

General Business Skills Education for the CAS
Task Force Recommendation
Executive Summary

BACKGROUND:

In May, 2000 a task force of the CAS was formed to explore and develop a recommendation for offering general business skills education to the membership of the CAS. The Task Force completed its work through a series of phone conferences and work done independently by members. The Task Force Recommendation includes the following areas.

Session Topics, Venue Offering, Vendor Selection, Funding, Alternative Ways to Offer Sessions, Ongoing Support/Evaluation, and Measure Of Success.

A more detailed synopsis, including some of the reasoning behind the specific recommendations, is included as a separate attachment. A vendor evaluation and summary of the activities of the SOA in this area are included as addendums to the Recommendation. Lastly, a summary of the CAS Activities to date addressing this topic is included.

SESSION TOPICS:

The following topics should be considered in this order for general business skills sessions of the CAS:

1. Presentation, Presentation for audience
2. Negotiation
3. Financial Statement
4. Marketing Strategies
5. Informal/formal writing

VENUE OFFERING:

The recommended venue offering for the General Business Skills sessions is the Spring/Annual CAS Meetings.

VENDOR SELECTION:

The Task Force recommends that for 2001, the CAS try at least one session from two vendors other than Communispond to gain some basis of comparison. The Task Force recommends using **Dale Carnegie** for a **Presentation Skills Session** and **National Seminars Group** for a **Win/Win Negotiation Session**.

FUNDING:

The Task Force recommends a nominal charge (\$50) for these sessions if part of a Spring or Annual meeting.

ALTERNATIVE WAYS to OFFER THESE SESSIONS

The Task Force also discussed offering general business skills sessions as part of the COPE program.

The Task Force recommends that the Committee on Professionalism consider adding General Business Skills sessions to the COPE curriculum as an additional day or ½ day (that is, not in place of existing COPE curriculum) and that participation be optional.

Participation in the GBS sessions should be made available to all CAS members (not just those attending the COPE seminar). Since the COPE sessions are offered throughout the country, this would offer the opportunity for CAS members to attend without incurring significant travel expense and time.

Additional details such as the specific session to be offered, funding and the vendor would need to be addressed either by the Task Force or the COPE.

ONGOING SUPPORT/EVALUATION

The Task Force discussed how to best provide ongoing support for the GBS education within the CAS. At this time, the Task Force recommends that the Task Force on General Business Skills continue, with some possible changes in membership based on interest from current members and to rotate the chairmanship. Maintaining the Task Force will allow for the proper focus on this area of education in the short term and a better evaluation of the long term support needed for this type of education within the CAS.

The Task Force will provide the following ongoing support and evaluation of the program. In addition, once a year, the Task Force will evaluate whether it should continue to have these responsibilities or the responsibilities should be moved to either a separate committee or incorporated into one of the existing CAS Committees.

- Re-evaluate recommendation after 2-3 offerings, specifically:
 - Session Topics
 - Venue Offering
 - Vendor Research
 - Funding
- Repeat member survey every 12-18 months
- Include overall question regarding GBS sessions at Annual and Spring Meetings of the CAS
- Further evaluate partnering with the SOA.
- Consider making GBS-type sessions mandatory part of COPE; however if this is done, these sessions should still be offered to the general membership and also at other CAS seminars or meetings.

MEASURE OF SUCCESS

The Task Force recommends the following measures to evaluate the success of the General Business skills sessions. Responsibility for evaluating the results of these “tests” should fall under the group assigned the ongoing/evaluation responsibility (mentioned in section above).

- Session attendee surveys at end of session
 - Evaluate attendee reactions
- Follow up surveys or “chat” rooms 6-12 months after attending the session
- Attendance at sessions
 - Increasing would indicate success

SUMMARY DATA ON CAS EFFORTS TO DATE:

- Sessions offered
 - Executive Presentation Skills
 - ½ day sessions
 - Spring and Annual Meetings, 2000
 - Writing Skills
 - Full day session
 - Spring, 2000
 - Negotiation Skills
 - Full day session
 - Annual Meeting, 2000
- Feedback on Communispond
 - Favorable from attendees, especially regarding presenters
 - All attendees from the Spring, 2000 sessions would recommend the session to a colleague
- Feedback from Sessions
 - Very favorable on the Presentation skills
 - Favorable, with some suggested changes, on writing skills
 - Some thought a full day of Presentation skills would be helpful
 - ½ day sessions have gotten greater attendance
- Approximate subsidy by CAS for sessions at the Annual Meeting
 - Based on the \$50 fee per attendee and the total cost for the sessions of \$14,800, the subsidy by the CAS was \$13,400.

5/15/01

Vendor Contact Information

Vendor Name	Contact Information	Date Proposal Received
American Management Association: www.amanet.org/seminar/public		No Proposal Received
National Seminars Group: www.natsem.com	Linda Lambright, Training Consultant A Division of Rockhurst College Continuing Education Center, Inc. 6901 West 63 rd Street Shawnee Mission, KS 66202-4007 Ph: 800-344-4613 ext. 3032 Fx: 913-384-1169 Lrlambright@natsem.com	August 10, 2000
Skillpath		August 26, 2000
Franklin Covey		No Proposal Received
Learning Scientists		No Proposal Received
Career Track: www.careertrack.com		No Proposal Received
ISO		No Proposal Received
Dale Carnegie	Lynda Kowalczyk 1333 Butterfield Road, Suite 140 Downers Grove, IL 60515 Ph: 630-971-1900 Fx: 630-971-3255	August 28, 2000
Communispond	676 St. Clair Street, Suite 2080 Chicago, IL 60611 Ph: 312-787-0484 Fx: 312-787-4585	September 14, 2000
Leadership Outfitters, Inc	Steven W. Swafford, Balance Warrior 944 S. Wakefield Street, Suite 200 Arlington, VA 22204 Ph: 703-769-7660 Fx: 703-769-7661 swafford@leadershipoutfitters.com	No Proposal Received
Results Technology, Inc.	Rhea Blanken, President 6604 Persimmon Tree Road Bethesda, MD 20817 Ph: 301-320-8711 Fx: 301-320-8713 rheaz@resultstech.com	No Proposal Received
Like Minded People	Jeffrey B. Cufaude, Innovate Faculty Member P.O. Box 78282 Indianapolis, IN 46278 Ph/Fx: 317-267-0047 jeff@likemindedpeople.com	No Proposal Received
Finn Enterprises	Susan Kudla Finn, Chairman & CEO 2601 Valley Drive Alexandria, VA 22302 Ph/Fx: 703-684-0327 skfinn@aol.com	No Proposal Received
Human Resources Training and Consulting	Barbara L. Schwietert 21402 Andover Road Kildeer, IL 60047 Ph/Fx: 847-438-4070	September 22, 2000

GBS Vendor Evaluation

Vendor	Session	Length of Session	Ideal Class Size	Lead Time	Fees *	Video Taping Available	Comments/Recommendation
Barbara Schwietert	Negotiation	3-4 hours	10-25	4-6 weeks	\$2,000 per day		
Skillpath	Varied	1/2 - 1 day	25	4-6 weeks	\$2,800		Doesn't seem to be very tailorable; do not recommend
Dale Carnegie	Presentation Skills	1 day	20 - 40		\$7,000		RECOMMEND pursuing
Communispond/ Frontline	Executive Presentation Skills	2 days (can be tailored to 1 day)	Up to 12 w/1 instructor Up to 16 w/2 instructors	6-8 weeks	\$9,700 w/1 instructor \$14,700 w/2 instructors	Included	
	Business Negotiating Skills	1 day	Up to 15	6-8 weeks	\$5,700	Yes; at a charge	
	Write Up Front	1 day	Up to 15	6-8 weeks	\$5,700		
National Seminars Group	Win/Win Negotiation	1 day	Up to 35 (additional \$10 per person)		\$2,500 - \$2,900**		RECOMMEND pursuing one of the sessions. This Seminars Group. This vendor has been very responsive and to our requests and appears to be very easy to work with. Also, note that the up front cost does not include customization; but the fact that customization is noted is a positive factor in the evaluation.
	Business Writing & Grammar Skills	2 days	Up to 35 (additional \$10 per person)		\$2,500 - \$2,900**		
	Powerful Presentation Skills		Up to 35 (additional \$10 per person)		\$2,500 - \$2,900**		
	Understanding Financial Statements	1 day	Up to 35 (additional \$10 per person)		\$2,500 - \$2,900**		

* Instructor expenses not included

** Plus \$150 per hour customization fee

Combined Notes of Discussions Regarding General Business Skills Education
Lisa F. Tourville, Chairperson
Society of Actuaries - Management and Personal Development Section Council
Nancy A. Behrens, Chairperson
Continuing Education Coordinating Committee

- The Management and Personal Development Section began as a subcommittee of the SOA Continuing Education Committee
- Approximately two years ago became one of fifteen SOA special interest sections
- Section has approximately 1,000 members, who pay section dues of \$15
- The section nets \$10 of the dues, providing approximately \$10,000 for education expenses
- “The mission of the Management and Personal Development Section shall be to plan, implement and actively promote management and business skills development for members, using a variety of channels”
- Recent topics have been Actuary’s Career Planner, Presentation Skills, Telecommuting, Influence without Authority and Positive and Professional Image
- For a more complete list of past topics refer to the attached file
- Recent sections newsletters are available at [THE STEPPING STONE - The Newsletter of the Society of Actuaries Management](#)
- Education is currently delivered through scheduled sessions at periodic SOA meetings, similar to the CAS spring and fall meetings
- Presenters are often SOA members with particular interest or expertise
- Frequently use outside vendors who often provide reduced rates in hopes of engaging for additional similar sessions at companies
- SOA believes that attendance at these sessions qualifies for general continuing education credit
- Cost of presentations are included in basic meeting fee
- Sessions have been well attended and attendance at times has been limited by space available
- Section has tried stand alone seminars although these have not been as successful as sessions at society meetings. In spite of that, the section would like to try more stand alone seminars
- Would be interested in joint seminars with CAS

General Business Skills Education for the CAS
Task Force Recommendation
Detailed Synopsis

SESSION TOPICS:

The following topics should be considered for general business skills sessions of the CAS. They are listed in order of number of “votes” from a survey of members conducted by the Task Force via the CAS Website. The recommendation of the Task Force is for the CAS to continue focusing on the first two topics. Note that these first two topics were also the most recommended from attendees at GBS sessions at the Spring, 2000 meeting.

1. Presentation, Presentation for audience
2. Negotiation
3. Financial Statement
4. Marketing Strategies
5. Informal/formal writing

VENUE OFFERING:

The recommended venue offering for the General Business Skills sessions is the Spring/Annual CAS Meetings for the following reasons:

- Received the most votes from the Task Force survey
- General accessibility/availability to members
- Spreading of cost

Including GBS sessions as part of the professionalism seminars should be considered as another venue. Please see the discussion under “Alternative Ways to Offer these Sessions”.

The Task Force discussed several additional possible venues. These venues are not being recommended by the Task Force at this time for one or more of the following reasons:

- Less opportunity to spread the cost when separate from another meeting
- Less interest expressed in the member survey
- Additional hotel and other travel cost to participants to stay extra time

These additional venues are listed below in order of number of votes from the Task Force survey:

Regional Affiliate Meetings

- ➔ might be able to partner with schools or other institutions
- ➔ potential to increase attendance since little or no travel cost to participants
- ➔ might need CAS to fund part of the cost

Adjacent to Spring/Fall Meeting

CAS Seminars

VENDOR SELECTION:

The Task Force recommends that for 2001, the CAS try at least one session from two vendors other than Communispond to gain some basis of comparison. Feedback on Communispond is summarized in a later section.

The attached vendor evaluation form shows the vendors that the Task Force contacted via an RFP. This form also shows a summarized evaluation of those vendors that responded to the

RFP. Most of the vendors were very willing to tailor specifically for the CAS, with the exception of Skillpath which does not appear very “tailorable” or “individualized.”

FUNDING:

The Task Force recommends a nominal charge for these sessions if part of a Spring or Annual meeting, for the following reasons:

- charging something nominal (e.g. \$50) is better than allocating full cost because charge should not be a disincentive to attend (CAS should be promoting this type of learning)
- charging something rather than nothing spreads the cost to those attending the session
- having GBS-type sessions may increase overall attendance (so some subsidy is reasonable)
- attendee is attending this session in place of other sessions (again, so something less than full cost is reasonable)
- based on the registration for the 2000 Fall meeting, where a \$50 charge was made, it does not appear this is a disincentive.

The CAS should explore with vendors the opportunity for a reduced cost in exchange for the “marketing opportunity” that the vendor gains by having access to employees of companies. (The SOA has been able to achieve reduced costs from some vendors for this reason).

If the session is an add on to the meeting, as in an additional day, then the Task Force has the following comments:

- Separate charge more “understandable”
- Cost might be prohibitive, or a disincentive to attend

The Task Force also offers the following comments relevant to the Funding recommendation. The following comments were considered in arriving at the Task Force’s recommendation for a nominal charge.

If part of general meeting:

Don’t charge a separate fee because:

- ➔ administratively difficult to split the funding
- ➔ attendees will be going to these GBS sessions instead of other sessions
- ➔ overall charge for registration represents an average cost spread across everyone attending the meeting, not particular sessions; for example, many attendees “pay” for the cocktail party or the keynote speaker, but don’t attend

Do charge a separate fee because:

- ➔ cost of adding these types of session can impact the overall cost to attendees even if they do not attend these sessions
- ➔ need some form of commitment that people who sign up for the session will attend

ALTERNATIVE WAYS to OFFER THESE SESSIONS

The Task Force also discussed offering general business skills sessions as part of the COPE program.

The Task Force recommends that the Committee on Professionalism consider adding General Business Skills sessions to the COPE curriculum as an additional day or ½ day (that is, not in place of existing COPE curriculum) and that participation be optional.

Participation in the GBS sessions should be made available to all CAS members (not just those attending the COPE seminar). Since the COPE sessions are offered throughout the country, this would offer the opportunity for CAS members to attend without incurring significant travel expense and time.

The pros and cons of this approach are discussed below:

- PROS
 - Funding-easier to spread the cost. There typically would be a larger number of students taking the Course on Professionalism, than are able to register at one of the conventions, so the cost per student should be decreased but there still might need to be some subsidy from CAS for cost to not be a disincentive.
 - The variety of locations utilized by COPE will enable many CAS members to attend GBS sessions without travel considerations.
 - Extending the availability to all members increases the opportunity for CAS members to obtain these skills, even beyond their ACAS, without attending an annual meeting or other CAS function, and without taking time away from obtaining continuing education credits.
 - Increases CAS' ability to experience and evaluate vendors through an increased number of offerings.
 - As an optional component, there will not be a conflict with requiring people to attend sessions they might be required to attend (and pay for) outside of CAS requirements.
 - Would assure that at least all new associates have the opportunity for exposure to these skills and normally at a fairly early stage of their career
 - It is good practical experience that most, if not all, students would benefit from.
- CONS
 - Class size might require at least two separate sessions based on vendor input on class size.
 - Adds a significant cost to the seminar
 - Increases the length of the seminar.

Other Alternative Ways to offer general business skills education to the CAS members include:

- Members lead the sessions
- Non-members lead the sessions; e.g.:
 - Financial presentation
 - Panel discussion led by CEO's or non-actuaries
e.g. Delivering message in the framework of the person you're communicating with
- Train other CAS members to facilitate sessions; for example Communispond offers "train the trainer" type sessions.
- CAS provide a link to websites of certain vendors
 - AMA or others as determined by our vendor research
 - Certain vendors may have corporate membership—ask CAS office to pursueNote: Not all sessions would be conducive to on-line training
- Regional Affiliate support

Work with Task force for Regional Affiliates or annual meetings of Regional Affiliates with information regarding vendors, SOA affiliates, and other recommendations of the GBS Task Force

- Partner with SOA

The Task Force was more focused on developing a recommendation for the CAS to follow in establishing GBS sessions and therefore did not fully develop a recommendation on how to partner with the SOA. However, the Task Force researched the SOA activities in this area (please see attached writeup) and offers the following general comments:

- The SOA has established a distinct section of membership, “Management and Personal Development” with an annual membership fee
- The SOA is interested in partnering with the CAS