

## **No, we can't do that.....Really?**

There's a poster from World War II of Rosie the Riveter saying "We Can Do It".

She was right.



While we're not fighting any wars in our daily business life, we should have the same "Can-Do" attitude.

Deciding how to give students a broader choice of meals for lunch, or determining the appropriate budget account to charge for consultant fees are simple tasks. We perform these every day. But what about when someone comes to you asking you to help in brainstorming ideas to speed up the student lunch line. Or "How can we move the job vacancy announcement and entire application and hiring process from paper to electronic form?" For these issues we need the "Can-Do" attitude that says, "Yeah, I can do that."

Do we have less people at our disposal to help us with these projects? You bet we do. Do we perhaps have fewer funds available to get these projects done? We sure do. Can you elect not to do these types of projects? No, you can't. By the nature of your role in your organization, administration counts on you to be able to get these things done.

Do any of us truly want our district to look the same 10 or 15 years from now as it does currently? No, not any more than we would want it to look right now as it did 25 years ago. Changes being suggested now require more thought, more planning, more work and more "Can-Do" attitude than ever before. Because many advances in efficiency have already been implemented, you have to look much harder to find the next project that will bring true positive change. This takes great effort. Don't get discouraged by this. The projects you undertake, complete and implement will likely free up labor and will likely reduce the dollars needed to operate, so in the long run your district will be more efficient.

You know you can do it, but what's holding you back are the obstacles in your way. Obstacles such as finding the time to take on a new task, finding the right people to work with that can help make this a success. Harry Truman once stated, "*In periods where there is no leadership, society stands still.*" Be the leader who accepts the challenge. Be the leader who says "Can-Do". It's likely if you don't, no one else will. Be a part of your district not standing still, and making positive progress. I know we all already do this to the extent of our daily job responsibilities. This is doing a little more than your usual effort. This is stepping up and saying "I'm going to be one of the people who makes a difference."

I work in Purchasing and creating a bid for paper or light bulbs is not difficult. Creating an RFP for a new Title I program is challenging. Creating a bid cooperatively with several other districts for a facility service that is unique to each district is difficult and the type of task that cause most of us to say, "No thanks, not me." These are the times we need the

“Can-Do” attitude. There is an answer as to how to gather the necessary information to formulate the bid. There is an answer of how to gather the appropriate people who can contribute the technical information. There is an answer of how to administer these tasks and aggregate this information to produce a bid that numerous districts can take advantage of and use to benefit their districts. You’ve just got to say I “Can-Do” this, and make the extra effort to do so.

I would be remiss if I did not take this opportunity to point out a colleague of mine who took on this type of challenge. Steve Starmer, Purchasing Manager for Frederick County Public Schools, initiated a project of a bus bid for all of the school districts in the state. Imagine the coordination a mission such as this would require. It would have been much easier for Steve to say, “No thanks, I’ve got enough to do.” Instead he said, I “Can-Do” that. A huge and complex undertaking is now a finished product to be introduced in the near future.

So the next time you’re presented with a challenging chore where the initial apparent answer is “there’s no way to do that”, stop and think of Rosie the Riveter and think “Can-Do”. I’ll go further and state that we should not only have the “Can-Do” attitude, but more importantly the “Will-Do” attitude.

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