

Everything runs great when the PCC is exciting and everyone is motivated and working together... but what happens after the good times pass?

How do you get everyone running on all cylinders again?

We will answer these questions and provide some helpful tips in today's workshop.

Here is the agenda for this workshop.

We'll talk about burnout, board development and working through change.

(Ask audience): How many here would be willing to help us out with something?

Thank those who raised hand.

Ask the rest if they:

Ever hear crickets chirping when you ask for a volunteer?

Your hand goes up for lack of anyone else stepping up.

Perhaps your hard work is not fully understood or recognized by your boss at your “paying job.”

You start to feel bad and it all equals: **BURNOUT**

A Word about Volunteers: People Volunteer for lots of reasons. For the most part, the reason doesn't matter. The important thing is, they are there.

They bring excitement, perspective, and ideas to the table. And their needs will need to be realized, or they will be gone.

They volunteer because they want to:

- Develop new skills

- Keep old ones up-to-date

- Get references

- Boss told them to! (That's the difference between volunteering and "Voluntold".)

- Feel like they are making a difference

How do you keep them engaged?

Best Practices:

- Job Description: Do they know what they are getting into?
- Authentically welcome them!
- Training/Mentoring
- Respect boundaries

The paying job comes first. Do not call them on weekends or evenings unless they authorized this.

Thank them, and recognize their contribution comes with a price.

Reward and recognize hard work, Set milestones and celebrate successes, Recognition programs, Thank you card , Thank you letter, Thank you call, Thank you email.

Don't place all the responsibility on the volunteer's shoulders. Remember that the industry co-chair, vice chair, or primary postal support will need to jump in if someone has to back out unexpectedly.

Be prepared. Don't waste people's time.

- Have Agendas for meetings
- Communicate progress on a regular basis

Build some interpersonal chat time into your meetings and calls.

- This can be done before you start, or as a wrap up or closing.

Here is a comment from Wanda Senne, PCC Advisory Committee, Industry Chair, about burnout.

Do you agree?

Recognize Volunteer Burnout:

- The best volunteers are often involved in many organizations and too much from any of them will affect the other groups. (These people are often the most dedicated and tend to get even more to do!)
- Sudden onset of absenteeism ... (It's enough work to keep a PCC moving along, it's an added reality to have to determine if someone is going to remain on your board/committee.)
- Change in communication frequency
- Decrease or not signing up to participate ("I have nothing to do." It's okay for a short period of time, but if you hear that more often, it's time for you to see how to "share the wealth.")
- If you hear, "we've always done it this way" or are not getting any new ideas, it's a sign of group burnout.
- Be strategic: Not having enough volunteers for an event can lead to burnout when you ask too much from too few.
- Only create new projects that are necessary
Exception: If a trusted or promising volunteer comes up with the concept **and wants to run with it ...** go for it. Cut a little slack and focus on the goal... let the volunteer do it their way.

Part Two: Board Development

Things to think about when recruiting for your board...

What do you need to be effective?

What are the current skills?

- Do you need people from other industry segments to help with mailing needs?
- Do you need someone with design experience to help with your promotions, etc.?

Are you losing any skills in the coming months?

- If so, you need to recruit **NOW**.

Best practices:

Establish realistic workloads – Tell them what the time commitment is.

Especially when it comes to the board or a committee, when it comes to execution, a committee of 10 quickly devolves to two overworked volunteers!

Sound familiar?

- Set expectations: Not all the work is glamorous (registration tables and cleanup).

Do you have an officer oversee each committee? How often/ when/ where do the committees meet ?

While an officer may oversee the committee there may be a different leader of the committee. This is a great way to have advancement to officer level positions by observing commitment level, leadership abilities, etc.

On the reverse it is a good way for a member of the Board to “test” additional responsibility , time requirements and commitment needed by them and their respective Company.

How well do you document time commitment and are you listening about what a potential member hopes to gain.

Do members self nominate? How many members is enough, too little or too much? Should it be a number game or is it what value would they bring?

Having the same leadership team for years is never a good idea.

Having elections every two years helps prevent stale leadership and alleviates the one/two person does all syndrome.

Elections of officers are handled a variety of ways.

- Does your Board have self nomination?
- Do positions automatically move up, do you have a committee who reviews?

Meeting structure changes can revitalize participation, if you have morning meetings would luncheon work better, etc?

Having multiple members from one Company is a great way to ensure your succession planning should one leave or even have shifting responsibilities within an organization.

How many times have you heard I don't have anything to do with the mail anymore or my job has changed and I don't have time anymore. Having Industry representation by reaching out to other organizations such as the College and University group assures multiple representation and people available to succeed to the Board.

By having Industry specific meetings you show value to other organizations to be involved in the PCC.

Does the Board send letters of thanks to each member's Company expressing the benefit and thanking their leadership for the support?

Do you offer some exclusive benefits to Board members, breakfast with the District Manager for example?

Does the Company benefit with some sort of acknowledgement of Board members at all PCC educational and networking events?

Are the executive board and their companies listed on an executive board tab on the website?

Does the USPS have the appropriate staff on the Board? Postmaster, BMEU supervisor, etc. ?

Does your Board fund the registration fee for a member to attend the NPF and obtain best practices?

Does a Company who sponsors the PCC have options for Board membership?

Let's talk about a couple comments...

Diane Winter said, "The key to a good board is good recruiting"...She went on to explain that when her PCC is interviewing for Board positions they listen intently for what the member's expectation and goals are in relation to Board involvement and the PCC clearly defines what commitments are extended by Board participation.

Allen also spoke about having experts on the Board on a wide variety of Industry topics which helps keep people engaged and relying on one another and helps facilitate general membership meetings.

Peggy said, "We love the PCC!" but that sums up perfectly that you need to always laugh and have fun!

Part 3: Making the Most of Change

3 Steps: Letting Go, Transitioning and New Beginnings

We'll go through each step because they can really help us in professional development. For more information, a great book on the subject is called *Managing Transitions*, by Dr. William Bridges.

Step 1: There is the change itself ("It isn't the change that does you in, it's the transition.")

Step 2: Go through the "in-between" time of transition, when the old is gone but the new isn't fully operational yet.

Step 3: Launch the New Beginning. This means that there is a shared vision, with a sense of purpose and pro-active energy.

Let's look at step 1 in more detail.....

Step 1: There is the change itself (“It isn’t the change that does you in, it’s the transition.”)
Acknowledge and mourn the “old” way of doing things and the people who did them. Let go of “this is the way X used to do it.”

Letting Go:

How many of you have lost a postal employee on your board within the last year? Why?

Could have been retirement or reassignment, but it really hurts your continuity, right?

How many of you have lost an industry board member within the last year? Again, retirement, reassignment, new company that doesn’t support the PCC, lots of reasons but still hurts your board.

We need to mourn these losses. Like grief, we can get angry, sad, stationary and inactive. We don’t know what to do next. This is perfectly natural. In fact, we need to acknowledge our loss and consider “closing” it with a ceremony or ritual – like bagels at their last meeting, or a Thank You card, flowers, or PCC mug?

Sometimes it happens so fast we don’t have time to publicly thank the person, but we can at least have our Board minutes acknowledge their contribution to provide a sense of closure.

Step 2: Go through the “in-between” time of transition, when the old is gone but the new isn’t fully operational yet.

Transition:

Yup, they are really gone. And, while I’m sure everyone would have liked time to train someone else, document everything they did, divvy up the work across all sorts of willing volunteers... that’s not the way it usually happens. In fact, those remaining often feel left “holding the bag.” Raise your hand if you’ve ever been given a great transition, where everything was taken into account. Okay... so most (or all) of us have been left holding the bag. Well, let’s move on, because it will happen again and again!

But, this in-between time, this “neutral zone” is also a time where new actions can happen. And that’s a good thing. Some examples:

- Our “old” PCC Coordinator handled 5 PCCs beautifully. She got out our newsletter on time and with terrific information... she was super-woman! Unfortunately, she retired and we’ve gone through 3 more PCC coordinators in less than a year. BUT... all of us in these PCCs realized that if we used the same template, had shared content, and used the front article and back square of our local PCC information, it would be a lot easier for whoever was doing the coordination. We don’t have to scramble for copy, and we get a great looking newsletter with everything we want to say included. A win-win all around – especially on resource sharing.

Our wonderful “go-to” Board Member has taken a job out of the industry. BUT... she has also helped recruit someone else (not from her organization, which we are still working on) who is stepping up on a lot of committee work. It won’t be the same without her, but she has helped us bring new blood onto the Board.

- A postal Board member who always does the programming for us is going on assignment. Sure, there will be a “replacement” and sure, it’s “short term”, but in the meantime, we decided that a number of the National PCC (and MTAC) webinars that are being offered should be specifically directed to our members, so they get great, new training at their desks, in addition to planning PCC Day as a board (rather than just having her handle it.) This gives us time and new ideas to make PCC Day the best event possible.

In other words, develop a new sense of purpose. Identify what’s important for your board to do, and what others can help with. In some cases, people who haven’t been involved in something up until now may have the best ideas and energy when they are given new responsibilities.

This is when the magic happens! Use the opportunity to make changes you weren’t quite prepared for – you’ll love.

OPPORTUNITY: Prioritize what’s important and focus on common goals.

THREAT: Inconsistency, lack of communication, feeling of not “moving forward.”

This is a key time for growth, energy, ideas – making changes and “re-patterning”.

EXAMPLE: Do more things regionally (or nationally). Focus on how you can really give your members the most “bang for your buck.” Reach out for help by including a more diverse group of members/mailers.

Step 3: Launch the New Beginning. This means that there is a shared vision, with a sense of purpose and pro-active energy.

EXAMPLE: First (X) – Publicize and celebrate! You'll find excitement in new actions – and new skills you'll learn.

Small successes make for big gains, especially when not everyone can take big steps yet. (Acknowledge everyone isn't there, yet, but everyone is invited.)

New Beginnings

You've identified new ways to do things, you've built that energy. You've set reasonable goals because you and your board have had a discussion on priorities... Good for you! Now, try to maintain records of what you are doing so that the next transition goes well. And realize...

You're going to get good at this because change is inevitable!

A great quote from C.K. Chesterton: *An adventure is only an inconvenience rightly understood. An inconvenience is only an adventure wrongly understood.*

I'd like to get some thoughts/suggestions/best practices from the audience on managing transition

