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INSIDE EXTRA

SPECIAL IMPLEMENTATION TEAMS ISSUE

Implementation Teams Are Ready to Go

The AICPA has just taken another critical step toward adopting a team-based culture: The five Implementation Teams, which were discussed during AICPA team awareness training, are ready to convene. These teams, which include a Design Team, an Alignment Team, a Communications Team, a Skills Team, and a Continuous Process Improvement Team, will lay the foundation of the AICPA's new work culture. Members for these teams have been chosen, and preliminary charters have been created for them. They are ready to begin their work to create as smooth a transition as possible from the old, hierarchical structure of the Institute to a more dynamic environment which encourages innovation and values everyone's participation in decision-making.

This special edition will list people who can act as a resource to Team AICPA members who want to contribute to this new environment, will explain a little bit about each of the five Implementation Teams' missions, and will explain the ground rules by which each of these teams will operate in order to insure fairness and a culture of partnership. These Implementation Teams are committed to working closely and openly with all of us as they proceed, but many questions that Team AICPA members may have about how this change will affect their work simply do not yet have answers. Most of these teams are expected to hold their first meetings in January. The transition to a team work culture is so monumental that it will necessarily take time. "The important thing for people to know," said Design Team member Pat Duane, "is that we are not withholding any information from them. The whole purpose of these teams is to stop hierarchical approaches, which create bad feelings and are inefficient uses of people's time and energy, and to replace them with an open-handed way of doing things. We want everyone to know what's going on."

The Ground Rules of Implementation Team Meetings

Each of the preliminary charters of the Implementation teams includes a series of ground operating rules that will help their members to work as equal partners. These guidelines, or ones like them, will help all future AICPA teams to operate equitably. The charters say that "All members will actively participate. Job level, position or title does not confer special privileges...[Implementation Teams] will conduct one conversation at a time, and not interrupt the person who has the floor...will freely challenge 'the way things are'...will resolve conflict through communication and consensus...[and team members] with more knowledge will be patient with the learning process of others."

These guidelines will create a situation in which a director on a team will have no more or less decision-making power within the context of the team's work than a clerk on the same team. Neither will he or she bear any more or less responsibility for the total outcome of the team's projects. With each person on a team freed from hierarchical constraints, a meaningful dialogue which may either support or challenge the status quo can occur. "The purpose of this," according to Design Team member John Lewison, "is to create an atmosphere where information can be shared freely. Decisions in this kind of situation will necessarily be based on both the vision of a senior staff member and the front-line experiences of a junior level person."

With people of every level of the Institute on Implementation teams, decisions will come from a greater base of knowledge and experience. In other organizations which operate in a team work culture, this has resulted in more profit, better staff morale, and improved customer or member service. The belief is that these guidelines will foster an atmosphere that will provide the framework for achieving our critical business goals, including improved service to members.

**Implementation
Teams – On a
Mission**

AICPA team awareness training gave an overview of the purpose of each of the five Implementation teams. Each of these teams' preliminary charters include mission statements. Here, in brief, are the functions of each of the five teams:

DESIGN TEAM - To create and maintain a dynamic framework for an empowered, diverse and successful team environment to ensure the transition of AICPA “the company” to “Team AICPA.”

The Design team identified the members of the Implementation teams, and they will do the same for the market segment teams. They will listen and respond to the needs and expectations of all teams, serve as a mediator and advocate for members of day-to-day work teams, provide appropriate resources to ensure highly effective day-to-day work, implementation, market segment, and problem-solving teams. In short, they will have an “oversight” role in the whole team process.

ALIGNMENT TEAM - To ensure fulfillment of the AICPA’s Values and Visions Statement by assessing and aligning the performance appraisal system, compensation, benefits, and other workforce and quality-of-life programs.

The Alignment Team will have the responsibility for making things fall into place in this new culture. One of the tasks of the Alignment Team is to help Team AICPA members be rewarded for being “team players,” as opposed to “bureaucrats.” This will mean, among other things, revamping how the Institute evaluates our work, not only as individual contributors, but also as team members.

SKILLS TEAM - To assess the training needs of Team AICPA on an ongoing basis, and to develop appropriate training programs to meet those needs.

The AICPA recognizes that change requires that people learn new skills, and it is fully prepared to train Team AICPA members to do their jobs in new ways as needed. The Skills Team is responsible for finding out what Team AICPA members need to learn, whether in the domain of technology, team participation, or other work-related skills. They will make sure that we receive the knowledge we need to do our work.

COMMUNICATIONS TEAM - To ensure that timely, meaningful communications on the transition to and implementation of Team AICPA are developed and distributed to staff, and that these communications are responsive to staff needs and concerns.

The AICPA will take a long time to complete the changes it has undertaken, but many steps have already been taken very quickly. Team AICPA needs to understand what is going on and feel that nothing is happening in secret. This team will take responsibility for informing staff of developments, for dispelling false rumors, and for creating an open-handed, team-like style of communication at the AICPA.

CONTINUOUS PROCESS IMPROVEMENT TEAM - To analyze, redesign and implement changes that will (1) simplify our work flow; (2) achieve the most effective and efficient production and delivery methods and help us provide members with high-quality services, products and support; (3) eliminate duplication and bottlenecks and (4) fill gaps and voids.

Many Team AICPA members have felt at times that there were too many forms to fill out at the Institute, too many steps to take to perform a task and a general lack of communication across functional lines. This team will take charge of ferreting out these issues and providing appropriate ways to save time and to improve the way we work with our members.

The Continuous Process Improvement team will create staff project teams that will use their first-hand knowledge of the work they do to improve efficiency. The six processes selected for initial performance improvement are production, product development, conference planning, member service, human resources, and accounting. The Production Process Improvement Project (PIP) Team is underway and it is expected that most of the other process improvement projects will begin in mid-January.

IMPLEMENTATION TEAM MEMBERS

Below is a list of the people who will participate in each of the Implementation Teams. These people are a resource to the entire Institute as it moves from one culture to another. The people listed as part of the Continuous Process Improvement Team will be involved in the "big picture" questions regarding process improvement, however, they may not sit on each of the project teams. Team AICPA members should feel free to contact any of the people listed below if they have questions or suggestions.

DESIGN TEAM	ALIGNMENT TEAM	SKILLS TEAM	COMMUNICATIONS TEAM	CONTINUOUS PROCESS IMPROVEMENT TEAM
Dale Atherton	Susan Anderson	Selmo Alamilla	Roseann Beni	Susan Anderson
Maritza Cora	Betty Betances	Sheri Bango	Leslie Billera	Gae Barbano
Pat Duane	Marsha Bonner	Gae Barbano	Kevin Burns	Jerry Cicalese
Melanie Heim	Mac Curtis	Donna Borowicz	Carmela Chinnici	Pat Duane
John Hunnicutt	Debra Dohnert	Anita Horn	Katherine Coveleski	George Durk
Gregory Johnson	Penny Donius	John Hudson	Gregorio Espinol	David Ray
Karen Jones	Sue Hicks	Ed Lake	Dave Handrich	Margarita Womelsdorf
Irene Kassimis	Charles Keiser	Boris Musich	Doug Kadow	Edie Yaffe
Frank Katusak	Peter Kieren	Cecil Nazareth	Krissy Korte	
John Lewison	Marty Lyons	Daniel Providence	Ron Piccin	
Janice Maiman	Mae Morrow	Roz Rambert	Anne Rothkopf	
Chuck Peck	Gerry Padwe	Mary Ann Tait	Shirley Twillman	
Jay Rothberg	Shirley Price	Nelson Vega	Louise Williamson	
Carol Shaffer	Bea Sanders	Pamela Womble		
Tarron Weir	Marc Simon			

