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Joint Meeting Dignitaries

American Woman's Society of Certified Public Accountants

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JOINT MEETING DIGNITARIES—Waiting in line for the parade to the speaker's table at the wind-up banquet of the 27th Joint Annual Meeting of AWSCPA and ASWA in September in Portland, Oregon are Frances D. Britt, CPA, AWSCPA president 1967-68; Mrs. Beth M. Thompson, CPA, AWSCPA president 1966-67; Julia J. Kaufman, ASWA president 1967-68; Doris Kay, president of Portland chapter, ASWA; Berniece Oswald, co-chairman of the meeting; and Naomi J. Nelson, co-chairman of the meeting and ASWA president-elect.

I might add that the securing of these 18 approvals is a job in itself. Straight, simple language is preferable to cumbersome phrases. After all, we want to keep the reader awake—not lull him to sleep. I was appalled at a sentence I recently encountered in an annual report. The company in question apparently was trying to explain a gradual correction of its supply-and-demand balance, and I quote: "This improvement came about because a strong growth trend both here and abroad enabled the industry to absorb its additions to capacity." How would you like to wade through 20 pages of that kind of language? Why didn't they say something like—"Business picked up so we were able to use up our over-supply." I *think* that's what they meant.

But, back to copy writing. First comes the president's message which must strike exactly the right balance between optimism and conservatism. No matter how bright the future may appear one cannot extol it too positively because in our business, as in all others,

there are too many variables that could change the picture. It has been said, somewhat facetiously, that if the President makes things appear to be going too smoothly, stockholders may get the unthinkable idea that the management is overpaid. If difficulties are overstressed, on the other hand, they may deduce that the job is simply too big for the present incumbents.

Seriously, the president's letter above all should convey a feeling of sincerity and complete candor. If things are not going well, he should say so and explain why—if things are going beautifully, again he should say so and explain why—but *never* should he embellish the truth. The urge to puff and blow a little is almost irresistible but strong and successful resistance to such an urge will pay dividends in winning public confidence and respect. As a Japanese artist once said, "Have the strength to do more but the will to refrain."