President’s Message:

Welcome back! Your Topeka IIA Chapter officers and committee members have been working hard over the summer break to put together a great program for the coming year. I hope to see you at the luncheons and seminars.

The CIA designation opens employment and advancement doors. Did you know that you can get 20% off the purchase price of the IIA’s CIA Learning System by ordering it through your local chapter? E-mail me to find out how.

Julie Pennington

September Meeting

CPE 1 hours
Speaker – Steven Haenchen
Topic – Occupational Fraud Trends and What You Can Do About It

Steven will be speaking about fraud trends based on the ACFE Report to the Nation’s 2016 statistics and how those trends affect our workplaces.

Steven Haenchen is a CPA/ABV, CFE, CISA, CIA. He works as a professor at Kansas University and is the president of the Association of Certified Fraud Examiners of Greater Kansas City. He is currently working on his Ph.D. in C.S.

Steven has been the CFO/Controller of public and private companies in the industries of mortgage banking, automobile financing, scheduled air transportation and contract computer programming. Steven has gained expertise in forensics by conducting detailed analysis of financial records, and specializing in verification and characterization of large masses of electronic data. In addition, Steven has computer forensic experience. He has performed computer security analyses and documented internal controls related to IT departments. Steven has analyzed over 1.3 billion records using local database and routines written by him.

September Meeting

Date: Tuesday, September 12, 2017
Place: FHLBank Topeka
       One Security Benefit Place
       Check in with first floor attendant
Time: 11:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.
Menu: Aboud’s Chef’s Choice
       Dessert
       Iced Tea and Water
RSVP: By noon, Friday, September 8, 2017

Reservations: Brenda Kindle
              FHLBank Topeka
              brenda.kindle@fhlbtopeka.com
              785-554-4506

Please email Brenda Kindle at brenda.kindle@fhlbtopeka.com if you have any dietary restrictions.

Registration: Member $15 Non-member $20

Event Refund Policy – The Institute of Internal Auditors (Topeka Chapter):

The purpose of this policy is to ensure event cancellations are refunded appropriately. Events include, but are not limited to: monthly meetings, luncheons, and seminars.

Cancellations made prior to the event registration deadline will be refunded at 100% of the event fee (or would not be billed if the attendee did not pay in advance).

Cancellations made after the event registration deadline will not be refunded (or would be billed at 100% of the event fee if the attendee did not pay in advance).
*IMPORTANT NOTICE FOR PAYMENTS*

Payments for all meeting and seminars need to be sent to the following address:

Capitol Federal  
Attention: Joe Beasley, Audit Services Department  
700 S Kansas Ave  
Topeka, KS 66603-3818

IIA Chat:

Name: Diana K. Fuhrken, CRCM  
Employer: Capitol Federal  
Position: Internal Auditor  
Time in this position: 9 years  
Education: Friends University

What was your first job? My first real job was at Harris Drug, Washington KS. I worked as a store clerk and at the soda counter.

What is your favorite food? Mexican

What is your dream vacation? To visit all MLB ballparks

What is your favorite TV show? Not sure I could narrow it down to just one – growing up it was Little House on the Prairie. Now, I like Blacklist, Suits, This is Us and The Big Bang Theory.

What is your prized possession? It is a ring that belonged to my Grandmother. There is nothing fancy about it, other than it was hers.

What do you try to avoid? Snow. I’m not a big fan.

If you could have any job you wanted, what would it be? I am not sure what it would be. However, it would definitely have something to do with kids and/or baseball.

What is your greatest accomplishment? My family

What would you like to get around to doing when you have time? Someday, when I have the time, I would love to get around to tracing my genealogy.

Who is the person you most admire and why? My mom she has faced much adversity and remains loving and strong.

What’s a pet peeve of yours? Hearing people chomp their food!

What’s your favorite summer vacation memory or tradition? My favorite summer tradition is having a family reunion or Independence Day at my Mom’s house.

Updating Your IIA member Information:

IIA members can keep their personal information up to date by visiting the IIA's website at www.theiia.org. In the upper right hand corner click on "Sign In". Once you are signed in, click on "Profile" and then "My Profile". Here you will be able to see your information and you can edit your personal information, address, and contact information by clicking on the "Edit" button. You can also update your contact preferences by clicking "My Preferences". If you need additional assistance, please contact Julie Pennington at Julie.Pennington@mymlc.com

Newsletter Articles:

Please contact Crystal Perez at cperez@capfed.com with any articles or suggestions for the newsletter. You may also know of special events (weddings, promotions, certifications, etc.) that you would like to put in the newsletter.

Volunteer Opportunities:

The Topeka chapter has had proven success because of the people who volunteer their time. Volunteering takes leadership, dedication, and effort. There is currently an opening for the co-chair of the Hospitality committee position. If interested in serving in this role or as an officer or board member for 2017-2018 to continue to enhance the internal audit
IIA Learning:

IIA Learning delivers innovative, quality, and convenient internal audit training, development, and networking for all skill levels. The flexible platforms focus on individual auditor training needs, as well as existing and emerging issues to ensure that internal auditors receive the knowledge and proficiency required to provide the highest level of auditing assurance, insight, and objectivity possible.

The IIA provides multiple learning opportunities:

1. **Seminars** are in-person and online; led by internal audit experts; cater to all auditor skill levels, topics, CPE needs and learning styles.
2. **Webinars** are short, live presentations, led by internal audit industry professionals; focused on trending topics and addressing challenges.
3. **OnDemand** are convenient, self-paced, and cost effective courses on existing and emerging internal audit topics; accessible online, anytime.
4. **On-site Training** provides an in-person, group training; focused on specific learning need and facilitated by internal audit leaders at your location.
5. **Exam Prep** is a self-study or facilitator-led programs; combines reading materials with online study tools to prepare participants for certification exams.
6. **Executive Development** is strategic guidance and mentoring for internal audit executives; facilitated by executive-level leadership in an elite setting.

Visit the IIA website for registration and more information: [www.theiia.org/training](http://www.theiia.org/training)

The next Members Only webinar:

**Ethics and Compliance Program Effectiveness**

**Date:** Tuesday, September 19, 2017  
**Time:** 12:00 Noon – 1:00 P.M. CST

**Sustainability or Enterprise Risk Management?**

**How Internal Audit and EHS Audit Can Support Both Sides of the Same Coin**

**Date:** Tuesday, October 10, 2017  
**Time:** 1:00 P.M. – 2:00 P.M. CST

**Is Your Team Ready to Audit Culture**

**Date:** Tuesday, October 17, 2017  
**Time:** 12:00 Noon – 1:00 P.M. CST

The next eSeminars:

**Assessing Risk: Ensuring Internal Audit**

**Date:** December 6 - 15, 2017  
**Time:** 1:00 P.M. – 4:20 P.M. CST

**Audit Report Writing**

**Date:** September 26 – October 5, 2017  
**Time:** 4:00 P.M. – 7:20 P.M. CST

**Cybersecurity Auditing in an Unsecure World**

**Date:** September 5 - 14, 2017  
**Time:** 1:00 P.M. – 4:20 P.M. CST

**Data Analysis for Internal Auditors**

**Date:** September 19 - 20, 2017  
**Time:** 1:00 P.M. – 4:20 P.M. CST

**Enterprise Risk Management: Elements of the Process**

**Date:** September 11 - 20, 2017  
**Time:** 1:00 P.M. – 4:20 P.M. CST

**Fundamentals of Internal Auditing**

**Date:** September 21, 2017  
**Time:** 4:00 P.M. – 8:00 P.M. CST

**Fundamentals of IT Auditing**

**Date:** October 2 - 11, 2017  
**Time:** 1:00 P.M. – 4:20 P.M. CST

**IT General Controls**

**Date:** November 28 - 30, 2017  
**Time:** 5:15 P.M. – 7:15 P.M. CST
Lean Six Sigma Tools for Internal Audit Fieldwork  
**Date:** October 3 - 12, 2017  
**Time:** 1:00 P.M. – 4:20 P.M. CST

Lean Six Sigma Tools for Internal Audit Planning  
**Date:** December 5 - 14, 2017  
**Time:** 1:00 P.M. – 4:20 P.M. CST

Operational Auditing: Influencing Positive Change  
**Date:** October 17 - 26, 2017  
**Time:** 1:00 P.M. – 4:20 P.M. CST

Performing an Effective Quality Assessment  
**Date:** November 7 - 16, 2017  
**Time:** 1:00 P.M. – 4:20 P.M. CST

Risk-based Auditing: A Value Add Proposition  
**Date:** May 15 - 24, 2017  
**Time:** 1:00 P.M. – 4:20 P.M. CST

Statistical Sampling for Internal Auditors  
**Date:** September 25 - 28, 2017  
**Time:** 1:00 P.M. – 4:20 P.M. CST

Succession Planning: Leveraging and Influencing Millennials and Other Generations  
**Date:** September 18 - 19, 2017  
**Time:** 1:00 P.M. – 4:20 P.M. CST

**Bookstore:**

**THIS MONTH’S FEATURE:**  
*Auditing Humor and Other Oxymorons*

What could be funnier than internal audit? Probably, just about anything.

However, a few years ago Internal Auditor magazine decided to give it a stab and Mike Jacka began writing internal audit humor. Now, some of the best pieces from the magazine and Mike’s blog “From the Mind of Jacka” have been gathered in this collection. Listen in on “The Adventures of Auditeman and COSO Boy”, read the most recent “Report to the Audit Committee: Anderson, Grimm & Goose Inc.”, or sing along with “I Am the Very Model of a Modern Audit Manager”. Come in and enjoy the weird world that is created when humor and internal audit collide.

With hundreds of titles to choose from, including books, training materials, certification preparation, interactive programs, and more. The IIA Research foundation Bookstore is your one-stop shop for internal audit resources. All Bookstore products have been reviewed by internal auditors to guarantee a perfect fit. Check out the member’s only bookstore for resources for all your Internal Auditing needs.  
[IIA Bookstore.](#)

**CONGRATULATION CORNER!**

The certified Internal Auditor (CIA) designation is the only globally accepted certification for internal auditors and remains the standard by which individuals demonstrate their competency and professionalism in the internal auditing field. Please join us in congratulating the following chapter members who recently obtained their CIA certification:

**ANNIVERSARIES**

Join us in congratulating the following individuals celebrating significant milestones as members of the IIA:

**5 Years**

Dawn Bicknell-Reiser  
Diana Fuhrken  
Joe Beasley

**CIA’s**

Join us in congratulating the following individuals in obtaining their Certified Internal Auditor (CIA) certification. This is the only globally accepted certification for internal auditors and remains the standard by which individuals demonstrate their competency and professionalism in the internal auditing field

(Non to Report This Month)
WELCOME NEW IIA CHAPTER MEMBERS

The Topeka Chapter would like to extend a warm welcome to our new members who recently joined our group.

(None to Report This Month)

la Magazine Website:

The digital edition of Internal Auditor is a full replicated version of the magazine that delivers internal audit insights and news in a visually enhanced, user-friendly design with new topic sections, enhanced search, and much more!

Visit the website at www.internalauditor.org and check out the April 2017 issue featuring “Resilience through crisis” where j. Michael Jacka discusses how an organization can weather through a crisis by being proactive and planning ahead.

IIA’s CIA Learning System:

Certified Internal Auditor (CIA): Strengthen Your Core

As The IIA’s premier designation for more than 40 years, the CIA sets the standard for excellence within the profession. The CIA journey begins with a focus on The IIA’s International Standards for the Professional Practice of Internal Auditing (Standards) and aspects of mandatory guidance under the IPPF. The journey continues with a focus on managing an internal audit project and culminates with concepts related to internal control, risk, governance, and technology. The CIA is a 3-part process for establishing your foundational core and starting point for career growth to:

- Distinguish you from your peers.
- Demonstrate your proficiency with internal staff and external clients.
- Develop your knowledge of best practices in the industry.
- Demonstrate your proficiency and professionalism.
- Lay a foundation for continued improvement and advancement.

Internal Audit Practitioner: A New First Stop on Your Road to Success

The Internal Audit Practitioner designation is a great way to quickly demonstrate your internal audit aptitude. You can earn this new designation through social badging by completing the Internal Audit Practitioner application and taking and passing the Certified Internal Auditor (CIA) Part One exam. Candidates who have successfully completed the CIA Part One exam within the past 24 months are also eligible to apply.

Gleim Discount:

The Topeka Chapter has partnered with Gleim CIA Review to ensure your success on the CIA exam!

Gleim CIA Review is the most widely used CIA prep course. More CIAs have used Gleim to pass the CIA Exam than all other prep courses combined. The exceptional content now includes over 40 hours of in-depth video lectures and comprehensive question test banks that cover all of the topics tested and are presented in a format that replicates your exam-day experience. In addition, CIA candidates enjoy a no-hassle Access Until You Pass® Guarantee and customized support from a team of CIA exam prep experts.

As a member of the chapter, you are eligible for a 10-20% discount on Gleim CIA Review Systems. To take advantage of the reduced prices and to place your order, log into the Members Only section of the Chapter website.

Please contact our Gleim representative, Melissa Leonard, with any questions regarding the Gleim materials or discounts available. Call her at 800.874.5346 or via email IIAChapters@gleim.com.
Chapter Achievement Program (CAP):

Do any of your internal audit activities earn Chapter Achievement Program (CAP) points for your Topeka Chapter of the IIA? What is CAP, why is it important and what can you do to help?
The Chapter Achievement Program (CAP) is designed by the Institute of Internal Auditors to guide chapters for developing quality programs and completing administrative duties to ensure it is meeting its obligations to its members. Points are awarded for each activity in accordance with the IIA guidelines. The goal is to provide valuable professional activities and development opportunities to our members and earn CAP points.

Certain activities that are conducted by member may qualify. Points are reported to the IIA on the 10th of each month covering three areas:

Service to Members: Attendance at monthly meetings, conferences and seminars, social events and new IIA certification.

Service to the Profession: Academic Relations; Chapter Scholarship Program, Student events held by the chapter. Advocacy; Junior Achievement Involvement, Building Awareness Champion Program, funding support for District advisors and District Representatives, Internal Audit Awareness month events, Host an Internal Audit event at work, Audit Channel TV submissions, Write exam questions for IIA certifications, Submit or Publish an article in the Internal Auditor magazine, participate on a non IIA sponsored or an IIA sponsored Quality Review Team, Chapter recognizes the member company for completing their QA.

Chapter Administration: Involves administrative reporting requirements to the IIA.

Chapter Objectives

Service to Members
- Education Objective: Offer over 20 hours per year of affordable CPE with more than 60% rated as excellent.
- Certification Objective: Two members become certified annually.
- Social Objective: Members get to know other members from different organizations.

Service to Profession
- Membership Objective: Increase active membership.
- Professional Development Objective: Continue to offer affordable and quality training for auditors
- Academic Relations Objective: Promote the profession at Washburn University

Chapter Administration
- Leadership Development Objective: Have 1 or 2 officers attend the Leadership Conference.
- Chapter Finance Objective: Have our lunch meeting fees cover the meeting expense; make additional income from the seminars to fund other activities (Leadership Conference, WU scholarship, WU student night).
- Communication and Participation Objective: Send out monthly newsletter and update website.
## CAP Summary

**As of:** 09/10/17

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Minimum for Bronze</th>
<th>Chapter Points (to Date)</th>
<th>% of Minimum</th>
<th>Balance to Minimum</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I. Service to Members</td>
<td>325.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0%</td>
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<tr>
<td>II. Service to Profession</td>
<td>200.00</td>
<td>37.81</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>162.19</td>
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<tr>
<td>III. Chapter Administration</td>
<td>160.00</td>
<td>21.00</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>139.00</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>685.00</strong></td>
<td><strong>58.81</strong></td>
<td></td>
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</table>

Total from Master Template: **58.81**

**Current CAP Status:** Pending

*updated Quarterly

**Targets:**
- Bronze 685.00
- Silver 1,060.00
- Gold* 1,560.00

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*Platinum 10 consecutive years of Gold
*Ruby 10 consecutive years of Platinum
*Sapphire 15 consecutive years of Platinum
*Diamond 25 consecutive years of Platinum
# The Audit Scope

Volume 30, Issue 1  
September 2017

## 2017 – 2018 Officers and Board of Governors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Phone</th>
<th>Email</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>President</td>
<td>Julie Pennington</td>
<td>Legislative Post Audit</td>
<td>(785) 296-5817</td>
<td><a href="mailto:julie.pennington@lpa.ks.gov">julie.pennington@lpa.ks.gov</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1st VP, Seminars</td>
<td>Marie Winter-Zima</td>
<td>Capitol Federal</td>
<td>(785) 231-6394</td>
<td><a href="mailto:mwinter-zima@capfed.com">mwinter-zima@capfed.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd VP, Programs</td>
<td>Brenda Kindle</td>
<td>FHLBank</td>
<td>(785) 438-6152</td>
<td><a href="mailto:brenda.kindle@fhltopeka.com">brenda.kindle@fhltopeka.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secretary</td>
<td>Elizabeth Salas</td>
<td>Westar Energy</td>
<td>(785) 575-8322</td>
<td><a href="mailto:elizabeth.salas@westarenergy.com">elizabeth.salas@westarenergy.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Treasurer</td>
<td>Angie Drake</td>
<td>FHLBank</td>
<td>(785) 218-4481</td>
<td><a href="mailto:angie.drake@fhltopeka.com">angie.drake@fhltopeka.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Board Member</td>
<td>Tony Risinger</td>
<td>Westar Energy</td>
<td>(785) 575-1968</td>
<td><a href="mailto:tony.risinger@westarenergy.com">tony.risinger@westarenergy.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Board Member</td>
<td>Amelia Noe</td>
<td>Westar Energy</td>
<td>(785) 575-1871</td>
<td><a href="mailto:amelia.noe@westarenergy.com">amelia.noe@westarenergy.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Board Member</td>
<td>Justin Stowe</td>
<td>LPA</td>
<td>(785) 296-7977</td>
<td><a href="mailto:justin.stowe@lpa.ks.gov">justin.stowe@lpa.ks.gov</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Board Member</td>
<td>Andrea Robben</td>
<td>BCBS</td>
<td>(785) 291-8897</td>
<td><a href="mailto:andrea.robben@bcbsks.com">andrea.robben@bcbsks.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Board Member</td>
<td>Robert Knott</td>
<td>Capitol Federal</td>
<td>(785) 231-6355</td>
<td><a href="mailto:rknot@capfed.com">rknot@capfed.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Board Member</td>
<td>Shanae Gooden</td>
<td>Kansas Army National Guard</td>
<td>(785) 274-1265</td>
<td><a href="mailto:shanae.d.gooden.civ@mail.mil">shanae.d.gooden.civ@mail.mil</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Board Member</td>
<td>Crystal Perez</td>
<td>Capitol Federal</td>
<td>(785) 231-6359</td>
<td><a href="mailto:cperez@capfed.com">cperez@capfed.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Board Member</td>
<td>Lori Miller</td>
<td>Capitol Federal</td>
<td>(785) 231-6396</td>
<td><a href="mailto:lmiller@capfed.com">lmiller@capfed.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Board Member</td>
<td>Jenny Tryon</td>
<td>Westar Energy</td>
<td>(785) 575-1652</td>
<td><a href="mailto:jenny.tryon@westarenergy.com">jenny.tryon@westarenergy.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audit Committee</td>
<td>Richard McMullen</td>
<td>Kansas Department of Transportation</td>
<td>(785) 296-5399</td>
<td><a href="mailto:mcmullen@ksdot.org">mcmullen@ksdot.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finance Committee</td>
<td>Angie Drake</td>
<td>FHLBank</td>
<td>(785) 218-4481</td>
<td><a href="mailto:angie.drake@fhltopeka.com">angie.drake@fhltopeka.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Robert Knott</td>
<td>Capitol Federal</td>
<td>(785) 231-6355</td>
<td><a href="mailto:rknot@capfed.com">rknot@capfed.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nominating Committee</td>
<td>Julie Pennington</td>
<td>Legislative Post Audit</td>
<td>(785) 296-5817</td>
<td><a href="mailto:julie.pennington@lpa.ks.gov">julie.pennington@lpa.ks.gov</a></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tony Risinger</td>
<td>Westar Energy</td>
<td>(785) 575-1968</td>
<td><a href="mailto:tony.risinger@westarenergy.com">tony.risinger@westarenergy.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Media (Chapter Website and MMT Administrator)</td>
<td>Justin Stowe</td>
<td>LPA</td>
<td>(785)-296-7977</td>
<td><a href="mailto:justin.stowe@lpa.ks.gov">justin.stowe@lpa.ks.gov</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Relations</td>
<td>Reza Espahbodi</td>
<td>Washburn University</td>
<td>(785) 670-1010</td>
<td><a href="mailto:reza.espahbodi@washburn.edu">reza.espahbodi@washburn.edu</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Government Relations</td>
<td>Mary Hoover</td>
<td>DCF</td>
<td>(785) 296-2973</td>
<td><a href="mailto:mary.hoover@dcf.ks.gov">mary.hoover@dcf.ks.gov</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newsletter</td>
<td>Crystal Perez</td>
<td>Capitol Federal</td>
<td>(785) 231-6359</td>
<td><a href="mailto:cperez@capfed.com">cperez@capfed.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hospitality</td>
<td>Brenda Kindle (Chair)</td>
<td>FHLBank</td>
<td>(785) 438-6152</td>
<td><a href="mailto:brenda.kindle@fhltopeka.com">brenda.kindle@fhltopeka.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lori Miller (badges)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Certificates</td>
<td>Tony Risinger</td>
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<tr>
<td>Membership Committee</td>
<td>Brenda Kindle</td>
<td>FHLBank</td>
<td>(785) 438-6152</td>
<td><a href="mailto:brenda.kindle@fhltopeka.com">brenda.kindle@fhltopeka.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
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<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
| Tuesday, September 12, 2017 | Lunch Meeting (1 CPE)  
Steven Haenchen  
Kansas University - Associate Professor of the Practice | FHLB     |
| Tuesday, October 3, 2017     | Lunch Meeting (1 CPE)  
Suzanne Smith Data Analytics JCCC | TBD      |
| Tuesday, November 7, 2017    | Lunch Meeting (1 CPE)  
Mr. Jackie Williams Deputy Attorney General | KDOT     |
| Friday, November 17, 2017    | Fall Seminar  
John Gatto  
IT General Controls | KDOT     |
| Tuesday, December 5, 2017    | Lunch Meeting (1 CPE)  
Dr. Kuehl | FHLB     |
| Tuesday, January 9, 2018     | Lunch Meeting (1 CPE)  
Rebecca Collins Emotional Intelligence  
Bartlett and West | KDOT     |
| Tuesday, February 6, 2018    | Lunch Meeting (1 CPE) | Westar   |
| Tuesday, March 6, 2018       | Lunch Meeting (1 CPE) | Westar   |
| Tuesday, April 3, 2018       | Lunch Meeting (1 CPE) | Cap Fed  |
| Thursday, April 12, 2018     | Spring Seminar  
John Hall | TBD      |
| Tuesday, May 1, 2018         | Lunch Meeting (2 CPE)  
Dr. Scofield Ethics | Westar   |

*Locations are subject to change*
5 Tips for Managing Conflict in the Workplace

We’re all human, and as long as we don’t turn into robots, it’s inevitable we’ll occasionally experience conflict in the workplace. But as managers of finance and accounting teams, wouldn't you prefer to oversee an environment where coworkers don’t clash, friction doesn't escalate into headbutting and everyone works to their full abilities?

In an Accountemps survey, CFOs said they spend six hours a week, on average, managing conflicting parties on their staff. Some of the executives (17 percent) say they spend a quarter to more than half of their precious time dealing with conflict in the workplace.

Sound familiar? Just think what you could do with that six hours a week if you didn't have to manage all those disagreements that erode into discord. Follow these five ways to encourage your workers to get along with others in the office:

1. Promote the flow of communication

Putting your head in the sand really doesn't help when there’s conflict in the workplace. Problems rarely resolve themselves on their own and can even become worse if they’re not addressed. So be proactive.

Encourage those on your team who are having difficulty with a coworker to get their disagreements out in the open while they’re still small. Here are some hints you can offer them:

- Ask your coworker with whom you’re not seeing eye to eye to name a time when it would be convenient for the two of you to meet, in a place where you won’t be interrupted.
- After laying out your point of view on the issue, listen carefully to what the other person has to say, show empathy, avoid interrupting, and ask questions to clarify what was said.
- Identify points of agreement and disagreement, and ask if your coworker agrees with your assessment.
- Express your desire to work out a solution and discuss ways to resolve your conflict.

2. Practice what you preach

Managers, of course, need to lead the way with communication. Here are some suggestions executives have to prevent conflicts while building rapport with their teams and colleagues:

- Don’t take yourself too seriously.
- Take an interest without participating in office politics.
• Nip rumors in the bud by offering accurate and up-to-date clarifications.
• Project an image of professionalism and good etiquette.
• Respect unique points of view, and don’t criticize others publicly.
• Check in regularly, and show how you value other people’s input.
• Be honest, reliable and direct with your communication style.
• Build your relationships by inviting others to coffee or lunch outside of the office.

3. Let your team know you can help

A critical component of leadership is developing a sense of what's important for you to do in times of stress.

First of all, tell your employees that if they find themselves in over their head, or if they’ve tried to resolve a conflict and the negative behavior continues to impede their work, they can talk to you. As a higher-up in your organization, you can provide recommendations and bring in another manager or someone from human resources mediation.

Some suggestions for helping people work together:

• Use your best listening skills so you can readily identify their concerns and the root cause of the problem,
• Encourage the two sides to put aside their differences and find common ground — such as the desire to help the company to succeed.
• Make it clear that their cooperation is required, and then continue to monitor the situation so the issue doesn’t fester and become worse.

When people believe their voices will be heard, they are more likely to perform at their best. Communication goes both ways, so inspire a relationship where they give you timely status reports and feedback about difficulties or challenges.

4. View everything as a learning opportunity

Perhaps, conflict in the workplace could be seen in a positive light. For all the grief disagreements can cause, there’s an upside when your workers can learn from them. Differing opinions can stimulate innovation and give added impetus for team building.

Helping to resolve disputes can put those you manage in a better position to assume leadership roles in your company. You can tell a temporary worker who wants to move into a full-time role that tact and diplomacy in dealing with conflict in the workplace can make a good impression on management. Or let an employee know that effectively working well with others can help with career advancement.
5. Criticize gently and praise achievement

In a perfect world, everyone on your staff would be flawless at their jobs. But the reality is that they will make mistakes, get into arguments, experience personnel problems, miss deadlines. When you need to call attention to shortcomings, make it your goal to preserve each individual’s dignity. Meet in private and allow them to explain the problem and what might have led to it. Rather than assigning blame, reframe a mistake or failure as a lesson, and focus on what might be done differently in the future.

All professionals appreciate recognition, particularly when they’ve put in extra time or effort. So celebrate resolution when your team achieves it. Even if they’ve made just small steps, congratulate them on the progress. They’re not robots, after all!

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Wanamaker is currently under construction changes. It may or may not be open to 6th street at the time of the September meeting. Safest route is take the Fairlawn exit from I-70 to 6th street. Also, 6th street is closed to through traffic from Gage to Fairlawn.