

The Constellation

A newsletter for Answering Service Employees; donated to the industry by TeamSNUG



Constellation

Spotting the North Star – and in that way knowing the direction north – has gladdened the heart of many a traveler throughout history.

The North Star or Pole Star – aka Polaris – is famous for holding nearly still in our sky while the entire northern sky moves around it. That's because it's located nearly at the north celestial pole, the point around which the entire northern sky turns. Polaris marks the way due north. As you face Polaris and stretch your arms sideways, your right hand points due east, and your left hand points due west. About-face from Polaris steers you due south.

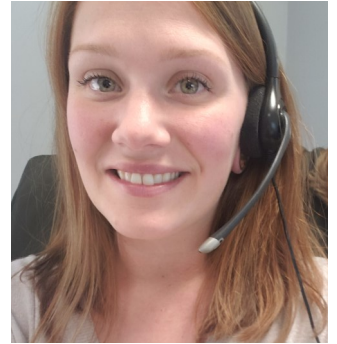
A Shining Star to Guide the Way...

Today's Luminary is

Erica Burke

Newtown Answering—Morrisville PA

Submitted By Theran Mossholder



After being in the industry for 10+ years and growing the company over that time, it was clear that I needed some help. I

went on the search looking for a general manager and more importantly to find the right fit for our company and team. As we all know, this can be a long and difficult process especially when hiring from outside the industry, but what I knew was, I wanted to bring in someone who would bring a fresh look and new ideas to the company. After months of searching we stumbled on a bright young manager eager to make a move...Erica joined our team in November of 2018.

After graduating from Temple University in Philadelphia, PA, Erica pursued a career in the hotel industry where she worked her way up to the general manager position at a large hotel chain. Not enjoying the hour plus commute every day, and wanting to get closer to home, Erica joined our team so she could spend more time with her family and find a place where she could grow and be more involved in a small business. At home, Erica is married to her husband Joe and 3 young girls (adding one since she's been with us) Leigh, Paisley and Sylvie. When she does take vacation she loves spending time up at the Great Wolfe Lodge in the Poconos (PA's Getaway) or down at her parents' lake house.

Since joining our team Erica has really found her place working every day with our staff. Her passion and enthusiasm working with people is why we brought her on board. Her focus, which is around the day-to-day well-being of our employees' lives, has really helped improve the morale of our staff and the quality of our operations. Teaching, coaching, and developing our people to truly bring out their best is her primary focus, while also working on schedules and reviews.

In addition to working with the employees, Erica also works with customers. Assisting them with their everyday needs like staff changes, on call schedules, and just about any basic question, Erica is there doing what she can. She is even dabbling a little into some minor programming, doing whatever it takes to make sure the customers are happy. Her eagerness to learn new things really shines.

Erica has truly been an invaluable addition to our team and a shining light for our employees. I can never thank her enough for the work that she does and the time she puts in every day. She has been a huge help to me allowing me the opportunity pursue other ideas and ventures. I'm very thankful to have her as part of our team and grateful to be able to call her a colleague and a friend.

Pause to Review - More Organized Messages

We've all done it! We've dashed off and quickly sent an e-mail or instant message only to think of one more thing we should have said – so we quickly write that second thought and hit “send” again. But WAIT, I should have told them this...and off goes a third message.

In the meantime, the recipient is writing a long answer to the first message, not knowing there is a correction in the second message, and more information in a third message. They send their reply, and THEN see the additional messages, and now need to write something new. What a waste of everyone's time and energy.

Let's see if we can stop the crazy!

Before you hit “send” on an e-mail, or “enter” on an instant message – hit REVIEW in your brain. Go to the beginning of the message and read it as though you were receiving it. Fix the typos, fill in the words you left out. Be sure you have complete content. More than 50% of the time you will clarify something, or realize you left out some important information.

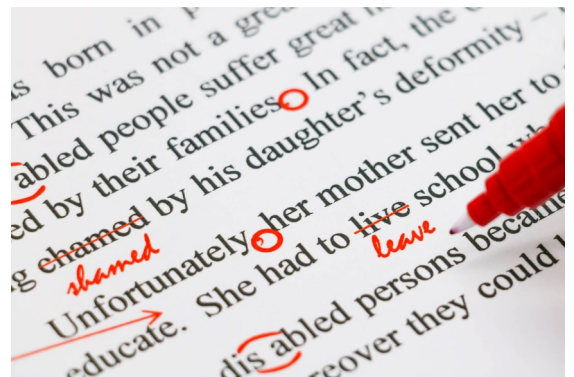
We are not only confusing others, and causing additional work for all involved, we are wasting their precious time – and right now especially, we have no extra time to spend! To make matters worse, we are frustrating not only those receiving these disjointed messages, we are frustrating ourselves.

Take time.

Think things through. Often as we review, we will realize that we could make our message sound nicer; when we're rushing what we write, it may come across as abrupt, or even negative. Don't let that happen. When you review as though you are the recipient you catch things that might sound snarky, or as though you are criticizing, when in fact you were only trying to get the message done in a hurry. The last thing you want to do is hurt someone's feelings or put them in a defensive position. You might then have to send out an apology when no harm was meant. (It has happened to all of us.) And it is sure to make the recipient (and worse, everyone, if your message went to a listserv or group conversation) think you have a negative attitude.

Pause to Review!

Organize your thoughts so that everything is clear to you and clear to anyone you sent it to. Whether you are sending information or asking a question, don't rush – this Pause to Review – will actually help clarify things in your own mind and expedite the process. Taking time – saves time!



THE BLACK SPOT

One day a professor entered the classroom and asked his students to prepare for a surprise test. They waited anxiously at their desks for the test to begin. The professor handed out the question paper, with the text facing down as usual. Once he handed them all out, he asked his students to turn the page and begin. To everyone's surprise, there were no questions....just a black dot in the center of the page. The professor seeing the expression on everyone's face, told them the following:

"I want you to write what you see there."

The students, confused, got started on the inexplicable task.

At the end of the class, the professor took all the answer papers and started reading each one of them aloud in front of all the students. All of them with no exceptions, described the black dot, trying to explain its position in the middle of the sheet, etc. etc. etc. After all had been read, the classroom silent, the professor began to explain:

"I am not going to grade on you this, I just wanted to give you something to think about. No one wrote about the white part of the paper. Everyone focused on the black dot – and the same happens in our lives. We have a white paper to observe and enjoy, but we always focus on the dark spots."

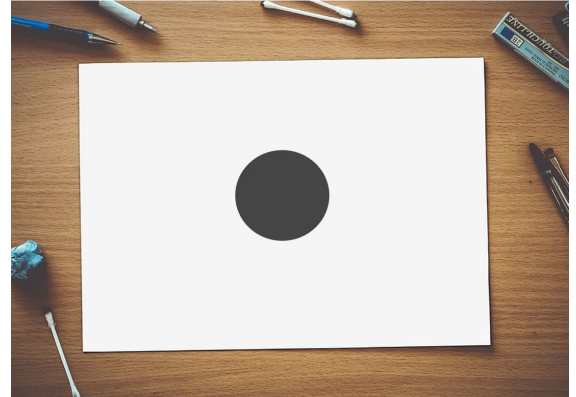
The story continued, but today we just want to center our thoughts on that large white part of the paper. Let that white paper represent the good in our lives, we have so much to appreciate, so much to make us happy, in our lives and at work. Our family and friends, who are there for us through thick or thin, yes, occasionally they might let us down, and that act might go into that black dot – but most of the time they bring us joy.

Our jobs, no they aren't perfect, but think of what they make possible. Most of us don't hate our jobs, we aren't miserable every minute we're there. Occasionally there might be something that contributes to that black dot, but most of the time we can find ways enjoy what we do, even though it might not be our life's choice. But our work makes it possible to eat food we love, to study to be more than we are now, to care for and pamper our loved ones.

Our jobs also give us the opportunity to earn praise, to be recognized, to feel good about ourselves. And they give us a way to recognize others, to make them feel good, and to help them up when they are low.

That white paper represents much to make us proud. It represents the good in today and in the future. Don't dwell on that small black dot. Don't let something that is a tiny fraction of your life take over a large part of your life.

Every day is a new beginning, a new season, make wonderful memories in that large expanse of white, those memories will carry you through life.



"You cannot have a positive life and a negative mind."

- Joyce Meyer