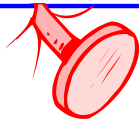


Bama Chatter

HFMA ALABAMA CHAPTER

VOLUME XXXXI, NO. 3

NOVEMBER / DECEMBER 2001



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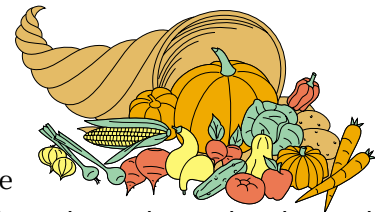
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Life Goes On ...

I guess it goes without saying that since the last one of these I wrote (late August), things have changed in the world.

The State of the World

It seems as though everyone has an opinion as to what to do in response to this act, and the majority of them are blabbing on the three major cable news channels around the clock these days. The current approach of bombing Afghanistan into oblivion is a start. The Bin Laden organization's major terrorist bases are stationed there, but judging from their crude construction, they could easily be moved to the next state that supports and sponsors terrorist activities (take your pick among Iraq, Syria, Libya, and a number of others). However, a brutal and decisive strike at the heart of that nation's corrupt regime would help to send a message to other states who consider harboring the likes of Bin Laden and his successors when his ultimate (and seemingly inevitable) demise takes place.

Diplomatic efforts only go so far, and Secretary of State Colin Powell carries enough clout in the region of the world in question to make an impact and forge the type of coalition that President George H. W. "41" Bush put together during the Gulf War. But make no

mistake about it: this is a situation that will only be resolved through military action over a sustained period of time. And such action will be made more difficult by the fact that we truly do not know exactly who should be the focus.



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2001 - 2002

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Leading @ the speed of light

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Advertising Information

Quarter page: \$100 per issue—Half page: \$175 per issue—Full page: \$300 per issue
Special discounts for long-term arrangements. Contact the editor for details.

Please send your ad and graphics on plain white paper or slicks. Deadline for publication is the 20th of the month preceding the month of publication. *Bama Chatter* is published bimonthly and is circulated to approximately 650 recipients.

Publication Schedule

ISSUE	DEADLINE	ISSUE	DEADLINE
September/October . . .	August 20th	March/April	February 20th
November/December. .	October 20th	May/June	April 20th
January/February	December 20th	July/August	June 20th

The statements and opinions appearing in articles are those of the authors and are not necessarily those of HFMA, the Alabama Chapter, or the editor. The editor strongly encourages submission of material for publication. Articles should be typewritten and double spaced, and submitted to the editor or the awards council chairperson by the 20th of the month preceding the month of publication. The editor reserves the right to edit materials and accept or reject contributions whether solicited or not. Readers are invited to comment on any of the published material. Letters to the editor must be signed and are subject to condensation and editing. All rights reserved.

Life Goes On . . . continued from cover

One cannot help but admire be pleased with the performance of George W. "43" Bush in the aftermath of the September 11th attacks. While it is almost a given that the nation unites behind its leaders during times of crisis such as these, Bush has made all the right moves and skillfully handled the various situations that have spun off as a result of the attacks with seeming ease and confidence. Credit it to the man or to the circle of advisors around him if you'd like, but it just seems to me that the president could care less who gets the credit. He seems genuinely engaged in this situation and determined to ensure that our nation's response is appropriate and brings devastating results to the perpetrators of these crimes against humanity.

One reassuring thought: in a free-for-all style street fight, it always helps to be on the side with the baddest dudes on the block. As an American, I personally take great comfort in having Donald Rumsfeld and Dick Cheney in high places these days. Both are accomplished foreign policy experts and have a thorough understanding of our military capabilities. And it's a safe

bet that they are both in rather hawkish moods these days. To think, had the attacks taken place on September 11th, 2000, our responses would have been influenced by the likes of William Cohen, Al Gore, and Madeline Albright.

On The Lighter Side

The Onion, the weekly internet news parody, released its special edition on the crisis a couple of weeks after the September 11th attacks. While some of the humor is irreverent and probably a bit much given the timing of the issue (keep the kids away from this one), the publication did contain several hilarious angles on the crisis including coverage of the hijackers' surprise as they found themselves in hell rather than heaven following their deaths, a guide to explaining this crisis to children that reads like a National Security Council briefing, a spoof of some of the contrived displays of patriotism that have followed the tragedy, and a couple of reports that make light of the dilemma of our nation's leaders regarding just who to hold responsible for these acts. This issue of The Onion can be found at <http://www.theonion.com/>

onion3734/index.html.

A Chilling Thought

I watched one of those "Modern Marvels" documentaries on The History Channel a few nights ago on the topic of the World Trade Center (WTC). The program was primarily focused upon the thought process that was involved in planning the design and construction of the WTC and the numerous engineering feats required to work around the fact that the towers stood on unstable ground with a high water table. It also outlined the complexities of even the seemingly simple things (elevator banks, window washing, water supply, etc...) at the towers. The network was quick to point out that the program had been produced over the past several months prior to the events of September 11th and that the decision had been made to present the program without editing or commercial interruption. Several of the principals interviewed for the program (the window washer, the electrical room manager, etc...) were listed as "Missing Since September 11th, 2001", graphics that really brought the tragedy to a personal level despite



Paul T. Graham, FHFMA, CPA
President, Alabama Chapter HFMA

my not knowing any of these people.

One of the men interviewed, an elderly Italian gentleman whose name and occupation/involvement in the WTC I cannot recall, made a chilling statement that was hard to forget. He said outright that the towers had been designed to withstand the impact of a direct hit from a 707, the largest jet manufactured at the time of the WTC's construction (the mid-sixties). I guess that neither he nor the designers of the complex could have anticipated that the towers would one day be faced with trying to withstand the impact of a direct hit from a 757 at approximately 500 miles per hour and the resulting heat from burning enough jet fuel to fill four tanker trucks. How could anyone have anticipated such? This gentleman was also listed as "Missing Since September 11th, 2001".

Life Goes On

While the WTC attacks practically paralyzed the nation and brought our economic engine to a standstill during the days immediately following them, life has to resume with some degree of normalcy. Any of you who may have attempted to travel by airplane in the next six months know that normalcy in that environment has changed a great deal. And if you think things are intense at the airport now, you should have hopped on a plane on September 16th—just five days after the attacks.

I did just that all in the name of HFMA. Every year the Chapter Liaison Representatives, Presidents and Presidents-Elect of the Chapters in Region V (Alabama, Florida, Georgia, South Carolina and Tennessee) convene in the fall to discuss the business of our region and to provide our National

organization with input from the Chapter level regarding ideas, initiatives, and issues important to the association as a whole. Our National Board sends representatives, and a member of the National staff attends as well. Most of the regions in the country get together for a day or two for similar purposes at some b-grade hotel. Our region does it right—by taking a seven-day cruise. This year's edition had been scheduled for months to launch from Vancouver, British Columbia on Monday, September 17th and travel up the Canadian and Alaskan coastline and back. One of the first personal issues I thought of in the wake of the attacks was whether or not this trip was going to take place as planned.

It didn't take very long for the first e-mail addressing the situation to arrive from Lawrence Laddaga, our Chapter Liaison

Representative from South Carolina. Lawrence has the right attitude about life. His immediate thought was that for us to not go on as planned would be just what our enemies would have wanted. The majority of those planning to attend agreed, and we all braved the air travel system only five days after the WTC attacks to get to the boat on time. Of the eighteen cabins booked for our group on the trip, sixteen were ultimately occupied.

The trip was most enjoyable. The meeting was a success despite rough seas that day, and it resulted in the sharing of a number of good ideas and opinions among the Chapters represented. For those of you considering pursuit of a leadership position within the Chapter in the future, let me tempt you a little more. In the six years that I have been involved in Chapter leadership positions, I have

attended Leadership Training Conferences (LTCs) in New Orleans, Hilton Head, Tampa, Ft. Lauderdale, Dallas, and Phoenix. I have attended Annual National Institutes (ANIs) in Orlando and San Antonio. And I have now seen the state of Alaska and the city of Vancouver, one of the most interesting places I think I have ever been.

Next year's LTC will be held in Puerto Rico (yes, HFMA has a Chapter there too). Next year's ANI will be held in Seattle. Next year's Fall Presidents' Meeting will be held on a boat in the midst of a seven-day cruise of the Southern Caribbean.

I don't know exactly what the organization has in store for leaders of the next decade, but I'd be willing to bet the farm that getting involved will be well worth the time and effort committed. Nothing would be more rewarding to me personally than to

CPAR Coaching Sessions & Testing

Who Is The Program For?

Any Business Office associate not already certified. There are no prerequisites.

Coaching Sessions

The following locations have been designated for Coaching Sessions. Details are as follows:

OCTOBER 20, 2001 • 9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

- Birmingham at Montclair Hospital
- Guntersville at Marshall Medical Center
- Huntsville at Limestone Hospital
- Mobile at Thomas Hospital

OCTOBER 23 & 25, 2001 • 5:30 - 8:00 p.m.

- Fairhope at Thomas Hospital
- Dothan at Southeast Alabama Hospital

Test Date

The test will be given on **November 10, 2001** from 9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. at all the locations shown above.

For Registration or Questions Call:

Nancy Strachan, Fairhope, (334) 990-1550
Linda Maddox, Birmingham, (205) 592-5859
JoAnn Hudspeth, Guntersville, (256) 571-8039
Pam Sanders, Fairhope, (334) 990-1551



see future presidents faced with the dilemma of just who to appoint to committee and institute chairs from an over-abundant list of qualified and interested candidates. Think about this over the next few months and feel free to call Phil Cusa or me to discuss how you can become involved both now and in the future.

The More Things Change...

...the more they stay the same. Think about these:

The Seattle Mariners won 116 games this year. The Yankees have just completed mopping the floor with them in the American League Championship Series as I have been writing this.

The Atlanta Braves went to the playoffs for the tenth consecutive season (nice streak, but they didn't stand a snowball's chance in hell of catching the Montreal Expos down the stretch in 1994, the year of the strike). They flopped in the playoffs again and will now be faced with breaking up the core of an aged team that will only have one World Series championship to show for their run.

Michael Jordan is back, but the Washington Wizards are still going to be lousy.

The level of boredom of the average NFL game may

have reached an all-time high. I'm in the middle of watching the Eagles and Giants fight out a 10-9 Monday night classic. Just about every final score of the last three weekends has resembled that of an American League baseball game. The problem to me is poor play at quarterback. Consider the fact that among the league's starters this past weekend were Jim Miller, Tony Banks, Anthony Wright (who is he?), Charlie Batch, Kordell Stewart, Tom Brady, Rob Johnson, and John Kitna. Not to mention the fact that Peyton Manning suddenly looks like Carol Channing in this silly new no-huddle offense some genius has inflicted upon him and Jake Plummer is just not developing into the franchise QB his team obviously would have hoped for.

Speaking of Monday night, would someone please break up this television crew? Al Michaels is outstanding in his play-by-play role, but Dan Fouts is absolutely vanilla and Dennis Miller's attempts to seriously describe the intricacies of the various offshoots of the 46 defense are laughable. And if someone could tell me what having Eric Dickerson on the sideline adds to the telecast, I'd

appreciate it greatly. The games are boring (see above), the lines are predictable, and I'm frankly not at all surprised that this piece of Americana is seeing its ratings tank in an unprecedented fashion this year.

Finally, I've conveniently neglected to watch the 4th quarter of every Alabama game this year. So, what's our record now? 6-1?

One Last Thing

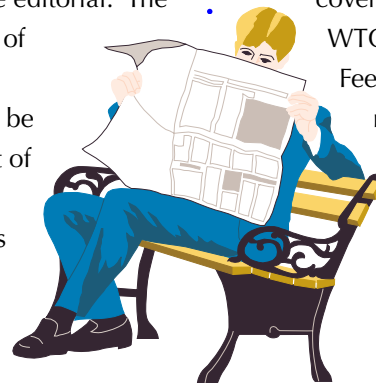
Thanks to the many of you who have offered kind words since my "debut" as an editorial writer in the Birmingham News Sunday edition of September 23rd. I hope you all had a chance to read the piece (we sent the link out via e-mail a few weeks ago), which addressed the recent implosion of Southern Health Systems. Let me emphasize again one point that I hope I made very clear in the editorial. The leadership of that plan should not be the subject of disdain for its business failure. It should, however, be chastised and made to stand accountable for its apparent dishonesty and general lack of integrity.

Hopefully we have not heard the end of this story as it relates to those points.

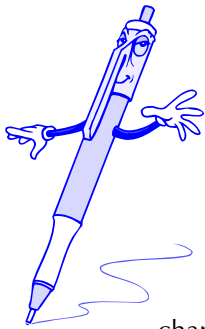
I came across a Birmingham Business Journal article from over a year ago in doing my research for that piece. It quoted the company's CEO as saying that the plan had "carved itself a nice niche in the Birmingham market". Here's hoping that nobody steps up anytime soon to fill the void that they left.

Speaking of getting involved, I found the process of having an opinion piece published in a major metropolitan market's newspaper rather simple. I just picked up the phone and called the editor with the idea. I wrote it, e-mailed the file, sent in a picture of myself from about three years ago when I was in desperate need of a haircut, and the piece was published two weeks later (it was actually delayed a week due to coverage of the WTC attacks).

Feel free to call me with your own ideas for future editorials that could further enhance the profile of the Alabama Chapter. I'd be glad to assist.



From the Editor's Desk . . .



I can't believe how much things have changed since the last time I wrote this message. Some of it I was prepared for, on September 6, 2001, my first child, Katie Wakeford, was born. As you can see, I am a proud mommy and have included a picture for everyone to see. Of course the other big changes have occurred as a result of the events of September 11, and I don't think any of us were prepared for that. I know it has become cliché to hear that life will never be the same, but how else do you even begin to explain how each one of us has been affected. I had to go to the airport two days after they reopened and it felt like a different country as everyone's suitcases were searched and National Guard members with weapons walked around the airport. Although I do not mind any of the additional hassle related to the increased security, it certainly is an eye-opener as to how vulnerable we were and how we take feeling safe for granted. I only hope that soon, we will be able to feel somewhat safe again.



Now my plea - please keep the articles for the newsletter coming in. We need contributions from everyone to keep the quality of Bama Chatter where it has been the last few years. Feel free to submit any information that you want to share with the chapter. It does not have to be technical in nature - we try to have some lighter information in every issue.

I hope to see everyone at some of the upcoming events and hope that everyone has a wonderful holiday season - it is hard to believe that it is almost 2002. Time sure does fly!!

Until next issue,
Jenny



*Mark Your
Calendars!!!*

HFMA Winter Institute
February 28 & March 1, 2002
Embassy Suites
Birmingham, Alabama

*Make Plans
To Attend!!!*

The new year is right around the corner, believe it or not, and we're gearing up for HFMA's Winter Institute. Don't wait . . . mark your calendars today! Further details regarding the Winter Institute will soon be available, but don't wait to make your reservation at the Embassy Suites - call (205) 879-7400. The special room rate for our meeting is \$119, and our room block will be held until February 1, 2002. Please be sure and mention the HFMA Winter Institute when you call.

If your company would like to sponsor this event, or for more information regarding attending the Winter Institute, please call Dawn Walton at (205) 939-9073.

The 2001 - 2002 B.E.S.T. Recruiter Campaign "Being Exceptional Starts Today"

This month, we would like to congratulate **Sydney Rountree** of UAB Medical Center for recruiting 2 new members during September/October. Sydney has just won the free gas for a month!!! The first month of this contest, we awarded **Phil Cusa** with the dinner for two for recruiting 1 new member during August.

Sydney is currently in the lead for the Grand Prize with her two recruits. And . . .

the GRAND PRIZE is (drawing to be held at the Annual Institute in San Destin)

**FREE AIRLINE TICKETS TO FLY ANYWHERE
IN THE CONTINENTAL UNITED STATES!**



Would you like to see your name in the lead? Get out there and be the **B.E.S.T. !!!**

To help you recruit members, we are offering a special discount to new members.

During November and December 2001 **ONLY**, we are offering to **waive the \$30 application fee!** So encourage your friends and colleagues to take advantage of this one time offer and JOIN TODAY!

Who will win the **movie tickets for 4** next month? The sponsor with the most recruits, of course! And that could be YOU!

As a reminder, it is imperative to call in any updated or missing information needed on our report, such as the sponsor's name and/or new members you have recruited if you don't see them on the list below. We want you to get credit for ALL your recruits.

Don't forget . . .

"Being Exceptional Starts Today"

Prize awards are based on a bi-monthly recruitment total. Totals are not cumulative for bi-monthly prizes. Only Grand Prize drawing is a cumulative total. In order to be eligible for prizes, new members must list your sponsor information on their application. In the event of a tie, the winner will be determined by the earliest join dates of all members she/he recruits. Contest ends April 30th, 2002.

**Travel is within the 48 contiguous States excluding Alaska and Hawaii. Tickets may not be redeemed for cash.*

To receive applications for new members or any information, please call (800) 264-2700 ext. 213. If I am not able to receive your call at that time, please leave your name, company name, phone number, address, email address and/or fax number on my voice mail. You can also email me at: **Pollyanna@cbmontgomery.com**. This will give me the opportunity to have your application to you ASAP! Or click on the link below to download an application.

Pollyanna

Pollyanna Brannan
Membership Chairman

 For a New Member Application, Click Here
<http://www.alhfma.org/Join.asp?Page=4>

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

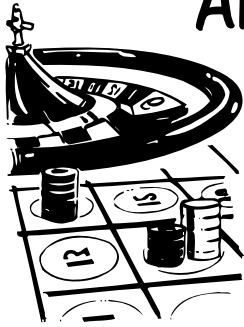
		SPONSOR	TOTAL RECRUITED
Donna K. Ezell* Athens-Limestone Hospital	Belle Ott* Thomasville Infirmary	TOTAL WITH NO SPONSOR	19
Kim Buzzard Brown* Jackson Hospital	Traci Collins* Athens-Limestone Hospital	Brenda Crowson	1
Carolyn P. McDowell* UAB Hospital	Ronda Stewart* Flowers Hospital	Phil Cusa	1
Robert Kurtts* Mercy Medical	<i>*Please call us with your sponsor's name.</i>	Jonathan Kimsey	1
		Terri McCullers	1
		Sydney Rountree	2
		TOTAL RECRUITED FOR 2001/2002	25

HFMA Southern Institute

Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, Florida

January 17-18 2002

Grand Casino Biloxi · Biloxi, Mississippi



Join us for the HFMA Southern Institute in January at the Grand Casino Biloxi! We have an incredible line-up of speakers planned and a lot of fun as well. Something different this year, to better serve our vendors and sponsors for an improved networking

opportunity, our welcome reception will be held on Wednesday evening with an early registration beginning at 6:00 p.m. This has been held on Thursday evening in the past, but we hope to provide vendors and sponsors the opportunity to have an early dinner with prospective clients that evening. Our Golf Outing is being coordinated by Cam Pearl. For additional information about golf, call Cam at Medassist at (334) 716-7880.

Our Keynote speaker is Ed Hearn. In 1986 Ed fulfilled his childhood dream as a member of the World Champion New York Mets. He was set to make "million dollar bank deposits" the following year with the Kansas City Royals when a serious shoulder injury brought a premature end to his promising career. Less than six months later, he was diagnosed with three potentially life threatening conditions. His speech is entitled "Conquering Life's Curves." This program promises to be a dynamic mix of entertainment, insight and inspiration.

Some of our other topics include Emtala, Joint Venture, Medicaid Eligibility, HIPAA and some other surprises.

Exhibit Space & Sponsorship: For exhibit space, contact **Cindi Barksdale** at (205) 391-8930 or chbfranklin@aol.com. For sponsorship contact **Linda Maddox** at Baptist Health System, Inc. at (205) 592-1226.

Hotel Information: The Grand Casino Biloxi - Bayview Resort & Spa in Biloxi, Mississippi has reserved a block of rooms for the HFMA Southern Institute at a special rate of \$85.00 plus tax. The room block will be released on Monday, December 17, 2001. After that date, reservations will be accepted on a space available basis only. You may contact the Grand Casino directly by calling 1-800-354-2450. Please mention the Southern Institute when you call to get the special rate.

Meeting Registration

Name _____

Title _____ Organization _____

Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone () _____ Please check here if you are a new HFMA member as of June 2001.

FEES:	MEMBERS (before 12/17/01)	MEMBERS (after 12/17/01)	NON- MEMBERS	Enclosed
<i>(You must be registered for conference to play golf.)</i>	\$120	\$125	\$145	\$ _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Golf Outing at Presidents Broadwater:	<i>before 12-18-00</i>	\$65		\$ _____
Handicap: _____ Average Score: _____	<i>after 12-18-00</i>	\$80		\$ _____
			TOTAL	\$ _____

*Make checks payable to: **Alabama Chapter-HFMA** and mail to: **Mitzi Winters, VP Finance***
 Baptist Health System, Inc. • 800 Montclair Road • Birmingham, AL 35226 • Phone: (205) 592-1226 • Fax: (205) 330-0870
 e-mail: chbfranklin@aol.com

The Alabama Chapter HFMA Fall Institute



Wynfrey Hotel at Riverchase Galleria
Birmingham, Alabama
November 14-16, 2001

This is your last chance to register for the 2001 Alabama Chapter Fall Institute. It is scheduled for Wednesday, November 14 through Friday, November 16 at the Wynfrey Hotel in the Riverchase Galleria in Birmingham.

Our educational sessions will address topics that impact the health care industry (HIPAA, i.e., recently CMS Privacy Rule Guidance, Alabama's Prompt Pay Bill, Appeals and Denials, EMTALA, etc.) and there will be time for networking and fun as well!

Events include golf at the Pine Tree Country Club, a night out at the Comedy Club, and a "Show Your School Spirit" day on November 16 for the Auburn and Alabama fans. Please don't miss this event!



A complete agenda and biographical information on all our speakers is on the Chapter website at alhfma.org



See you there!

Hotel Information: You may make reservations directly with The Wynfrey Hotel by calling (205) 987-1600, or toll free (800) 996-3739. Please mention HFMA to receive the discount rate. The block of rooms reserved for this function will be released on October 14, 2001. After this date, reservations will be accepted on a space available basis.

MEETING REGISTRATION

Please register by October 31, 2001

Name _____
 Title _____ Organization _____
 Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____
 Phone () _____ Please check here if you are a new HFMA member as of June 2001

FEES:	Members	Non-Members	
Registration	\$125	\$150	\$ _____
Golf	\$60	\$60	\$ _____
Guest at the Comedy Club	\$25	\$25	\$ _____
TOTAL			\$ _____

Please check the events you plan to attend:

- Wednesday's Golf Handicap or average score _____
- Thursday Evening Comedy Club (included in registration fee)
- I plan to bring a guest to the Comedy Club (Add \$25)

Dress code for all events is casual.

Make checks payable to: **Alabama Chapter-HFMA**
 Mail to: **Yolanda Rich, CHC, MBA**
Baptist Health System, Inc.
 P.O. Box 830605 • Birmingham, AL 35283-0605
 Phone: (205) 715-5461 • Fax: (205) 715-5865
 E-Mail: yolanda.rich@bhsala.com

Human Engineering: Management for the New Millennium

by Greg Smith, M. DIV., LPC

Management in this millennium will require a new management style that will address issues like increased pressure to exchange information, doing more with less and potentially more time in the work place. Unfortunately, the new emphasis on data and speed is not always conducive to employee or customer satisfaction. The *buzz words* for the last few years have been *job stress, downsizing, team building, staff retention, professional goals, employee retention, time management, salary caps* and *customer satisfaction*. To employees these terms often carry negative connotations.

There is one new management style that is being talked about that can positively affect all these issues. This management style is what I call **Human Engineering**. Human Engineering refers to an organization's attempt to sculpt a job to better meet the skills and needs of the employee. Job sculpting is not really new as many companies are and have been managing in a way that fits the

parameters of sculpting an employee's job. This concept, although not totally unique, has not been well defined and certainly not addressed as a new concept for implementation.

Those companies or institutions that try job sculpting with their employees tend to fall into this management style by chance, implemented by personal management style as opposed to design.

Overview

In general, **Human**

Engineering is based on the premise that a happy employee is a good employee.

Although most companies agree with this concept they don't always have a management philosophy that embraces this in practice. Most companies are run from the top down which means they focus on strategic goals, senior management goals, middle management goals and

then encourage, manipulate or tell the rank and file employee what to do.

One of the major problems with top to bottom management styles is that the rank-and-file employee never seems to get the full picture or a sense of direction of where the company is headed. This organizational style seems to break down at the middle management level as information and understanding never seems to "trickle down" to lower levels of the organization. The end result is that the

rank and file employee does not develop a sense of *ownership*. If an employee does not feel a shared interest in the company then their job becomes a *task*, which sets the stage for boredom, low productivity and a potentially disgruntled employee. The best way for an organization to create a sense of *ownership* is to communicate to the

employee that they make a difference. This is best accomplished by understanding the individual employee, knowing specifically what his/her skills are and what motivates each employee.

Human engineering tries to identify the *esteem indicators* of each employee and incorporate these into their job tasks. *Esteem Indicators* refer to those things in life that bring value to the individual, unique desires that make a person feel good about themselves. For instance, some personality types like to accomplish tasks while some individuals hate details, some are best at building systems while others are visionaries and some employees are great with numbers but are lacking interpersonal skills.

The goal of human engineering is to retain good employees. This is accomplished by utilizing employees' strengths and creating job descriptions that incorporate esteem indicators for the employee.



Human Engineering Examined

On the surface, human engineering appears to be simple or static. This is misleading. Once this philosophy is instituted it creates endless possibilities and embraces change. The market place has been talking about change for a while now and it is time to adopt a management style that embraces rather than fights change.

Approaching goals through a style that tells the employee that they are free to “do it differently” creates a positive view of change. For too many years, every time an employee heard, “there are going to be some changes around here,” the axe fell. Most employees have been conditioned to run for cover when they hear the word change. Management has tried to convey that change really means opportunity but has failed to prove this in practice.

Human engineering can in fact positively affect the every day work place. This is demonstrated by showing the positive impact human engineering has on the *buzzwords* mentioned earlier. For instance:

Job Stress: The common perception about

stress on the job is that people are “overworked” or simply stated, have too much to do. Human engineering frames this a little differently. It says that *how much* or *what* people do is not as important as what they *don't do*. If an employee's job does not contain something that they enjoy then they are more at risk for burnout and job dissatisfaction. An employee that spends part of their day doing personally meaningful tasks (esteem indicators) will better negotiate those tasks that are less fulfilling.

Downsizing: Attached to the term downsizing is the phrase “do more with less.” This is quickly interpreted to mean, “more work, same pay.” This is not always true, or at least, does not have to be the case. As an organization blends jobs together it provides each employee the opportunity to take on tasks that meet their *esteem indicators*. Many times when an organization downsizes it has the chance to redefine job roles.

Through adjusting particular job tasks the organization can use this as an opportunity to let employees select addi-

tional tasks that meet their esteem indicators. If this is accomplished the organization has gone a long way in communicating that change is positive.

Team Approach: The team approach as it relates to “problem solving” has not stood the test of time. Organizations that form teams to accomplish goals and strategic plans need to evaluate this process. The common philosophy that “two heads are better than one” is not necessarily true. Human engineering works on the premise that some people are better team members than others are and some are not good team members at all.

Many times teams are formed to represent various departments in the organization and are not formed with attention to specific individual strengths. This in essence hinders the team in its attempt to move forward toward goal attainment.

Team building for morale sake does not work if the team is dysfunctional and ineffective. If the individual has to give up his/her unique skills to fit the team this can once again communicate capitulation not utilization. This, of course, is not conducive to goal achieve-

ment.

Staff Retention: One of the biggest concerns in the corporate world is staff turnover. This is especially true today in healthcare. Some of the latest research out of Canada says that only about 25% of staff leave employment because they cannot perform the tasks of the job. Most employees leave or are terminated due to stress, job dissatisfaction or personal problems that prevent them for doing their jobs.

Better employees of today have no problem moving to seek better jobs. The culture of staying in one place professionally for years at a time is over. Organizations are looking for ways to keep good employees. It has become quite obvious that the employer cannot keep enticing employees to stay by increasing salaries. Human engineering addresses this problem by communicating the importance of personal values and ownership in the company that increases job satisfaction and employee retention. Human engineering believes that money is a poor long-term motivator.

Customer Satisfaction: Industry has also become

interested in customer satisfaction as an indicator of a healthy company. Outcome studies, Press Gayney, and 360-degree surveys are terms of the new business world. Regardless of whether or not companies consider employees among their customers, human engineering addresses satisfaction.

Teaching *communication skills, anger management techniques* or providing seminars on *how to defuse the dissatisfied customer* does not help if the employee is dissatisfied to start with. Most people are not able to meet the needs of others if their own needs are not being met. The philosophy of human engineering states that *customer satisfaction starts with employee satisfaction*. Companies that treat their employees like customers are well on their way to attaining customer satisfaction.

Time Management:

The essence of time management training says that the issue is many times not the amount of work required but rather the priority in which work is done. If time management is really a productivity issue and not a time issue then human engi-

neering can be paramount. If an individual can determine the difference in “energizing work,” as opposed to the mundane or unfulfilling tasks, then they can better manage their day. A major part of human engineering is helping the employee know the difference and structure tasks in a way that keeps them motivated.

Misconceptions About Human Engineering

- *Human Engineering is opposed to terminating of staff and requires the employer to find ways to satisfy all employees.* This is not true. Human engineering does not intend to impact Human Resources policies as they relate to termination issues or to employment policies. It rather relates to retaining “good employees” in a system. This is not about tolerating poor performance but rather deals with ways to increase job satisfaction and productivity of valued employees.
- *Human Engineering takes the power away*



from management and puts it in the hands of valued employees to determine their own jobs.


This could be true if human engineering is not instituted correctly. Management does not give up authority when human engineering is implemented but rather uses its authority to communicate concern for the employee. It is not a change in power but rather a change in style that communicates management’s desire to improve job satisfaction.

This can only be done from a position of power and not from a position of weakness.

- *Human Engineering communicates that employees do not have to perform tasks they do not like.*

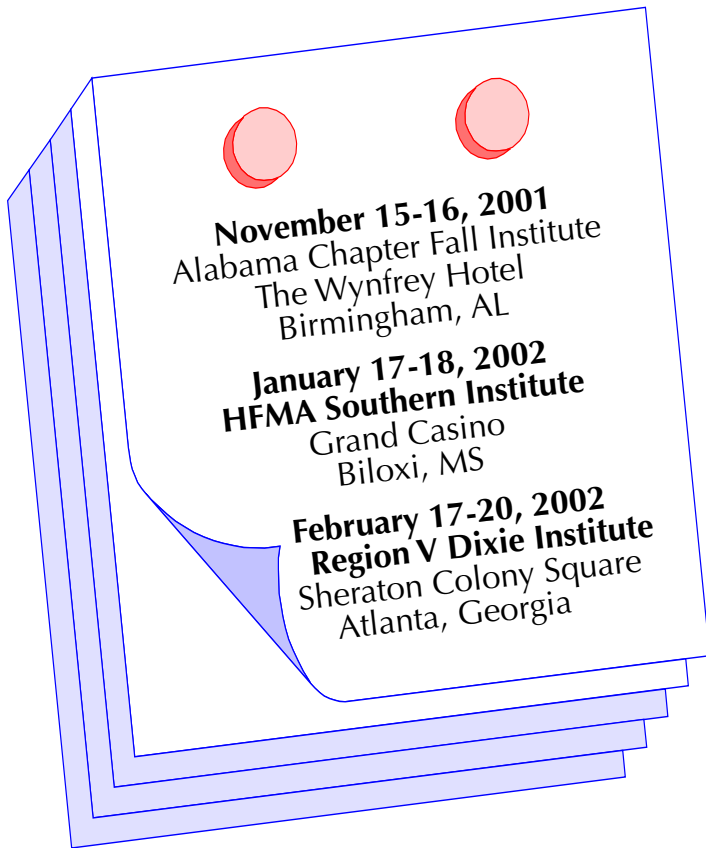
Although human engineering does suggest that managers take a look at job sharing (adjusting some tasks that better fit employee personalities) it does not say the undesired job tasks are to be dropped. On the contrary, the essence of Job Sculpting is to incorporate

elements in the employee’s job that provide personal value and satisfaction. Many times this means adding job tasks, not dropping them.

- *Human Engineering is not new.* This is true, as a concept. What is new is the attempt to train and implement this philosophy throughout an organization. Human engineering is not something you can implement in a memo or departmental meeting. It requires an understanding of individual employee personalities, relational skills by management personnel and a clear sense of purpose from senior management. Most of all, it requires an unwavering commitment by the organization. Human engineering is a dynamic agent for change, once implemented; it is hard to stop. 

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LOOKING AHEAD

This is our last issue of *Bama Chatter* for this year. Have a safe and happy holiday season and look for our next issue in January 2002!



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