



2003 Regional Conference Report

Conference Chair:	Maria Martinez, Rollins College
Host Committee Chair:	Trudie Frecker, University of South Florida
Theme:	Clearwater Ahead: Adding Value Through People
Dates of Conference:	May 4 – 7, 2003
Location:	Sheraton Sand Key Resort Clearwater, Florida

Total Number in Attendance	248
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Highlights

This year's conference was had three very energetic and dynamic speakers. Wayne Kost, President and CEO of Philip Crosby Associates II, Inc., brought the 'house' into the *Quality Revolution*. He shared his experiences with the introduction of quality into numerous organizations and the successes these organizations now enjoy. Bob Rosner, the "Retention Evangelist", assisted us with identifying the *12 Steps to Surviving Today's Workplace*. Bob won the hearts of the participants not only because of his insightful presentation, but also because of his resilience during the presentation. The hotel experienced a total blackout during the session and we sat in complete darkness for approximately 20 seconds. It's also important to add that he was officially on his honeymoon the week he spoke with our group. Seriously, he left his new wife in New Orleans flew to Florida for 2 days, then returned to the Big Easy to complete his honeymoon. Hmmm, wonder if his wife had anything to do with the power outage? Our final speaker on Wednesday morning left the house in stitches. Buford P Fuddwhacker, a.k.a Roger Reece, was an absolute delight. He helped us put our "Hound Dog out of His Misery" by eliminating our "stinkin' thinkin'". He also introduced us to "Web TP". For those of you who could not attend, he surmised that the bathroom is the only room in the house that Bill Gates has not yet invaded. So Buford created "Web TP", a small LCD screen with a conveniently placed roll of toilet paper for the bathroom. And lest we forget the "Elvi", Yohna Cone and John Toller, singing the Web TP promo song to the tune of *Blue Suede Shoes*. I know that I'll never forget it.

In addition to the keynote speakers, the quality of the concurrent sessions is due to the outstanding efforts of Maria Martinez, Chair-elect and Program Chair. Maria with the assistance of her Administrative Assistant, Maria Guevara-Musick, created an excellent multi-disciplinary program that included sessions on topics relevant for all areas of human resources. With the collaboration of the Host Committee, lead by Trudie Frecker of the University of South Florida and the entire Southern Region Board, the participants were provided with 4 days of excellent programming, beautiful weather (ordered especially for us), and great social events. The numbers tell the story, the conference received an overall average score of 4.83 from conference participants.

Our social events included a welcome reception, co-sponsored by Graystone Advertising and PeopleAdmin, for newcomers and first-timers. We had record attendance for this group; over 50 first-timers attended the conference this year. On Sunday evening, ING sponsored the Opening Reception in the Island Ballroom. This was a great kick-off to the conference. For our Evening Out, we celebrated Cinco de Mayo poolside at the hotel. We enjoyed cuban and mexican cuisine and an fabulous sunset. As in true Southern Region tradition, the group danced the night away by tiki torch to DJ sounds. On Tuesday night, the Chair's Hospitality event was held at the hotel's Beach Room. Karaoke was provided by

Buford P Fuddwhacker. We never knew we had such great singing talent among our southern region participants. The chair was roasted by Andy Brantley, former National President and former Southern Region Chair, who was standing in for Maria Martinez. Maria was unable to attend the conference due to a family illness.

The conference hotel, Sheraton Sand Key Resort, received extremely high ratings from our participants, the host committee and the board. The food, service and accommodations were most excellent.

Activities and Accomplishments

1. This was the first year we contracted with an outside vendor to manage our conference registration. We contracted with the University of South Carolina Continuing Education Division. They provided on-line, fax and mail-in registration options for our participants. They provided regular updates to the list and a final list that was used to create the conference participant list for the conference bags. Overall, it was a success. Once we mailed them, they promptly processed all on-site registrations to finalize the process. We will use this group again.
2. Special efforts were made by our Director of Membership, Jeff Mudrak, to contact first-timers from 2002 and non-member institutions. We had 26 non-member registrants for the 2003 conference. As reported previously, we had over 50 first-time attendees. We credit this in large part to the concentrated number of higher education institutions within the state of Florida as more than 75% of the first-timers are from Florida schools.
3. While we are still calculating the final numbers, the preliminary figures indicate that this conference very well and we broke even. Based on feedback from the participants, the location was a huge draw for many of those who attended.
4. Pat Deery, Ex Officio Director of Communications and Marketing/Newsletter Editor, prepared three newsletters which are available electronically on our website. Email notifications are sent to the membership indicating the newsletter is now available. We've found this format is highly acceptable from our membership and extremely cost-advantageous.
5. With the assistance of Susan Reichbart of the CUPA-HR National Office, the region secured a contract for the 2005 conference site. The conference will be held at the Adam's Mark Hotel in Mobile, Alabama. The Adam's Mark has just undergone a \$5 million refurbishment and was voted Mobile's Top Hotel. Mobile is a charming city and if we're lucky between April 10 – 13 during the conference Mobile's internationally famous Azeala Trail may be in full bloom. From historic home tours to wildlife tours, Mobile has something to offer for everyone.
6. Letters were sent to the president of each institution from which a member received a regional award. Letters were also sent to award winners' supervisors.

Regional Award Winners

Distinguished Service Award

Diane Baca
Associate Vice President, Human Resources
Mercer University

Quality in Human Resources Practice

Department of Human Resources
Florida State University

Outstanding Achievement Award

Debra Allen
Director of Employee Communications
University of South Carolina

Excellence in Human Resource Management

Department of Human Resources
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill