TOP 10 11 - BEING AN EFFECTIVE QA MANAGER

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OK (encouraged) to remind management of due dates, SOP reviews, audits, etc.

- Do not nag
- Give regular status updates
- Meet regularly with the Lab Manager
9. OK NOT TO KNOW

- You are not expected to know everything about QA/QC
- You are not expected to have done everything in a lab
- Know where / how to obtain answers

"I AM NOT YOUNG ENOUGH TO KNOW EVERYTHING" - OSCAR WILDE
8. TECHNICAL KNOWLEDGE

- Understand TNI Standard (as applicable)
- Know method requirements
  - EPA methods
  - *Standard Methods for Examination of Water and Wastewater*
  - 40 CFR 136 requirements
  - State specific QA/QC requirements
  - Program requirements independent of method (ex: Lead & Copper Rule)
  - Other State requirements (ex: Texas lab approval vs lab accreditation)
- Know how to do technical writing
  - SOPs do not need to be a Master’s Thesis
- Seek out training opportunities
Do not state “TNI Requirement” unless an absolute requirement
- Best Management Practice” and “Industry Standard” may be sufficient
- Explain reason for process/protocol
- TNI Standard states what to do not how to do it
- Trust is destroyed if a “requirement” is not a requirement
6. ADMIT MISTAKES

- We are all human
- Learn from mistakes and try not to repeat them
- Accept responsibility and move on
5. ROOT CAUSE ANALYSIS / CORRECTIVE ACTIONS

- Develop a thorough understanding of RCA
  - Identification of Root Cause
  - Implement Corrective Actions
  - Follow up on effectiveness
  - Serve as facilitator
- Focus on systemic issues that allow human execution errors to occur – not the human execution
  - Often cited insufficient training w/ retraining of employee
- Resources
  - TNI Brown Bag (http://www.nelac-institute.org/content/eds-home.php)
  - American Society on Quality (http://asq.org/index.aspx)
  - Mind Tools (www.mindtools.com)
  - Multiple Root Cause Analysis books
4. NETWORK

- Be professionally active
- LinkedIn
- TNI committees
- Industry related organizations
  - American Water Works
  - Water Environment Association
  - American Society on Quality
  - State laboratory group
- Know other local / national Quality Assurance / Quality Control Managers
3. UNDERSTAND CHANGE MANAGEMENT
2. UNDERSTAND CHAIN OF COMMAND

- QAO is not the Lab Manager
- QAO needs to influence / support management decisions
- Assignments and deadlines need to go through lab supervisory structure
- Give management time to discuss changes with staff
- Failure to follow chain of command can:
  - Create distrust between management and QAO
  - Create conflict between staff, QAO and supervisory structure
1. SERVE AS INTERNAL CONSULTANT

- The lab is your customer
- Serve as a resource for knowledge and training
- **DO NOT BE A POLICEMAN WITH A BIG STICK**
- Provide management with feedback on program effectiveness, potential ethical dilemmas, trend analysis, potential process improvements
- Communicate, Communicate, Communicate
  - Active listening
- Do not be discouraged if recommendation is not immediately implemented
  - Balance between regulatory requirements, staffing, work loads, budget
- Focus on continual cycle of improvement
- **BE PASSIONATE ABOUT WHAT YOU DO**
BONUS: PEOPLE SKILLS

- Active listening
- Empathy
- Relatable
- Good sense of humor
- Tailor communication style to audience
- Smile
- Mentor
Technical skills will pave the road to being a QAO.

Soft skills (empathy, good communication, good organization, listening, etc.) will make you a successful and effective QAO.
Acknowledgements

- NTMWD Laboratory
- TWUA Lab Analyst Section
- Scott Siders, Dorothy Love, Matt Sowards, Shari Pfalmer, Judy Morgan, Lynn Bradley, Barbara Escobar, Jack Farrell

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