



Meet Stephen Bauld

Author, trainer...and passionate about procurement

I had the opportunity to have dinner with Steve and his lovely wife, Wendy, when we both attended the Purchasing Management Association of Canada conference in St. John's, Newfoundland in May 2008. The sun even came out that day. Now, Steve has considerable ability in the procurement area (which by all accounts is widely recognized) but I don't think even he could coax the sun from fog! However, as you will see here, in his own words, he is a doer ... so maybe he did find a way.

—Anne Phillips, Editor

CURRENTLY, I AM the Vice President of the Ontario General Contractors Association and as such I represent the OGCA at numerous events related to construction and purchasing. I am the industry liaison with other organizations particularly in the areas of tender issues and workplace safety. I am also responsible for promoting brand recognition of the OGCA.

Like most people, I got involved in purchasing mostly by random chance. I was very young when I started at Dofasco after finishing school and I was asked if I was interested in a job in the purchasing department. Getting well paid for buying stuff sounded like a good job at the time, and I got to wear a suit! That is the short version of how it all started. It proved to be a good choice for me. Over the years, I found that you get to meet so many different people every day, learn about all types of products and services, and life is never boring.

For young people today it is one of the most exciting and rewarding areas they could ever work in, and that includes public or private sector procurement. I always say when I give purchasing speeches that most kids want to grow up

to be police officers, firefighters, doctors, or lawyers. Very seldom will you have a six year old say they want to grow up to be a purchasing agent! As a profession, we should work on changing that.

I was elected in 2007 to the board of the Ontario Institute of PMAC. I have been a PMAC member for over 30 years, as well as past president of the Hamilton district in 1992.

My 33 years of international business experience in construction and purchasing in both the public and private sectors is reflected in two books I co-authored: *Handbook of Municipal Procurement* (Toronto: Butterworths, 2002) and *Leadership, or the Lack Thereof* (Toronto: Lulu, 2006) and in the many articles that my writing partner, Kevin McGuinness, and I have had published in *Summit* magazine. For several years we anchored the magazine with our column, "In our opinion" and now we contribute regularly to "Municipal matters." We are working on the second edition of the municipal handbook as well as another book on how to manage a not-for-profit organization. I also do speaking engagements, not just on construction and purchasing, but on

leadership, which I consider an integral part of enlightened management.

I gained my municipal experience through five years at the City of Hamilton where I managed the buying staff and was responsible for approximately \$600 million annually in procurement of goods and services, and also capital construction and disposal of surplus assets. City operations are diverse and so I had the opportunity to work on the emergency preparedness committee as well... an area where, in my opinion, the support of highly competent procurement professionals is absolutely essential to the success of any emergency plan. After all who else will have to find those scarce generators and other essential supplies and services and make sure they are delivered when needed during an emergency?

Prior to working in Hamilton, I spent several years working in the private sector, first for 20 years at Dofasco in Hamilton, followed by 7 years at Johnson Machinery Co in New York City, where I negotiated purchase and sale contracts with major companies, including export and import licensing. My skills at problem solving and analysis were honed in

the school of hard knocks – the highly litigious environment of the USA.

Of course not all my life is work. I have enjoyed personally participating in many sports and also coaching. I am a certified trainer in karate and hold a 6th degree Black belt. As President of the Ontario Karate Association, I worked with the National Karate Association to win full recognition of karate under Sport Canada. When I was young I was a Canadian karate champion; now that I am older I work on my golf game which, if I do say so myself, I play quite well – at least when I am not injured – a statement that will resonate with golfers!

I am also proud to give back to my community through charitable work. My wife and I helped with the Kemp Family's annual fundraiser, and I enjoyed being the MC at their "Night of the Black Pearl" event fundraiser for breast and prostate cancer. We also helped to organize the annual St Joseph's Villa Gala fundraiser for the seniors' centre and we worked with the Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic Children Aid Society, organizing fundraisers to help under-privileged children.

That may also seem like work to many

of you, but trust me, Wendy and I have fun at it. I also enjoy spending time with my very talented wife who is an accomplished Canadian artist, our three adult children, and now four beautiful grandchildren.

When Editor Anne asked me about retirement, I told her it has never entered my mind. I envision myself working till I drop, writing books, speaking engagements, golfing, traveling with my friends and family and whatever else I can think of. I cannot sit around; never have, never will. Life is too short. The most important aspect is to have your health and then the sky is the limit. A lifetime in the purchasing arena has been good to me, and I hope to stay involved with procurement for the rest of my life, in one aspect or another.

Anne also asked me what challenges I see ahead.

As the former purchasing manager for a large municipality you have certain opinions. Now working with the OGCA and contractors on all purchasing-related government and private sector contracts, I can see both sides of the fence. The chance to work both sides of the street is very rare, and I think it provides a better

understanding of how the overall procurement process can be fair, open, and transparent for all parties involved. I have been very fortunate to have a ring-side seat and viewpoint from every perspective possible. So, for me, the top three challenges in procurement today are, in no particular order:

- Leadership – making sure you are improving your skills, and self worth, and piece of mind every day.
- Communication – interacting, and networking with as many people as you can to improve your soft skills.
- Work environment – it is very important to work in an environment that you thrive in, that you are excited to get up and go to every day. Eight hours can go by in eight minutes if you are in a good job with good people. The exact opposite is also true if you are working for a poorly run operation or the employees are all on different pages of the playbook. People who love their work are as much an asset to the organization as the organization is that provides a positive workplace is to its people. *MM*