



SHARED SERVICES

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One of the great motivations about being a Circuit Rider is all the wonderful people I get to meet and become friends with along the way and provide them help. I am comfortable stating that I have yet to meet an operations specialist who is not pleasant and willing to help more than just their system. That says a lot for our community of operations specialist. What I have noticed is many operations specialist do not reach out to other systems for assistance, information, or just for common conversation in our industry.

Operations Specialist are ever changing and conforming to the regulations and needs of the state and their own systems and communities. With changes comes adversity and challenges. I would like to go over some of these for our operations specialist to know that they can reach out and be successful in making new connections and getting through challenges that they may face.

First, we must overcome our fears of reaching out for help or guidance as if it reflects a lack of ability or education. Seeking help in the near communities in our areas is a STRENGTH, not a weakness. Knowing when you need help and asking for such help as an operations specialist shows great growth as a professional. The ability to convey your message can positively impact many areas of your life for the better, but it takes practice. In these times of pandemics and regulations, your near communities are what make us stronger together and as individuals.

Second, after overcoming the fear is knowing what you need. Identify what your needs are and convey them clearly to whomever is necessary. Odds are, they themselves have either had a similar issue they have solved, or they may be looking for similar help. Either way, that communication line is now clearly and concisely opened, and the outreach is respected as a new line for them also to reach out to you for help. It's cyclical, and you never know what you may be able to help someone else with in the future. In NYS we have new young operations specialist taking the helm and some could use all the help they can get. Sometimes it is just the right tool that they may need. Other times it could be saving loads of money by sharing a rod pusher with a neighboring community rather than paying major money to have it done by a contractor. Then there are times you just need an operations specialist who understands, and you need to vent over a coffee. I have found in the smaller communities, operations specialist have only one or two guys that may struggle to handle major repairs within their system, not because of laziness, but through lack of personnel. Sometimes these guys

just need an extra body or two to hand tools down in the hole or to run for proper fittings or to just help watch the dirt. Being able to reach out and ask for that can be difficult, but as a powerful composer like John Powell stated - "Communication works for those who work at it." You cannot expect to receive help if no one knows you need the help.

Any which way you spin it, we need to be communicating with each other far better as operations specialist. Some areas and communities have a shared services program. In these shared services programs systems can purchase equipment together that they otherwise would not have been able to individually. Other shared services are personnel! One hand washes the other and we need to get back to those roots. It is so easy in this technological day and age to simply skip "talking" and to just send a text, however "text" does not share expression cues that make communication so much stronger and effective. Nonverbal communication is essential to successful relationships in the workplace and cause you to miss out on the gestures, body language, facial expressions, and inflection. When you use inflection, the changes in your tones also help you to express your views in a more expressive way. When you can convey the depth and seriousness of the situation it allows the listener to better understand. Eye contact, posture, and voice speed all play a role in effective communication. Let us make it a point in the new year to share our services and communicate as operations specialist. United we stand, divided we fall. Let us reach out and lift each other up to bring all your surrounding community operations specialist to a level where communication is the key! Please consider joining the NYWARN mutual aid network made up of water & wastewater systems across our great state. You can reach out for more information or visit their website at www.nywarn.org.

"Communication – the human connection – is the key to personal and career success."

Paul J. Meyer

