



**MESSAGE
FROM THE
CHAPTER
PRESIDENT**



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Happy February!

Hard to believe another month has passed and we are now in February. An extra day this year, which I really need although it will take more than one extra day to get caught up.

There have been a couple issues directed to the as the Chapter Executive Committee which we would like to bring to your attention.

- The 2-hour webinars the chapter hosts each month, require your presence at the location of the event. If you wish to participate remotely, you must register with the National AGA and the cost is \$49.
- The SIGMA ID for the Greater Lansing AGA Chapter is CV0059058. If your department is Reimbursing the chapter for an event, please include the SIGMA ID to ensure the chapter receives the payment.

Please take advantage of what your AGA membership has to offer.

Cindy

Mission

AGA is a professional association advancing accountability, transparency, and leadership by promoting education, certification, innovation, and collaboration across all levels of government and stakeholders.

Vision

AGA endeavors to be the premier association for advancing government accountability.

Values

Service, Accountability, Integrity, Leadership

February EVENTS

Webinar
February 5

Monthly Luncheon
February 18

see page 2 for details



**The secret of getting ahead is getting started.
Mark Twain**

**Good, better, best. Never let it rest.
'Til your good is better and your better is best.
St. Jerome**

**Only I can change my life.
No one can do it for me.
Carol Burnett**

**If you can dream it, you can do it.
Walt Disney**

Eye Opener



\$41,198

The average price of a ransomware attack during the third quarter of 2019, more than tripling the amount from the first quarter. While overall there were 6 percent fewer ransomware incidents in 2019 compared to 2018, the ransom amount has grown. These figures are prompting U.S. insurers to increase cyberinsurance rates by up to 25 percent.

SOURCE: Governing.com | January 24, 2020





**WEB CONFERENCE
WEDNESDAY**
February 5, 2020
2:00pm to 3:50pm
G Mennen Williams Building
Auditorium
Lansing, Michigan

GASB UPDATE

Participants will learn about new accounting and financial reporting standards, including the recently issued implementation guides for fiduciary activities and leases. The webinar will also provide an overview of various Current Technical Agenda projects, including Subscription-based Information Technology Arrangements and Financial Reporting Model Improvements.

SPEAKER:

Dave Vaudt, GASB Chair
Deborah Beams, GASB Project Manager
Scott Reeser, GASB Senior Project Manager
Paulina Haro, GASB Project Manager

CPE

2 hours Auditing-Government
CPE Sponsor ID 104201

REGISTRATION

Register on-line at www.aga-lansing.org.
Click on events.
Register before Monday, February 3

COST

AGA Members – FREE
Non-members - \$20
SIGMA ID CV0059058

DELIVERY METHOD

Group – Internet Based

Registrants are responsible for payment unless cancellation is received by the registration deadline.



**MONTHLY MEETING
TUESDAY**
February 18, 2020
11:45
Van Waggoner Building
Lakeshore Learning Center
Lansing, Michigan

MICHIGAN SPECIFIC ETHICS

Changes to CPE, licensure expiration and more. We guide you on a deep dive into Michigan's accountancy law and administrative rules to help you steer clear of any violations. Ask the experts your questions about licensure and compliance with Michigan's accountancy act.



SPEAKER:

Shane Berry, Vice President of Government Relations, Michigan Association of CPAs

CPE

Michigan Specific Ethics 2019-2021
CPE Sponsor ID 104201

REGISTRATION

Register on-line at www.aga-lansing.org.
Click on events.
Register before Friday, February 13, 2020

COST

AGA Members - \$12
Non-members - \$16
Student Assistants - FREE
SIGMA ID CV0059058

DELIVERY METHOD

Group – Live

Registrants are responsible for payment unless cancellation is received by the registration deadline.

NLT 2020

National Leadership Training

Feb. 12–13, 2020 | Washington, D.C. or virtual





Paul White

Posted
12/03/2019



PICKING UP CUES YOUR THAT YOUR COLLEAGUES NEED ENCOURAGEMENT

You may be surrounded by co-workers who need to be encouraged and feel appreciated, and you may not know it. Not everyone wears a sign that says, “I need to feel valued” or “Approaching burnout: encouragement needed,” (although some of us do wear “signs” on our faces where others can easily tell when we are discouraged or weary).

But many people are harder to read — they don’t say much and have rather non-expressive facial expressions. Additionally, some of us are not especially talented at picking up clues sent out by others. Our colleagues may be clearly communicating their distress, but we are missing the signals.

Here are some clues that you can watch for, to help you know when those with whom you work may need a message of appreciation or encouragement:

Irritability and resistance

When team members are chronically irritable, something is usually wrong. Irritability usually indicates they are upset or angry about something. (Note: it may be work related — or it may be from something going on in their personal lives.) But the problem is more intense when resistance is also present — for example, resistance to instruction and new procedures, or resistance to change. Often workers become irritable and resistant when they don’t feel valued by others for their efforts and contributions.

Discouragement

Discouragement literally means “lack of courage.” Sometimes people “lose heart” over time. They begin to wonder why they should keep trying. When you hear people make statements like, “Why try? It won’t matter,” or “I’m ready to give up and just call it quits,” you should know that a sense of discouragement is starting to set in.



Increased Absenteeism or Tardiness

Some people send indirect messages when they are unhappy. Not showing up regularly for work or consistently arriving late is one way to indirectly say, “I don’t want to be here.” A lack of feeling like they matter can be the foundation for these behaviors. While the behaviors need to be addressed directly by the individual’s supervisor, communicating their importance to the organization can also be impactful.

Cynicism and Sarcasm

We frequently hear managers report concerns about how cynical their staff has become. Sarcastic remarks to new processes and procedures can become commonplace. Cynicism and sarcasm are ways people subtly communicate anger and a lack of trust. Usually, they are accompanied by a condescending attitude. Clearly, a steady diet of authentic appreciation can begin to turn around people’s negative attitudes.

Apathy and Passivity

People become passive when they believe their actions don’t matter and whatever they may try won’t make a difference. Apathy (a “who cares?” attitude) is a common motivator behind passivity. Workers begin to put forth less effort when they believe their supervisor or colleagues don’t value what they do. When you observe increased passivity among your team members, take note, because poorer work performance is not far behind.

Social Withdrawal

A clear warning sign of a colleague not feeling like they are valued (and part of the team) is when they begin to withdraw socially. Co-workers who become less communicative, don’t “hang out” as much, decline offers to go out for lunch or after work, and also just aren’t as involved as they used to be are often separating themselves from the rest of the team. They often withdraw because they feel no one cares about them. These individuals clearly need to be encouraged and have others reach out to them.

Negative Work Environment

Finally, when the overall work environment is characterized by negative communication styles, then encouragement and appreciation are in dire need by all. Positive comments between colleagues can, over time, decrease cutting remarks, intense negative reactions and overly critical feedback among team members. But a sustained, concerted effort is needed.

Early Career Center

INTERVIEWS: FIVE WAYS TO ACE THEM BEFORE STEPPING THROUGH THE DOOR

By: Zachary Rettig, GovLoop, Posted October 16, 2019



Interviews are inevitable. Whether you're being considered for a promotion or a brand-new job, chances are you will have to meet with someone face to face before you're offered the position. Even though interviews are a source of anxiety for many, there are plenty of things you can do to help lessen the stress and take them on with confidence. Here are five tips on what to do before your next interview to help you walk in with your best foot forward.

Tip 1: Study, Study, Study!

It never hurts to be prepared. When it comes to interviews, preparation is especially fundamental. Before an interview, you should take some time to get familiar with every detail on the job listing. Also, thoroughly research what the organization is, what it does and how your role will fit into the bigger picture.

The agency's website is a great place to start, but reading reports and new stories from other sources can help give you a more complete understanding of your potential employer's mission. Doing this research will clue you in on what the interviewer will be looking for in a candidate, and which areas of your resume to highlight in the discussion.

Tip 2: The Interview Process Is There to Help You, Too

Although the pressure can make this hard to believe, an interview is ultimately there to help you, too. As the interviewer is trying to judge whether you'd be a good fit for the job, take the opportunity to do the same. The interview is your chance to get an inside look into the organization and establish a sense of its culture, practices and workplace environment.

Take some time before the interview to reflect on what your personal strengths and career goals are. What kind of a workplace environment do you flourish in? Write these down. Do you see any common themes across them? See if these resonate with your experience in the interview.

Tip 3: Ask Questions

At some point during the interview, you will likely be asked if you have any questions. The answer to this should be yes!

Asking questions in an interview is important for several reasons. Relating to tip No. 2, it's your opportunity to learn what working in the organization would be like. It's also your opportunity to use some of that research from tip

No. 1. Asking questions about the agency's operations shows that you've done your homework and that you are passionate about the impact your work would have.

Finally, don't be afraid to ask a few questions in advance of the interview. Practical questions about location and procedure (how much time will it take me to get through building security?) and interview format (will it be one-on-one or with a panel?) will help you know what to expect walking in and avoid unexpected hiccups.

Tip 4: Practice, Practice, Practice!

While it's impossible to predict exactly what you'll be asked during an interview, there are some general topics that you should be prepared to talk about – for instance, why you want to work for this organization, and what makes you a good candidate for the position.

Many employers, especially in the federal service, conduct behavior-based interviews. This is where a candidate's past behavior is analyzed to assess how they might respond to future challenges. You may be asked questions like: "Tell me about a time you made a mistake. How did you handle it?" or "Tell me about a time you set and achieved a goal. How did you accomplish this?" Find someone who you can practice answering questions of this kind aloud to. Getting used to this style of question will help you keep your composure and answer with confidence.

Tip 5: Do Yourself a Favor (Or Two)

At the end of the day, the best piece of advice for an interview is to simply relax. Of course, this is probably the hardest advice to take, as it's much easier said than done. Even though eliminating pre-interview stress is more difficult than just flipping a switch, there are a number of things you can do in advance to make the big day go as smoothly as possible.

For instance, you should plan your exact route to the interview location before the day-of. If you have the opportunity, practice getting to the location so you know how much time to budget yourself to arrive on time, plus a little extra (you never know when traffic could strike). Also, lay out your outfit, important documents and essential items the night before. This will ensure that you won't forget anything and save you time getting ready. And lastly, the best favor you can do yourself before an interview is to simply get a good night's sleep.

Restaurant Finds Workers on Autism Spectrum Are Naturals with AI

Joe Rubino | The Denver Post | December 6, 2019

An AI restaurant ordering service company has found that people on the autism spectrum “are naturally drawn to it and naturally do incredibly well with it.” The company hopes it helps provide opportunity and purpose.

(TNS) — A Colorado Springs company that operates an AI restaurant ordering service has found that one group that struggles to find work is a great fit for a key job that keeps its technology running smoothly: people on the autism spectrum.

Synq3 Restaurant Solutions and its intelligent virtual assistant technology (or IVA for short) has been fielding phone orders placed at Chipotle Mexican Grill restaurants since May 2018. Broomfield-based Noodles & Co. uses the service as well, with several other major U.S. restaurant brands expected to start using it soon, Synq3’s CEO Steve Bigari said in mid-November.

As the IVA service grows, so too does one job title at Synq3, the company’s “intent analysts.” And that means more opportunities for workers with autism.

“What we’re finding is people who are on the spectrum are naturally drawn to it and naturally do incredibly well with it,” Bigari said of the positions, launched earlier this year.

Analysts help the automated voice ordering system interpret the wide world of human speech. If someone is placing an order in a loud room, speaking in a thick Chicago accent or using phrasing that IVA doesn’t understand right away, it appeals to an analyst for help. The system displays a handful of options of what it thinks the customer is saying on the analyst’s screen, the analyst listens to a digital whisper of the word or phrase and picks the right option. It all happens within a few seconds so the ordering process moves along smoothly.

“Chipotle is a great example because many people mispronounce chorizo,” Bigari said. “A normal voice assistant would just fail. ‘I’m sorry. I don’t understand. Please repeat that. I’m sorry. I don’t understand. Please repeat that.’ And then you’re throwing your phone out the window. What happens here is it gets an immediate feedback loop.”

Bigari developed the intent analyst job alongside Kevin Reiss, Synq3’s human resources director. Both expected it to be a good fit for people with autism.

Bigari’s 19-year-old daughter, Anna, is on the spectrum. The responsibilities of the job fit the skill set of atypical people like her, he said: fond of detail-oriented work, repetition and instant feedback like scorekeeping but not adept at interpersonal interaction or comfortable dealing with customers face to face. She joined the company in June as its fourth-ever intent analyst. It the first job she’s had.

Nearly half of people with autism reach the age of 25 without ever holding a paying position, according to statistics on the website for Autism Speaks, an advocacy organization.

“I feel like I have a purpose,” Anna Bigari said while taking a break during a recent shift at Synq’s headquarters. “Before, I was just lounging around the house. Here, I make friends. I help people over the phone even though I don’t talk to them.”

She is particularly fond of an internal messaging service that allows Synq3 employees to give each other kudos.

Automation is often looked at as an employment boogeyman, snatching jobs for human workers and giving them to machines. That not the case with Synq3, Steve Bigari said. The company got started as a call center in 2002, fielding drive-through orders placed at McDonald’s restaurants. In the early 2000s, it employed around 50 people. Today it has over 800 employees either working at its office at Mark Dabbling Boulevard in Colorado Springs or in their homes.

The company employs about 50 intent analysts and expects to add many more as its operation scales up. Pay starts at \$11.75 an hour, but that figure is expected to rise, Bigari said.

Seventeen of those employees were referred to the company through the Colorado Department of Labor and Employment’s Division of Vocational Rehabilitation. The division and Gov. Jared Polis recognized the company for its work at an awards ceremony in October. The job is not reserved for people with disabilities, Bigari said.

Dave Boennighausen, CEO of Noodles & Co., has autism in his family. He considers Synq3 one of the state’s most innovative companies.

“With the labor situation that we have today with unemployment at historic lows, they’ve created an absolute win-win,” he said. “It’s not just solving the labor challenge but also providing opportunities for a workforce that is particularly well-suited to provide a superior work.”

Anna Bigari is as excited as her father to see the program keep growing.

“I think there’s a lot of hope if we keep doing what we’re doing, because this job is really made for people like me who are atypical,” she said, “people who stand out.”

Chapter Education Calendar



You can register for all chapter events at www.aga-lansing.org. Click on events.



Check the chapter website and upcoming newsletters for more information.

October 23, 2019

Monthly Luncheon Meeting

Michigan Electronic Library (MEL)
VanWagoner Building, Lakeshore Room
1 hour CPE

November 19, 2019

Monthly Luncheon Meeting

State Budget Update
VanWagoner Building, Lakeshore Room
1 hour CPE

November 20, 2019

Webinar Conference

Ethics
VanWagoner Building, Sleeping Bear
2 hours CPE



WEBINAR CONFERENCES on this calendar are group based trainings requiring your presence at the Lansing location to receive CPE. Can't attend? You can receive CPE as a single attendee for \$49 by registering on the National AGA website.

February 20, 2020

Monthly Luncheon Meeting

Michigan Specific Ethics
VanWagoner Building, Lakeshore Room
1 hour CPE

March 4, 2020

Webinar Conference

Improper Payments
Constitution Hall, Conference Room A/B
2 hours CPE

March 25, 2020

Webinar Conference

Cybersecurity
VanWagoner Building, Lakeshore Room
2 hours CPE

April 8, 2020

Webinar Conference

Ethics
G. Mennen Williams Building Auditorium
2 hours CPE

April 21, 2020

Monthly Luncheon Meeting

Topic to be Announced
VanWagoner Building, Lakeshore Room
1 hour CPE

December 11, 2019

Webinar Conference

Controlling Your Bots
Capitol Commons Center, Conf Room F
2 hours CPE

December 18, 2018

Monthly Luncheon Meeting

Michigan Education Trust
VanWagoner Building, Lakeshore Room
1 hour CPE

January 8, 2020

Webinar Conference

Uniform Guidance
G. Mennen Williams Building Auditorium
2 hours CPE

Date to be Announced

Professional Development Training

Training for Government Professionals
Location to be Determined
8 hours CPE

January 21, 2020

Monthly Luncheon Meeting

Annual Tax Update
Library of Michigan
1 hour CPE

May 13, 2020

Webinar Conference

Fraud and Data Analytics
G. Mennen Williams Building Auditorium
2 hours CPE

February 5, 2020

Webinar Conference

GASB Update
G. Mennen Williams Building Auditorium
2 hours CPE

May 19, 2020

Monthly Luncheon Meeting

Topic to be Announced
VanWagoner Building, Lakeshore Room
1 hour CPE

OTHER EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES



National AGA

To register for events, visit www.agacgfm.org

February 12-13, 2020

National Leadership Training

Washington DC or Virtual
14 hours CPE

March 18, 2020

Members Only FREE Webinar

AGA Annual Women's Webinar
2 hours CPE

April 8, 2020

PIO/CFO Summit

Washington DC
4 hours CPE

June 26, 2020

Members Only FREE Webinar

Professional Development
1 hours CPE

July 19-22, 2020

Professional Development Training

Dallas, Texas or Virtual
24 hours CPE

West Michigan AGA

To register for events, visit www.agacgfm.org/Chapters/WestMichigan/Home

April 21, 2020

Accelerate Year-End and the Annual Audit Webinar

Your Desk
2 hours CPE
2:00 p.m. – 3:40 p.m.

The GASB has identified *timeliness* as one of the key factors in the relevance and usefulness of government financial data. Yet, with all the complexities of governmental reporting, new accounting pronouncements, and day-to-day responsibilities, many government financial managers are struggling to keep up. This webinar will explore the challenges faced by governments today, and offer practical suggestions on how to accelerate the year-end close and annual audit so you can *Move Forward*.

Sponsored by Rehmann

The beautiful thing about learning is that no one can take it away from you.

BB King

My CGFM®

LOG INTO YOUR AGA ACCOUNT TODAY

"My CGFM" Makes Tracking CPE Easier

We've added a new feature to "My CGFM" to help you keep track of the CPEs you earned at AGA events! In addition, you can upload CPEs earned outside of AGA to keep your records in one place.

25 REASONS
to be a CGFM

Reason #18

Understand the big picture of government

25 YEARS
CGFM.

25 REASONS
to be a CGFM

Reason #19

Set an example for others

25 YEARS
CGFM.

25 REASONS
to be a CGFM

Reason #20

Challenge yourself

25 YEARS
CGFM.



MEMBERSHIP NEWS

CONGRATULATIONS! Member Anniversaries

John Daly, CGFM	24 years
Wanda Clavon Jones	13 years
Ma Blanche Quirante	13 years
John Stark	13 years
Dolores Midkiff-Powell	9 years
Karen Farr	3 years
Robin Garity	2 years
Ben Hung	1 year

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!

Melissa Ballard
Eaton County
Holly Simon
Technology, Management, and Budget
Sonya Butler
Health and Human Services

APPOINTMENT RECOGNITION CRAIG MURRY, CGFM, CPA

AGA REPRESENTATIVE APPOINTED TO GOVERNMENTAL ACCOUNTING STANDARDS ADVISORY BOARD

Craig Murray, CGFM, CPA, Director of Professional Practice for the Michigan Office of the Auditor General, has been appointed to the Governmental Standards Advisory Council (GASAC). Craig will serve a two-year term as AGA's representative to this important industry committee. The GASAC advises the Governmental Accounting Standards Board on strategic and technical issues, project priorities, and other matters that affect standard setting.



RENEWAL SEASON IS COMING!

Your CGFM renewal is just around the corner. Make sure your address is up to date to ensure proper delivery of your renewal notice at the beginning of the year, as well as any future correspondence.

CHECK YOUR CPE REQUIREMENT

Whether your renewal cycle ends December 31, 2019, or if you have another year to go, log into **My CGFM** to double-check your current CPE cycle and upload your training records to stay on top of your CPE requirement.

CPE AUDIT

National AGA is currently in the process of completing the annual CPE audit from a random sample of active CGFM's. If you were selected for the audit, you would have already received a letter in the mail notifying you of the audit process. As a friendly reminder to all CGFM's, we recommend you keep your training records for at least three years and review the documentation guidelines listed in the CGFM CPE requirements (Section 16).

SELF-LEARNING BY AGA

Did you know that AGA offers online, on-demand training that can count towards your CGFM CPE requirement? AGA's Self-Learning Training features quizzes on sessions from AGA events that are self-paced and web-based, offering you the chance to earn your CPEs from your home or office on your own time.

USE OF CGFM

Only active CGFM's may use *CGFM* after their names. Retired CGFM's must clearly indicate *CGFM-Retired*.



Are you up to date?

Verify your contact information today!

IT'S MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL TIME

Not receiving the *Journal*, *Topics*, invoices, or other mail and emails from AGA?
Be sure your preferred mailing address and email address are correct in your AGA profile.
Help AGA reach you by making sure your account is current.



Chapter Executive Committee 2019-2020

Platinum
Chapter

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Immediate Past President

Vacant

Community Service Director

Vacant



See the Chapter's Annual Citizen Centric Report
on the website.

The Chapter's Citizen Centric Report was awarded a Certificate of Excellence by National AGA.

www.lansing-aga.org

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