

# CEPTO CITY OF EL PASO TAX OFFICE NEWSLETTER

“COMMITTED TO EMPATHIC EXCELLENCE”

## THE UNBEATEN ALERT FOOTBALL TEAM

It's football season, so a story about the impact of quality management on a football team is called for.

Two years ago the Kansas City Chiefs were terrible, so they hired a new coach. Under the new coach the same group of players who had gone 2-14 the year before, now began the season 9-0.

Why? The new coach encouraged player empowerment and alertness. As one example, during one game a wide receiver was alert and noticed that occasionally a defender on the other team would clap his hands twice and 2 defenders would then cover that receiver on that play, leaving someone else uncovered. The receiver shared this alert observation with the coaches and the rest of the offensive players; as a result

they scored 2 touchdowns on plays when the defending team clapped their hands twice, and they won the game. Multiply that kind of alertness and communication and teamwork by the number of observations/recommendations made by every player on the team and the impact was a team transforming from 2-14 to 9-0.

The empowered, alert El Paso City Tax Office Team

Just like the Kansas City Chiefs, the El Paso City Tax Office Team has been on an alert, empowered winning streak.

Seven months ago the CEPTO staff was asked to Innovate and Implement improvements in 6 areas of focus (Lean Process Improvements, Tax State-

ments, Technological Enhancements, Telephone/IVR services, Training programs, and Web-based services).

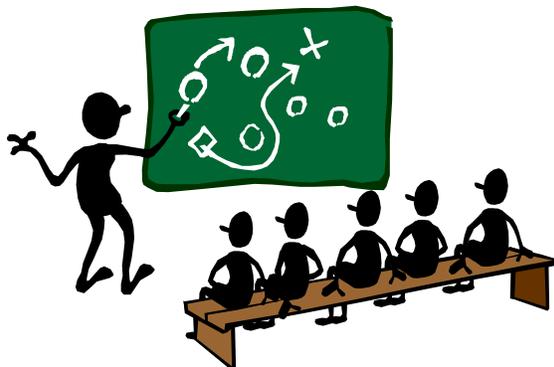
Over the past seven months the CEPTO Team has innovated at least 52 documented recommendations and 24 of those 52 are already implemented and operational. (Note: the actual numbers are higher as many recommendations were made verbally, implemented immediately and never documented.) The attached Committee Project Status Reports document an impressive explosion of creativity and persistent implementation by the CEPTO Team, which will result in significantly improved service for the citizens of El Paso.

Way to go Team Tax Office! An exceptional seven months! Thank you.

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**TAX OFFICE**  
**HOURS OF OPERATION**  
**HORARIO**  
**Monday - Thursday**  
**Lunes - Jueves**  
**7:00AM - 6:00PM**  
**Friday Closed**  
**Viernes Cerrado**

## BI-LINGUAL SERVICES

The Tax office has been consistently improving our bi-lingual services (signage, forms, etc.), and we took another giant leap forward when we recently made 6 of our website pages available

in Spanish.

Maria Ramos, Ignacio Esquivel, Susana Avila and Ingo Thomas of the I.T. Dept are to be recognized and appreciated for creating

this service for the citizens of El Paso.

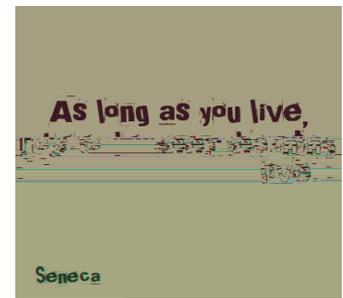
## THE SECRET TO LIVING LONGER...

...is to have a reason to.

A 14-year study of over 6,000 people found a very strong relationship between having a positive passion/purpose in life and living

longer.

In short, people who are excited about getting up in the morning get up on more mornings.



## CITIZEN APPRECIATIONS TO...

Susana Avila— *“very helpful and courteous” “she took the time to help” “very diligent”*

Liz Elizondo— *“very professional”*

Olaya Garcia— *“excellent”*

Elva Gonzalez— *“very nice and knowledgeable”*

Blanca Jacquez— *“Friendly” “very efficient, helpful, nice” “very patient and explained things”*

Nicolas Jacquez— *“very courteous”*

Paul Marquez— *“very cordial”*

Yvonne McGrew— *“very good service”*

Michael Puga— *“very helpful” “very courteous” “very knowledgeable” “fantastic”*

Maria Ramos— *“You’re the best” “Deeply appreciate your help”*

Eva Reyes— *“Awesome, went beyond call of duty”*

Jesse Rodelas— *“very courteous, respectful, professional”*

Belen Ruiz— *“very quick and courteous” “kept your cool with a rude customer”*



## KEYS TO SUCCESS #1 - FINISH STRONG!

The book On The Edge by Alison Levine discusses the importance of remaining focused, alert, and “on edge” all the way through total completion of a project. The specific example that she provides is that most accidents and deaths on Mt. Everest occur not on the ascent when the climbers are alert and

motivated to reach the peak, but on the way back down when they are physically tired and mentally relaxing. Likewise, football players talk about how many injuries occur to the player who has “relaxed” at the end of a play. In organizations, a great weakness is that many creative recommendations and proposed projects lose

momentum and are never implemented.

Whatever its called (momentum, focus, commitment, dedication, follow through, completion, stamina, etc.), finishing strong is crucial to success.

## KEYS TO SUCCESS #2—QUALITY LISTENING

Another key attribute of successful people and organizations is that they truly, fully LISTEN and truly hear accurately what is being said to them.

A recent article identified 3 categories of poor listeners:

1) **RAMBLERS** - are motivated to be the talker, and to keep chattering so that

they are the center of attention. They have no interest in having to be the audience. For them its about attention, not sharing ideas;

2) **ROBOTS** - we were all programmed to “pretend listen” in school; to stare fixedly at the speaker, and when there is a silence to nod and say “uh-huh”. That is how ROBOTS

“pretend listen” most of the time; and

3) **REGULATORS** - they regulate and censor the input. They hear what they want to hear, regardless of what is actually said.

Successful people eagerly listen in order to learn. Period.



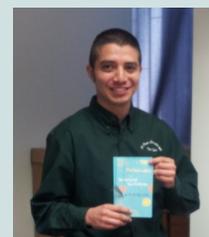
## SAD FAREWELL TO PAUL...

CEPTO bid a sad farewell to part-timer extraordinaire PAUL MARQUEZ. Paul provided outstanding citizen service and proposed numerous creative

recommendations for how to improve operations.

We are very happy for Paul that he was offered a full-time posi-

tion with another department. He is very deserving. Thank you for everything and best of luck, Paul.



## THANK YOU, BLANCA...

The Tax Office expressed our appreciation to a

departing part-timer, **BLANCA JACQUEZ**.

Blanca was an awesome contributor to the Tax Office family. She arrived just as the position of “Tax Office Greeter” was being created and, even though Blanca had no background in tax laws or procedures, she rapidly learned and

quickly began to create and define this critical position. Her dedication, professionalism, creativity, commitment to constant improvement and commitment to quality empathetic customer service were greatly appreciated by the Tax Office family and by her customers.

Blanca was a great “face” of the Tax Office. Thank you Blanca!

## AT LONG LAST...

!!



At long last, known bean counter MARIA RAMOS was arrested, jailed and silenced...*for a while!*



Staff roared their approval as America's finest cuffed her and led her away.

For one blissful afternoon there was no stomping of Prada high heels, no yelling of "Did you balance it 5 times! Not 3. 5!!" "And there was no screeching of "Why is my tea cup empty!"

Unfortunately, after a couple of hours in the Muscular Dystrophy Association's Fundraiser Slammer, she was released...and returned...and demanded more honey in her tea.

But, it was great to be free of the tyranny for a few hours.

## BRAIN TEASER...

Attached is a "Word Play" brain teaser. The first 3 staff members to submit the correct answers to Dr. Childs will receive a prize.

*Good luck!*



"A mind that is stretched by a new experience can never go back to its old dimensions."

— Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr.

## LEAN PROCESS/RESOURCES IMPROVEMENT COMMITTEE STATUS UPDATE

09/10/2014

PROJECT PRIORITY	PROJECT DESCRIPTION	STATUS
1	Clarify refund / transfer application with improved "proof of payment" description	Complete
2	Create a central drop off center for Cust. Serv. Documents.	Complete
3	Work with Parks and Rec. on web tax payments training/assistance to citizens.	In Progress
4	Escrow signature line to be moved from bottom center to bottom left.	Complete
5	Escrow overpayments under \$5 applied to next year's tax bill.	Complete
6	Imaging "Bad Address" envelopes	Implemented
7	Escrow agreements change "shall" to "may" make payments of ...	Awaiting legal review
8	Reminder on Web and to pay before January 31st.	Will be put on in October
9	Cashier workstation ergonomic re-design.	Pending Budget
10	Web Portfolio Payment Training for Small Companies	Pending
11	Public Signage Regarding: 1) Delgado on 14th, and 2) No credit/debit cards	Signs Ordered

## TAX STATEMENTS COMMITTEE STATUS UPDATE

09/10/2014

PROJECT PRIORITY	PROJECT DESCRIPTION	STATUS
1	Emphasize Prop ID # (Geo # for internal use only)	Done
2	Bold "Balance Due" or "Paid in Full" on receipt	Done
3	Note 1.98% fee for Credit Card transactions	Done
4	Revert to old quarter pay message. "You may qualify..."	Done
5	Quarter coupons to include delinquent amount due	In Feb. '15
6	Include "Total Amount Due" on statements	Done
7	Reminder bullets on back of statement or envelope	Done
8	Instructions on how to pay multiple accounts	Pending
9	Ask Delgado to highlight Prop ID #	Pending
10	Include Codes "T" or "L" in Payment Agreement #s	Done
Stand-by	2-paged Tax Statements (1 English; 1 Spanish)	
Stand-by		



## TELEPHONE / IVR COMMITTEE STATUS UPDATE

09/10/2014

PROJECT PRIORITY	PROJECT DESCRIPTION	STATUS
1	Customer friendly explanation of how to enter amount desiring to pay	In Progress
2	Improving success rate of payments (i.e. entering routing # twice to verify)	In Progress
3	Menu re-phrasing and message re-phrasing (in Spanish also)	In Progress
4	Insert Message: If paying amount less than \$1.00 (then explain how)	In Progress
5	Clarify message on how to enter year for Credit Card payments	In Progress
6	Improve welcome message—too long	In Progress
7	Message reminding to pay early to avoid IVR wait times	Will be put on in October
8	Clarification of what tax year they want to pay (current vs. delinquent)	Awaiting Programming
9	Welcome message - Top 3 Services	Pending
10	Clarify tax year vs. calendar year	Pending
11	Abort scripts by pressing zero	Pending



## WEBSITE COMMITTEE STATUS UPDATE

09/10/2014

PROJECT PRIORITY	PROJECT DESCRIPTION	STATUS
1	Penalty and interest waiver info. Put on website with link to property tax code	Completed
2	Update refund and transfer applications form on web, (clarify proof of payment requirement)	Completed
3	All messages & links on tax website in Spanish	Completed
4	Acknowledgement of E-payment. Remove "successfully" so just say "submitted"	Completed
5	Improve payment screen (routing number in one box and a verifying re-enter 2nd box)	Completed
6	Ability for a taxpayer to print duplicate receipt	Completed
7	Make "Print your tax statement" more visible	Completed
8	Do not auto-populate total due. Give options of what amount to pay	Awaiting Programming
9	Self search "Am I due a refund" (put on FAQ's page and Top Services page)	Completed
10	Payment pending pop-up	Awaiting Programming
11	Add a "Consent" Checkbox next to returned item fee message	Awaiting Programming
12	Ability to request a tax certificate online	Completed
13	Home Page "Bulletin Board" messages	In Development
14	Monthly Usage "Screen Hits" Report	Completed
15	Add "Not Usable" message to Self Printed Duplicate Receipts	Pending
16	Scheduled/Recurring Payments - e-checks	In Development

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PRESIDENT EISENHOWER had a wonderful quality, an aide once observed. "He could look at people with a smile and get them to do what he wanted."

It's a wonderful quality to have. Other things being equal, a friendly, likable supervisor is always more persuasive than one who isn't.

There's nothing wrong with a pleasant, good-natured approach to people and problems - in fact, there's none better. The strange thing is that we so often forget to use it.

Why?

One reason is that - under the pressure of business - we sometimes take ourselves a little too seriously. We get to thinking about our own feelings and problems and forget about the other fellow's.

Another reason - a bit more subtle - is that so many people think they have to be gruff or grumpy in order to appear firm and decisive and to get things done. That isn't so.

You can be just as firm and decisive with a smile on your face as you can with a scowl.

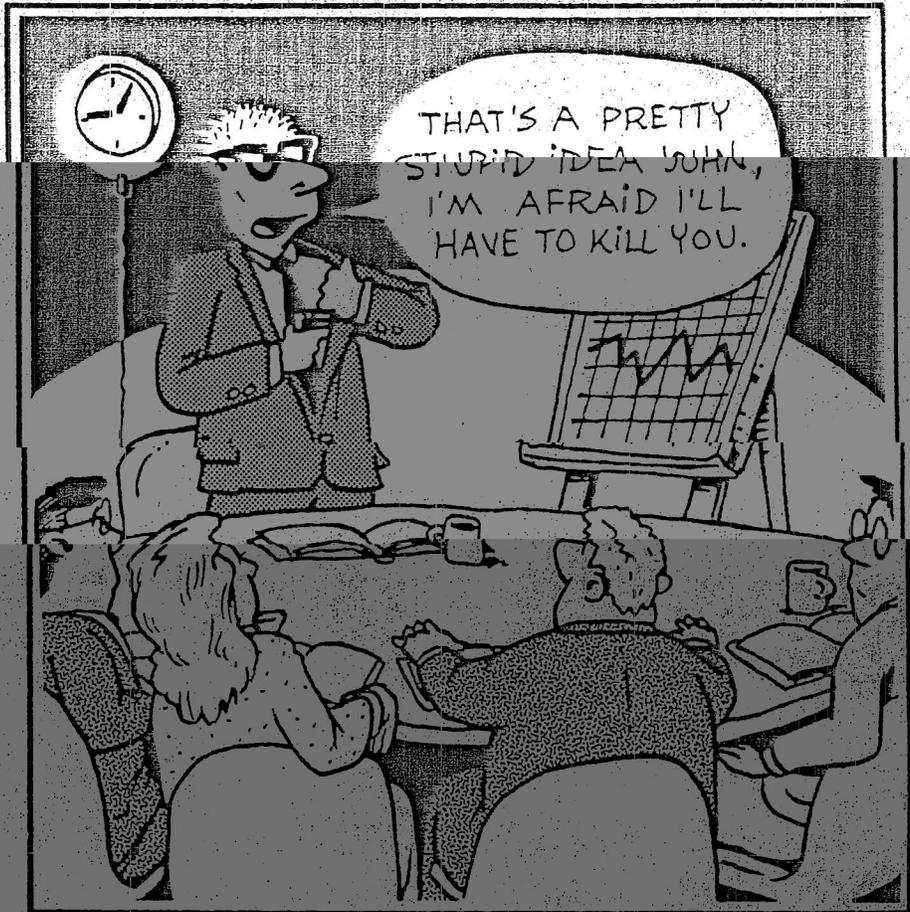
And just as convincing too - once people have learned that you have a habit of meaning what you say and following through to make it stick.

If you take a minute to think of some of the best bosses you've ever worked for, you'll find that most of them . . .

- were approachable and easy to talk to,
- rarely became overexcited or flew off the handle,
- didn't let a few problems poison their whole outlook,
- took a friendly, pleasant approach,
- and showed consideration for the feelings of the people who worked for them.



GILLMANIA



**Y**ou can do anything if you have *enthusiasm*.

*Enthusiasm* is the yeast that makes your hopes rise to the stars.

*Enthusiasm* is the spark in your eye, the swing in your gait, the grip of your hand,

the irresistible surge of your will, and your energy to execute your ideas.

*Enthusiasts* are fighters, they have fortitude, they have staying qualities. *Enthusiasm* is at the bottom of all progress. With it, there is accomplishment. Without it, there are only alibis.

—Henry Ford

