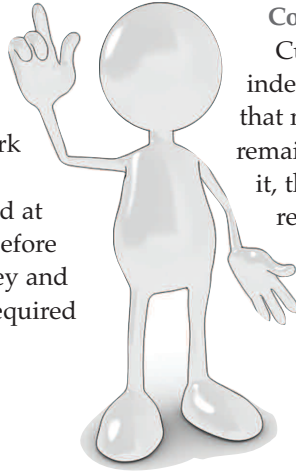


# Let's Talk 'Consultative'



**E**ver wonder what happened to the eIdea Program and why it isn't working? How about F4 parcel volume and the lack of consistency in recording? We charge customers parcel rate yet don't measure the piece as a parcel during volume recording. What about Form 150s not receiving credit for General Deliveries and exempt Postmasters having no TACS code to record accurate work hours when working days off or holidays? These are only samplings of what's discussed at quarterly consultative sessions. Okay, stop before you start emailing issues to President Charley and our National Board, so we can discuss the required process. We have a very important part in ensuring success when any issue is moved to consultative session by doing our homework. Yes, we have to address these issues at home first.



## Let's Talk Process

When a Postmaster is unable to resolve an issue, they call for help from their state board or District coordinator. The District coordinator contacts the source to try and resolve it; in most cases it starts with the MPOO. If the issue is not resolved, it's escalated to the District level. Often the state president becomes involved when it escalates to the District manager and works with the District coordinator. If the president and District coordinator aren't successful, the issue is elevated to the Area and the Area coordinator becomes involved. In our Area, we address our issues with the manager of HR and our AVP. If no resolution is reached, we move the issue to our National Board and a consultative session. We must turn in our homework at this time. This is the paper trail of what, who and responses we will send to LEAGUE HQ.

Currently, we are working on the issue with the eIdea Program. ELM 631 encourages its employees to contribute constructive ideas that will improve customer satisfaction, generate revenue, increase productivity, reduce cost and improve the competitiveness of the Postal Service in the marketplace.

We had several Postmasters in California and Hawaii whose eIdea suggestions were over four years old. The eIdea received the initial level review by the MPOO and that was the end. Some submissions have been implemented, yet their submissions still sit pending review. When the electronic version of the eIdea Program was implemented, it was supposed to improve processing time. As most of us have seen, this is not the case. While this program is a great tool to develop cost-cutting strategies or implement revenue-generating suggestions, they all come back to fiscal responsibility.

So the program is stalled, what can we do? The District coordinator brought the issue forward to the MPOO, who asked the District for support. The HR turned to the Area, which included Eagan.

## Condensed Eagan's response:

Currently an idea can remain in a "submitted" status indefinitely, but we are working on some time limits that may go into effect late this FY, or next. An idea remains in a "submitted" status until the evaluator opens it, then it converts to "in evaluation" status. It will remain "in evaluation" until some action is taken to close, return, escalate it, etc. Currently, evaluators receive periodic automatic email notifications that they have an idea to evaluate; then they open the idea for review and the notifications stop. Prior to 2007, evaluators could turn off these automatic notifications. Our programmer is currently working on software changes that will:

1. Create a programming routine to periodically search for and close all eIdeas that are in a *Submitted, In-Evaluation, Returned, or Requested Re-Evaluation* status where the original submitter is no longer an active employee.

2. Create a programming routine to periodically reassign any eIdeas that are currently assigned to an evaluator who is no longer an active employee to the HR System Administrator for the evaluator's performance cluster with a message explaining why it has been reassigned.

3. Send an email message to all assigned evaluators of ideas that are in a *Submitted, In-Evaluation, Returned, or Requested Re-Evaluation* status who "owned" the idea prior to the date the option to turn off the automatic messages was removed (August 2007?), reminding them they have an idea to evaluate and take necessary action on, and that they should do so within seven days.

4. Start system generated email messages on the current schedule (first notification day one, next after seven days, etc.) to all "owners" of ideas that are in a *Submitted, In-Evaluation, Returned, or Requested Re-Evaluation* status that had their ideas reassigned or escalated prior to 2007.

5. Modify current email notification process to continue the messages to the assigned evaluator until the idea is *Closed, Escalated, Returned or Reassigned* by them. (Currently, notifications quit once the idea is opened by the evaluator.)

It is hoped that these changes will stimulate increased activity by evaluators. At our state/Area level, we were done. On the national level, fiscal accountability for revenue forgone must be addressed at Postal Headquarters. We know our Board will represent us well during the consultative session. Do you have a "consultative issue"?

—Norma Powell, Pacific Area Coordinator