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Interview with Bob Blundred

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Bob

INTERVIEW WITH BOB BLUNDRED

BY

DAVID L. GROVES

ABSTRACT

Bob Blundred has been one of the leaders in the amusement parks and attractions field. He has helped formulate a sound foundation that has made the industry into a major social and economic force in our society.

QUESTION 1: What has been your role in the profession?

ANSWER: I have been a professional organization manager for 35 years. This includes experience with the International Association of Amusement Parks and Attractions and the coin-operated music and game industry. There is a difference between trade associations and professional organizations but, for the sake of this presentation, we will assume that they are similar entities. Association management techniques are the same for most organizations whether they are trade or professional. Management from one association to another is directly dependent upon your performance with one organization and how well you have managed this operation. As a result of your reputation, your name, will become prominent and you will have the opportunity for advancement.

QUESTION 2: What has been your major contribution?

ANSWER: My primary role as I see it with trade associations or professional societies is as an educator in helping others to understand their organization and how to better approach their operations to improve their profit lines. This has been accomplished with most organizations that I have been affiliated with through the conferences and emphasizing professional educational workshops that have a practical application. Educational materials and efforts have a significant impact upon an organization because it helps to mold the organizational position and allows them to explore new ideas and techniques.

QUESTION 3: What has been your primary role as a director?

ANSWER: My primary function as director of an organization was to see the overall picture and how the pieces fit together from operation to operation and provide some type of educational activities to help the members solve their problems. One of the most important elements among skills of association management is the ability to stimulate cooperation among members so that there is a sharing of ideas and the responsibility for improvement of the profession can be shared among all of its members and they take part in the educational process. In the private sector, especially in the outdoor amusement industry, the amount of competitiveness has a direct influence upon the educational activities. The outdoor amusement industry tends to be less competitive because each of the attractions serve their own local market and even if there are different attractions in the same area they have their own personality and character and find their own niche in the marketplace. For example, a kiddie park can be beside an animal farm and both be highly successful because they have carved out a specialized marketplace for themselves.

QUESTION 4: What has been your biggest challenge?

ANSWER: The biggest challenge is anticipating owners' and managers' problems and helping them to see the solutions to these problems through educational processes. It is important to have a positive personality to work well with the membership. Rapport with the membership is essential so as to stimulate a willingness to share successful ideas.

QUESTION 5: What is the general role of an executive director of an Association?

ANSWER: The primary role of an executive director is to provide leadership through the motivation of the membership. Leadership, in this context, is being on the cutting edge of new trends and solutions to problems without interfering with individual operations. One of the frustrations may be being able to see patterns and trends but not having individuals to accept these ideas that would improve their operation. This is the reason why it is essential that members become part of the solution and be able to document and direct one member to another in terms of sharing a critical element to an organization. Many organizational managers who cannot provide leadership in the context outlined find themselves in a precarious situation and at odds with many members, which sometimes results in conflicts and does not allow them to effectively complete their job.

QUESTION 6: Have you achieved your professional goals?

ANSWER: I have not been able to achieve my goals as of yesterday. You cannot sit still because someone is always on your heels. This type of position takes a great amount of energy and endurance.