

AMCEA
2008 CONFERENCE HIGHLIGHTS
COLUMBUS, OHIO
OCTOBER 18TH – OCTOBER 22ND

SATURDAY OCTOBER 18TH

The welcome Reception hosted by The Columbus Dispatch was held at the Arena Grand Theatre downtown. AMCEA members and guests were treated to a private showing of the movie *The Express*. A drama based on the life of college football hero Ernie Davis, the first African-American to win the Heisman Trophy Award. Of course, a movie wouldn't be fun without the popcorn, candy and drinks enjoyed by all, a great way to start the 55TH Annual Conference.

SUNDAY OCTOBER 19TH

Exhibitor's day was kicked off with a breakfast for the Membership and Vendors. Since the theme of the Conference was "Play for Performance", members were asked to wear their favorite college or pro team colors. They were invited to join the AMCEA Sports field with an all star line up of Vendors. Vendors who participated in the event included **Biehl & Biehl, Inc.** Chicago, IL ; **Credit.net** Omaha, NE; **Levy Diamond Bello & Associates, LLC**, Milford, CT; **\$creening For Profit** Fort Wayne, In; **Szabo Associates Inc**, Atlanta, GA; **Shoom Inc.**, North Hollywood, CA. Throughout the afternoon prizes were given to members who had the answers to athletic questions asked. We thank all the Vendors for their continued support in making Exhibitors Day a success.

MONDAY OCTOBER 20TH

Brad Campbell, Corporate Controller for The Columbus Dispatch welcomed the delegation to Columbus. He gave highlights of what to see and do in Columbus during our stay. The new Board Nominations were presented during the first General Business Session along with committee/ project reports. The day continued with speakers and educational material as follows:

Leif Hokanson Smith, PSY.D with the University of Dayton spoke on 5 keys to Pragmatic Management, doing more with less.

1. We have to be proactive about changing our attitudes to our benefit. This is particularly important when everyone around us is losing their perspective.
2. With every new challenge, first try to innovate (rather than problem solve).
3. We always seem to evaluate reasons for failure while neglecting reasons for success. We need to understand reasons for current successes in order that we can replicate and improve on them.

4. Balance is a wonderful tonic for stress. We can only achieve balance if we first realize that work supports life, not vice versa.
5. Pursue effectiveness (getting the right things done) over efficiency (getting things done). You can do this by setting priorities and pursuing them relentlessly.

Paul R. Anderson, CPA and Director of assurance practice with **GBQ Partners** spoke on Financial Statements 101. He discussed changes to generally accepted accounting principles. Things to watch for, such as are you receiving a full set of financial statements. He did a walkthrough of a Financial Statement - Balance Sheet and how to interpret them.

Gary Bugge with **\$creening For Profit** spoke on Cross Border Fraud. As we all know a lot of scam advertising comes for Canada and other countries. Gary spoke on current scams and what it is costing newspapers. His Alert System for Advertising Credit Managers has helped newspapers save money on scam advertising throughout the years.

TUESDAY OCTOBER 21ST

Matt Fluegge, Assistant Vice President, with **Fifth Third Bank's Processing Solutions** division discussed Credit Card processing. How the interchange fee is calculated and who retains that fee. Whether the transaction is processed with or without the card determines the rate charged. Credit cards that offer rewards are more costly to process. If a transaction is not captured and settled to the bank within a two day requirement, the rate charged is higher.

Robin Szabo, President, of **Szabo Associates** discussed Managing Receivables during Tough Times. Monitoring troubled industries and watching for "Red Flags". Red flags to look for are changes in the market, customers paying habits, or is the customer attempting to cancel an existing contract. A customer repeatedly requests documentation that has been sent previously.

Prioritize collection efforts by making new customers 1st, high dollars 2nd and slow pays 3rd. Contact accounts according to your payment terms. Start contacting customers when they become 15 days past due. Team up with sales and have them help you collect on delinquent accounts if you meet resistance after the first attempt.

Document all communication. Obtain confirmation of payment responsibility at time of sale. If an agency is involved, clearly establish a "joint and several liability" position on all written contracts, invoices and correspondence. Notify all parties involved of your terms and conditions. Keep record of every collection effort and communication.

Relate to the customers situation. Is there a legitimate dispute? How has the economic slowdown affected the debtor's industry? Try to anticipate the debtor's responses. Foster an atmosphere of cooperation and mutual respect.

Make the most of the tools of the trade. Make sure the account activity information you have is accurate and up to date. The telephone is still the collector's best friend. Once you have reached an agreement recap the arrangement. Send a follow up letter confirming the conversation, including the date of the call and agreed upon payment arrangements. Form letters can be used to conserve time, effort and cost. These can be used for first, second and third reminders. As a last resort, a final demand letter for payment stating your next action such as third party collection should be sent. Follow through with turning the account over to a collection agency if no payment is received.

Kim Kocher, from Delphia Consulting spoke about Rewarding & Recognizing Employees on Low to no Budget. Employee recognition is a communication tool that reinforces and rewards the most important outcomes people create for a business. When employees are recognized effectively, you reinforce the actions and behaviors you most want to see people repeat. For effective recognition all employees should be eligible. Identify exactly what is being rewarded and recognized. Recognize across the generations Boomers, Gen X and Gen Y. Low cost or no cost recognitions can be hand clappers, reserved parking spot, lunch or dinner with the boss, emailed "high fives", certificate of appreciation. Make it a fun time.

Second Business Session: **Loretta Dominguez**, Santa Barbara News Press, **David Lofe**, The Atlanta Constitution, **Mary Younger**, The Courier-Journal were elected to serve a three year term on the Board of Directors at the. We congratulate and wish them well on their new positions.

The **Host Event** and **President's Dinner** was held at The Wigwam on Tuesday evening. Dinner was followed by an awards ceremony, where President, Dee Stevenson, recognized the outgoing Board of Directors. Mary Younger was presented the Pen & Quill Award by Dee Stevenson. Kent Treadwell last year's AWK recipient, presented the AWK Award to Kay Rice. The Host Award and the Larry Murphy Award were presented to Cheryl Szluzer by Dee Stevenson. Kimberly Riley presented Dee Stevenson with the Outgoing President's Award. After the awards presentations, Dee Stevenson introduced Kimberly Riley as the 55th AMCEA President. Kimberly gave her acceptance speech and introduced the 2009 Board of Directors. AMCEA thanks The Columbus Dispatch for sponsoring the evening.

WEDNESDAY OCTOBER 22ND

The delegation had an open discussion regarding the future of AMCEA. Several ideas were given on how to improve communication to the membership, ways to reduce expenses, and what steps to take to retain and acquire new members. Kay Rice facilitator for the Round Tables used an open format discussion.

The conference was adjourned and delegates left with the determination to work harder at making AMCEA the best organization ever for its members.