

## MANAGEMENT PRINCIPLES (random order)

### PLANNED SPONTANEITY

This method provokes instant responsiveness from an audience or group. It was learned in part from experiencing the awkward delay that occurs when discussion of an address or paper is expected from an audience, and in part from studying the technics used by subversives to disrupt meetings.

The writer watched a meeting of deans of medical schools (Palmer House in Chicago) destroyed by distraught medical students. They entered the room silently, filled every vacant seat and stood in lines along the walls on each side of the audience. Then they occupied the podium and took over the public address system. There was *no violence and no meeting*. A search of a Chicago book store revealed the published manual they were using as a guidebook. It contained other information useful for producing successful meetings.

One method in vogue at the time was to designate a discussor for each paper, but the planned spontaneity approach proved to be much more effective. It works this way.

Two to eight persons (numbers proportional to size of audience) are instructed to study the subject matter of the paper or address in advance and to rise instantly when discussion is called to make a comment or ask a pertinent question.

These secret first responders provoke instantaneous audience responsiveness and they fade from the action as regular members of the audience continue the discussion.

Planned spontaneity evokes the conspiracy potential in each of us and it scintillates a meeting. This is **the principle of planned spontaneity**.

### ROUND TABLES

Round tables seating eight to ten persons are prescribed for luncheons and banquets, and the elevated head table is eliminated. Announcements and speeches (if any) are presented from an elevated free standing podium using a public address system.

The traditional straight line elevated head table is obsolete. The dignitaries are on involuntary display and they are miserable with no one with whom they can converse. The Chair cannot resist the temptation to introduce all of the officers and dignitaries in the head table line up. When everyone is seated in a circle they enjoy each other and the event., and they are grateful to be themselves.

The CNS touch is to scatter the officials and official guests at tables around the room to interact with members at large. Only the Chairman's table is reserved for the principal speaker and a few designated members.

The best system is to designate seating for everyone. This plan breaks up the individual cliques and builds the identity of the organization. A computer makes this task easier to accomplish, but a table map and seat assignment ticket (or place card) are necessary. This is **the principle of diplomatic seating**.

At the first meeting of the World Federation of Neurosurgical Societies in Brussels over a thousand neurosurgeons and guests were present at a banquet. Each person was assigned a designated place at a table seating 24 persons. Husbands and spouses were separated and seated within conversation range was someone who spoke your own language. This complex seating plan was accomplished manually without the assistance of a computer.

The round table provokes the primitive memory of sitting around a campfire in safety and together. This arrangement is the **campfire principle**.

### **PRESIDING IN SILENCE**

It is not necessary to announce events at a banquet or luncheon. The best plan is to provide a printed program. At prescribed intervals the designated person mounts the speakers platform and addresses the audience.

Conversations are interrupted by sounding a trumpet or musical accolade, ringing a school bell, rapping a gavel or flickering the room lights.

The principal then does his or her thing, retires, and the function moves along smoothly and silently. Of course each person with a part in the program receives full written instructions in advance.

At an American College of Surgeons banquet in Oslo each event was announced by four trumpeters performing on a balcony. The principals were scattered at different places around the room and by the time each person reached the free standing podium the audience was ready to listen.

This is **the principle of presiding silently**.

### **IDENTIFICATION**

It is awkward to enter a meeting room and not be sure it is your organization. Hotels routinely label their lecterns with their name or logo so it will be prominently displayed in news photos.

Scientific and social groups need to practice **the principle of identification**. It is a useful habit to display the name or logo of the organization in every meeting room, usually in the front of the room on an lectern or easel, or on the wall. It provides an identity and contributes to organizational pride.

## THE MEETING MANUAL

The leaders of professional societies are often much less precise about managing the organization than when operating their clinical practice or performing research. *Reinventing the wheel* each year an annual meeting was planned was not part of the management style of the Founders.

A Meeting Manual was produced before the Memphis meeting in 1951 and it was revised and extended annually during the early years of the CNS. It provided a written *meeting memory* to guide successive Arrangements and Program Chairmen. This practice contributed to the continuity and precision of CNS operations.

This is **the principle of the Meeting (or Organization Operations) Manual.**

### WHERE SHALL WE MEET?

Large organizations had a limited number of places to meet. Only Atlantic City, New York, Miami, Chicago, Las Vegas, Los Angeles, and San Francisco could accommodate such giants as the AMA and ACS in the 1950s.

Medium sized societies in the 300 to 500 attendance range like neurosurgical groups had many more choices.

There was a tendency for established societies to meet somewhere the organization had never met before and resorts were often favored over metropolitan areas. There was a hidden agenda (expressed privately) that the more expensive and remote the meeting site the less likely that the youngsters could afford (time and money) to attend. The writer attended one Meeting Site Selection Committee in which there was a serious effort made to schedule the next meeting in Tahiti - a place everyone on the committee wanted to go, where no one had ever been, and there was a good chance few of the newcomers could afford to attend.

The CNS favored meeting in metropolitan areas in all regions of the USA and Canada( by rotation); places where where housing and transportation was easy and affordable. In addition an opportunity was provided for larger numbers of practicing neurosurgeons (members and non-members alike) and neurosurgical residents to attend and learn. This is **the principle of selecting meeting sites that are in the best interest of the profession as a whole.**

### WHAT ABOUT SPOUSES?

In the 1950s and 1960s workaholic *neurosurgeons* attended alone, stayed up too late, drank too much and bought expensive guilt presents for spouses left at home. The CNS changed the culture by encouraging spouses to attend and enjoy social, educational and recreational opportunities. The target of 75 % spouse attendance was achieved and **the neurosurgical society culture was altered forever.**

## AVOIDING ELITISM

Congress men and women establish lifelong friendships in the CNS. These cherished relationships are especially strong among the officer corps. The CNS leadership recognized the risk of creating elite groups early in the life of the organization. Several measures were taken to combat elitism including the following:

- o Avoiding spending too much time together at the Annual meeting;
- o Sharing contacts with distinguished guests with members at large;
- o Spreading the officers out among the members at luncheons, receptions and banquets;
- o Abandoning the head table pattern at meal functions;
- o Avoiding private parties together in the Headquarters Hotel during the Annual Meeting;
- o Assigning non-officer members to high profile tasks such as chairing important committees, conducting scientific sessions, serving on extra mural liaison groups, etc.;
- o Thanking and recognizing members for work in the CNS;
- o Avoid closed meetings and secrecy;
- o Share information openly with members.

It is important to embrace **the principle of combating elitism** constantly.

## HONORING DISTINGUISHED NEUROSURGEONS

The CNS organizers recognized **the principle that there are far too few honors available to compensate for the daily dedication and selflessness of so many scientists.**

An early idea was to honor the best and the brightest neurosurgeons living anywhere in the world. All of the Founders and most of the early members were under 45 years of age. Thus in the beginning we selected honorees from among high achievers in older age brackets. It was recognized that later on some CNS members would grow into giant status and be honored at an Annual Meeting.

It was not easy to pay the expenses of overseas honorees, and resist the pressures applied by older professionals to capture our honorees for their own private agenda.

## TIME OUT

Neurosurgeons work and worry more than most professionals. It is difficult for them to plan an Annual meeting with some time out for relaxation and fun. The early CNS leaders attempted to **protect neurosurgeons from themselves** by avoiding over programming, scheduling some social and recreational relief, and offering interesting post meeting travel opportunities. Battles were fought successfully over **this principle**, but the war is not yet won.

## WHAT'S IN A NAME?

*Principle: The name is everything!* How can the *American* College of Surgeons be international in scope? Who knows what the *Trudeau Society* is all about? How can the *Lehigh County* Medical Assistants Association attract and hold members from four nearby counties (*Lehigh Valley* would be better)?

The Founders avoided limiting words like *American* or *National*, or *North American* because we envisioned the society to be *world-wide in scope*.

We noted that the initials *CNS* also signified the *Central Nervous System*.

The word *Congress* was all inclusive - American, European, Asian, South American (intercontinental). It was anticipated that at some future time it might be called The *World (or International)* Congress of Neurological Surgeons.

It was not a federation of societies so the emphasis was placed on individual professionals - *neurological surgeons*.

The only objections came from the Europeans who viewed the word *Congress* as an occasional convening of professionals from more than one discipline or from several countries. It has not stopped them from attending or joining.

The writer Chaired a restructuring committee of the AANS during the Frank Mayfield Presidency. They were having problems with *The Harvey Cushing Society* name. What was it? Who was Harvey Cushing? Was it an alumni club (it started that way)? It was a sentimental name for neurosurgeons, but the politicians and the public did not know that it was a prestigious professional society. So we changed the name to the AANS - proudly adding the *American* to designate its origin and domestic focus.

The name *CNS* was distinctive - we knew the *CNS* would be different!

The writer also participated in the naming of the World Federation of Neurosurgical Societies. It is a true federation of organizations and was so named.

We gave up the designation *World* (for now). There may be room for a *World CNS* at some future time!

## DON'T SAY IT - WRITE IT!

The above caption often appeared on the memo pads of engineers. We adopted the principle as *engineers of the nervous system*. Early on the organizers were determined to capture the information being presented at the *CNS Annual Meetings*. Since you can remember less than 10% of what you hear we wanted our members and others to refresh their memory by reading *Clinical Neurosurgery*. The principle of *anything worth saying is worth publishing*.

## TW MEMBERS

At earlier neurosurgical meetings (not CNS) there were many *TW Members* (or AA, UA, US, DL, CO, NW). Attendance at annual meetings was required. These TW Members flew into the meeting site, registered, and flew home the same day. A few *never attended* a meeting for years. Some attended the luncheon without paying for it (no ticket) and the society picked up the deficit.

The CNS maintained an attendance record (we required attendance too), but we avoided being a *meeting cop*. Instead we gave almost everyone a job to do. Our target was 75 % active participation in the annual meeting - this was achieved from the beginning.

The jobs were important to the vitality of the society like the following:

- o Chair *and Secretary* presiding at scientific meeting.
- o Parliamentarian
- o Host or Sergeant at Arms *in charge of the audience* (safety, comfort, seating, privacy, evacuation in an emergency, etc.).
- o Audiovisual Officer.
- o Exhibit Officer.
- o Registration Officer.
- o Greeter at a Reception, Luncheon, and Banquet.
- o Program Committee.
- o Arrangements Committee.
- o Host for foreign attendees
- o Host for Speakers
- o Host for Honored Guest
- o Post meeting tour Director.
- o Local Information Officer.
- o Message Center
- o Membership Committee

**Multiple persons were assigned to these kinds of tasks so no one was burdened with the same task for the entire meeting.**

Hosts at social events included members and spouses. At the first few meetings spouses were in charge of the Registration function..

***Principle: members with something important to do attend and stay for the whole meeting.***

Incidentally, there were (and may still be) ***TW Professors*** , who spend more time in the air than on campus (usually at taxpayers expense).

## PROGRAM CONTENT

It was customary for neurosurgical societies (not CNS) to call for papers for the next annual meeting. The offerings were triaged by a Program Committee and the winners were awarded a place on the program. The only control exercised by the Committee was some of the following options:

- o *Neurosurgical icons* were automatically granted a place on the program regardless of the appropriateness of the topic.
- o The program time available always exceeded the number of papers offered so some papers needed to be discarded.
- o Papers from a training site were usually accepted without debate if a member of the Program Committee member worked at that site (favoritism and partisanship were rampant). Sometimes rivalry between two or more site representatives resulted in *scientific horse trading*.
- o Topics of obvious current scientific interest were selected. Some of these topics turned out to be *temporary fads*.
- o On rare occasions a speaker was selected by the Committee outside the *freewill offerings*.
- o The final selection of papers served as *fillers to use up the remaining program time*.
- o Papers originating from non-training neurosurgical practice sites were largely ignored.

The result was a program of random topics seldom related to each other and most often not related to everyday clinical practice. Sometimes the speaker had a hard time explaining how his esoteric research was related to the discipline of medicine.

The CNS decided to *control the program content*. A theme (or a limited number of themes) was selected for each annual meeting.

The Scientific Program Committee invited *the speakers from a pool of experts nationwide (actually worldwide)*. The topics were slanted toward clinical neurosurgical practice. Our members were young and still learning. They needed to add to their diagnostic prowess and treatment expertise. Almost all of the early speakers were non-members, but they soon joined our ranks.

**The CNS early adopted the principle of controlling the program content to promote to the intellectual growth of its members and thereby benefit individual patients and society as a whole.**

## PUBLIC RELATIONS

The CNS organizers were aware of the importance of public relations. We established a news room at annual meetings and assigned a member to watch over it. We asked speakers to provide a manuscript before the meeting (many responded) and copies of their papers were available for the news media

Local news agencies were alerted and invitations were mailed to *science writers* using a national mailing list. The Program Committee selected some program items that were expected to be newsworthy (difficult but possible). The early Honored Guests were from abroad and they attracted considerable attention from TV reporters.

We encountered several *impediments* that are chronic afflictions of scientific societies:

- o Many presentations are *complex or technical* and generate little public interest.
- o All of the CNS programming is current but *seldom a new discovery*.
- o The thrust of CNS programs may be exciting to neurosurgeons, but it is largely *postgraduate education*.
- o National level science writers receive many invitations and must choose which society to attend (*competition* ).
- o Local reporters often *lack the background* to handle high tech items.
- o Many *scientists are uncomfortable* talking to reporters.
- o Some leaders of societies *place PR on the back burner*.

At the time CNS was founded there were some dramatic examples of neurosurgeons making themselves newsworthy with dramatic announcements or claims that were soon discredited by peers. One neurosurgeon developed a *cure for Parkinsonism* and made the mistake of *talking to the press before he made his dramatic announcement* at a national neurological society (attendees read about it in *The New York Times* at breakfast several hours before his presentation at the meeting). He never recovered his place in scientific circles and his claims later proved to be overstated.

**Principle: Public Relations is a necessary obligation and service to both the scientific community and the public. It takes hard work to be effective. The same high ethical standards of science applies to PR.**



## BUILDING A MEETING

An Annual Meeting creates momentum in a society that needs to be captured and sustained until the next meeting. The Officers and Chairs are in shock and then they busy themselves with preparations for the next annual event. The members enter a state of hibernation if left undisturbed. It is useful to continue a steady flow of information targeting the membership including some of the following items:

- o Highlights of the last meeting.
- o Announcement of the charge and composition of new committees.
- o Brief outline of the program for the next meeting.
- o Description of features found in next meeting site.
- o Announcement of special opportunities at next meeting (sightseeing, post meeting travel, special events, etc.).
- o Biography of honored guest.
- o Organization business (new members, liaison with other societies, academic news, etc.).
- o More meeting details.
- o Registration / Reservation materials.

It is possible to build excitement for the coming meeting, starting with generalities and moving on to more detailed information ,plus increasing the frequency of mailings as the next meeting approaches.This can be done with straight mail or a newsletter

**Principle: provoke anticipation and excitement for the next annual meeting begining within hours after the last meeting.**

## REDUNDANCY

Redundancy was built into the CNS from the beginning - standby Honored Guest, substitute Speakers, back up Presiding Officers, Hosts and Meeting Workers appointed in pairs, Duplicate Equipment (projectors, chart holders, screens, pointers, easels, etc.).

**Principle: expect everything about a meeting to go wrong and prepare for it - that is Redundancy! (Members will report it is the best organized meeting they ever attended, while the redundancy monitors become basket cases).**

## NAME BADGES

CNS Members follow the practice of *preparing name badges that are readable at a distance and wearing them on the right side* (most persons are right handed and cannot read a badge worn on the left side when shaking hands).

Wearing the badge at all functions is a courtesy to others who may not know you, and is a barrier against free loaders (inside or outside the organization). CNS badges are worn with pride.

In some meeting sites like Washington, D.C. *professional free loaders* dress well and take their meals everyday at unmonitored convention meals.

**Principle: Annual Meetings are transient events and there is no advantage to keeping your identity a state secret.**

## CAMP FOLLOWERS

The *Camp Followers* of scientific societies are *the alumni officers that never quit trying to run the organization*.

There were plenty of them at other neurosurgical societies, occupying the long head table and shedding tears over past remembrances. They knew how to block or delay memberships, blackball unworthy peers, select meeting sites at remote and expensive sites, and erect barriers to thwart program innovations.

The CNS format was to promote workers to positions of leadership before they were 45 years of age and then retire them from the officer corps. Some organizational memory was lost, but new history was expected to be made every year by fresh heroes.

Memory in the CNS is sustained by the hands on work of its members (remembering by working through several changes of officers).

The growth of the CNS was in part due to the involvement of large numbers of members in its operations and in innovations introduced by fresh leadership. The program format and content was of course equally important.

**Principle: select young leaders from the ranks of the worker bees and retire them promptly from office with thanks and token honors.**

The real thanks from the CNS is derived from the satisfaction of providing unusual and willing service to the organization, professional peers, and society.

Retired officers soon found they were needed in other important arenas. There are other places in the world needing change, refinement or inspiration.

## INSTRUCTIONS

At the CNS there were written instructions for everything and everyone with a job:

- o Presiding Officers
- o Hosts for Honored Guest
- o Hosts for Speakers
- o Hosts for Receptions And Banquet
- o Hosts for Audience
- o Audiovisual Officer
- o Exhibitors
- o Registration
- o Speakers
- o Meeting Arrangements
- o Message Center
- o Signing
- o Back Up Honored Guest and Speakers
- o Planned Spontaneity Responders
- o Designated Discussers
- o Auxiliary Officer
- o Sightseeing and Special Events
- o Post Meeting Travel Officer

**Principle: Educated people (neurosurgeons are super educated) are used to following rules and game plans if they know what game they are playing and *the rules and plans (instructions) are in writing.***

Early in the CNS game the organizers did not know how to spell "Chamber of Commerce" and lacked the resources for hiring professional meeting managers, so everything was done by members and their spouses. This is the origin of the CNS tradition of *hands on leadership*. It later led to *CNS graduates infiltrating and changing (improving) other generalist and specialist societies as change agents.*

## HOSTING

Anyone who has ever attended a *Reception* knows the coldness of no one greeting you at the door. (CNS seldom uses the word "Cocktail" - we are more interested in the conversation than the cocktails).

The CNS had *Hosts at the door (3 or 4 couples)*, and *silent Circulating Hosts (3 or 4 couples)*. They became professional hosts in one evening (as instructed, of course).

Hosts were assigned to the Honored Guest and all the speakers who were non-members (almost all the early speakers were invited guests)

**Principle: Friendliness can be *spontaneous* at any time (if provoked, practiced, and genuine).**

## MORE CNS LORE

- o It was intended that *every meeting would be different* . The basic objectives would remain the same and the arrangements would become more sophisticated year by year, but something about the ambience would stand out.
- o The hotel management was requested to increase the cook and waiter staffs for breakfasts so members would not be delayed in attending morning meetings.
- o The CNS never relied on hotel audio visual equipment. After inspecting what they had on hand, we usually ended up renting or borrowing our own equipment (in duplicate).
- o A Message Center was operated for friends to find each other and relay important telephone messages (some one was in always in charge).
- o We encouraged the Auxiliary to plan educational events in addition to sightseeing and style shows. (Rationale: neurosurgeons get smarter every working day and spouses may not grow as fast intellectually due to household confinement - makes for a more level playing field).
- o By Laws were changed as needed, but at a slow pace to maintain organizational stability.
- o At one meeting the Presiding Officer had a desk telephone to order adjustments in room temperature, or receive information, etc.
- o Non Board eligible neurosurgeons and non members were welcomed to attend Annual Meetings (our societies shut them out).
- o Neurosurgeons could apply for membership as soon as they completed their training (this policy soon made *the CNS the largest NS society in the world*, but we were more interested in continuing their education than being bigger).
- o We considered the Scientific Exhibits an opportunity for members to become an active participant in the scientific program, and we wanted to maintain an appropriate balance between commercial and scientific exhibits.
- o We segregated smokers.
- o It was a common for the Program Committee to *walk through every part of the program looking for ways to make the process smoother*.
- o We designed and produced a CNS Key (a later President added the gavel for Past Presidents).

## More CNS Lore (Continued)

- o Several of the CNS organizers were part of the group that organized the World Federation of Neurosurgical Societies, and they did much of the planning and paperwork including proposing the name.
- o CNS members reorganized and renamed The Harvey Cushing Society under the Mayfield Presidency.
- o The CNS soon became a serious threat to the other three societies. Two withdrew from competition, one confining its attention to Academic faculty and the other chose to be a close knit Travel Club. Very early in the game the CNS made the conscious decision to co-exist with and support the AANS. We passed the honor of being the NS spokes group to the AANS, and we have remained friendly stags ever since.
- o The CNS produced the first US & Canada Directory and the first World Directory of Neurological Surgeons.
- o The CNS from the beginning encouraged attendance and membership by foreign neurosurgeons and we are active supporter of the WFNS. It is an international society in fact.
- o At some meeting *the paper in progress was posted outside the meeting room.*
- o At many meetings a *Post Meeting Travel Program* was operated. (Rationale: most NS are workaholics and take to little time off from work - as long as they are spending time and money to travel to an Annual Meeting, why not add on a few days of R & R before returning to work?).

## REFLECTIONS

Neurosurgeons who participate in the CNS are never the same persons they were before and the change is even more apparent in the elected officers.

Walk into an Annual Meeting of the CNS and the experience is different from attending other scientific societies. *The meeting is alive and breathing!* Part of it is the attention to details, and the feeling of belonging to an extended family. Each Annual Meeting is different - not so much one set of officers trying to outdo the next - more a sense of providing another different experience in the life of dedicated professionals.

The Founders and early organizers expected the CNS to succeed, but its performance has far exceeded their expectations.

Each succeeding President, officers, committees and memberships have made significant historical contributions to the progress of the CNS.

## IN THE BEGINNING

There were 22 Founders and many more who entered into the conversations that led to organizing the CNS. At the first scientific meeting there were over 100 and now there are several thousand members. How did it all happen?

First there was a need for the CNS and second there were *the conspirators*.

Some of the early organizers were more active than others. It is possible to name a few persons (some living and some deceased) who might have been justifiably hanged, expelled, excommunicated or disgraced as being the ringleaders of the conspiracy. That act might have made a statement, but there would be others left alive and well to continue the cause.

The organizers were good listeners. They collated and wrote down ideas that came from everywhere. Some of them became early CNS Presidents. Their personalities changed from a straight to a blend from working intensely together.

So many ideas came from some many different persons that it was difficult then (and now) to sort out the original author of a particular CNS idea. The organizing group changed frequently and was always expanding as the CNS grew in size and influence.

Free from any artificial constraints we were able to use the organization as an experimental social laboratory. The CNS also became a training center for future academic, community, and scientific leaders.

It was a once in a lifetime experience for the CNS organizers and that same experience is repeated for others each year since its founding in 1951.

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