

ipma-hr



Greater Kansas City Chapter
Member Information

International Public Management Association
for Human Resources

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MEMBER INFORMATION HANDBOOK

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CHAPTER RESOURCES

CHAPTER OBJECTIVES

- Provide a forum for all persons in all jurisdictional levels of public personnel administration to discuss current developments, policies, and issues that shape today's human resources field.
- Supply a medium for mutual professional development by exchanging information, ideas, and experiences.
- Encourage and facilitate cooperation between all levels of public jurisdictions.
- Interpret human resource information and communicate to the general public.
- Implement the objectives and program goals of the International Public Management Association for Human Resources within our chapter.

BENEFITS OF MEMBERSHIP

Regular Meetings. Timely meetings concerning current issues. Networking opportunities, which provide members with valuable insight and information from the experiences of other professionals in the field.

Membership Directory. An annual listing of chapter members including the agency, location, telephone and fax numbers.

Chapter Newsletter. A quarterly publication updating members on recent human resource issues, meeting dates, conference dates and chapter information.

Social. Informal opportunities to meet other professionals in the public personnel management field.

Recognition. As a human resources professional organization committed to excellence, the Chapter may recognize members annually for their dedication and professionalism in the field of public personnel management.

Discounts. Discounts to all luncheons, social events, and the Annual Spring Conference.

ADVANTAGES OF MEMBERSHIP IN YOUR LOCAL CHAPTER OF IPMA-HR

Some of the benefits which IPMA-HR members can obtain from their local chapters are as follows:

1. Chapters assist in keeping members in closer touch with significant trends and developments in their locality.
2. Chapters enable members to add to their professional growth and development by participating in chapter programs such as meetings, committees, and special studies.
3. Chapters provide a medium for contact and communication within the chapter area for personnel professionals at all levels of government (municipal, county, state, and national) and private industry.
4. Chapters facilitate the pooling of resources and experience in an effort to overcome common professional problems shared by chapter members.
5. Chapters bring the purposes and objectives of IPMA-HR closer to the individual and provide a means for continuous program of activity in each locality.
6. Chapters provide a link with the International Public Management Association for HR
7. Chapters provide members with a medium through which they can develop a stronger professional personnel association.

FORMATION OF THE GREATER KANSAS CITY CHAPTER

The formation of the Greater Kansas City Chapter was the work of several individuals. Richard Krueger (Office of Personnel Mgmt.), Tom Lewinsohn (City of Kansas City, MO), and James Witkop (Office of Personnel Mgmt.) played primary roles. Other key members included Larry Harkness (City of Kansas City, MO), and Pat Brazil (US Dept. of Labor). Pat Brazil was appointed by Richard Krueger to serve as the chapter's first president. The chapter's charter was officially filed with IPMA-US as being effective on July 1, 1975, though the progression towards this development began in the early 1970s when the chapter's "founding fathers" started crossing paths with one another. Many thanks are due to Richard Krueger, Tom Lewinsohn, and Jim Witkop for their dedication to the chapter and assistance in providing this information regarding the Greater Kansas City Chapter's formative years.

Richard Krueger and Tom Lewinsohn met while working for the Kansas Civil Service Department in Topeka. Eventually, both moved to Kansas City to pursue different opportunities – Lewinsohn at the City of Kansas City, Missouri, and Krueger at the Office of Personnel Management where he worked with Jim Witkop. Krueger established a steering committee and it was determined right away that Kansas City could support a chapter. Krueger personally appointed members of steering committee, which represented all levels of government – city, county, state, and federal. Initially, the goal was to develop inter-government relations. It was evident that human resources professionals had very little contact between levels of government. Information on pay, benefits and challenges was shared. Even coordinating decisions like office closures due to weather would ease traffic congestion for the 20-22,000 employees in the downtown inter-governmental area.

The Chapter became more inclusive over time. However, 30 years ago, smaller metropolitan cities did not have human resources positions, so it was not a matter of exclusion. Lewinsohn was a strong advocate of sharing the expertise of the Kansas City, Missouri, HR department with other metropolitan personnel offices. Thus, a mutual benefit within the association was felt throughout other jurisdictions.

Soon, the chapter's leadership began to think more along the lines of training and recognition. The role and value of HR had to change from being administrative/process-oriented to adding value to the organization. However, that is not to diminish the importance of record keeping. Critical functions of human resources must be done with skill, beyond “keeping the organization out of trouble” in terms of ADA, EEO, etc. The HR Director should be part of the corporate decision-making, rather than the policy enforcer.

Richard Krueger advises those starting out in human resources to get a degree and join a professional organization like IPMA-HR. Without doing so, it is too easy to get tunnel vision – thinking that the way you do things at work is the *only* way it is to be done. Also, become familiar with important resources. Network and know whom to call when you are in trouble.

Krueger recalls, “a personnel director once told me that you are not any good until you have been fired once.” You must learn how to be flexible and roll with the punches if you wish to go far in your career. “Palm trees bend when the hurricanes come through – they are resilient. This quality is needed in human resources more so than in any other kind of work.” Krueger has a personnel management degree from the University of Kansas. He served as a personnel clerk in the Navy. He has served his entire 35-year career in human resources management.

Tom Lewinsohn became a student member of PPA (Public Personnel Association) while enrolled in the master's program of public administration at the University of Kansas. Membership was encouraged by James Drury, a professor and strong advocate of PPA because of the journals, literature, and resources obtained through membership. Lewinsohn never expected his career with Kansas City, Missouri, to last 29 years. His original staff included people with backgrounds in sales, inspection, and a variety of municipal services. He is especially proud of his role in building a department of the best professionals in the country. "It takes time to build a house, but it can be taken down in a matter of hours." Lewinsohn believes in the following 5 principles for those in human resources management:

1. Practice the golden rule of do unto others as you would have done unto you. If you can live by that, you can get up every morning and like what you see.
2. Stand up and report to your CEO regarding poor management practices within your organization.
3. Grant exceptions to the rules based on good cause and allow these exceptions to become precedence under similar circumstances. Deal with the 1% of circumstances that do not fit appropriately within the rules.
4. Do not be afraid to get fired for what you believe is right. When the organization knows that you cannot be politicized, they respect you.
5. Make decisions even if you know you cannot be right 100% of the time.

Jim Witkop's career began as a student at Kearney State in Nebraska. He saw a bulletin board posting about a civil service exam and signed up. Witkop's whole career (minus three years) has been with the Office of Personnel Management and he acknowledges that such a career path is no

longer available today. The environment has changed. “We cannot do as we have done in the past. We must reward and implement retention strategies based on a commitment to provide experience, training, and opportunities to grow and develop skills. Such opportunities, if taken, will provide people with portable skills and the ability to compete in the job market. It’s an empowering approach by encouraging people to develop their *own* ability.”

Witkop identifies three characteristics that are evident among successful, powerful people: intellectual ability, interpersonal skills, and integrity. In order to be successful, one needs to have an intellectual ability that allows him or her to focus on developing their potential within their intellectual acuity. Superior interpersonal skills are essential by providing one with the ability to deal with people in a positive and productive manner. One needs integrity that translates to a public service commitment by striving to improve one’s organization. “We have to be able to articulate the companion goals – do the most appropriate thing in the most appropriate manner. They may compete, but they do not conflict.”

Public HR managers accept and embrace public service as an honorable calling. The general public perceives government at two levels – bureaucrats and public servants. However, the public appreciates the individual who provides water, street cleaning, mail, and other public services. A healthy distrust exists. HR professionals help bridge the dichotomy of that perception. Witkop notes, “succession planning is the legacy we can leave as we face significant retirements in the next five years. We have an obligation and opportunity to attract people to public service. HR professionals must articulate the need for strategic planning and recognition programs by offering providing a bag of tools, rather than a bag of tricks.

THOMAS F. LEWINSOHN AWARD WINNER

In order to recognize and honor members of the Greater Kansas City Chapter who have made outstanding contributions to the purposes and conduct of the Greater Kansas City Chapter, the Board of Directors has established the Thomas F. Lewinsohn Award, which may be conferred on one person each year.

The major criteria are that any person selected:

- Be an active practitioner in personnel management promoting sound, positive, innovative, and effective personnel principles, and
- Be an active member in the Greater Kansas City Chapter motivating and promoting professional growth in the personnel field.

All Chapter members are eligible to submit nominations. The President-Elect shall forward nomination forms to all members of the Chapter by January 31 of each year. Nominations shall be on the official Nomination Form. The award is presented at the spring meeting each year.

Past Recipients

1993	Dianna S. Wright
1994	Richard Krueger
1995	Yasmine Chapman
1999	Pam Symonds
2000	Pat Hawkins
2001	Tom Briggs
2002	Lori Carnahan
2003	Susan L. Gray
2004	Cynthia R. Pitts