

Reflections at 30

Jason Green, Executive Director

Returning from OAWU's 29th annual conference in Sunriver, catching up on everything from legislative issues here at home and back in DC, CEU card totals from the conference, mail and letters, several hundred emails, sleep and a number of other things, I began reflecting upon our Board, Staff and Membership over the past thirty years.

I have been involved with OAWU for over 20 years now and am excited in how the Members are supporting and making this Association their association. OAWU is growing and really making a difference! All one needs to do is ask one of the staff if they believe in what they do and what OAWU is about and one will see the excitement level raise. This excitement, also shared with the Membership, was evidenced at the annual conference with the new and returning faces and level of interaction and participation in every area. I am extremely proud to be a part of this Association and see the Board of Directors and the OAWU Staff work so hard and in unison towards the common goals of the Membership. Steady, maturing and exciting association growth is indeed rewarding!

For those of you working with others, whether subordinate or supervisory positions, I would like to leave you with a couple thoughts. The following thoughts and challenges were several of the many reflections from the past thirty years. I must state that I am very proud and trusting of your Association Staff and the maturity they exhibit. As with any company or organization, it has not always been so. There are usually times of testing and growth to get beyond various stumbling blocks and the following are huge to many systems and cities, some have dealt with these challenges for years.

A subordinate staff member drops an idea or comment to your boss/board without first talking to you, or after they have shared it with you and you stated you would take care of it. What is their motive? To get credit, make an idea work through pressure of the boss/board, to discredit you? Was it innocent? Simply not thinking through the conversation and concluding it was not their place to share that information but the bosses? What can happen or be the result of this type of activity?
Undermining, insubordination, backstabbing.

Yes, even innocently, these are the results and it breaks down trust, communication and brings forth doubt and breaks the chain of command. As a boss or supervisor, how will, how would you respond to this? Do you trust your staff and their motives? Will this make you insecure or angry? Will you confront the person? What if it were you, in either place of this hypothetical question? Do you practice this or allow it?

Does your staff or do you know that your staff will be an advocate to/for you before your boss or board of directors? How do they represent you in your absence? Does your staff know that you trust them in this area? If you do not trust them, why not and what do you do? Does a boss or supervisor keep their head in the sand, so to speak, and never question things like this or suspect it may happen, for what ever reason? If we allow it, know for certain it will happen again, and again.

One of the greatest joys at work I have are the truly great relationships with co-workers, communications and fun, even when work is the hardest and TRUST... knowing that my staff have my best interest at heart and yours! OAWU 30-years old and loving it, my respect and a grand thank you to the OAWU staff!