

Suggestions Do Count

Bechtel/SAIC, Yucca Mountain Project

BY RONNIE SPARKS, CPPM, LAS VEGAS CHAPTER

When I began writing this article I had just read Dr. Goetz's article called "Challenges," *The Property Professional*, Vol. 14 Issue 4 – 2002, page 5. Yes, I admit, I have something to offer, it just may not be useful to all. After thinking a little bit more I decided to try and describe what it takes to give suggestions and leave your opinions at the door.

A co-worker and I had just spoke earlier in the morning and we had talked about changes we would like to see in our chapter and she said, "you have to speak up." Each person has a right to their opinions and they can act on their opinion or they can react to other's opinions. I have, in the past, reacted to everyone else's opinion but gave my half-a-cent worth of opinion anyhow. Sometimes my opinions are useless and sometimes they are great ideas. Read on and read a suggestion I did make and how it was incorporated.

Identifier

In June of this year I started a new career path with a large construction contractor, a federal agency, in Las Vegas, Nevada. Along with me, I brought some expertise I had gained while working at the Nevada Test Site (NTS). The expertise had nothing to do with the Test Site itself but the property control system that managed over \$4 billion in government assets. The automated system we used for tracking those assets is called Sunflower Assets (SFA).

I managed the inventory at the NTS and therefore had to use SFA to ensure that the integrity of the records were correct i.e.; the custodian, the location, the supplemental data etc. Physical inventories were done on an annual basis. However, the complete inventory was only completed on a biennial basis. Each year started with either the first half of the 100% inventory or the second half. Our accuracy rate was 98% or above which is well above commercial standards. What I'm getting at is I learned new skills and methods to locate assets, assign assets and inventory assets.

The contractor had just merged its property systems into one property system due to a new contractor being awarded the government contract. With it brought literally thousands of records that were no longer up to date or had erroneous information within the record. We wanted to try and get the most accurate data into our system by using a unique identifier. Many companies use their employee number as a way to identify a person but we wanted even more accurate records.

Our contract consists of many contractors working on the same project, which yields several different variations of employee numbers and therefore leaves our data wide-open for human error, a negative way to standardize information and inconsistency. What Robert is to some, Bob is to others. This is the type of information that can kill your record integrity. Many Human Resource offices do not require a person to be put in the records by their birth name and therefore this becomes un-standardized information. We had the same problem, but with many HR offices not just one.

There was however one standardized piece of information that Bechtel Nevada had used at the NTS that seemed to work excellent and that was the suggestion I brought to the new contract in June. Why not use the badge number assigned to each individual? Every individual that enters a facility on our site must have a badge and there is a unique number assigned to that badge. In order to get the badge you must present a birth record and the name on the birth record is what is placed on the badge.

What a concept! Now we have the unique badge number and a "real" name as opposed to a slang name or if you will, a nickname. I suggested to my new employer that we utilize this information within our record database for all persons no matter what contractor the person worked for or where. I must admit, though, this has not been an easy task and it is still not complete. With the help of the Security Department, holder of the badge information, Information Technology, staff performing the automation of records updating, and Property & Materials Management we can overcome the barriers.

Not only were we able to localize this unique information for our database for an automated approach into SFA but now our ES&H, HR and Training departments have come aboard to help standardize information throughout the company and they too have a need for the same information.

If I would have kept my mouth shut I would not be agonizing over the complications with the records currently but as the administrator of the information I refuse to let the information reflect negatively upon me. I hope that you read this article and come up with your own suggestions to help your own property department or even your NPMA Chapter. My opinion may not count for much but my suggestion has been recognized. ♦