



# Region 7 Review

A monthly publication for the members of IPSSA, Inc. – Region 7

October 2005

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## Director's Corner

B. K. Taylor Award - bring your nominations for this award to the Oct. 25 R7 Board meeting. A nomination form was enclosed with the August R7 newsletter.

B.O.R.D. - At its next meeting, the B.O.R.D. will discuss finding a replacement for **Roberta Rohwedder** of the Financial Office at IPSSA Inc., who has announced that she will retire at the end of this year.

Contact me if there are any issues you want me to bring to future B.O.R.D. meetings.

## Conversation Peace

Difficult talks can become easier if we approach them in the proper way.

By **Victoria Downing**

One of the toughest parts of managing for many people happens when they have to talk to an employee, sub, or client about an unpleasant topic — whether it's underperformance, a disagreement about a bill, or a misunderstanding about a project. Many people don't know the best strategies for dealing with these tough conversations, so what could have been a productive discussion often turns into an angry exchange after which both parties feel betrayed and hurt.

Because many of us don't know the most effective ways to deal with these

tricky conflicts, we do what most people do — simply avoid them. Hey, if you ignore it, maybe it will go away. Unfortunately, that rarely happens and putting it off just makes it worse.

What a difference it would make in our lives if we could all handle these touchy situations with aplomb, elegance, and productivity. Authors **Kerry Patterson, Joseph Grenny, Ron McMillan, and Al Switzler** call these situations “crucial conversations” and, in their book of the same name, identify them as a discussion between two or more people where (1) the stakes are high, (2) opinions vary, and (3) emotions run strong.

That could describe many situations in the remodeling world.

In *Crucial Conversations*, the authors share the reasons why we act like we do when faced with a problem — from the adrenaline rush that muddies our thinking and pushes us to fight aggressively or flee the situation to the way our minds create angry stories about the other person's actions, which starts us off on the wrong foot altogether.

These human relationship experts believe that we can all learn how to create productive discussions without anger or defensiveness by using a variety of simple strategies.

For example, the authors describe a tendency that most of us have to let our emotions take over when somebody does something we disagree with. When this happens, we begin to unconsciously invent stories about why the person involved took the action they did. And in these stories we overemphasize the other person's guilt and assume the worst possible motives. Then, when we approach them to discuss it, we're walking in with our minds made up and immediately attack. With this approach, the chances of getting what we want are severely diminished.

Instead, the authors suggest, if we learn to recognize this pattern, we won't be drawn into inventing the rea-

sons behind the decision. We'll understand that we don't really know why the person did what he or she did — we're just imagining that we do. All we really know is the action they took. With this mindset, we walk into a conversation trying to explore the reasons behind the action. Once we understand the reason behind it, we can work together to come to a solution. No attacking, no defensiveness — just a dialogue between two people who both want things to work.

By following this and their other commonsense rules, we will become more comfortable in beginning these crucial conversations.

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**Victoria Downing** is president of *Remodelers Advantage*, Fulton, Md. 301.490.5620.

## Calendar of Events

- **Spa & Pool Industries Memorial Golf Tournament in Honor of Jock Hamilton**, Sat., Oct. 22, Ridgemark Golf and Country Club, Hollister, CA. Contact David Allen at 408-984-6737, Ivan Vance at 818-376-8531, or United Chemical at 800-524-5550.
- **R7 Board Meeting**, Tues., Oct. 25, 7:00 p.m., Filippi's Pizza Grotto (858-748-1800), 13000 Oak Knoll Dr., Poway, off Hwy 15 and Poway Rd.
- **International Pool and Spa Expo**, Tues. – Thurs., Nov. 1 - 3, Orange County Convention Center, Orlando, FL. Visit [www.poolandspaexpo.com](http://www.poolandspaexpo.com).
- **BORD Mtg.**, Sat., Nov. 12, Embassy Suites at 24<sup>th</sup> Street Phoenix, AZ. Contact IPSSA executive office, 888-360-9505, or [ipssamail@aol.com](mailto:ipssamail@aol.com).
- **Aqua Show**, Wed. - Fri., Nov. 16 - 18, Mandalay Bay Convention Center, Las Vegas, NV. [www.aquashow.com](http://www.aquashow.com).

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