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Editorial

Broader horizons for extended impact

by Barbara J. Lautzenheiser
and William C. Cutlip

Venture capitalists tell us that people with good ideas are a dime a dozen. It's the people who can carry out those ideas — who can provide the leadership and management skills to get them accomplished — that are valuable and worthy of their investment.

The actuarial profession's foundation — the quality that makes us unique — is our technical expertise. Our exam syllabus gears us to handle complex mathematical and technical situations. We must be able to use that expertise to implement and produce results.

The future of our profession will take us into some jobs with nontraditional roles. Our traditional work also will see dynamic change. The strong foundation of our problem-solving, mathematical, statistical, modelling, risk selection, and legal and economics education position us to do excellent work. When you add to that a set of well-developed personal/

management/leadership skills, you'll be positioned to do that work with excellent results.

For the past three years, *The Actuary* has featured a recurring set of articles under the banner, "The complete actuary." This series, developed by the SOA Committee on Management and Personal Development, has presented discussions on a variety of subjects to help you develop these skills. This issue contains another article in this series.

Other special articles in this issue give you a perspective on how some have used these skills or why they are needed. These perspectives are shown from several vantage points: a CEO, an international consultant, a recruiter who has heard what employers expect of actuaries, and a public servant.

We hope these articles will stimulate you, lead you to act on improving and developing your skills, and help to broaden your horizons, expand your impact, and take leadership roles.

Reflections cont'd

Goal setting is a way for the leader to define a vision of the future as it should be. Plans then have to be made to achieve those goals. With training to model the outcome of future contingent events, the actuary is well equipped to be a major participant in management and leadership planning. Although there are often jokes about the actuary as cartographer, understanding the map is often the key to getting from here to there.

The management planning process is consistent with the analytical skills inherent in the actuary's training and experience. Consider the following process:

- Set goals of where you want to be.
- Develop projections of where you will be if you follow your current course.
- Consider various scenarios to determine what changes have to be made

to reconcile your current course with your desired destination.

- Test the sensitivity of underlying assumptions to evaluate potential risks of various courses of action.

Although this may be simple in theory, implementation in practice often is a real challenge.

As a final allegory on leadership, I recommend the recent movie,

Homeward Bound, The Incredible Journey. Shadow, who became the leader, had a nobility of purpose and a clear vision of what his mission should be. Although he could have had greater depth in planning, he met the one real qualification of leadership — followers.

David M. Holland is president and chief executive officer at Munich American Reassurance Company, Atlanta.