking First *Incessant questions are getting in the way of work*

Some employees feel more comfortable checking in with their managers before making *big* decisions. But what happens if an employee checks in before making *any* decision? That's the situation manager Nicole Tedesco found herself in when an employee constantly disrupted her work with questions.

### **No time for work**

"How's it going, Nicole?" manager Matt Harold asked.

"Ugh, terrible day," Nicole replied. "I can't get a single thing done because Michelle keeps coming in and asking me questions!"

"Really?" Matt asked. "Well, she is fairly new. She probably doesn't understand everything yet."

"It's been two months," Nicole said. "I just can't excuse it anymore. She asks me about things she's already done, too – she should know some of the answers by now!"

### **Bothering co-workers, too**

"Maybe she only feels comfortable coming to you," Matt said.

"Well, she asks me most of the questions, and when I'm not around, she asks the people who sit near her," Nicole said.

"I know because a couple of them have complained to me that she's constantly asking for their help and advice on things."

"Do you think she's just trying to adjust, and this is her way of reaching out to people?" Matt asked.

“Maybe, but I thought this would be over by now,” Nicole said. “I mean, all of our other employees went through the same training as Michelle. And they caught on fast.”

“You should talk to her,” Matt said.

“I want to, but she seems very sensitive,” Nicole said. “Plus, despite all of her questions, she is doing a pretty good job. But I can see that she isn’t making any friends here by annoying people. And if other people, like me, can’t get their work done because of disruptions, something’s got to change.”

### The big question

It was normal for new employees to be inquisitive. But Michelle couldn’t seem to do anything on her own without asking for help or support – and she’d already completed her training period. Nicole wanted to encourage Michelle to do more things on her own, but wasn’t sure if she had the personality to do so. If you were in Nicole’s situation, what would you do? One of the ideas below might provide some guidance.

#### WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW:

When employees are slow to do things on their own:

- Encourage them to come up with ideas to contribute during meetings, and
  - Step back and give them space to perform on their own.

## How Two Managers Would Solve the Above Communication Problem

### 1 Find out what’s holding her back

I would call Michelle in and explain to her that she was hired to take on certain responsibilities, and she needs to be able to do them on her own. Then we’d work out an action plan to make that happen. I’d follow her progress in the beginning. Sometimes, when this happens, you have to find out what’s holding them back. Usually, once we’ve worked that out, the employee feels much more comfortable.

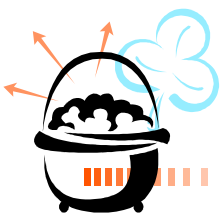
*Suzanne Yaspelkis, Director of Change Management  
GKN Aerospace – Bandy Machining, Inc., Burbank, CA*

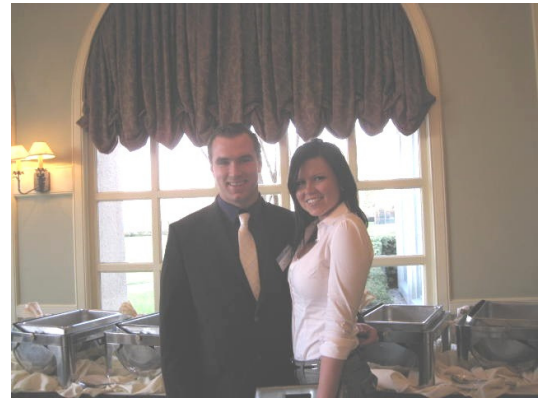
### 2 Give a little freedom

Employees need the freedom to be able to do things by themselves. So I’d sit down with Michelle and remind her what she’s expected to be doing by this point, and that she doesn’t need my permission to do them. Perhaps there’s a legitimate reason why she’s timid. I’d step back and allow her to have some space, while continuing to answer her questions – as long as they were fairly reasonable. But if this behavior continued, I’d document it and look into disciplinary action.

*Susan Strassner, HR Manager  
West Pharmaceutical Services, Montgomery, PA*

\*Both articles are from Communication Bulletin for Managers and Supervisors





**WELCOME TO THE NEW  
TEXAS A&M STUDENT  
CHAPTER**

**Upcoming Meetings**

**DATES**

- March 26<sup>th</sup>
- April 16<sup>th</sup>
- May 15<sup>th</sup>

**PLACES**

- The Briar Club
- Hilton Americas
- The Briar Club

**SPEAKERS**

- Forum w/ CMAA
- Open
- Open

**We are still in need of venues and speakers.**

*Please contact:*

*Bret Myers for Venues 713-465-8381, [bmyers@houstoncc.com](mailto:bmyers@houstoncc.com)*

*Amy Cheng for Speakers 713-577-6003, [amy\\_cheng@hilton.com](mailto:amy_cheng@hilton.com)*