

The Sinclair Advisor



E-News for our clients, prospective clients, and Associates

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Welcome to *The Sinclair Advisor*, a monthly electronic newsletter for clients and Associates of The Sinclair Advisory Group LLC. The Sinclair Advisory Group is a leading provider of strategic planning, leadership development, and expert advisory services to government agencies and private industry.

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SAG DEVELOPS NEW ORGANIZATIONAL FOCUS

In last month's issue, we told our associates that SAG leadership was having a strategic retreat at the beginning of June. While we are still putting together the results of our work, here are a few decisions we've made we'd like to share right away.

First, we are going to refine our organizational focus. Our goal is to help our clients identify, evaluate, and solve their toughest problems. Our intent is to create a unique kind of organization, blending the career experience of our Associates with a team of Consultants focused on delivering exceptional and measurable outcomes.

Second, at the heart of our business will be a simple set of values. Our team will have a passion for the work they are doing; they will always treat our clients with respect; they will be prepared to fully understand our clients' businesses and needs; and they will go out of their way to be helpful and supportive above and beyond the tasks they are asked to accomplish.

Third, our leadership team will speak regularly with our customers to assess our level of performance and to find out if there are any additional ways we can help our clients achieve their goals. We intend to develop trusted two-way partnerships with clients, not just business relationships. We will seek out and embrace opportunities in which we can solve problems as a team and deliver outcome based results.

In the next few weeks and months, we will continue to communicate our new focus and make it the heart of our organizational culture. We will take whatever steps need to be taken to make our vision for the future a reality. Whether you're a client, prospective client, associate or consultant, we think you'll be pleased by the results!

MANAGING WITH DATA FOCUS OF NEW VA CONTRACT

As our Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) readers know, VA Secretary Eric K. Shinseki has established sixteen 'transformational initiatives' for the Department. These initiatives are designed to create a Department that is, in Shinseki's words, "people-centric, forward-thinking, and results-oriented. One of those initiatives is to "use evidence and data in decision making on a more regular basis," and the Veterans Health Administration (VHA) has contracted with Sinclair Associate Albert (Al) Washko to help them accomplish the Secretary's vision.

Washko has been hired to provide coaching and leadership support to help make VHA facilities more data-driven. He was asked to do so based on his success as Director of VA's Nebraska-Western Iowa Health Care System before his retirement last March. At that facility, and at other health care facilities he has managed both within and outside of government, he successfully used data to improve performance. At Omaha, he created a series of five University-based courses to improve senior staff's analytic capabilities; trained front-line staff in data analysis techniques, and demanded that hospital management teams provide data to support their decision-making recommendations and in their regular reports on facility operations.

Under the terms of the new contract, Washko will help senior managers at twelve VA facilities throughout the nation to implement the Omaha model for approximately one year. He will make a presentation on the project at VHA's August Senior Management Conference in Chicago, and will work with VHA to select "early adopter" pilot sites following that discussion. If the pilot proves successful, VA and SAG hope to roll out the project to the entire nation.

"Because this project is attached to the Secretary's Transformation Initiatives, it already has a lot of visibility and enjoys a lot of support," Al said recently. "I think we're filling an important need for the Department."

FRED DOWNS NEWEST SAG ASSOCIATE

Administrator, author, actor and decorated Vietnam veteran Frederick (Fred) Downs, Jr. has joined SAG as our newest associate. Fred's previous positions as Chief Procurement and Logistics Officer and Chief Consultant of the Prosthetic and Sensory Aids Service for VHA make him uniquely qualified to provide subject matter expertise in areas including health care administration, financial management, logistics, procurement, project management and supply chain management.

Fred is a decorated Vietnam veteran who served in the U.S. Army as a platoon leader from 1966 through 1969. He lost his left arm above the elbow when he was severely wounded in combat. He was decorated with the Silver Star, the Bronze Star with "V" device for Valor, the Vietnam Gold Cross of Gallantry, the Combat Infantryman's Badge, and four Purple Hearts.

He is a member of the Officer Candidate School Hall of Fame: the recipient of the American Medical Association's Citation of a Layman For Distinguished Service award; and he was a 2004 Presidential Meritorious Rank Award winner. He has lectured on leadership at the United States Military Academy at West Point.

Fred is also the author of three critically acclaimed books published by W.W. Norton and Company: *The Killing Zone: My Life in the Vietnam War*, *Aftermath: a Soldier's Return from Vietnam*, and *No Longer Enemies, Not Yet Friends*. He is a member of the Screen Actors Guild and has appeared on numerous television programs and in movies.

Besides his work with SAG, Fred will continue to serve as a volunteer peer counselor at Walter Reed Army Medical Center to injured soldiers who have sustained traumatic amputations, meeting with them and helping them prepare for their lives ahead and to learn to cope with their handicaps.

For more information, contact Seth Sinclair at Seth.Sinclair@sinclairadvisorygroup.com.

JUNE BLOG POSTS

Here are the articles that appeared in our *Sinclair Speaks* blog in June. Check them out, and all our posts, at <http://sinclairadvisorygroup.blogspot.com/>.

- *Our Approach to Project Management*, by Seth Sinclair. What differentiates Sinclair Advisory Group's project management services from other consulting groups, and why we think our approach saves time and money.
- *The Lessons of Weinergate*, by Ev Chasen. What the misfortunes of former Congressman Anthony Weiner have taught us about leadership—and about the changing way in which news is disseminated.
- *Bringing New Veterans Into Civil Service*, by Pat McKlem. An important, thought-provoking proposal by a Sinclair Associate offering a useful new approach to improving returning veterans' opportunities to get Federal jobs after their separation from service.
- *SAG to Help VA Become More Data Driven*, by Ev Chasen. How the experience of Associate Al Washko will help VA use data to better manage its health care facilities nationwide (also see "Managing With Data Focus of New VA Contract," above.)
- *What Leaders Should Expect From their HR Departments*, by Gary Rossio. A former VA Director offers his thoughts on what a sound HR Department should be able to provide—and why they are key to any good organization's success.

Got an idea for a future blog post? Want to write one yourself? Email Ev Chasen at Everett.Chasen@sinclairadvisorygroup.com. Thanks!

ASSOCIATES' AREA

New Faces: As part of our new focus (see page 1) SAG has hired two new interns to support our clients and Associates:

- **Erica Eng** is a 2011 graduate of the College of William and Mary, double majoring in Marketing and Psychology. Erica has previously interned at New York Life's Richmond office, supporting their clients and policyholders, and worked at At Home Care in Richmond, helping the company to expand their business. She played Varsity Field Hockey during all four years of college. Erica will support SAG in marketing and outreach, client delivery support, and internal operations, especially finance and contract management.
- **Siddharth Rajagopalan** has just finished his third year at the University of Virginia, with a triple (!) major in Commerce (Finance and Accounting), Mathematics and Economics. (According to Siddharth, he is UVA's only current triple major.) He is an Echols Scholar at the school, and recently led a team that pitched Major League Baseball on a marketing campaign to increase the sport's youth and Hispanic fan base, which MLB is

currently implementing. Siddharth has previously interned at Right Size Law PLLC; the Smithsonian Institution; and with the Fairfax County Library System. Siddharth will evaluate the current consulting market, including SAG's competitors, our services, and industry trends, and will provide recommendations on our company's future directions. He'll also work directly with clients and learn more about management consulting.

If you get the opportunity, please take a moment to welcome Erica and Siddharth!

THE LAST WORD

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