

# CAO CONNECTION

Volume One, Number Six

May, 1996

## A NOTE FROM SCOT FAULKNER

To remain current in this fast changing world all professionals should take the time to attend conferences and review articles relevant to their field. During this process of "staying current" one occasionally comes across an item which makes you stop and really think. Here is one that I recently encountered:

"A weekday edition of the New York Times contains more information than the average person was likely to come across in a lifetime during 17th century England"

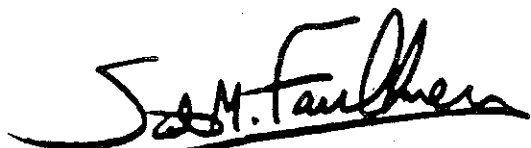
- Richard Saul Wurman  
"Information Anxiety"

Is it any wonder that we often feel that all this modern technology seems to make our lives more complex instead of less?

This "information anxiety" ties directly to what many people expect when it comes to customer service. We are swamped with information about everything. When we thirst for just a little sip of knowledge, we encounter fire hydrants of facts. In a service environment like this, we search for a friendly guide who has our interest at heart. A person we can trust, who will help us sort through the volumes of information and help us arrive at informed choices which will make our lives better.

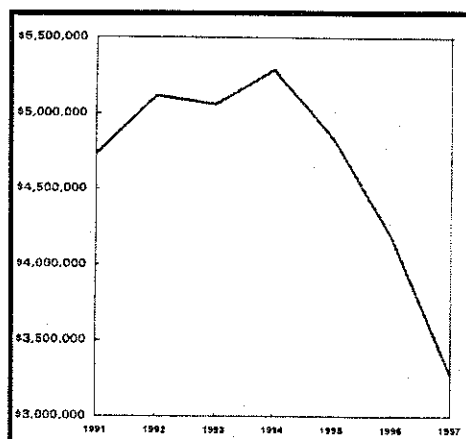
Think about the last time you shopped for a car, a mortgage, or a suit of clothes. The friendly person who stepped forward, treated us well, gently asked what we really wanted, and helped us find what we needed is etched in our minds. This is the essence of good customer service.

We have this same challenge within the House. Between the CAO staff and our data files are vast reservoirs of information on everything from case law to the very latest in computers and telecommunications. Our role is not to swamp our customers with our knowledge. They come to us because they already know we know this stuff. Instead, our role is to be that friendly, helpful guide to seek out what they need with the minimum of hassle.



## CHART OF THE MONTH

HOUSE POSTAL OPERATIONS COSTS FY 1991-1997



For chart explanation,  
please see page three

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## **BRANDING AMERICA CONFERENCE AND EXPOSITION**

If we talk about branding, what comes to mind? Old cowboy movies with rustlers in black hats.

The good guys in the white hats have to brand their horses and cattle for later identification. The real stories and lore of the old West left us with a rich history of "brands".

The brands we'll discuss here were seen while attending the Branding America Conference and Exposition held in the Charlotte, NC Convention Center. You'd probably recognize more than 95 percent of the brand names. Almost half of the growth of "branded" businesses in 1996 will be the expansion of recognized restaurants and food products into non-traditional markets such as convenience stores, gas stations, business offices and institutions.

The Conference highlighted three methods the restaurant industry is using to package brands. Quick Service Restaurants (QSR), the industry name for fast food restaurants, were well represented at the Exposition. Second, food product brand manufacturers were creating packaged concepts that included their products, logos & signs, uniforms, manuals and, in some cases, equipment specifications to market their products. Third were equipment manufacturers creating food service themes and manuals designed to emulate QSRs in order to market their equipment. In many cases food product manufacturers and food equipment manufacturers combined forces to create marketing concepts.

In addition to the Exposition, the Conference had eighteen conference sessions dealing with branding strategies, financial considerations and equipment engineering. I believe there is no doubt that brands, in the form of QSR's, will show up on Capitol Hill in the near future and that the Branding America Conference and Exposition will have had a hand in the successful branding of Capitol Hill.

Oh yes, I forgot to mention a large dewy eyed cow carrying a sign reading "eat mor chikin". Cows haven't learned to use spell check. The cow was wearing a Chick-fil-A apron.

## **COFFEE SERVICE IN CANNON ROTUNDA**

Looking for a place to pick up a quick cup of coffee on the way to work? Look no more, Marriott/Thompson has announced the opening of a new coffee cart on Monday, May 20 in the basement area of the Cannon Rotunda. Located at this busy crossroads in the Capitol tunnel system, the new coffee service will feature Gourmet Bean blends, Dunkin Donuts and Sara Lee breakfast pastries.

This easily accessible facility was established to provide busy customers with speedy satisfaction during the hectic pre-work and coffee-break hours, weekdays from 7:30 am to 10:30 am.. It is one of a series of service enhancements being brought by Marriott to the House Restaurant System under the auspices of the CAO.

Don't miss the grand opening on May 20 of this patriotically draped facility. Plan to come and help inaugurate this innovative coffee service, which we know will brighten the grey stone walls of Cannon...and hopefully your day!

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## **PHOTO OFFICE MODERNIZATION LOWERS PRICES**

After installing new photo processing equipment, the Office of Photography announced a 28 - 70 percent reduction in the prices for bulk print orders. Due primarily to the use of automated equipment for processing film and prints, the price changes reflect what modernization can do for the bottom line of a business.

The equipment utilizes "dry" film processing, allowing employees to process and print photographs without exposure to harmful chemicals sloshing around in open trays. And, as the film is processed by the machinery, employees have the opportunity to work on other projects. If you would like to see this incredible technology at work, why not stop by the Office of Photography for a tour during the next CAO Open House?

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## NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF BROADCASTERS: DIGITAL HEAVEN

Las Vegas, Nevada. The name invokes images of casinos, Elvis impersonators, Hoover Dam and the great expanse of the desert southwest. But what about digital communications and cutting edge technology? Or Virtual Reality TV Studios? During the National Association of Broadcasters annual convention last month these unorthodox views of Las Vegas were the norm.

The convention buzzwords were "digital" and "systems". Over 1,000 exhibitors had their digital products on display and more than 92,000 communications professionals worldwide traveled to Nevada to see them. The range of exhibitors went from large, multi-national corporations with entire systems; to small, local companies showcasing a niche market product. In this era of downsizing, cost conscious managers were most excited about the digital production tools.

In the past few years, digital has fully permeated all aspects of production: audio, video, film and storage of video data. Digital audio is crisp, with no noise and is easier to manipulate. If you've ever broken your favorite cassette tape (say Stevie Ray Vaughn) and taken it apart, you'd use scotch tape to "repair" the break in the tape. Audio engineers in the Office of Communications Media do the same thing to edit radio actualities recorded by a Member of Congress. It takes skill, years of practice and great ears to actually edit tape, but the technique is the same. In the digital environment, no razor blades or scotch tape are needed, the audio is represented by a real-time graph, and manipulated in the computer, without physical intervention.

Video is much the same, with recorded images loaded onto a hard drive and manipulated in the computer. As you can imagine, this technology revolutionizes production. Anyone with a good computer and a digital video program can edit video and create amazing graphics or special effects. In fact, a popular TV series used a \$3,000 digital special effects package and a personal computer to create the series' underwater opening sequences.

So much for the past and the present. The future is virtual reality and it's not just for video arcade games. On display were units with the ability to digitally create or replicate any environment. When one vendor saw my U.S. House of Representatives name badge, she turned to her computer, pulled video of the Capitol off her hard drive and digitally superimposed it into her studio. By mixing that signal with the video signal we were suddenly standing in front of the Capitol. No special goggles, wires or attachments. And in three dimensions! In other words people, clouds, birds flying through the air and vehicles could be seen in front of us, behind us, all around us. All accomplished via one small digital box. Just think of the possibilities.

Even though we don't (yet) have this technology in the Office of Communications Media, the trip was a productive learning experience. The digital production universe may soon include the House of Representatives, and this convention demonstrated how cost effective and service enhancing that universe will be.

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### MAIL CHART EXPLANATION

Included in the 1996 costs are the following one time charges:

1. Ford Office Building mail room renovation costs were \$395,530
2. Lump-sum accrued leave costs were \$101,717
3. House personnel costs from 10-1-95 to 2-13-96 above the contract costs were \$238,950
4. House overtime expenses from 10-1-96 to 2-13-96 were \$47,148

*Non-personnel expenses were not included in the 1991-1993 costs*

#### Welcome to April's New CAO Employees!

**Gail Henkin, CAO, Immediate Office**  
**Catherine Bechard, HIR, Client Services**  
**Rodney Murphy, HIR, Immediate Office**  
**Michael Davis, HIR, Client Services**  
**Corinne Zaccagnini, HIR, Client Services**  
**Haitao Jiao, HIR, Communications**

## TASTE OF THE HILL- BUFFET STYLE

There are two buffet services of note on Capitol Hill that have more to offer than just food. One is located on the upper floor of the Library of Congress Madison Building and the other is in the basement of the Dirksen Senate Office Building.

The Library of Congress offers a relaxed dining experience with a view of the Capitol dome and Washington Monument. The attractive buffet table consists of a salad bar, entree and vegetable table and carving station. However, you're allowed only one pass at the buffet table. Don't miss the Caesar salad and save room for dessert. Wine is also available.

Located just off the Senate subway system in the basement of the Dirksen Senate Office Building, the South Buffet is perfect for visitors or staffers looking for a change of pace. Everyone's taste buds will be satisfied with this menu which includes succulent Osso Bucco, Egg Plant Parmesan, BBQ Short Ribs, Filet of Fish in Wine and Mushroom Sauce and an array of pastas and home made sauces. Don't miss the chef's special Fried Chicken either. Dessert is a make your own Sundae and there are no restrictions on the number of times you can return to any part of the buffet line.

Both buffets are priced in the \$8.00 to \$9.00 range and with gratuity will cost you \$10.00 or a little more. Don't worry, you will feel like you got a bargain after you finish your meal.

## TRAINING CORNER

"Informative and interesting.", "Terrific insight.", "Helped me understand my fellow workers which equals a stronger workforce.", "Taught me valuable communication tools that will help me in life in general.", "It's a very interesting class and useful to understand working as a team, also useful for personal and team relationships", "Now I understand the way each person thinks and responds to problems and work processes."

These are a few of the comments from CAO associates after participating in learning opportunities through the Organization and Employee Development Center, Office of Training.

Think about how a tree grows. It is dependent on the elements of nature for growth—rain, sun, wind and nutrients. Although, it has no control over its environment, it adapts. A tree grows using the resources available. Its roots grow deeper and stronger into the nutrients as its branches reach upward. Like all living things, a tree lives through cycles as it taps the resources available.

We provide resources to stimulate your growth in the same way a tree uses its natural resources to grow. Many courses offered will provide the rain to further your development and will generate the sunlight to refine and hone your talents, the nutrients to stimulate your growth and the wind to blow away what no longer serves you to make room for new learnings.

Be it for shade, fruit or lumber, each tree has a purpose, as does every CAO associate. Each CAO associate is here to serve our customers. The training and development opportunities have been prepared to help you be the best you can be to serve yourself and others. The workshops and seminars are designed to support the development of the knowledge and skills CAO associates need in order for our organization to provide world-class service today and in the future.

Make your investment today in your future by continuing your learning as you find growth and balance from the resource and development opportunities provided by the Office of Training.

**For more information, call Wendy Younk at extension x-60526 ☐**

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Published by the Quality Improvement Team  
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