

The Real Power

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How did Louis Sportelli become Louis Sportelli?

How did Scott Haldeman become Scott Haldeman?

How did Fred Barge become Fred Barge?

These may seem like silly questions, but in a profession of strong and powerful personalities the answer to each may not be so obvious. Occasionally, you hear someone talk about the fact that a particular association, licensing board, or organization is "controlled" by an individual or, more likely, a group of individuals. How did this happen? Is it really "controlled?"

A very recent case in point is the Society of Chiropractic Management Consultants (SCMC). How did it begin? Who are the members? How can they do what they are doing?

The SCMC took almost two years to develop. It began with a group of consultants who knew each other and recognized the need for an organization that would encourage all consultants to maintain the highest ethical standards. The charter members included most of the major management consultants in the chiropractic profession.

Even though the society's constitution and code of ethics have only recently been ratified (please see "Management Consultants Ratify Constitution" in the November 8, 1991 issue of "DC"), the society has already begun to make its presence felt. Not only are its members reviewing their own operations to insure compliance with the new standards, but many other management consultants are taking a hard look at the SCMC's code of ethics in an effort to see how they measure up. It is anticipated that the vast majority of management consultants within the chiropractic profession will apply for membership.

In addition, Richard Vincent, D.C., the president of SCMC, was asked to meet with the Louisiana Board of Chiropractic Examiners to assist them in an effort to implement a newly enacted state consultant law (please see "Louisiana's New Management Consultants' Law" in the October 25, 1991 issue). The formation of the SCMC has allowed the member consultants to work with the state boards to better serve the profession and the public instead of being at odds with each other.

But how did this happen?

Another example took place in the early days of the Council on Chiropractic Education (CCE). In those days, part of the CCE standards included the requirement that a chiropractic college teach minor surgery. At the time, a number of states still allowed DCs to perform minor surgery as part of their practice. Palmer College of Chiropractic did not necessarily want to add this to their curriculum. As far as the college was concerned, surgery was a part of medicine, not chiropractic, and had no place within the profession.

While Palmer College couldn't see the need for surgery, they did see the need for all colleges to be accredited under one accrediting agency. They also saw the advantage their students would have if

they were allowed to practice in all 50 states. So they made a compromise, joined the CCE, and taught minor surgery.

But the compromise was only temporary. Within ten years, Palmer College with support from many of the other colleges was able to have minor surgery removed from the CCE standards. It was obvious to most that surgery was not the direction the profession was going in, so removing minor surgery came as a natural transition.

While Palmer College didn't like the idea of having to teach minor surgery to become a member of the CCE, you can bet that some of the charter members of the SCMC don't like the idea of having to act according to a code of ethics that will cause them to be constantly scrutinized. No one likes being governed by rules when before they were not. But both Palmer College and the consultants of the SCMC recognized the need to be a part of their respective organizations. They could see the ultimate benefit to the profession and the public.

In addition, both Palmer and the consultants were able to influence the outcomes of issues that concerned them. Not only has Palmer eliminated the requirement to teach minor surgery, but it has influenced most of the other changes in the CCE standards that have occurred over the years. The consultants who are members of the SCMC have a voice with the state boards. This is progress not only in terms of the future of the profession, but also in terms of its unity.

But what was the secret?

They got involved! They didn't just complain about the problem, try to form a new organization, or adopt an attitude of being separate and independent of the important issues that faced them. They were willing to compromise and work within the system. They saw the needs of the profession as greater than their own self-interests.

Most of the time, when an individual or group complains about not being able to work within an organization, or seeks a way to justify their reason for creating a new organization, they make the same statement: "Changing any organization which already has an established power base and bureaucracy is nearly impossible." If you inquire, "Where you ever an involved member in the organization?" they will ultimately tell you "No" but only after trying to qualify the answer by making it sound as if they had tried to change the organization for most of their life.

The facts are clear, history does repeat itself. Those who get involved and try to work from within accomplish much. If they really sacrifice themselves, they become chiropractic role models. Those that do nothing but complain, or worse yet, try to separate and destroy, only serve to waste resources and the energies of those who trusted them.

Getting involved doesn't translate into getting your own way. Instead, you get the privilege of becoming part of the direction and future of the profession, which most people think is more important.

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