

## First Impressions, Who Cares?

by Roger Henson, Southwest Training and Consulting

Recently I arrived for a business appointment where I was the client. When I came into the reception area there was a display holder on the wall with a PowerPoint™ document inside. It was an attractive layout with a fall picture and the words “Welcome Roger Henson.” A quick introduction with the receptionist and she presented me her business card. Under her name were the initials D.O.F.I. She let me in on her secret job description, Director Of First Impressions. She was the number one person responsible for the first impression a client had when entering their office. She did her job well, from the display, to her friendly greeting to knowing why I was there and who I had an appointment with. Their Vision and Mission statements were attractively framed and there was reading material about their company and their industry.

After I had left I began thinking whether anyone today really cares about first impressions in a customer service business setting. Contracts are usually negotiated at a headquarters location for a lengthy period. Quite often the person providing the service either by phone or in person works for a subcontractor. Think about the “cable guy” who comes to your home or the person at the 800 number call center when you are trying to get information about your health insurance, just a couple of recent interactions I can readily recall.

I remember what it was like in the beginning years at Xerox. We did not sell copiers or service contracts. We rented equipment to the customer, who paid a monthly rental fee, and then so much per copy for the copies they made that they felt were usable. Theoretically, we could have been out of business in a month because the rental term was monthly. Whether you were installing a new machine or were there to fix a problem, first impressions were very important. In those days the rep called ahead, had a tool kit that looked like a briefcase and wore a jacket and

tie. Since there were no cell phones, we had to ask politely to use the customer’s phone.

Quite often we think of first impressions in the service business as being between the front-line employee and the customer. However, managers are also in the spotlight when they have meetings with new staff members, deliver a speech or write an email to someone they have never met.

Account Service Managers are always meeting new people, often in difficult situations. On one occasion I flew across the country to meet with a senior-level manager to discuss issues he had with our service. There were no pleasantries or coffee, he just wanted to know if I knew service and had done my homework. He gave me 30 minutes to summarize the issues and outline my solutions. When I returned to my office there was a letter telling me I was welcome anytime, and from that meeting we developed a relationship that lasted for many years.

Remember, we do not get a second chance to make a great first impression. It may sound trite, but it is true. It is easy to recall a person we have met or heard for the first time that left us with a negative impression. Though we can’t have a second chance to make a first impression, we can do our best to overcome it. In the game of golf we want to look good off the first tee when everybody is watching. However, a great recovery shot can still compensate for the poor drive. Just watch Tiger Woods. So if you have not made a good first impression can you recover? Like a lot of things in life, timing is everything. The longer you wait the less likely it is that you will be given that second chance.

D.O.F.I. was not the boss’s idea, it was the receptionist’s. She wanted to set a higher goal for herself. Does the culture in your organization foster creativity in bringing people together? Does anyone really care about first impressions or second chances?

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## Join NASM

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- Quarterly newsletter
- Certification recognition program
- Networking
- Spring and fall events
- Golf outing
- Education programs

Visit our website:

[www.nasm.com](http://www.nasm.com)

and click on the "About" tab.

## ADVERTISE

### in the NASM Quarterly Newsletter

Contact Ken Cook  
for details:

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[kenc@kencook.com](mailto:kenc@kencook.com)

### JobTarget Website

Need help filling a job vacancy at your facility? Go to [www.nasm.com](http://www.nasm.com) and click on "Employment Opportunities." NASM has partnered with JobTarget to provide you with various links and information.

The JobTarget website offers employers and job seekers an opportunity to find each other.

## A Letter from the President

Greetings to all:

As 2009 comes to a close and another year has passed, I would like to say thank you to the 2009 Officers, Directors, Committee Chairs and volunteers and extend my appreciation for your leadership and support. It is your sharing of your talent, experiences and commitment that helps NASM grow as an organization. I have had the opportunity to network with many service professions and individuals that recognize the need to add value in our culture.

2009 was a busy and exciting year as the NASM members focused on two important committees:

- **Education / Certification**  
NASM promotes education and training in the service and support profession with a consistent commitment to the advancement of service managers in all vertical industries. The focus of the NASM Education initiatives addresses the ongoing challenges and current relevant subject matters for Service Manager Development.
- **Service Leadership Conference partnering with The Chicago Chapter**  
This was a successful one-day event held in September at Northern Illinois University with cross-functional executives and their Service Leadership teams. Exhibitors were available to share their knowledge, experience and proven solutions to increase awareness of the leading tools available to improve service quality and effectiveness.

Going forward as a NASM team we will continue to drive for better opportunities and continue to grow our organization by:

- Providing a Service Executive Program through our Service Management Institute's "Certification"
- Providing the NASM website, including ongoing updates of "Members Area" information
- NASM Conference participation joining up with "The Chicago Chapter" on special events
- Continued expansion of job opportunities via NASM "JobTarget" program
- Providing quarterly newsletters with increased circulation, advertising space and exclusive articles
- Offering the NASM Annual Golf Outing – a great way for networking and meeting new business friends

In order to achieve these objectives, we need your continued support to:

- Renew your annual membership
- Check out our NASM website
- Take the necessary steps to learn about and update your certification
- Let us know if there are topics of interest that NASM is not addressing

As I reflect on the past year, I have truly come away with the fulfillment and gratitude of working with many people and various businesses that recognize the importance of Service Management.

Thank you,

Jim Mueller  
NASM President

## First Impressions, Who Cares? (cont'd.)

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In today's economy when we are focused on needs, not wants, and there are more suppliers than customers, First Impressions matter.

First Impressions are just common courtesies. Human interactions can still cause us to stumble and lose business. You may have the best product on the market, but the sale just may go to the person who knows how to relate to the customer in the right way.

*Service so good it is an experience begins with the first impression.*

Roger Henson  
[RHensonDFW@aol.com](mailto:RHensonDFW@aol.com)

# Certified Service Manager Program Moves Forward

By Brian Stringer, NASM Chair, Education and Certification Committee

Manufacturers are seeking educational resources for their dealer and distributor service managers around the world. NASM has received numerous requests to provide a study program along with testing for certification in knowledge applicable at the dealer level.

Parts and Service sales continue to provide consistent revenue and profit through economic cycles. Adding value for customers is achieved as product support professionals gain tools to deliver efficient solutions that customers desire. NASM recognizes this growth trend in the service industry and has certification programs available for service personnel, and is developing distant learning classes. The distant learning classes will allow flexibility of time for service personnel to gain the training required to achieve certification and recognition.

Continuous improvement in customer service is the goal, and learning new techniques enables companies to deliver better solutions for their customers. Certification is an important step through the education process which recognizes the importance of service personnel in the industry. A certificate of course work completion and registration with NASM for the achievement is gratifying for service leaders.

The NASM Certified Service Manager (CSM) program is structured similar to the successful Certified Service Executive (CSE) program with an application, review for experience, confirmation and, if qualified, invitation to take the written test. A study guide/book authored by Jack Huffman is near completion.

For more information about the CSM program, contact Brian Stringer - StringerBrianS@JohnDeere.com.

# Service Leadership Conference Exceeds Expectations – September 22

By Ken Cook

Using a targeted theme, “The Service Proposition in 2010: Innovation, Strategy and Process,” the conference achieved success with over 80 attendees. Dr. Promod Vohra, Professor, NIU, welcomed the attendees with an insight into workforce development and the focus on service leadership.

Gerald Bruder, well-known motivational presenter, was the keynote speaker, energizing the general group of service executives with active dialog, humor and penetrating questions on life.

Following the keynote session, concurrent tracks for executive and functional manager topics were conducted. For the executive, topics included Innovation – Adam Hartung, Strategic Vision – Bill Burnett, Transforming Your Parts and Service Business – Tom Walley and Tim Hagen, and Service through the Eyes of a Customer – Neil Johnson and Walt Gasparovic.

A general panel of service executives addressed the State of the Service Industry with Imperatives for Survival. Panelists included Les Teplicky, Roy Steele, Mike Cline and Larry Shalzi. Walt Gasparovic hosted the panel.

Topics for the functional manager included Warranty Management Using Metrics for Service Quality – Kevin Krakora, Product Life Cycle Management – Roy Steele, Service Training and Learning Management Systems – Ken Cook and Adam Retzlaff, Service Parts Optimization – Roy Steele and Service Documentation and Translations – Larry Anderson.

The conference was hosted by NASM and The Chicago Chapter. Special thanks to the planning committee, Gary Zaffke, Chairman, and Margaret Myers for administrative support, for putting on a very valuable event. Attendees’ evaluations showed great interest in the topics and want for the conference to be expanded in 2010. Thomas Schlick is President of The Chicago Chapter and Jim Mueller is President of NASM.

## NASM Certification – Your Key to Service Management Success!

NASM Certification recognizes those individuals who accomplish a prescribed level of competence in the Service Management field.

Some companies also use NASM certification as a prerequisite for hiring Service Managers, and as a basis for salary increases and promotion.

NASM offers the only certification program for service executives nationwide.

**Three certification levels are available:**

- **ASE: Granted for seven years**
- **CSE: Granted for three years**
- **LCSE: Permanent certification when it is achieved**

Each level has specific requirements and goals.

Go to: [www.nasm.com](http://www.nasm.com) and click on “Service Management Certification” for more information on application procedures.

**Don’t delay, take that next step toward NASM Certification!**

# Mastering Change with Four Simple Steps

By Vince Lightfoot

**There is a little poem that reads, “Two men looked through prison bars. One saw the mud; the other saw the stars.”** The moral: You can improve your ability to deal with change by focusing your attention on the future and by seeing the glass as half full rather than half empty.

We certainly hear a lot about change these days. A critical issue in dealing with change is the subject of control. Most of your stress and unhappiness comes as a result of feeling out of control in a particular area of your life. If you think about the times or places where you felt the very best about yourself, you will realize that you had a high degree of control in those places. One of the reasons why you like to get home after a trip is that, after you walk through your front door, you feel completely in control of your environment. You know where everything is. You don't have to answer to anyone. You can relax completely. You are back in control.

Psychologists call this the difference between an “internal locus of control” and an “external locus of control.” Your locus of control is where you feel the control is located for a particular part of your life. People with an external locus of control feel they are controlled by outside forces: their bills, their relationships, their childhood experiences or their external environment. When a person has an external locus of control, he or she feels a high degree of stress. And with an external locus of control, a person is very tense and uneasy about change of any kind. Change represents a threat that may leave the individual worse off than before.

On the other hand, people with an internal locus of control possess a high level of self-determination. They feel that they are very much in charge of their life. They plan their work and work their plan. They accept a high level of responsibility, and they believe that everything happens for a reason and that they are the primary creative force in their life.

Since the only thing over which you have complete control is the content of your conscious mind, you begin to deal with change by taking full, complete control over the things you think. As Aldous Huxley said, “Experience is not what happens to you; it is what you do with what happens to you.” Since change is inevitable and continuous, it is how you think about what is happening to you that is most important in determining how change affects you – and whether you use it to your advantage or let it work to your disadvantage.

We fear change more today than ever before, and for less reason. The reason we fear change is because we are afraid that we will be worse off as a result. No one fears change that implies improvement. For example, if you learned that you were going to have to change your lifestyle because you had just won the lottery, this is not the kind of change that you would avoid or anticipate with dread. It is change that implies unpleasant surprises that you fear and become anxious about, because it causes you to feel that you have lost a certain amount of control in that part of your life.

Your aim is to become a “change master,” to embrace change, to welcome change, to ride the tides of change and to move toward the improvements you desire.

Boat builders know that the deeper the keel of a sailing vessel, the more stable it will be in storms, squalls and gusts of wind. The same holds true for you. The deeper your keel – or stabilizing factors in your life – the less likely it is that you will be blown over or off course when unexpected change occurs.

You can deepen your keel and increase your stability by setting big goals for yourself and making clear, written plans for their accomplishment. Goals enable you to control the direction of change. With goals, change becomes planned and deliberate, instead of random and haphazard. Goals assure that the changes that take place in your life are primarily self-determined and self-directed. With clear, specific goals, the changes that take place will tend to be positive and move you toward something that you want to achieve rather than blow you off course.

It is inevitable that you will experience a continuous series of large and small disappointments and setbacks in your life. That is the nature of the game. They are unavoidable. Some things work out, and some things don't. Sometimes you win; sometimes you lose. In spite of your best efforts, unexpected and unpredictable events will derail your best-laid plans. This endless process of change and setbacks begins when you first enter the workforce, and it continues for the rest of your career. Problems and changes in your work are like the rain – they just happen. But if you set clear goals for your work, as well as for your family life and for your personal development, then no matter what happens, you can concentrate your thinking on your goals and take a long-term view of your current circumstances. You can, in effect, rise

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above the challenges of the moment and keep your eyes on the guiding stars of your life and your most cherished dreams.

With clear goals, you will become multidimensional rather than one-dimensional. A setback or disappointment in any one part of your work will be quickly offset by the fact that you are busy in other areas, and you simply won't allow yourself to invest too much emotional energy in one particular thing that doesn't work out to plan.

Now I'd like to share with you a four-step method of dealing with change:

**The first step** is simply to accept the change as a reality. Acceptance is the opposite of rejection or resistance. Acceptance keeps your mind calm and positive. As William James said, "The starting point in dealing with any difficulty is to be willing to have it so." The minute you accept that a change has occurred and that you can't cry over spilled milk, you become more capable of dealing with the change and turning it to your advantage.

One of the best ways to deal with the worry that is often generated by unexpected change is to sit down and answer, on paper, the question: "What exactly am I worrying about?"

In medicine, it is said that accurate diagnosis is half the cure. When you sit down and define a worrisome situation clearly on paper, it suddenly becomes less stressful to you, and it will often resolve itself. In any case, when it is clearly defined, you have diagnosed it, and you now can do something about it.

**The second step** is to ask yourself, "What is the worst possible thing that can happen as a result of this change?" Much worry and stress comes from the

refusal to face what might happen as a result of a difficult problem. When you clearly define the worst possible outcome and write it down next to the definition of the problem, chances are you will find that, whatever it is, you can handle it. Often, your worries will begin to evaporate after you have determined the worst that might happen as a result.

Now decide to accept the worst possible outcome should it occur. Mentally resolve that, even if the worst possible consequence ensues from this situation, it will not be the end of the world for you. You will accept it and carry on. The very act of accepting the worst possible outcome helps to eliminate the stress and anxiety associated with the situation.

**The third step** in dealing with change is adjusting your behaviors and actions to the new situation. Ask yourself, "What are all the things I can do to make sure that the worst does not occur?" Sometimes we call this "damage control." In the business schools, this is an important part of decision making, and it is called the "mini-max regret solution." What can you do to minimize the maximum damage that can occur from an unexpected change or setback? As you begin thinking of all the things you can do, you are adjusting your mind to the new information and preparing to take steps to deal with the change effectively. Write these things down next to the result of step two.

**The final part** of this four-step method for dealing with change is to improve on the existing situation. Often, a change signals that your plans are incomplete or that you might be heading in the wrong direction. Serious changes, which create real problems, are often signals that you are on the

wrong track. There is an old saying, "Crisis is change trying to take place." You will often find that the change is a healthy and positive step toward achieving your goals.

W. Clement Stone, the billionaire and founder of Combined Insurance Company, was famous for his attitude of being an "inverse paranoid." He was convinced that everything that happened to him was part of a conspiracy to help him to be more successful. Whenever something unexpected occurred, he immediately said, "That's good!" and then looked into the situation to find out exactly what was good about it.

If you look into any change, you will always find something good and beneficial for you. Look for the valuable lessons contained within every setback. What is the hidden advantage that you can turn to your benefit? Is this change a signal that, if properly responded to, will save you from a much bigger change or problem in the future? Since your mind can hold only one thought at a time, if you force yourself to look for the positive aspect of any change, you'll keep your mind clear, and you'll keep your attitude optimistic and confident.

Victor Frankl said that the last great freedom of man is the freedom to choose his attitude under any given set of circumstances. You cannot control what happens to you, but you can control your attitude toward what happens to you, and in that, you will be mastering change rather than allowing it to master you.

A mark of a successful person is what has been called "tolerance for ambiguity." This simply means that you have the capacity to deal effectively with a rapidly changing situation.

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## Articles for NASM Newsletter

NASM publishes the newsletter quarterly.

Please submit articles/  
information to Ken Cook,  
Ken Cook Co.  
([kenc@kenccook.com](mailto:kenc@kenccook.com)).

**Deadlines are:**

**February 1**  
for the March issue

**May 1**  
for the June issue

**August 1**  
for the September issue

**November 1**  
for the December issue

### What's on Your Reading List

Please take a moment to think about what you've read lately that would be of interest to your fellow NASM members. Be sure to include the complete title, author's name, a brief book overview and where it's available. Send your recommendations to [kenc@kenccook.com](mailto:kenc@kenccook.com) and we'll include them in subsequent newsletters.

## Mastering Change with Four Simple Steps (cont'd.)

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The more successful you become – the greater your income and responsibilities, the higher your status and position – the faster the rate of change that will be around you. At every stage, it will be your ability to function with calmness, clarity and quiet assurance that will mark you as the kind of person who is going places in life.

In the final analysis, your ability to perform effectively in a world of ongoing change is the true measure of how well-developed a person you are. As you continue to do this, you will experience a wonderful feeling of self-control and self-determination that your whole life will be bright and positive – and so will your results.

## Laura Berg Recognized for Distinguished Service

NASM president Jim Mueller described Laura Berg's contributions to NASM as "... continuous, dedicated, professional and long-term" as he presented a plaque recognizing her administrative support.

In addition to the engraved plaque, Laura was also presented an Honorary Life Membership in NASM along with a gift certificate. Mike Berg escorted Laura to the grand dinner event held at the Wisconsin Club. Jean and Ken Cook, Walt Gasparovic and Vince Lightfoot participated in the celebration.

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# Welcome New Members

**Mike Coker**, CSI – Coker Service, Inc.

**Michael Wagner**, Dimerco

**Michael Meskill**, Electronic Theatre Controls

**Laura Berg**, Honorary Member

**Andrew Kussro**

**John Williams**

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## 2009-2010 Events

*Note: Dates and locations are subject to change.*

### 3rd Field Workforce Optimization Summit

December 8-10, 2009  
Las Vegas, NV

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### Interlog Winter 2010

January 25-27, 2010  
Hyatt Pier 66, Fort Lauderdale, FL  
[www.interlogwinter.com](http://www.interlogwinter.com)

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### Remote Services Implementation Summit

February 22-24, 2010  
San Francisco, CA

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### Field Service 2010

April 26-28, 2010  
The Westin Kierland Resort & Spa  
Scottsdale, AZ  
[www.fieldservice2010.com](http://www.fieldservice2010.com)

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### Interlog Summer 2010

June 14-16, 2010  
Omni Hotel, San Diego, CA  
[www.interlogsummer.com](http://www.interlogsummer.com)

### NASM Golf Outing

July 8, 2010  
Bristol Oaks Country Club  
Bristol, WI

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### Field Service East 2010

September 15-16, 2010  
Atlanta, GA  
[www.fieldserviceeast.com](http://www.fieldserviceeast.com)

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### NASM 2009-2010 Business / Board Meeting Schedule:

Business/Board meetings are monthly teleconferences (**1-800-630-9030, pass code 4616060#**), unless otherwise noted. Typical meeting dates are scheduled for the 4th Tuesday of each month, starting at 10:00 am central.

**December 22, 2009** 10:00 am (cst)

**January 26, 2010** 10:00 am (cst)

**February 23, 2010** 10:00 am (cst)

**March 23, 2010** 10:00 am (cdt)

Note: With some exceptions, there will be face-to-face meetings that coincide with other NASM events. The face-to-face meetings will have available phone-in to the teleconference for those unable to attend.

## NASM Board of Directors 2009

### President

Jim Mueller, CSE  
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*Chairperson Nominating Committee*

### Board Members for New Term

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Deere and Company – Retired 9/09  
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