Q & A With Personal Development Solutions' Rita Williams-Bogar on Breaking Down Communications Barriers and Filling the Gaps

As part of the celebration of The Institutes CPCU Society 2016 Annual Meeting, we asked our expert speakers to share their insights on the industry, career development and opportunities for CPCUs.

Rita Williams-Bogar, President and CEO, Personal Development Solutions, LLC

2016 CPCU Society Annual Meeting Session:
Breaking Down Virtual Walls: Leading and Motivating Remote Team Members

The Institutes (TI): Can you share an important theme that will be explored in your presentation?
Rita Williams-Bogar (RWB): It may be a surprise to some, but the skills required of a successful remote team member aren’t all that different from what’s required to be a successful in-person team member. Our focus should instead be on the communication walls that need to come down. We’ll use humor to demonstrate this point and explain how to enable collaboration between on-site and remote workers.

TI: What is the single most important bit of personal or career advice you would give to a new CPCU?
RWB: Look for the gap or need that you can uniquely fill. For example, if your colleagues are overly reliant on email, there is a relationship-building gap, and you can be the one who picks up the phone and talks to people. Of course technical expertise is one part of success, but being of value to others is a greater factor.

TI: What skills do you believe are most essential for CPCUs in today’s business climate?
RWB: There are a number of skills that prepare CPCUs for success, and all of them are critical to helping CPCUs become the people who can identify and fill the gaps. Professionals who excel in their careers have the ability to think critically and strategically beyond the current moment, understand the nuances of communications, and identify and serve as mentors. Strong employees demonstrate that they can be flexible and adaptable in a changing environment while maintaining a “can do” attitude.

TI: The insurance industry is rapidly evolving. What excites you most about working in the industry?
RWB: I am excited by the speed at which the industry is evolving. There’s no time to be stagnant, and there is always something new to learn and explore. This speed creates a lot of opportunity for professionals who are eager to move the industry forward and are able to provide value by developing their skill set to meet emerging needs.

TI: What are you most looking forward to learning about from other speakers and attendees at the 2016 CPCU Society Annual Meeting?
RWB: I have identified several workshops to attend each day, covering both career/leadership and technical information. Beyond taking away insights from these great sessions, I am most looking forward to networking with attendees to strengthen current relationships and set the framework for building long-term relationships.