



CAD Leadership 2012 - Becoming an Extraordinary CAD

Class ID: CM2881

Description:

As those who work out know, the core is the center of the body that drives every other area. For CAD managers, the core is composed of the central perspectives and beliefs that drive them to action. The core motivates, outlines, circumscribes, defines, and restricts every decision, action, and outcome that they are involved in. Get the core right and you get more done, motivate more people (including yourself), and inspire and encourage others. Get it wrong and you may cripple your CAD efforts, derail your decision-making and tangle your team into knots.

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By the end of this class you will learn:

- How to make the workplace a positive environment
- Embrace constant improvement as a way of life
- Discover 7 key Cores that move you toward extraordinary
- How to avoid 10 Failures that most CAD Managers make

About the Speaker:

Mark has more than 30 years of hands-on experience with technology and management. He is fully versed in deployment planning, installation, standards and configuration to training and strategic planning. His career started as a drafter and continued through CAD Manager, Technology Director, CIO and Executive Director. As an internationally known speaker and writer, he is a returning speaker at Autodesk University since 1996. He is an Autodesk Certified Trainer (ACT).

Mark is currently serving as Executive Director of the Autodesk User Group International (AUGI®). He writes the monthly "CAD Manager" column for *AUGI HotNews*. He is owner/editor of two blog sites, www.caddmanager.com and www.bimmanager.com.

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The CAD Manager's Environment

CAD Management is considered “middle management”. This term applies to anyone that does not report directly to the company CEO and that has people reporting to them. You are in the middle. Middle management is where the vast majority of people actually work. It is the environment that we all live in.

If you are like most CAD Managers, you spend the majority of your time putting out fires and managing processes and people above you and below you. You interact with everyone in the firm. You touch just about every process that creates or delivers the design. Sometimes you feel empowered and other times it feels like you cannot get anything done. It ranges from a feeling of total control to out of control. You have feelings of success and failure, all in the same day.

Add to that the fact that you have to work and get things done with employees that do not work for you. The users of the products you oversee have no direct line of reporting that includes you. You cannot hire them or fire them. You have to constantly negotiate your way through the day. Trying to get others to do things the way they should with little real leverage over their efforts.

CAD Management is unique in that your area of responsibility does not match your circle of authority. You are responsible for putting in place processes, guidelines, standards and quality control. But you have to do this from outside the chain of command. You are reaching into the workflow of others to define, modifying and manage their procedures.

You manage and oversee the technology that people use, but have little leverage over the people that actually use it.

Challenges of CAD Management

- The Authority Challenge – you have none
- Constriction of Having No Control – cost, time, resources
- Ambiguity of your Duties – everyone thinks they know what you should do
- The Smartest Guy in the CAD Room – It's a shootout every day
- A CAD Meltdown – small or large – you have to clean up others mistakes
- The Blame Game – it always seems to be your fault
- Change is Bad – no one wants to embrace any kind of change

The CAD Manager's Core

As those that workout know, the Core is the center of the body that drives every other area. It is that band of muscles that encircles your mid section from just below your shoulder blades to your hips. Many think that working the Core will deliver the best exercise routine as it is mixed with other workouts. I am not a workout expert (other than knowing how to avoid doing them), but know that any time this core area is ignored; it affects every area of the body.

Core Functions – The Extraordinary Center

A Six Pack – plus one

There are six core functions that a CAD Manager performs. They filter through every area of your oversight and are linked together to create your environment

1. Planning

CAD Managers should always be planning. Short term and long term planning. Planning their days and weeks and months. Mapping out what they need to do today, tomorrow and next week. No one is thinking more about CAD than the CAD Manager and they should be thinking and planning more than anyone.

CAD Managers make plans that are detailed enough to generate actions, but not overly detailed as to take up too much time during the planning phase. Do not get bogged down over-planning everything. Plan just enough so that everyone can see and think about what will happen and what might happen (or just you if you are doing something alone).

- **Plan on planning.** Even if you think you know exactly what to do. Stop and think about what you are going to do. Do you need to gather information, tools, software, etc.? Rather than run all over the place when you are half way through a project, think about it before hand.
- **Plan for the best.** Making your plans with the best ideas you can come up with is great. If you have been down the road you will be better at knowing what might be expected. If you have not done planning in an area you are called on to provide leadership, get some input from others.
- **Prep for the worst.** Make sure you think through a few “what if” scenarios. You know that everything will not go as planned. Take a little time to think of a backup plan and a way to back out if things end up not working. Planning for how to get back to a previous state will enable you to move confidently forward.

2. Organizing

CAD Managers are called on to organize things. Processes, procedures, structures, organizations, staff, and budgets... the list just keeps on going. There are software tools; books, systems, charts and so much more that help people get organized. Some people are better than others at organizing. I think it is a sign of the way your brain is wired.

Some areas of my life are organized and others are not. If you looked at my closet or my garage, you would not think that I am “over the top” organized. My desk may not look organized, but I can get my work done efficiently. I have a saying... “My desk is not messy, everything is “misplaced” exactly where I can find it.”

But when it comes to my CAD life – it is organized. My standards are organized. My systems are organized, my server is organized and my data is organized.

Here is what I think you need to organize at a minimum:

Your Standard

It needs to flow in a manner that reflects how people will use it. It needs to start with the basics of project/firm organizations and file naming. It should have the early chapters/pages devoted the first things people need to know to start a project. It should start with server folder names and locations and then it can move on to the file setup and support file structure. After that it can move to mid project issues like layout, set structure, dimensioning, detailing and more. After that move to plotting, deliverables, archiving and other things that tend to happen at the end of a project.

Your Server

Every project should be located in a central location and file names in such a way that everyone can find them. Folder names could be by client or project name or number. Just do it the same way for all of them. And keep everything for the project under the same master folder. Break sub-folders out by function or discipline or department and define the naming. Do it the same for every project you have. Just be consistent. People can find things if you are consistent. They can move from one project to another if it is all in the same location in the sub-folders.

Your Support Files

Put them in one place and lock them down. Do not allow people to copy them into their own favorite location. Keep them available to all users at all times. Provide some logical setup for them all. Standardize file names.

Your Archives

Know where they are and how to get to them quickly. This means that you standardize the naming and the storage location and sorting of the media. You could develop a database that could be searched, or list them on your intranet. Pay attention to this area. Just because the project is over does not mean that you can get sloppy.

3. Leading

I have taught many classes in this area. There are tons of books. I have narrowed the sphere of Leading in CAD to what I call the 5 T's of CAD Leadership

Tools relates to the CAD tools that you select. Which ones will you use? What will you use them for?

Talent relates to the people who are using the tools. Do they have a gut level understanding of how they are used? Do they get it? Do they push the limits?

Technology is your approach to using the tools and the talent. Who gets to use what? What mix can they have? When do they select the tools? When do you push toward the next great tech tool.

Training is how you get everyone there. Provide it and you succeed. Let it laps and your best tools and talent go stale.

Time – the magic ingredient - just give it all time to work

4. Coordinating

Are you coordinated? Some folks can juggle baseballs, while riding a unicycle, on a tightrope. That would be a stretch for most of us, but some are more coordinated than others.

Coordinating is something that CAD Managers have to do every day. They orchestrate the flow of CAD work, schedule roll-outs and downtime, work with multiple departments, shuffle deadlines and work under pressure. Here are a few areas where coordination is needed. Some are very hands on and some are philosophical.

Project Work Flow: CAD Managers need to be embedded into the project workflow so they know what is coming. This is typically seen as critical when it comes to plotting output. Coordinating submittals between projects is important. Work with the PM's to make sure that they are not landing on the same date and time. You will not be able to

change submittal dates, but you can work with the PM to schedule the output. You may even have to outsource plotting if there is a major bottleneck.

Software Roll-outs: You will need to coordinate the timing of new software roll-outs. Make sure that they avoid major project submittals and milestones. Make sure that training is ready before the roll-out (if needed). Make sure that everyone in the firm knows it is happening. No surprises.

Hardware Refresh: When that new hardware finally arrives, make sure that the desktop swaps are not impeding work production. Some have done them on the weekend, some overnight, some during lunch. You need to work with each individual person on the timing of a swap. Don't just roll up with a new workstation and expect the person to jump out of their seat (unless the old dog machine they have is on it's last legs)

5. Controlling

One of the things that I have listed among the seven functions of a CAD Manager is that they need to be controlling things. Controlling can seem overbearing and annoying to people if it rings of some micromanaging person in your past. Done right and it is motivating. Done wrong and it is just annoying.

Let me expand on the definition. Controlling should be controlled and not allowed to leak into every aspect of your work life. If you are a controlling person, it is seen as dominating. But if you control the things that tend to go out of control, then you will be appreciated.

Before we start defining what to control, let's talk about why we need to and what needs to be in place.

We control things that tend to need improvement or maintenance. Maintaining control over your speed in a car will prevent accidents and tickets. Improving your gas mileage can save you money. So even in this simple example, we see a need to control. The way we control begins with Measurement. We measure our speed with a speedometer. We measure our mileage with gallons used per miles driven.

Measurement is critical to controlling. Without it, how would we know where improvement or control is needed? How would we measure our effectiveness in controlling?

Start measuring and tracking the areas you think need to be controlled. So what needs to be controlled? Here is my list:

- Performance of People
- Performance of Technology
- Performance of Systems and Standards

6. Staffing

CAD Managers have to work with and through others to get things done. They have to work with people that they hire, but mostly they work with people they do not hire. Others hire them. They report to other managers. Others promote them and others fire them. Some CAD Managers wish that they could fire some people.

Working with employees that others hire and fire does not mean that you have no input into the process at all. You can seek to have a part in the hiring and promotions and also give indications to the managers of those employees that may not be contributing to the firm in a positive way.

Here are some ideas about getting involved in the processes that you do not control.

Set up a screening process for new hires. This may be a CAD Test or something that attempts to verify the validity of candidate's statements about their technical ability. There are commercially available CAD Test or you could make your own. It could be a written test or it may include an actual drawing component. I have used both.

Become part of the interview process. It could be that you become part of the interview process and actually get some time to talk to new hire candidates. I have done this before. It was just a casual conversation about what software they used, how long they have been doing it and where they worked before. During this chat, I was looking for language that made me believe they actually have used the software to the level they stated. I would ask a couple of direct questions about advanced software areas or maybe ask them questions about the standard they use to use. All of this was to see the comfort level of their interaction and what level they discussed. Advanced users are usually very willing to discuss details while novice users will either avoid details or get them wrong.

Once the employee is hired – your interaction is not done.

Get involved in evaluations. I try to provide input into employee reviews if the employee is providing superior efforts or if they are detracting from the team. Mostly the former. Seldom and selectively on the latter. Just email the manager or supervisor or have a conversation about the employee's contributions. It is a way of complimenting the good employees and helping managers see the negative side of an employee in an area they may not notice. I don't do this for every employee just the top 5% or bottom 2%.

Staffing is part of your job and you can have input even if you are not the hiring manager.

7. Motivating

In order to get the Six Pack, you need motivation. For yourself and others. “Let’s get this done” – “We can do this” – “It is not as bad as it appears” – “We need to kick it into high gear”

These are just some of the motivating statements that might be used in your daily interactions with your team and others. The CAD Manager has to motivate people to encourage progress. Motivation is the process we use to spur others on to action.

It is imperative that the CAD Manager be a motivator so that the firm move forward on all front. They need to motivate in the small stuff and the large things. Daily, weekly and ongoing motivation is needed because people get bogged down in the project work and may lose sight of the purpose of where they are headed and why they are doing it.

Extrinsic Motivation is when you are motivated by something outside of your own thoughts and internal desires. This is where the CAD Manager lives in relationship to others. All of the statement above can be used in an extrinsic manner when working with others. Extrinsic motivations can include money, grades, time off, extra benefits, avoidance of pain or effort and many more ways of getting things moving.

Intrinsic Motivation is when someone is motivated by their own internal desires, values or feeling of duty. We all have this within us in differing measures. Some can energize themselves, pick up the pieces after a failure and strive for more out of themselves without much interaction with others or reward at the end of the process. Others may need to be motivated when they have no internal desire to move forward.

The CAD Manager may have access to tangible motivators like bonuses, gifts and such but most likely they do not on a regular basis. So they have to define motivators that can be used that may not involve some physical reward.

Here is a list of some Extrinsic Motivations that I have used:

Build Teams. Define a team that helps with software decision – adding the right people to the team will be a motivator. Those involved will feel appreciated and take a higher stake in production. Take a look at the posts I have on CAD Standards Teams on my blog – caddmanager.com

Ask spot questions. Just asking what someone thinks about your processes or standards can motivate them with a feeling of involvement. When people feel that they are involved and that they are contributing, it makes them willing to push a little harder on their efforts.

Give rewards. Extra software utilities that do not cost a lot can be purchased and distributed first to those that need a little motivation. Tossing a little utility at those who are trying to improve can make them try even harder.

Buy them lunch – or provide lunch at a casual meeting. Ask several users to come to a meeting at lunch (onsite or off) where you will gather some ideas about what might be done better. Creative conversations can spark users to think outside the box and come up with new approaches to getting things done.

Give people credit. When a good idea is provided make sure that you announce who gave it to you or who was pivotal in making a new initiative work. Giving credit to those that help you will encourage them to help you again.

Talk about the big picture. Some users may be motivated by the long range, big idea discussions. Just knowing what is going on elsewhere in the firm can help people grasp the purpose beyond their own project and function. If times are tough and they will soon change, just knowing what is planned for the next few months can keep people from frustration and giving up.

Tell people Why. Besides knowing what needs to be done, tell people why it needs to be done. No one likes being given directions without much information. Provide more than is expected and it will motivate individuals and teams.

Core Perspectives – Becoming Extraordinary

For a CAD Manager, the core is the central perspectives and beliefs that drive them to action. The Core motivates, outlines, circumscribes, defines and restricts every decision, action and outcome that they are involved in. Get the Core right and you get more done, motive more people (including yourself), inspire and encourage others. Get it wrong and you may cripple your CAD efforts, derail your decision making and tangle your team into knots.

CAD Managers that have worked on the core know that it separates them from the crowd. They have moved from Good to Better, then to Best and often to Extraordinary. They seem to have the best perspectives on approaching problems, making things happen and getting things done. This all starts from some deeply held stances that influence every day of their work life.

Here are the beginnings of a list of Core items that set a CAD Manager on a path to being Extraordinary.

1. It's a Career – not a Job

Average CAD Managers see CAD Management as a collection of job functions that need to be completed on a daily basis. They go through the paces and get things done, but there is no spark that ignites their fire for long periods of time. They are meeting the job description, but not moving past it. They have settled into a routine and they like it. It works, it is easy and it meets the requirements. When someone challenges their turf, they stall, argue, deflect or delay.

Extraordinary CAD Managers see CAD Management as a career to continually create and grow into. Each day brings another opportunity to learn and expand their knowledge about CAD software, processes, enhancements and structures. They go beyond the job description and actually expand it. They do not settle for less than their best, at all times. They work hard to make the workplace better. They do not look to others to make it a better place, they do it themselves. They avoid conflict and seek to make teams work better.

2. Constant improvement is a way of life

Average CAD Managers survive on past innovation and occasional improvements. They seem to settle into ruts of production processes that never change. They cling to past ways of doing things even when software upgrades make them obsolete. They are not looking for innovation and actually will struggle slightly against others who seem to want to innovate.

Extraordinary CAD Managers constantly look for ways to improve on all areas of CAD production. They sift through ideas of others. Gather input from just about anyone. They keep their eyes open and think about what might not be working best. When they spot a problem they do not complain – they fix. When they hit a roadblock, they figure out a way around it. When they are challenged by others that do not want to make things better (but want to keep the status quo), they seek ways to convince them to move forward. They do not settle for good enough.

3. CAD Managers serve others, not control them

Average CAD Managers want users to do just what they are told and they squelch creativity. I am not talking about individuals moving away from the company standard toward creative CAD Standards, I am speaking of creative new ways to approach a problem in CAD. They take suggestions as challenges to their authority and end up creating an environment that has everyone worried about not doing it their way (as opposed to the best way).

Extraordinary CAD Managers provide a target and allow users to define how they get there. They provide a CAD Standard that does not tie the hands of innovation, nor provide no guidance on what is to be achieved. It is a balance of goals with specific methods only when needed. It tells them what to do but not how to do it. It is a destination to achieve,

not a road map to drive. Their perspective is that they provide the resources for the end users to get their job done, not constrict them with an overabundance of rules.

4. People are Pivotal to Progress

Average CAD Managers use people to get things done. They tell them exactly what must be done and how to do it, one step at a time. They parse out information as if it should be hoarded like water in the desert. They do not empower people and actually hamper CAD efforts by not investing in the most valuable commodity a company has – the people.

Extraordinary CAD Managers know that energized employees work harder and go beyond the task list they are provided. They encourage learning and give workers that tools they need. They create self-service environments where all resources are open to every CAD user. They restrict access only after abuse and push as many decisions down to the workers as they can. They don't second guess a bad choice, but seek to debrief and advise on improvements for the future.

5. Change is to be embraced and managed, not avoided.

Average CAD Managers see change as annoying, a duty and demanded by others. It appears to be complicated and threatening to some, something to be endured only when a firm is in desperate shape. They may not even realize that they are dragging their feet and slowing down the firm. Firms that are laggards get left behind. It may not happen right away, but it happens. Average CAD Managers become part of that slowdown or may even cause it.

Extraordinary CAD Managers see change as an inevitable and positive part of CAD. In an ever-changing technology based career, change not only means the tools you use, but also the methods you employ. Changing tools but keeping old habits will undercut the value of any upgrades you make. When change happens or is caused to happen by the CAD Manager, they also review their policy and procedures at the same time.

Embracing change means that you plan for it and make it happen. CAD Managers are change agents and should be looking for ways to move their firms forward. Small or large moves – it does not matter – they just keep things moving.

6. CAD Technology offers empowerment, and enables design.

Average CAD Managers run CAD like IT. They see themselves as provisioners. I have nothing against IT, it is just that CAD should not be run exactly like IT. When IT provides services, the general bottom line is uptime, uniformity and managed services. While these are not bad, they may be inappropriate for CAD environments. IT's job is mostly done when the systems are up, stable and running. If the CAD Manager takes this perspective and does not provide services after the install, then CAD chaos soon arrives. Users are left to themselves and struggle through troubles on their own. Uptime and uniformity matter, but flexibility, innovation and training are crucial.

Extraordinary CAD Managers run CAD as a Design tool. They see themselves as enablers. They know that their job is to make others more productive and help get the software to do what the designer wants. They see CAD technology as a way to free designers to be creative and work to get the software to be easier to use. While embracing the best of IT methods and practices, they move beyond to provide project level services to individuals, teams and the entire firm.

7. Procedures and Standards are a means to an end, not written in stone.

Average CAD Managers usually have good CAD Standards. They know their stuff and they get the document created and distributed. They also get people to follow the standards. Where they may go wrong is becoming inflexible in the application of that standard and refusal to update it.

Extraordinary CAD Managers know that nothing is so perfect that it should never be changed or so inflexible that it can never bend. They build flexibility into the CAD Standard or the process in such a way that the projects can get completed. They also know that every so often they need to update the standard to reflect what has been learned and what people are actually doing. They realize that the standard is just a standardization of the methods and products that CAD produces. The standard is a means to an end.

8. Work is fun, not toil, but you have to work at making it fun.

Average CAD Managers buy into the notion that work is only a means to a paycheck. They may fully expect everyone to be serious, totally focused, and devoted 100 percent to working hard and never losing focus. They expect everyone to have the same work ethic as they do and to take things as seriously as they do. The CAD Manager does have to take their work and product seriously because no one will care about it more than they do, but they do have to lighten up at times.

Extraordinary CAD Managers see work as something that should be inherently enjoyable. They believe that they can and should assist everyone in getting along and having a good time doing it. Getting the job done can be fun. Without acting like Mary Poppins or necessarily whistling while they work, they do need to blow off the steam of project deadlines and hardware failures. Sometimes laughing when things are getting tough is healthy. Come on – crack a joke every now and then. Make fun of yourself in front of others. Help others get through a tough day with a smile and encouragement. Make work Fun!!

Core Failures – Avoiding the Setbacks

Top Ten Failures of a CAD Manager

1. Failing to define the target – your standards are not good enough

Yes – I always start with the standard. If you have not provided a well-defined target for you CAD users to hit then you cannot expect them to hit it with much consistency. If your standard is not solid, then users will get creative about how they get things done. They will seek solutions on their own and end up finding them. The trouble with that is that they will not be unified. This leads to Chaotic CAD.

2. Failing to watch over the process

Let's say that your CAD Standard is solid. You have covered everything that needed to be addressed. You have added to areas that were weak. You have expanded areas that were too sparse. You may feel comfortable that you have it all together.

What may happen is that the process is in place but it is not monitored. You have set the ship in motion but you are not checking the maps or the compass to see if it is staying on course. You need to have some way to verify that everyone is actually following the standards. You need a Quality Assurance process. You need a CAD QA process. In a nutshell, this would be a checklist based on your standards. Compare the files against the checklist to see how things are going. Whatever you find that is not compliant, fix it.

3. Failing to care about Quality

Similar to the area above is the fact that it is very easy to start letting quality slip. It happens little by little. If you fall into the trap above you will never have a process for checking on quality. This trap is when you have a process, but do not continue to follow it. Good habits are hard to develop. It takes a great amount of diligence to maintain top quality. Don't let your focus wander. Put a regular checkup day on your calendar as a reminder. Write it on your "to do" list.

4. Failing to keep learning new things

This is like teaching an old dog new tricks. No – I am not calling you "old". But you may appear to be that way if you stop learning new things. Everyone needs to continue learning. Reading is one of the best ways of doing that. Taking training classes yourself is another. There are many ways to keep learning and that do not cost anything. Keep learning

5. Failing to experiment

I have always said that play time is valuable. Ever since Kindergarten (ha ha). In the corporate world, playtime is that time when you can just “fiddle around” with technology. You need to take time to check out new tools, research new techniques, and try out new methods. Some will be worthwhile and others will not.

Taking the time is one thing. Spending money is another. I have always included some “R&D” money in my budget. It is a small amount of money that I use to try things that may be promising but have no immediate need. If all we do is buy what we need, then we may be missing opportunities to expand our tools in ways that allow us to venture into new places. Keep a list of things that you wish you could do and that you wish you could buy. When you get some time or money you will already know which tool you want to investigate.

Don't forget to let other experiment also. Don't keep all the fun stuff to yourself.

6. Failing to pay attention to your career

Don't forget about your career advancement, especially in these economic times. Keep your job focus uppermost in your mind. Keeping your job is on many people's minds these days. Stay visible and involved. Do not slow down in your efforts to have an impact on your firm's productivity. Small increases in productivity can pay big dividends.

Keeping an eye on your career means staying connected to your internal management, external connections and the industry you work in. Make sure you interact with your management. They are the ones that run the teams that use your tools. Keep them happy. Interact with your external connections. Attend User Group meetings. Toss a few emails out to stay in touch. Here is a good test to see how connected you are to people outside your firm... When times get tough, who reaches out to you? Do others contact you with their CAD troubles? Are you getting calls or email from those that have lost their jobs? If no one is connecting with you, then you need to get connected.

7. Failing to save money

Look for ways to save money. Look to see if you can reduce your outlay for software or hardware. If you have reduced staff, then can you reduce your subscription to some of the software? There is no requirement that every copy of your CAD software is on subscription. Some of the vendors may allow dropping it. Delay upgrades that cost money.

Saving money may help keep you on the good side of management. Avoiding the spending of money can also look good. Make sure that when you save money that management knows about it.

8. Failing to listen to complaints

People complain about things. It is in our nature to see the negative before we see the positive. Some people complain more than others. Some people seem to need something to complain about. Any way you look at it, complaints are out there. Do you hear them? Do you listen?

Hearing people's complaints is key to avoiding failure. Complaints exist because there are concerns that have not been addressed. By not addressing people's concerns you run the risk of missing opportunities for small successes.

When you listen, try to get past the ranting to the core of the concern. Apply your troubleshooting skills to these problems. Some of the complaints may go beyond the software to people issues or process problems. These need to be addressed also. Working on process changes and people concerns is not easy, but it needs to happen.

9. Failing to listen to good ideas from others

Listening to complaints is always balanced by listening to good ideas. You have to keep your ears open for these. Sometimes they come from the most unexpected people. I have gotten a lot of good ideas for CAD productivity upgrades from people who did not even use CAD. They say things like, "it should do this or that" because they don't really know what the software can do. Their perspectives make me think of how I could get the software to do "this or that". Then I go to work to program or customize it so that it does.

10. Failing to pass on your knowledge

Give it away – that is your job. Making others as knowledgeable as you can is part of your job description. I end every one of my presentations with the words "Pass it on". This is because I believe in passing on information, knowledge and wisdom. It is not mine to keep or hoard. I need to give it to the next person. This makes them more efficient and it helps me to keep them self-sufficient.