

Concerns for WBCCI

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This is the third of the papers I promised. As stated in the last paper, this will address more specifically those changes that I believe might contribute to the survival of WBCCI. Admittedly, these are my opinions and certainly open to discussion and disagreement. In fact, I welcome others thoughts as I believe that many recognize what needs to be done to assure the Club's future. The problem has been one of action, or the lack there of. At some point, we need to cease talking and get on with doing!

My comments are based upon my experience both in academia and in the practical world of organizations. To begin, I spent the first forty-four years of my life in the military, first as a dependent growing up in the military environment where my father was a senior officer, next as a young soldier for over three years, a cadet at West Point for four years and finally as an Infantry officer leading in various situations to include combat. I think I understand the military structure and structures similar to the military. I worked in a corporate environment for seven years before launching my own company. I understand the corporate environment. My company consulted on change management, so I have a grasp of the difficulties of change. Finally, my academic work is in the area of organizational behavior, management and leadership.

The 20-20 Committee

A good start is the work already in progress by the 20-20 Committee. All should read their latest report. If half of their recommendations are taken seriously, we would be on the way to returning WBCCI to the great club it once was.

Staying Focused

We should view all we do through the prism of our mission statement. In other words, what does WBCCI stand for and what is its goal. Once we have that clear, everything we do should support that goal. If it does not support that goal or worse, if it

detracts from that goal, we should cease doing it immediately. This begins with the IBT!

What is WBCCI's Goal?

WBCCI has drifted away from being a caravanning and camping club to being an organization fixated on "structure" and hierarchy. An inordinate amount of time and energy is spent on formal events that seem to benefit a few but irritate many. Just look at the emphasis on uniforms. Not only the senior managers but also their distaff side wears distinctive uniforms that further separate them from the Club members. I suspect this practice crept into our Club through the influence of former military folks. This practice has lost favor in today's military and has outlived its value to our Club if it ever was of value.

A simple review of practices that benefit and aggrandize a few but irritate many would surface issues that can be easily resolved

Leadership in WBCCI?

When we look at the leadership within WBCCI, a couple of points come to mind. One, we are content with managers and not leaders. Generally, these individuals self-select. Once having "volunteered," they are moved along to higher positions with little or no thought given to either their ability or their temperament for the positions. These folks are advanced not for their ability to lead the organization but more for their ability to manage the day-to-day activities.

We are content with managers willing and able to put on "events" and we neither expect nor demand much else from them.

Understand, this is not a criticism of these individuals, for they are providing exactly what we ask of them. The problem, if that can be said, is the Club is getting exactly what it is asking for. For the most part, this has served WBCCI well over the years. Unfortunately, that is not what WBCCI needs. Today, we should allow our leaders to focus on the needs of the organization beyond rallies.

WBCCI fosters the practice of selecting managers and not leaders. This works well when all you want, or need is the status quo. The successful manager is one who does not “rock the boat” and who ingratiates himself with the existing management structure. Successful managers maintain order and neatness in the existing organization.

Close observation of the IBT for four years leads me to recognize that there is clearly a strong norm for the behavior of the IBT members. This norm is one that rewards agreement over disagreement; one that values consensus over divergent thinking; one that maintains the status quo rather than allowing change. Moreover, the non-verbal behaviors exhibited by senior members of the IBT clearly show favor on those who “fall in line” and disdain for those who do not agree with the executive committee.

The Power structure of IBT!

The International President is certainly entitled to pick his/her treasurer and secretary. However, we should not be asked to “vote” on them so as to enable them to be voting members of the IBT. As it now stands, the executive committee holds sufficient voting power to override the Region President’s with the help of a few Region presidents who can be counted upon to follow the lead of the executive committee. This takes the power from those more closely representing the rank and file and centers it on the executive committee.

The Misuse of Rules

Certainly organizations require some structure and the constitution is a means to provide that structure and order. *Robert’s Rules of Order* is a useful tool to bring order to assemblages. However, we sometimes use both to stifle discussions and muffle viewpoints that differ from those of the senior leadership. The Constitution of WBCCI should be reviewed to insure that it contains only those points necessary to maintain our Charter; **it should be written so as to be long on spirit and short on words**. It should not be used by the IBT to block divergent opinions.

The System

There is too much emphasis on the “good ole boy” system within the Club. This follows on the comment above concerning the norms dictating how one “gets along” with the “power structure.” This practice violates all the leadership practices advocated in such recent books as *Good to Great*. This “network” begins at the Region level and gains strength as it moves upward through the system. It is very apparent at the International level. Again, I suspect that this was the “way it was done” in the structured organizations of many who volunteer for positions within WBCCI.

However, this is not the past, this is today. This nepotistic practice violates all the examples of good leadership practices. Effective leaders of today are not aloof; they work closely with their followers. There is less concern for status and perks and more concern for the accomplishment of the task and the betterment of the organization. There is less emphasis on structure and formality and more emphasis on having access to and association with the members of the organization. There is more emphasis on “what can I do to better the organization” rather than the status and perks offered by the position.

The Future

Clearly, WBCCI requires strong leadership that recognizes the issues and more importantly, is willing to address these issues. Again, many points made in the 20-20 Committee report provide a good beginning. We can only trust that the committee’s effort does not find its place with the many dust covered surveys conducted in the past.

And finally, if nothing else, I hope that these papers generate some thought and discussion. I realize that there are many more points that you may add to this paper and perhaps some you might want to delete. None-the-less, in my view these are some of the larger cultural issues that need to be addressed before we concern ourselves with tweaking the small points.

Thank you for reading them.