

Core4 at LancasterHistory.org Clarity and Agreement, Results and Joy . . . Yes!



“Holding regular one-to-one meetings: it’s so simple, but so brilliant!”

“We LOVE the proposal process!”

“I feel more accountable to others.”

“I’m working differently with my colleague.”

“I’ve been given the structure I crave. It makes me more productive.”

Members of LancasterHistory.org’s eight-person leadership team made these comments in fall 2013 as Jean Kilheffer Hess and Susan Wood wrapped up a fifth Core4 session with them. Beginning in April, Jean and Susan led five 3-hour interactive sessions teaching managers to build trust, delegate effectively, clarify accountabilities, and make good decisions.

Just six months earlier the organization’s environmentally sustainable Campus of History opened as a portal for history in Lancaster County. The ten-acre, park-like setting that hosts the 35,000 square foot new facility as well as the home of America’s 15th president, James Buchanan, attracts more than 100,000 visitors a year. Tom Ryan, PhD, President and CEO, leads the staff of 25 which is charged with sharing the heritage

and history of the people, places, and events that shaped the Lancaster, PA region and beyond.

As the Campus of History opened to outstanding public acclaim, Tom Ryan wanted to ensure that the team guiding its daily operations was working as effectively as possible and moving towards maximum workplace happiness. Specifically, he wanted the leadership team to:

- Function optimally with one another
- Have more focused accountability, while staying open to serendipity
- Make decisions with greater buy-in and engagement, thus diminishing energy drain
- Be intentional about where to commit the organization
- Create more joy and eliminate unnecessary drama

In response to these needs, Susan and Jean led highly-interactive workshops and coaching sessions introducing Core4's simple, integrated elements:

- Clarity and agreement on performance goals
- Supportive one-to-one relationships between managers and employees
- Every employee connected to a functioning, aligned team
- Participative decision-making process

So what happened?

This combination of below-the-radar leaders of the library, archives, and collections, along with higher-visibility leaders from development, marketing, and public programming, became energized by the potential to improve "how we do business." The team's receptivity to trying new ways of working created a vibrant learning environment. Every Core4 session was filled with curiosity, humor, experimentation, and deeper insight. The team immediately put new skills to work: leading department meetings differently, communicating their own accountabilities, and clarifying staff accountabilities.

Other staff noticed changes in how the leadership team works and asked for focused training in Core4 practices. In January 2014, Susan and Jean led a session involving all staff to build skills in communication, effective meetings, decision-making, and accountability.

What's next?

Led by Tom and the leadership team, all staff are poised for improved decision-making through the proposal process, ramping up productivity

in staff meetings, and expanding everyday coaching: producing results and joy in the workplace! Core4 practices are further transforming a good organizational group into a great, highly-functioning team that meets its mission daily!



Susan O. Wood applies a strengths-based approach to employee retention, strategic planning and leadership development. Susan worked for seventeen years with CIGNA, an international financial services company, where her focus was people development and planning. From 1995–2000 she worked on information technology projects with Andersen Consulting, as a change manager.

She has an MS degree in Human Resource Development from American University/NTL Institute for Behavioral Sciences, and a BS in Education from the University of Minnesota. She lives in Mount Gretna, PA, where she is active in community affairs.



Jean Kilheffer Hess begins every client engagement with attentive listening. She brings a customer-service orientation built on curiosity, not assumptions.

Clients and colleagues appreciate Jean's ability to listen well and ask good questions, communicate clearly, understand the big picture, and guide work teams in a skills-discovery process.

The creativity and competencies Jean offers clients emerge from her experience in public accounting, management, fundraising, business resourcing, and as an entrepreneur. Jean has a BS in Accounting, CPA certification (inactive status), and an MS in Theological Studies.