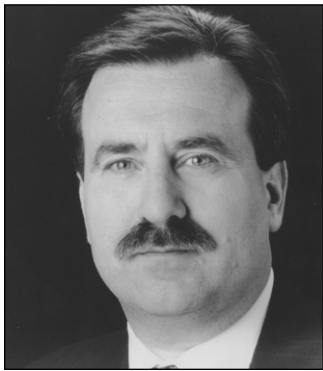


Coaches Corner With Barry Knepper



Barry Knepper

TAB Member's question: I have employed my niece as a favor to my sister. My niece is an underperformer and this has caused morale issues among other employees. What should I do?

TAB Coach: While procrastination may work as a strategy for some difficult business decisions – it is hardly ever useful regarding a serious performance issue, regardless of the employee's last name. An unhappy sub-performing employee brings down morale, and their continued employment sends the wrong message to everyone else that is hopefully

productive and happy in their work.

My recommendation is to sit down with your sister and explain the situation first. The discussion must cover the performance issues and the effect on other employees and the company in general. You can then sit down with your niece and ask her if she is doing what she wants to do? I can almost guarantee her answer will include not working for you. As a family, you can then try to help her move forward into another opportunity by getting her training in what she really wants to do.

Barry Knepper is the certified facilitator

and coach in Queens for The Alternative Board®. The Alternative Board brings together owners of privately held businesses to overcome challenges and seize new opportunities with a combination of peer advice and business coaching. Board members meet monthly to learn from one another's successes and mistakes to grow their businesses to the next level. Business owners also create more valuable and profitable companies with scheduled strategic business coaching sessions focused on business and personal growth.

Dismantling The Career Ladder

By Gail O. Mellow

For low-income New Yorkers, it is a slippery and difficult climb up the career ladder to a middle-class job. Mayor Michael Bloomberg just made it harder by removing the bottom rungs of the ladder. He proposes to slash the budgets of City University of New York's (CUNY) six community colleges by \$26 million.

If the City Council supports Bloomberg's cut, NYC will see severely reduced educational access at the one place – CUNY's community colleges – that help low-income and working class New Yorkers get ahead. This reduction comes at the worst possible time, during an economic recession.

The deteriorating national and state economy will not impact everyone equally. As the gap between rich and poor in our city and across the country widens, New York must make sure that the support necessary to help people get and keep family-supporting jobs is strengthened, especially during tough fiscal times. The only form of "recession Insurance" proven to produce results is education or training beyond high school.



Gail O. Mellow

As President of LaGuardia Community College, I see on a daily basis the power of education to open doors to the middle class for the over 50,000 people who study with us each year. Let me tell you about two students who exemplify upwardly striving New Yorkers.

After Marcy returned from military service where she drove 18-wheelers between Afghanistan and Iraq, she enrolled in an occupational therapy program at LaGuardia. She works full time at JFK airport at night, and is also a full-time student during the day. When she graduates this summer, Marcy will enter a profession that will move her from poverty to a starting salary of at least \$35,000 a year with benefits.

A former student who has climbed very far up the career ladder is Umberto. He did not even speak English when he started at LaGuardia as a cleaner. Umberto persisted to learn English, finish an associates and then a bachelors degree in computer programming, and went on to get his masters in public administration.

Marcy and Umberto are not extraordinary; thousands of ordinary New Yorkers are leveraging low-cost public education to enter middle-class professions and fill crit-

ically-needed jobs in our local economy.

Community college students have a dream of using education to move into the middle class. When students achieve their goals, the return on investment of city dollars is impressive: family income goes up 17 percent upon graduation for LaGuardia Community College's students. These students don't need or want a hand-out, but they do want a hand to help them climb the ladder.

The Mayor's proposed \$26.5 million community college cutbacks are part of overall planned reduction of \$48.1 million in city funding for CUNY. They come just when the demand for an affordable, high quality community college education is at a 30-year record high. Enrollments are booming, with almost 80,000 degree credit students, and another 118,000 students in workforce development education and training annually. The cuts will reduce classes, curtail library hours, limit tutors and close computer labs.

I implore the Mayor and the members of the New York City Council not to dismantle the ladder to economic progress for our lowest income New Yorkers. Restore funding to our community colleges!

Gail O. Mellow is the President of LaGuardia Community College.

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Did You Know...

That Chamber members can ship DHL overnight letters and small packages at HUGE savings, in fact, the lowest rates available to any Chamber in the U.S.



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That the Queens Chamber is the only association to whom Tiffany Jewelers offers a discount program. You can save 15% on most gifts and jewelry; a Queens Chamber Exclusive Benefit.

Did You Know...

That the Chamber's Value Plus/Affinity Program allows you to advertise your organization in every issue of Queensborough and on our website 24/7/365 for only \$300 a year!