Learn Positive People Power at the Mid-Winter Conference

You may have noticed the great agenda for the 34th Annual Mid-Winter Conference to be held Jan. 8–10, 2014, at the Y.O. Ranch Hotel and Conference Center in Kerrville. If the exciting line up of speakers has not already fired you up to attend, this introduction to the keynote speaker/master magician surely will.

Jim Gentil will show attendees how to “Pump up the Positive!” at the Mid-Winter Conference. Gentil knows you can succeed. He’s positive! That’s why the Texas Legislature honored him with a Resolution recognizing him as “Mr. Positive.” His passion is showing others the miraculous successes that can be achieved through cultivating a positive attitude.

He is the author of two successful books, Positive People Power! and The 60-Second System of Success. He also provides a weekly Positive People Power! newsletter that reaches thousands of subscribers around the world, including the South Pole.
A master magician, Gentil has entertained executives of Fortune 500 companies around the world and performed at the Magic Castle in Hollywood. His magic tricks and spontaneous humor have earned him countless standing ovations. But the real magic lies in his message of the power of positive thinking, which not only entertains, but literally transforms the lives of those who embrace it. He is making the world a more positive place, one audience member at a time.

He says, “To succeed in today’s market, you’ve GOT to have a strong, positive attitude. And just as it’s necessary to exercise your physical muscles to gain strength, you’ve got to exercise your attitude muscles to keep yourself moving forward. Uncover the secrets of how to quickly switch negative thoughts and actions over to the positive side and see everything in a bright, new positive light. Where you once saw disruptions and obstacles, you’ll now see a clear-cut path to the success you deserve.”

Gentil began touching people’s spirits when he worked as a teacher for 14 years, both here in the U.S. and abroad in Germany and Korea. While in Korea, Dow Chemical became aware of his positive rapport with people and offered him the position of Human Resources Manager. He later became Dow’s Public Relations Manager and Corporate TV News Anchor. Before he retired after 25 years with Dow, he also served as Lobbyist and Manager of State Government Relations.

Here are a few comments on his presentations:
• “The American Business Women’s Association had the awesome experience of hearing a remarkable speaker, Jim Gentil. Jim gave an interesting, informative, educational and fun presentation. This unique message stays with you long after his presentation is over. He uses humor to discuss how small changes in your life can make a dramatic impact and follows with a magic trick to help you remember the change. We highly recommend Jim as an entertaining, motivational speaker.”
• “Your presentation at our annual awards banquet was extremely fitting. Everyone in attendance benefited from your thought-provoking program. Your program can make a great contribution to a person’s attitude being positive. We need more of this type of thinking in general and among managers and salesmen in particular. Keep up the good work. I’m having a fantastic, great super, terrific, wonderful day because I agree with our message.”
• “I have met with many of the employees that attended the dinner and all were moved by what you had to say. Your lighthearted humor, incredible magic, uplifting stories and positive message was a real treat! I know almost everyone at the dinner signed up to receive your newsletter. Looking for speakers to address hospital employees from across the spectrum is not an easy task. Ensuring that the message is meaningful to all is a challenge at best. You more than filled the bill and we would certainly recommend you to others.”

Speakers Presented Legislative Recap and Updates on Agency Initiatives

A jam-packed speaker line-up kicked off fiscal 2014 at the September bimonthly meeting. Sam Miller of the Comptroller’s office shared his wealth of knowledge on House Bill 6 relating to the creation and re-creation of funds and accounts, the dedication and rededication of revenue, and the exemption of unappropriated money from use for general governmental purposes. Miller also explained the impact of Section 2 of HB 7 requiring interest earned on certain General Revenue-dedicated accounts be deposited to General Revenue Fund 0001. Following Miller’s presentation, Ben Strauser of the Comptroller’s office shared highlights of other bills affecting state agencies.

Kimberly Teague, Senior Auditor, State Auditor’s Office (SAO), updated the group on the new internal reporting requirements outlined in HB 16. Teague provided some background by reminding the audience that Government Code, Chapter 2102, requires certain state agencies and institutions of higher education to submit an internal audit annual report each year to the Governor, Legislative Budget Board, Sunset Advisory Commission, SAO and the entity’s governing board and chief executive. SAO is charged with prescribing the form and content of that annual report. HB 16 amended the Internal Auditing Act to require agencies to post internal audit plans, internal audit annual reports and any weaknesses or concerns resulting from the audit plan or annual report on the agency website. Agencies are also required to post a summary of actions taken to address issues raised by the audit plan or annual report.
Additional Agencies to Implement CAPPS

During this biennium, several state agencies will join the agencies that have already implemented the Comptroller’s Centralized Accounting and Payroll/Personnel System (CAPPS), the statewide Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) solution for Texas.

**CAPPS Agencies by System and Implementation Date**

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<th>Agency</th>
<th>System</th>
<th>Implemented</th>
<th>Central/Hub</th>
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<td>• HR/Payroll</td>
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*Estimated based on current information

The CAPPS Go-Forward Strategy builds in flexibility for state agencies to implement CAPPS while maintaining the current course of replacing the Comptroller legacy systems with an integrated ERP system for all agencies. Agencies need flexibility to choose an ERP solution that is adaptable to agency-specific business needs and affordable to implement, operate and maintain.

The strategy will achieve statewide CAPPS implementation by offering agencies two basic ERP implementation models. A key component shared by both is a central data repository, or Data Warehouse, maintained and operated by the Comptroller’s office. The two implementation models are:

• Statewide ERP Platform (Central)
• Hub

The Statewide ERP Platform serves as the central system that will meet the internal needs of most state agencies and is hosted by the Comptroller’s office. A Hub agency is generally large, with a complex organization and funding structure.

For more information, please see Agency Implementation Options on the ProjectONE website.
What is something most people don’t know about you?

That I am really an introvert. I learned early in my career that we live in a fairly extroverted society and I would have to be able to survive in both worlds to succeed. Although I’m very verbal and friendly at work and in TSABAA, I’m also that person that will sit in the corner at a party and just watch rather than working a room to visit with everyone.

Describe your most embarrassing moment in state government.

Too many to count!

First Vice President Lori Trank

What is your 60-second “elevator pitch” business description of what you do?

As Manager of Accounting Operations, we primarily handle all Accounts Payable and Travel payments for the Health and Human Services Commission. We are also responsible for vendor maintenance, warrant distribution, Public Assistance Certification and voucher preparation for imaging services. We have 34 staff, 10 of whom are my direct reports. I have an Assistant Manager, an Accounts Payable Manager and a Travel Manager who manage the large volume of Accounts Payable and Travel that our agency processes. Of course these are just the basics of what we really do. We also have many “other duties as assigned”!

The best part of my day is…

I love my staff and enjoy my coworkers, but I’d have to say after 5 p.m. is the best part of my day. I enjoy the quiet after all the staff has gone home when there are no meetings, phone calls or other interruptions (except the cleaning people and their vacuum cleaner or emptying trash cans!). It’s the time I can really catch up on what I got sidetracked from during the day, and it helps me be better prepared for the start of the next workday.

Second Vice President Paul Campbell

What is your 60-second “elevator pitch” business description of what you do?

I am Director of the Payments Management section for the Texas Department of Transportation. That basically means if it’s a TxDOT expenditure, we ensure that it gets paid accurately and timely. This involves about $10 billion a year and includes everything from road construction payments to TxDOT’s payroll. We also handle the employees’ time accounting and deductions as well as all W2 and 1099 reporting. I am also the Finance Division’s legislative coordinator, and in my “spare time” take on many other special projects and initiatives as needed.

The best part of my day is…

The best part of my day is when we complete a project that results in a process improvement or an assignment that was a challenge that ultimately helped me further develop my overall professional knowledge.

What is something most people don’t know about you?

Most people don’t know that I’m a “West Pointer” — but not in the typical way. I didn’t actually attend the U.S. military academy, but was born nearby while my father, who was a West Point graduate, instructed a math class to cadets. Needless to say, my time there was spent in a much more leisurely fashion than most!

Treasurer Phillip Ashley

What is your 60-second “elevator pitch” business description of what you do?

I oversee the Comptroller’s Fiscal Management Division. One of the Comptroller’s four primary functions is to serve as Chief Accountant for the state, and Fiscal Management is the branch of the agency that carries out that responsibility. There is a wide variety of duties that we are responsible for including paying and auditing the state’s bills, managing and controlling state appropriations, producing the state’s financial reports, and certifying appropriation bills. I have a very dedicated staff who help me to make sure all of these important functions are operating as intended. I am also responsible for establishing the vision and direction that guide our division as our agency and state government continue to evolve!

The best part of my day is…

The people! Due to the nature of our work in Fiscal Management, I have the unique opportunity to work with people from all over state government. We have customers in every single state agency and university, and I very much enjoy hearing from them and working with them every day. I also have a wonderful staff who really makes my job fun and rewarding.
Meet the Board
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Secretary Rebecca Trevino
What is your 60-second “elevator pitch” business description of what you do?

Infrastructure financing. My team is responsible for coordinating the sale of municipal bonds and using the proceeds of those bonds to finance local water projects. We also evaluate applications for financing, and manage the operating budget and accounting functions of the agency.

The best part of my day is…
…the morning. I enjoy accomplishing things so each day brings the joy or challenges of new opportunities.

What is something most people don’t know about you?

I was recognized by the City of Austin for resuscitating a 3-year-old drowning victim.

Describe your most embarrassing moment in state government.

Within six weeks of accepting my first state position I was required to teach a class on the financial reporting requirements associated with the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) program. I stood up in front of about 60 to 70 people and could not remember what JTPA stood for. My new boss had to take over with a conference icebreaker until I could calm myself down and instruct the class as I had practiced all night the previous evening.

Please tell us about “My problem and how I solved it.”

At this point in my career, I have determined that most problems relate to miscommunication or lack of communication. It has been my experience that any problem can be solved if you study it to determine the actual problem, evaluate solutions with others who are impacted by the issue, consider the pros and cons as well as any unintended consequences, develop a plan of action, deploy it and be ready to make adjustments if necessary. Don’t react; evaluate and respond.

Parliamentarian Yolanda Hall

The best part of my day is…
…the evening. Evenings provides me peace and accomplishment. It is the time of day when I can unwind, workout and regroup my thoughts. Evenings allow me to calmly do a retake of the day’s activities and plan my next day’s strategy. I enjoy my mornings too, but the ability to see the sunset and allow darkness to shine brings a meaning of completeness. It provides the opportunity for you to breathe freely without others interrupting. The evenings bring a sense of peace, calmness and closure in one transition.

What is something most people don’t know about you?

My true passion is event planning. I enjoy planning events for others, catering and cooking. Planning is both stressful and energizing to me. It gives me a sense of joy to see others benefit and appreciate the work that I have put into an event, whether it is a dinner, wedding, family function or work event. Event planning allows me to use my additional skills that can’t always be represented in my professional work life. I love decorating, coordinating colors, crafting menus, picking wines and setting the stage for a memorable event.

Past President Daniel Benjamin

The best part of my day is…
…coming to work — really! I enjoy what I do, and the staff members are wonderful. They are smart, motivated and really take pride in what they do, which makes my job easy.

What is something most people don’t know about you?

That I am a sci-fi geek! Also, in May I entered on the last day and ran the Spartan Sprint four days later. The race is a four-plus mile trail run with 15 obstacles. You get one attempt at it. I did not train for the race and have never run more than two miles, but I wanted to show my two sons that it’s important to take chances, not be afraid to fail and enjoy life. I thought it best to lead by example. I completed the race, and it was an awesome experience! 🚀

Mid-Winter Conference
Deadline Dec. 3

Register online for the 34th Mid-Winter Conference at the Y.O. Ranch Hotel in Kerrville before 5 p.m. on Dec. 3 to avoid the $25 late fee. Don’t forget to make your hotel reservations at the Y.O. — information for hotel registration is on the bottom of the form.

See you in Kerrville from Jan. 8 to 10!
Message from the President

I am very excited and honored to serve as the 2014 TSABAA President. It seems like just yesterday when a mentor explained to me just what TSABAA is and exactly what the organization provides. That was over a decade ago!

I would be remiss if I didn’t thank Daniel Benjamin for all of his hard work and dedication to our organization. His leadership this last year provided clear direction and enhancements. The 2014 officers will build on that design.

During this year, much of my focus will be on enhancing the number of business staff who utilize all TSABAA has to offer. I will challenge each of you to educate coworkers and peers on the value of our organization and how TSABAA can benefit each of us. As many of us inch towards retirement, it is incumbent upon us to prepare the next generation of business administrators to carry on the vital daily work we do. What better way to do this than through TSABAA?

Our organization has a long history of developing leaders. After all, we have been around since 1969. We continue this long tradition of mentoring and providing leadership through various activities in TSABAA. Please consider reaching out to the organization to volunteer or join us at a bimonthly training, and bring a friend.

Thank you all in advance for the great year we are about to have.

Carla James
2014 TSABAA President

“Nothing great is ever achieved without enthusiasm.”—Ralph Waldo Emerson

Personnel Moves

Bill Briggs left the private sector to become the Chief Financial Officer at the Department of Assistive & Rehabilitative Services.

Renita Bankhead of the Water Development Board accepted the position of Assistant Chief Financial Officer at the Department of Motor Vehicles.

Two long-serving Appropriation Control Team Leads for the Comptroller’s Fiscal Management Division have moved to other agencies:

- Christy Bearden is now Accounting Manager for the Texas School for the Deaf.
- Katrina Burch is the new Senior Financial Accountant for the Financial Reporting Team at the Teacher Retirement System.
Analysis of the Summer Conference Evaluations

TSABAA’s 44th Annual Summer Conference was considered a success by attendees who answered our after-conference survey. Comments ranged from high praise to areas needing improvement. A sampling of the comments:

- “Best conference ever!”
- “Conference was not as good this year as in years past due to speakers and venue.”
- “Good speakers overall…”
- “…Several of the presentations were interesting and/or insightful.”
- “The topics were kind of boring.”

The presenters earned a mixture of scores and comments. The four rated highest were:

- **Jo Dale Guzman** – *Communicating Upward*
  “Very energetic, and made great points about how to talk with your boss without getting nervous.”

- **Marny Lifshen** – *Work it Out! Demystifying the Male/Female Workplace Dynamic*
  “Excellent presentation and even better subject matter. She was very engaging and presented very applicable situations. I most certainly believe my communication skills will improve by employing some of the tools she gave during her discussion.”

- **Ralph Disher** – *Let’s Make a Deal! Which Fraud Door Should You Be Worried About?*
  “Ralph is always interesting and entertaining. Bring him back!”
  “Gave great tips for how to prevent fraud in the workplace.”

- **Roxanne Gruhlke** – *Objectivity: A Matter of Maintenance*
  “She was fantastic! Well versed in the material and presented it in a very excited manner. I gained a lot of additional knowledge from having attended this session.”

Many agreed with the value of the Thursday night networking event. Attendees appreciated the opportunity to meet fellow conference-goers in a more casual setting. In fact, when asked what they liked best about the conference, 16 respondents specifically mentioned the networking event.

But networking in general was listed as a key benefit of the conference. Asked to identify what they liked most about the conference, comments included:

- “The opportunity to meet and talk with state agency personnel from various state agencies.”
- “A great place to meet staff of other agencies, like our new ACO.”
- “I enjoyed the luncheons and the breaks. I met a lot of people during those times.”
- “I liked the diversity of some of the presentations as well as the networking opportunities. The door prizes are fun, too!”

The TSABAA officers and committee chairs are reviewing the ratings and comments to determine any enhancements or changes needed for the next conference.
September Bimonthly
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Brett Spencer, Statewide Wellness Coordinator, Department of State Health Services, provided an insightful update on the state’s effort to implement HB 1297 on model wellness program development across agencies. Spencer shared some of the challenges and successes in helping agencies implement their own wellness programs based on the following priorities:

- Increase Usage of Preventive Services and Screenings
- Improve Tobacco Cessation and Prevention
- Increase Routine Physical Activity
- Improve Healthy Eating Choices
- Improve Stress Management
- Improve Lactation Support for Nursing Mothers

Eddie Trevino, State Energy Conservation Office (SECO), provided the group with an update on the Texas LoanSTAR Program. As the state energy office, SECO partners with Texas consumers, businesses, educators and state and local governments to reduce energy costs and maximize efficiency. The LoanSTAR Program was designed to provide low-interest loans to governmental entities including state agencies for retrofitting existing structures with energy efficiency measures such as:

- Lighting (interior and exterior)
- HVAC (chillers, pumps, VFD installations)
- Energy Management Systems
- Window Tinting
- Water Efficiency (interior and exterior)
- Commissioning
- Thermal Storage

Key to awarding such loans is the applicant’s ability to demonstrate loan payback through demonstrable energy savings over the life of the loan.

If you are interested in learning more about these topics, please go to Bimonthly Meetings on the TSABAA website for links to all the presentations mentioned in this article.

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