



SOCIETY OF ACTUARIES

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E & E CORNER

- ▶ A major news item is the changed educational requirements for the ASA designation approved by the Board of Governors on January 21, 1993. An article on page 1 in this issue describes those changes. We have received our first formal request from a candidate to become an ASA by virtue of the strengthened educational requirements. For more information on the subject, call Pat Holmberg, 708/706-3527.
- ▶ The examination for Course 210, Introduction to Actuarial Practice, will be a three-hour, 30-credit examination for the last time in November 1993. Originally, plans called for Course 210 to be reduced to 25 credits starting with the 1993 session. However, sensitivity to the concern raised by candidates that they had not received enough advance notice has led to changing that schedule.
- ▶ The eligibility period has been expanded for the Intensive Seminar program. Candidates who have passed Course 120 (Applied Statistical Methods) or Course 151 (Risk Theory) within the past two years are eligible to sign up for the corresponding Intensive Seminar program. Eligibility was previously one year. For the August 1993 sessions, this means that candidates who passed the required examination during one of the sessions from November 1991 through May 1993, inclusive, are eligible for the Intensive Seminar.
- ▶ The interactive voice response system adopted for the exam hotline for the November exam results proved very popular. We logged 16,526 calls to the system, many occurring outside of regular office hours. The only problem reported was candidates having trouble getting through, because all lines were busy. We will expand the number of lines to the system for the May results.
- ▶ Success on the November exams resulted in 511 new ASAs and 156 individuals completing educational requirements for Fellowship, needing only to complete the Fellowship Admissions Course.

An international consultant's views

What leadership and management skills do actuaries need?

by Sue A. Collins



Leadership is a necessary quality in any organization. Actuaries, whether employed by life insurance companies or by independent firms, should place an equally high premium on training in leadership and management as they do on technical training. Unfortunately, this has not been the case.

Once I passed the actuarial exams, I assumed I had all the skills necessary to be a successful actuary. It was a rude awakening to discover my first job demanded the ability to manage and lead people as well as to perform actuarial tasks. It took me some time to realize that management skills were an essential part of being a successful actuary and not an optional extra.

With the benefit of hindsight and practical experience, I now can name more easily the leadership and management skills that are important to a consulting actuary:

- Communication
- Ability to set an example
- Co-working
- Being an acknowledged expert
- Project management
- Problem-solving
- Business development
- Negotiation

I will cover the first three skills listed, those that have assumed more priority as my career has progressed.

Communication

Communication involves listening, as well as talking. When listening, I play back to the client or colleague what I have understood to see if it matches what they have said. This is often a very revealing process. When talking

or writing, I often use graphic representations to aid understanding. Above all, I try to communicate in a way that is appropriate for an audience usually less technical than I am.

Ability to set an example

One can set an example in many ways. One of the most important is to ensure that all work is accurate and meets our quality standards and the client's expectations. Equally important, especially in consulting, is the need to meet very demanding deadlines. I never have expected more from my colleagues than I am willing to give myself. To show mutual respect for colleagues and clients also is a very positive aspect of leading by example.

Co-working

Co-working is the ability to work effectively with peers, junior staff, more senior staff, and clients. For me, this ability consists of being sensitive and open to suggestions, communicating clearly and frequently, and directing rather than dictating.

The importance of a well-rounded actuary is clearly demonstrated in the role of the appointed actuary in the United Kingdom and the emerging role of the valuation actuary in the United States. These roles encompass statutory and professional responsibilities relating to the financial health of an insurance company and are carried out for that company's board of directors. The performance of these duties requires not only technical competence but also broad-based management skills.

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