

C.P.M. NEWS SHIFT HAPPENS

My local grocery store installed a self-checkout lane where I now scan, bag and pay for my groceries, all without standing in a long line. A clerk is handy just in case the technologically challenged – example: me – have problems working the system. Recently, upon checking out, I mentioned to the clerk that I was euphoric about not having to stand in line, rely on someone else to verify my discount credits, etc. To my surprise she vented that, as a result of the new technology, the store “downsized” two checkers...with more to follow. I looked at her and said, “Shift happens.”

Recently, when my Norelco Electric Shaver needed repairs, I called the local shaver repair store and found that the minimum service charge was more than the cost of a new razor. They lamented that it was driving them out of business. I responded, “Shift happens.”

Now ISM has announced that the C.P.M. (Certified Purchasing Manager) professional certification designation is being replaced by the CPSM (Certified Professional in Supply Management). They say that this is because world-wide the “tactical” emphasis on “Purchasing” is being transitioned to an emphasis on the “strategic” role of “Supply Management.” In other words, the days of Purchasing being mere order-takers has been replaced by Supply Chain Management in which Purchasing is an integral link. ISM is emphasizing that our role has been elevated and that we are expected not only to get “a seat at the table,” but to contribute heavily when we get there. “Shift Happens.”

While formulating my thoughts on this topic I saw an e-mail from Ray Jenson, C.P.M., Associate VP of Business Services at Arizona State University (ASU) and Past NAEP President. He wrote about the American College and University Presidents Climate Change Commitment, how this issue was going to be discussed at the Sustainability Institute at ASU in late April, and how we needed to get on board on with this subject. No, he didn’t say “Shift happens,” but that is what he was meant when he said we should adopt Wayne Gretzky’s path to success by skating to where the puck is going to be, not where it is. Ray’s comment that “This is an example of good strategic thinking” is equivalent to ISM’s warning that the Supply Managers of tomorrow must adapt.

Ray then asked many of the questions all of us must ask ourselves if we plan to stay on the leading edge, of our profession, including

"How do we get a seat at the table?"

"What can we do now proactively to address these leading edge issues when the opportunity is upon us?" and

"Will we be counted among the leaders or will we be part of the pack that scrambles to catch up?"

Ray had it right with the Wayne Gretzky analogy. Skate to where the puck is going to be. Why? "Shift happens."

At the NAEP (National Association of Educational Buyers) National Conference in San Jose, David Buck, C.P.M., Director of Purchasing Services, Idaho State University, Andee Alexander, C.P.M., Senior Buyer at Saddleback valley Unified School District, and I led a lively discussion at our workshop. One man noted correctly that the CPSM will be the certification to have in the future. We agreed but noted that the certifications to have today – the ones most recognized by our profession – are the C.P.M. (and the CPPO for those in public sector procurement). We also noted that, more and more, we need the certification just to get the promotion or a job interview. To get ahead *today* we maintained that the C.P.M., CPPO or similar recognized certification is still a necessity.

To stay ahead of the curve, should you abandon your goal of obtaining a C.P.M. or CPPO and, instead, go after your CPSM in 2009? To borrow from the Gretzky analogy, I would say that puck isn't in play yet. There is still plenty of time to "score" in this game. So...

Be on the leading edge. Obtain your professional certification now. Want more information on how to start, how to prepare, how to test? Write me at ashbybob@sbcglobal.net.