



**January 8, 2014**

**CoSIDA Continuing Education session teleconference: "Reaching Out & Climbing Up - How A Little Self Promotion Can Benefit You, Your School and Others"**

**Presenters:**

**SCOTT STRICKLIN, Mississippi State Director of Athletics**

**PHIL TICKNOR, Washington College (Md.) Assistant to the Athletics Director for Communications & Academic Support**

**CHRIS SYME, Principal, CKSyme Media Group**

**Moderator:**

**DAVE WALTERS, Guilford College Assistant Athletics Director/Sports Information Director**

**DAVE WALTERS:** Hello and Happy New Year, and welcome to CoSIDA's first continuing education program of 2014. I'm Dave Walters, and I bring warm greetings from chilly Greensboro, North Carolina where I serve as sports information director at NCAA Division III member Guilford College.

We're thrilled that you've made time to listen today, as we have a distinguished panel to discuss the interesting subject of self-promotion. Today's panel is the latest in CoSIDA's continuing education program, which is considering recommendations from the 2013 Cryder-Reinbold report, CoSIDA's Strategic Branding Initiative.

Before we begin, let me thank CoSIDA corporate partner, ASAP Sports for its help with today's program. ASAP Sports is CoSIDA's official instant transcript provider and will provide a FastScript or full transcript of today's call, and will be posted to the CoSIDA website for future access.

We're also grateful to today's panelists: Mississippi State Director of Athletics, Scott Stricklin, Chris Syme of CK Syme Media Group, and Washington College Assistant to the Athletic Director, Phil Ticknor. If you'd like a preview of their remarks or links to their professional profiles, visit [CoSIDA.com](http://CoSIDA.com) where you can download a two-page PDF file with that information. We invite questions from our audience, and there are three ways to submit your queries. Folks can email them to CoSIDA's Director of External Affairs, Barb Kowal, at [BarbKowal@CoSIDA.com](mailto:BarbKowal@CoSIDA.com).

You can ask your question through our CoverItLive blog, and you can find a link to it on the front of CoSIDA.com. Finally, we'll be watching CoSIDA's Twitter feed at CoSIDA. I'll ask questions in between and after our panelists remarks as time permits.

Right now, let's hear from our first panelist, Phil Ticknor of NCAA Division II Washington College in Maryland. Phil is the Assistant to Athletic Director of Communications and Academic Support. The floor is yours.

**PHIL TICKNOR:** Thanks, Dave, I'm going to start off by giving a little background on sort of how my position has evolved into a long fancy title. When I started here it was the summer of 2001. I was fresh out of undergrad. I was pretty fortunate to land a full-time job directly out of undergrad. I went to Goucher College and had been essentially the de facto Assistant SID while a student there.

I was fortunate to get this position because at the time it was not necessarily a highly desirable one. I have a feeling that I sort of turned it into that over time. We were a one-man show. We had some students, I know, and my AD won't be upset with me saying this now, but the first time I asked him about attending the CoSIDA convention, he asked me what CoSIDA was. So there hadn't been a lot of necessarily ground work laid in terms of explaining what we do here and having a full grasp in terms of not only across campus, but even within athletics.

So essentially over the last 12 years we've been able to build up both my own position, both literally and figuratively, as well as this office. We started as a one-man show, and now there is a second full-time person in communications, plus we have a part-time local guy who is a broadcaster who is actually officially employed with us rather than a paid-per-game sort of person.

We actually are fortunate enough to have a head coach that has some videography skills that does some prerecorded video featurettes and stuff. So if you look on our website and see four people listed, you'd think we're spoiled to have what we have for 17-sport, non-football Division III institution.

But it wasn't always that way. I'd like to think that sort of the some of the things I've done on campus have helped transition us into that. I'm hoping, as well, it's a very fortunate to have thing to have been some place for this long and still been able to grow my career. That's not always going to be the case for everyone, but I think there are a lot of lessons here that can be applied in terms of as a resume builder as well as just making connections.

Some of the things that I really have found valuable here at Washington College in terms of growing both my own profile and the profile of this office is essentially service to the campus community, whether that's long-term, short-term, I've just come off of -- I know if anybody's read the material ahead of time, it mentions me being on staff council, and that just ended last month. They've kicked me out for being on too long essentially. I've served two consecutive terms and that is the limit, so I have to wait at least two more years to come back on the staff council. I was actually the chair of the college of staff council for 2012.

Along with that, I've served on a number of different committees in and out of athletics. Search committees, I actually really enjoy search committee work, so not only have I been in on obviously a lot of our coaching hires, I've also been on the search for our latest dean and provost to the college, which is a great experience and a way to meet people across campus, which I had done through staff council, but also connect with faculty. As you can imagine, a dean search committee is primarily focused on the academic side of campus.

So that was a nice way to connect with faculty, and explain what it is that I do in my office and for them to get a sort of respect that this isn't some sort of sports stats geek or what have you or I'm only living in the athletics world.

In addition to that, I just recently was asked to serve on a grievance committee for an employee grievance which you can imagine on a small campus is a delicate issue. But that was a good experience to see how that works. Last year I was on the committee that selected people who were nominated for presidential awards both from employees and alumni people in the community.

By doing so, again, I've built some relationships across campus that have made connections and earned both, myself, my office and even the athletic department some respect. Because, again, on a campus of any size, a lot of times there is that disconnect between the academic end of campus and the athletic end in terms of everyone being on the same page.

The funny thing too is I've sort of got this reputation that I don't know if people value my opinion now on this campus or whether they know I can write. But this time around for the presidential award as I mentioned earlier, I was asked to write letters for three different people. Now thankfully none of them were competing with each other. But I pictured in my mind the people on the committee this year saying, "another letter from this Ticknor guy."

But at any rate, I felt kind of nice about the fact that people would at least value my opinion or my writing ability to be able to be asked to write three different letters. And only one of those was somebody in athletics, so it was nice to be asked to write about someone on another campus.

Through this experience and over the years here my thinking on what industry I work in has sort of shifted. I sort of think of myself now working in higher education first and athletics second. Maybe that's a little idealist. But I certainly think that could come in handy in terms of building that sort of respect and recognition on your own campus, which is familiarize yourself with your school's mission statement. That is something that I think you can try to jury-rig away. Your work helps achieve that mission. Because when you have a conversation with a school administrator or president what have you, someone else, I think that can leave an impression that you kind of get where the whole campus is going, and you can tie in what it is you do to that mission.

Sometimes it's easy for us to sit in our little boxes or what we call here, silos, and to be able to get out of those can make a world of difference.

I will say as you develop those relationships across campus, don't be shy about talking about your position and what value you add. I would say don't be shy about that no matter who you talk to and certainly what you do personally. So it may not be things that as we all do constantly doing things outside of our technical job descriptions. But at the same time, I think a lot of us fall into the trap of feeling like we're the most overworked people both in the department and perhaps on campus. And to have some experience when we talk to other folks on campus, it's not just the coaches and trainers who try to compete for who is the most overworked. It is the event planners on campus, student affairs on campus, faculty on campus. Everyone thinks they're overworked. Whether it's true for everyone or not, who knows. But I think making it into a contest isn't going to win you any friends. I think if anything, there is a way to present that by talking about what you do that may find you some empathy in terms of making those connections.

Oh, yeah, I had to work X, Y, Z as well, and you can build more respect for other people who you may now think just punch the clock and come in at 9:00 and leave at 5:00 when in reality we're not the only ones working long hours.

I think you may find a sort of tradeoff there as well as a secondary point where you may build some relationships where people get now that, hey, you're really tied up in an empathetic way instead of people just throwing a million things at you and you having to say no. People get, hey, they're busy. Not in a way of I can't ask them anything because they're too busy, but it's give and take. As well as you may find people who work in other areas of the campus who think it's really cool what you do and are willing to lend a hand when you get in a jam, and certainly vice versa.

I know by the nature of our jobs, we're not necessarily always available to help when other people are busy. A lot of times it's the same time that we're very busy. But when you can offer to lend a hand when other people are busy, you may find that give and take. It's a great way to essentially get free or possibly cheap or very likely free help and volunteers from other people on campus.

The other thing that you're probably going to hear from everyone today is don't be afraid to brag. Obviously, do it with some tact, but if you receive an award from CoSIDA or from your conference -- I'll be honest, when the link went up on the CoSIDA site, I made sure to this panel, I made sure I sent that to my athletic director to say, hey, here's something I'm doing on Wednesday.

It's actually a sort of movement we're going through within our athletic department to try to promote what our coaches and athletic staff do and not just their job, but in terms of awards, whether they're appearing somewhere, speaking, any sort of professional advancement that sort of raises their profile. That is something that I would certainly encourage.

It doesn't mean that everything you do you should write a press release about yourself. I know people find that odd. But maybe something that should be submitted to the college magazine or maybe you have an employee news letter, any of that, certainly don't be shy.

Certainly, if you get those glowing emails from parents and those are the ones we want to frame because we get enough of the negatives. Whether it's a parent, fan, student, prospective student, by golly, if you ever get one from a visiting fan or student or parent, somebody who has no vested interest in supporting what you do, don't just copy your AD. Copy maybe it's applicable to make sense to copy the president, depending on who is sending that email or what it's about. It may make sense to copy somebody in admissions. It may make sense to copy somebody in student activities. It may make sense to copy someone in advancement, development or alumni office. But let people know that somebody was impressed. Somebody on the outside looking in was impressed with what your shop did.

Don't keep those to yourself, because the people complaining aren't just complaining to you, they're probably copying people on that too. So make sure other people on campus see the positives as well as hopefully the vocal minority.

For your own personal professional development, this is what I've sort of alluded to, you're not always going to be in the same place for 13 years. I know it's sort of an odd exception that I started here and never left yet my job has changed multiple times. But certainly whether you're trying to create your own office and you need to push for an assistant or whether you're looking for a promotion or a move across campus, it certainly makes a lot of sense, a good reputation for yourself and the value of your work, that sort of thing will definitely come in handy.

But even if you're applying for a job at another school, your resume will stand out at least in my opinion. If you're able to list some references that are not necessarily what people expect. People expect to see a reference from your superior. People expect to see a reference from your coach. But, boy, if you have a listed reference or maybe even a letter of support from somebody, a high-ranking school official, maybe not the presidents themselves, but anybody else in another area of campus who can speak who understands what you do and can speak to the quality of your work, I think that goes a long way whether you want to stay in this profession or certainly if you're looking for something slightly different. Because certainly if you're looking for another job outside of higher education in communications or in event promotion or something along those lines, it would be great, I think, on your resume to have the support of somebody who is outside of the realm of athletics.

Then lastly, I'll say, and it sounds so old-fashioned, and I'm not necessarily an old-fashioned person, varying technology, plenty of emails, constantly on Facebook. Anybody that knows me they're probably tired of pictures of my six-month-old daughter. But when it comes down to it, you're in a physical space on your campus, and probably if you sit down and think about it, you realize there are a lot of people who only know you by your email address or your voice on the phone.

But even on a large campus it's not as if you're trying to connect to people all over the world. Even on a large campus, please, get out and meet as many people face-to-face as you possibly can. I mean, it makes a world of difference both just for your relationships with people and certainly the respect they have for you. It's a lot easier to dismiss someone who is just a name or a voice on the phone than it is to actually dismiss someone that you've engaged in the one-on-one, face-to-face conversation.

Again, a lot of the things I mentioned at the beginning in terms of how you can serve on campus, staff council, different committees, those are easy ways to achieve that goal of meeting people face-to-face. But even if it's not in a formal setting, a staff forum, just eat lunch with somebody you don't know or introduce yourself to somebody you've talked on the phone multiple times, it goes a long way. I really don't think anything boosts the professional relationship more than putting a face to a name. It sounds old school and simple, but there is a reason why some people say it because it actually does work.

**DAVE WALTERS:** Well, that's some good stuff there, Phil. We appreciate your sharing with us.

Folks, thanks for joining in on the CoSIDA continuing education call. We're in between some of our speakers right now. Just wanted to let people know we're having some technical difficulties of the CoverItLive blog. If folks are out there trying to find it and it's not popping up, we are working to correct that situation. In the meantime, if you have a question, feel free to email that to [BarbKowal@CoSIDA.com](mailto:BarbKowal@CoSIDA.com) or you could tweet it to CoSIDAnews.

Phil, I've got a question for you. As you set up your sports information shop at Washington and then added new responsibilities over time, what has been your biggest challenge to maintaining a high level performance as the SID?

**PHIL TICKNOR:** I think the challenge is prioritizing and understanding what works, what doesn't work, and sort of the catch phrase -- it sounds very corporate, but ROI, return on investment. Those are conversations I've had with our SID. We don't print anything anymore.

We've got a three times a year schedule card that I may finally have convinced them to nix for next year.

But we've stopped doing media guides long ago in print. We've held on to them for a couple sports where designed them to a PDF that looked like a print publication but stopped printing them, and eventually stopped printing them. Then we realized why do we get something designed for print that gets outdated and is not getting printed. So we focus everything on digital. Whether it's our web presence, social media and now in the last few years we've added the live video and audio streaming.

A lot of that has been in terms of evolving over time, and having those conversations about what we're actually getting return value for.

So that's probably been the key thing is eventually we've been fortunate that we've been able to add resources from a human perspective, but there are still some things that you have that's a give and take. As you add more and more, you have to sit down and have conversations about let's analyze where are we getting bang for the buck? We've decided focusing education on print publications and money on print publications wasn't making any sense for us.

**DAVE WALTERS:** Very good. I've got an email here that the blog is now live. The CoverItLive blog is now live. So that's great. That is another way that folks can participate with us on the call with questions.

Phil, thanks again. We'll look forward to hearing more from you during our Q & A time after all the speakers have addressed us.

Next up is Chris Syme of CK Syme Media Group, which is usually located in Bozeman, Montana, but may be wintering in San Diego or some other warmer climate. Chris is an author, speaker, principal of the public relations communication agency. Before she started her own business, she served as assistant SID at Montana State and Eastern Washington Universities.

Chris, thanks for being here and for your leadership in our organization. Take it away.

**CHRIS SYME:** Thanks, Dave. Great to be here. And thanks, Phil. Phil's experience sounds a lot like mine at Montana State. I was heavily involved in campus communications at Montana State. I had the pleasure of being the department liaison to the campus communications committee when I was there. I know that there were a lot of faculty members, staff members at Montana State that loved athletics and wanted to help out. As a matter of fact, I think our whole score crew in every sport while I was there were professors, so those are some really important relationships.

My background is a little different probably because I came to sports information out of teaching and journalism background. Basically I was a college adjunct and high school teacher and coach before I got to working in newspapers and TV and radio, then got into sports information. Went back to Eastern Washington for my grad degree after my kids were out of school. I came in with a little different background, but I've always been a teacher and activator kind of person. So a lot of the desire to advance professionally was inherent in me.

I think there are a lot of people out there that that's in you. So what I'd like to talk to you about today is three quick tips, if you will, on ways that you can not only promote your own personal brand, but you can become a curator of information that can really be helpful to other people, because that's what it was all about for me. It was about being an information fountain that helped a lot of other SIDs.

While I was at CoSIDA and the media chairman there was that time period where we were transitioning from social media being brand you new to social media being a great marketing tool as it is now.

First, I'd like to talk about people networking. I think it's important, at least it was for me, to develop some mentoring and some helping relationships with people around you who can benefit from your expertise and your learning and your leadership. Helping these relationships with people not only who want to be where you are but also who are where you want to be.

I did this a lot by volunteering for committees on campus, joining online groups when that started to become popular like hashtag chats, Google plus groups. CoSIDA has a great LinkedIn group where you can network. Plus I want to give a shout out to Jay Stancil at Union for SID chats. My favorite online chats are SIDs.

I know there are a lot of sports chats out there. But if you're an SID and want to network with other SIDs, that's a great chat. It's Wednesdays at noon mountain, 2 Eastern, I think. It's on Jay's blog.

Also my second point is about developing your personal expertise. I'm really a big believer that everybody has something that they love to do or something that they're really good at. There are lots of times they're the same thing, actually. But I think that it's important to develop some kind of public expertise while you're sports information director.

There is a lot of -- I follow a lot of people on Twitter, a lot of SIDs, that curate a lot of information that help other sports information directors and people in the sports business. A lot of them have blogs, some of them are on Tumblr, some of them have websites where they curate information. Just a few that I follow that I really think are good at this.

Blake Tim at Pacific, the Oregon Pacific, Jay Stancil at Union, Chris Yandle, Miami, David Petroff at Edgewood in Wisconsin has a great Twitter feed plus a blog if you're a small school on social media, and I read that a lot. Derrick Dockett at the Missouri Valley Conference is another one that has great personal expertise on Twitter. Jessica Smith at NCAA, Eric Nichols at South Carolina, Steve Chen at the Big West Conference.

That's just a few of the people that I follow that are really good at developing expertise and being curators of information that other people can use on Twitter. Just a note here real quick, I'm going to send out a tweet. I'm at CKSyme S-Y-M-E after this is over, and I'm going to list all these resources on my Tumblr blog. So in case those names just kind of went right by you very quickly, you can check that afterwards.

Also, look for ways to be a resource in other departments within the athletic department or SID departments, whatever you want to call them.

My former boss at Montana State, the SID Bill Lamberty was a history buff. He used to write a lot of pieces for the campus alumni magazine. If you've got a development idea, an idea about how to raise some money, talk to your development people. If you run across something on the internet that might be of use to somebody in marketing or development or compliance, be sure to pass it around or pass it along.

It's a good idea to become a curator and be known for that. It helps to have some expertise. Another way to push your expertise is to put together a profile on HARO or Help a Reporter Out, that's an acronym H-A-R-O, if you've never heard of that. That's a place where reporters can contact you for sources of information on certain subjects.

The third thing I'd like to talk to you about quickly is I think it's important to attend industry events. This could be anything from local chamber of commerce, if that's your thing, Elks, whatever, to things as large as NACTA, CoSIDA, or NAIA-SIDA conventions.

But this really starts with your leadership. I think it's important. When I was at Montana State I had good leadership. They let us have time off for professional development if we requested it. So I used to get professional development time off every March and go to a Regional Men's NCAA first round and did a lot of networking there.

But talk to your leadership, and see if you can sell the benefits of professional development. Because promoting your personal brand is promoting the school brand as well. I think that's an important selling point to remember.

Also, think outside the athletic box here maybe. Join PRSA or the American Marketing Association. Many of those have local chapters and multiple conference events. I'm in Bozeman most of the time, and Spokane which is close to Bozeman has a really active PRSA chapter that puts on four little mini, all-day conferences every year. They're really cheap and cheap to get there. It's a great place to network.

Also there is a lot of great information available online now. Hashtag sports conferences coming up, one in social media, the social media success summit. Put on the Social Media Examiner every year. It's all online, all virtual, all recorded. You don't have to be there. But if you live in a region where you have access to a large urban area, then you might have more possibilities here. For instance, like the Digital Sports Fan Engagement conference coming up in Dallas. If you're anywhere in that area, that would be a great thing to go to.

My bottom line really is it's important for sports information directors and for anybody, for that matter, to really latch on to the idea of professional development because there are a lot of ways that you can pursue that where time and money are not a factor.

Speaking of time management, I just wanted to pass this along. I think Phil mentioned this, and I think it's important for us to remember that, yeah, we put in a lot of hours, we do. So do a lot of other people. But I read a really good blog piece the other day. If you don't follow David Petroff's small school social blog on Tumblr, he wrote a piece about being mobile, how to work in different areas at different times. It was really an inspiration to me to look at some things that I am doing to work smarter.

Those are things I'll leave with you. And a reminder that I'll put all these resources out on Tumblr. And if you want to find that you can look for me on Twitter after the call, and I'll send it back to Dave.

**DAVE WALTERS:** Chris, thanks so much. You're always a fountain of information and resources. We appreciate those things that you've just rattled off. Folks will be able to go back and review the individuals and the sites that you've referenced in a number of ways. They can go and check out your Twitter feed. You said you were going to put that out.

Just a reminder that folks can review the full transcript of today's remarks courtesy of ASAP Sports. There will be a link to that at the CoSIDA.com website.

Also on CoSIDA.com there is a two-page flyer with a summary of some of the highlights from today's speakers as well as their contact information. So we'll just point you to that.

Chris, a question for you specifically. This is a little bit less about resources but more about your own personal experience as an SID. What were some things that you learned or practiced as an SID that gave you the confidence and experience to move into a different profession?

**CHRIS SYME:** Well, I'm going to go back to leadership. I had great leadership when I was at Eastern Washington. The Athletic Director was Scott Barnes who is now at Utah State.

When I was at Montana State, Peter Fields is our AD, still there. Bill Lamberty was my boss in sports information. All three of those guys, and Pam Parks, the women's Associate AD at Eastern encouraged me to do everything outside the box. So because I'm an outside the box person already, that wasn't difficult.

But I mentioned earlier the leadership that will release you for professional development, that will say -- when I was at Eastern Washington, Pam Parks asked me if I was interested in compliance and would I like to learn about compliance? And Scott Barnes said, yeah, go ahead, do that. There is a lot to be said in my career for leadership. Because the reason that I left Montana State was because I had family that I needed -- my elderly mother had dementia and I had to quit my job to take care of her. At that time the athletic director was very supportive, and I still have a great relationship with Montana State.

I think the leadership to me is the key there.

**DAVE WALTERS:** Appreciate that, Chris. If you in the audience have a question for one of our panelists, you can email it to Barb Kowal at CoSIDA.com or submit it through today's CoverItLive blog, which is up and running at CoSIDA.com. You can also tweet it to CoSIDA news.

Our final speaker is fresh off a trip to Pasadena where he presumably was not running stats at Monday's BCS Championship game. Scott Stricklin has been Mississippi State's Athletic's Director since 2010. Started in college athletics in the Bulldogs media relations office as a student assistant.

Scott, thanks for the time and your friendship with CoSIDA. We're all ears.

**SCOTT STRICKLIN:** Thanks I appreciate you letting me join the panel this morning. I always tell people that I didn't get into athletics so I could be in media relations. I got in media relations because I really wanted to be in athletics. And I think that's probably the case for a lot of SIDs out there. We have a skillset that kind of lends towards whether it's writing or communicating or just a passion in that area. At the end of the day, we all want to be in athletics. I think getting pigeonholed can be a frustration that I know I struggle with at times, and I hear from other SIDs who feel the same thing.

So what I was going to talk about this morning, a little bit about how to kind of break out of maybe a stereotype or someone just saying that person is an SID. That's what they're going to be, and try to broaden into some other areas within the department.

I preface all this by saying there is nothing wrong with wanting to be a career SID. It's a great profession. There are great people who do it. If that's where your passion is and you don't want to get involved in any other areas of athletics, but you want to be the best SID you can be, I think that's great. There are certainly a lot of people like that out there.

So what I'm about to say may not be for everybody, but I think one of the things that's really important for anyone who is looking to move up to the ladder, whether it's to be a higher profile in their department from a media relations standpoint or maybe dabble in some other areas, I think you've got to provide value beyond just the media relations role.

A lot of that goes back to you've got to be someone that people in the department see as someone who can figure things out and get things done. Really, if you think about it, a good SID should have skills that are really kind of tailor-made for this area. Because an SID has to know a little bit about everything in the department if they're going to effectively communicate the message of the department to external constituents.

When I first got out of media relations, I got into fundraising and I had somebody ask me why I thought I could be a good fundraiser, and on my feet I just kind of thought there are some traits that good SIDs have that really translate into the area of fundraising.

A good media relations person knows how to build relationships whether it's with coaches or student-athletes or other staff members or media members. That's pretty important in the fundraising.

A good media relations person knows how to communicate key messages and get their point across. That is pretty important in fundraising. A good SID knows how to have difficult conversations in a way that doesn't turn people off. Sometimes you've got to walk into that locker room and tell the coach, hey, it's time to go talk to the media or you're about to get asked this hard question or maybe have a confrontation with a media member, but do it in a way that's not unpleasant.

When you're dealing in fundraising, a lot of times asking for money is not an easy thing. That's a hard conversation to have. So I just use that as an example to say there are traits that SIDs have that do translate into other areas of athletics, but you've got to be able to find yourself and work to develop those traits and understand how they do transfer.

That leads me to my second point which I think is really important to spend as much time as possible learning about the other areas of your department and developing relationships with your peers within the department and understanding what they do and more importantly why they do what they do. Why does the business office set their budget up a certain way? Why does the ticket office communicate with season ticket holders on the timeframe that they do? Why does compliance track the things they do and how often do they do it? I think it's so important to understand those things.

Really when you work in an athletic department, you've got a front row seat. There are all these sports management courses all across the country now that didn't exist 20 years ago on all these campuses. If you're working in the athletic department, you've got a built-in laboratory and probably a colleague that wouldn't mind you taking them to lunch so you can pick their brain about what they do in the facilities or marketing or whatever the area is.

I think having a curious nature about you really pays dividends. Because once you understand not just what they do but why they do it, it allows you to provide value to the department. If there is a crisis and the athletic director comes to you and says, we've got to communicate a response here, you're not having to be caught up to speed. You're up to speed because you know what's going on and why things are working the way they do, and you can immediately become part of the solution for your department.

Then the last piece is I just think it's important to -- it kind of ties into what I was talking about as far as getting to know and developing relationships. I think it's so important not to be the guy that does know it all, but to be humble in your approach with your colleagues.

I bring this point up because kind of the preface of this was self-promotion. I think there are ways to show you have value without beating your chest and making sure everybody knows about the good things that you're doing. I think working hand in hand with your colleagues in the other areas of the department and doing it in a way that is respectful, I think naturally they'll see your abilities and see that you can do things outside just the media relations realm.

Chris said something that I think is true, and that is leadership. You've got to have leaders who are looking for people who can do multiple jobs. Who can multitask a little bit. I was fortunate to work for some people in my career who saw some things in me and allowed me to do some things other than just media relations, even though that was my title.

Then the other piece of it is I think it's important to take it upon yourself to jump in and help where you see a need. If you're at an event and you see a donor who might need some help and you can jump in there and be the person to help them, even though you're not a fundraiser, you're helping your department and developing relationships and you never know where that kind of stuff might come in handy down the road.

**DAVE WALTERS:** Good stuff, Scott. Thank you very much. We've had a submitted question for you. The question is if you believe NCAA Division I conferences or schools hesitate to consider candidates whose worked exclusively at Division II or Division III schools?

**SCOTT STRICKLIN:** I think the honest answer there is probably yes. I think you'd like somebody who has experience at the level they're going to be working at. Now that doesn't mean that that's a non-starter. I can tell you from experience in coaching searches and other areas that we've interviewed people who have been at different levels, whether it's at FCS in the sport of football or Division II or other sports.

That's a question that you've got to get answered. How will the success they've had at Division II or whatever, how will that translate? That's a question you've got to figure out.

I don't think the label hurts as much as have they seen -- you have a bigger scholarship list at Division I. You have more people involved in enterprise and larger budgets. How is this person going to be able to manage all of that? At the end of the day, you have to figure out what traits you're looking to hire for, what traits are important to you, and really try to dig in to see if this person has the traits that will project to the next level.

But that's what you're going to do. You have a coach who may find an under-recruited person at a small high school and have to project their skills. Can they make it in college at the level they're at? And in the same way you're trying to do that on the personnel side. Can this person's skills translate to the next level, to the Division I level? Probably more times than not, they can. The jobs are very similar. It's just a different stage, if you will.

**Q.** With your experience in sports information and the media relations, are there some things that you think folks working in small colleges can do to help position themselves for consideration at larger schools?

**SCOTT STRICKLIN:** My sense would be the hardest thing -- it goes back to something Chris talked about, which is networking. Being able to come in contact with people who may end up making decisions at Division I jobs and trying to make an impression on them. The most important thing I tell young people all the time is you need to try to learn and pay attention. You need to develop relationships.

If all your relationships are at Division II, it might be hard to get noticed by someone at Division I who might be hiring for a position.

Chris's suggestion of going to settings whether it's I'll volunteer to work a Division I basketball tournament or something at a site, that's a great way to kind of get introduced and rub elbows and develop those relationships at the next level. Because people -- people are paying attention. It's my belief that people who know that one day they're going to be hiring a position, they're always on the lookout for talented people to help that maybe down the road someone will look at. It goes back to might this person be someone that can provide the kind of value I want

in this position? The problem is a lot of Division I people don't interact with Division II people very often.

So it's incumbent upon the Division II person to put themselves in a setting where they can be noticed, recognized and build those relationships.

**DAVE WALTERS:** If you in the audience have a question for one of our panelists, we have a couple more minutes. You can email it to [BarbKowal@CoSIDA.com](mailto:BarbKowal@CoSIDA.com) where you can submit it or at our CoverItLive blog at [CoSIDA.com](http://CoSIDA.com), or you can tweet it.

I have one question here from Brian who asked about the T-word, time. Specifically, he asks where SIDs might cut back and budget their time for activities that build the experience and networks that our panelists have alluded to this afternoon? I'll throw that open to any of our panelists who might have an idea about time management for the SIDs to accomplish some of these reaching out type goals.

**CHRIS SYME:** I'll jump in real quick. This is Chris. I'll say one thing. Read that Tumblr blog that David Petroff wrote the other day on mobility. There are some awesome ideas there. I would suggest that.

I think sometimes it's just a question of being able to do your work at a different time and place that you're normally used to doing it.

**PHIL TICKNOR:** I'll jump in too. This is Phil. It's funny that question came up because I was in a search committee interview for a position across campus, and I had to leave that early to hop on this call here. But one of the questions posed in the interview sort of led to one of the people on the committee talking about how their office does essentially a time budget at the beginning of the year and sort of plans out when their busy times will be. How much time they have to focus on certain things. It sort of dovetails into the idea of trying to plan as far ahead as possible.

I know from our standpoint when one of the things we have to concern ourselves with is (No Microphone), and I've got that stuff planned season by season. I'm looking at weekends in the spring that are going to be killer as soon as I have the schedules.

I'm sort of caught by surprise sometimes there are a lot of folks in our profession who don't do that and are going week to week. I tell you, if you're going week to week in our profession and you're pulling it off, more power to you. Because I have no idea how I'd get about by that way. Really, I think planning ahead is one of the biggest things.

The other thing is to have those conversations with your superior about return on investment and certain things. If there are things that you're spending a lot of time on that really isn't producing much. I'll say at our level, I don't think outside of a handful of teams and handful of sports at the Division III level, there is really not a whole lot of purpose in doing 10- to 25-page game notes. Other than if your idea is you want to do them for myself for professional development to build my resume. But other than that there is not a whole lot of return on those.

If you're doing game notes for a sport that you're not having media members attend and you're spending a lot of time on them, you might want to take a step back and wonder what the purpose is. There are two things there. One is planning ahead to budget your time. Time is money. It's the same sort of thing. You wouldn't spend all your money in the beginning. You need a plan for your time essentially.

The second piece being, you know, taking a step back and looking at it. There are things we've always done that we don't need to be doing any more?

**DAVE WALTERS:** Scott, a question for you. What is the best way to advance when you have supervisors above you who are either not leaving or who don't want you to leave, won't advocate for you because they don't want to lose you?

**SCOTT STRICKLIN:** Well, I hate to keep repeating myself on a certain issue. I think developing relationships across the industry is so key. I've worked at five different schools. Every job I've ever gotten somebody picked up or somebody I knew somewhere picked up the phone and said so and so has an opening or we have an opening, would you be interested in looking at this job? That happened because I took the time to get to know people and they were around me or I was fortunate enough to get opportunities in conference tournaments or whatever where somebody saw what I was doing.

Yeah, I think if you're sitting back waiting for advancement at your own place or sitting back waiting for someone to clear the deck for you, I think there are a lot of frustrated people out there who have taken that approach. You've got to be really proactive and be willing to leave.

There are a lot of people who like the idea of staying in one place and moving up the ladder, and that sounds really idealistic. But I just think reality is a lot of times you have to leave to get the kind of advancement that a lot of people want in their career.

**DAVE WALTERS:** Sure, sure.

Question from Adam. I think we may have already touched on it a little bit. He asked if it was better to network with Division I SIDs and then make the jump from Division II or Division III to Division I, would that help if they were references? And I think what I've heard some of our panelists already say is yes, that is a good way to go.

I think what Phil has said about planning is a good thing here. You need to look around and see if there are opportunities to rub shoulders if you're working at a smaller school. Are there opportunities for you to work at some larger events or attend some larger events and just try to build relationships? And to take a bit from what Chris said, are there ways to interact with some Division I folks through social media in some of these discussion groups or online where you can build up some kind of reputation with folks and maybe be able to reach a point with someone who works at a Division I school to serve as a reference for you.

I think that effectively answers Adam's question.

One final question here: This comes from Paul at Arkansas Tech. He writes, in my efforts to move into upper athletic administration, I've tried to position myself as someone who finds a way to say yes. In many ways I look at that as professional development. What tips can you give on finding an appropriate balance between our already time consuming responsibilities and our efforts at professional development? Anyone?

**CHRIS SYME:** Well, I can tell you just briefly from my own experience that you if want to do that, you have to put in more time. It's really hard to cutaway duties that you're assigned as an SID so you can do professional development things. I think that people who really want to move forward do have to burn a little bit of the midnight oil. I don't know any other better way to say that.

**SCOTT STRICKLIN:** I would concur with Chris. I think you've got to want it really badly. There is a great story about Buzz Williams, the basketball coach at Marquette, when he was a young student manager at Oklahoma City University or somewhere like that. How he just inundated head coaches at small colleges. I think he ended up at UT Arlington, which is not a small college. Just inundated them and knocked on the door and showed up in their driveway to try to get an opportunity to break into college coaching.

Most people who work in college athletics have a similar story somewhere along the line of how they really invested a lot of time, effort, and energy to get to where they are.

**DAVE WALTERS:** That is something that SIDs aren't unfamiliar with, I should say, and that is hard work and a strong work ethic. I think that's probably what it's going to take in some instances to try to carve out the time to make the connections and gain the experiences you want to advance.

Well, that's going to conclude our time for today. If you joined us late or want to review something you've learned, we'll have a transcript courtesy of ASAP Sports on the CoSIDA.com website in a little while.

We thank ASAP Sports for its partnership with CoSIDA, and its role as official instant transcript provider.

CoSIDA.com will also have an audio archive of today's call. Thanks to our panelists, Phil, Chris, and Scott, and to CoSIDA's Director of External Affairs, Barb Kowal for making today's call possible.

Thanks to all of CoSIDA's leadership for its commitment to continuing education. Please watch your email as well as CoSIDA's website and Twitter feed for news of upcoming continuing education programs.

I'm Dave Walters wishing you all the best as you reach out and climb up in 2014. Take care, everybody.

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