

NEW HEIGHTS

Southern Region Middle Managers Newsletter

November 2016



The Sky's the Limit for Middle Managers in Asheville!

by Sheri Schwab, NC State Univ.

We hope you already have your calendars blocked for the upcoming Southern Region Middle Managers Professional Development Conference! This will be held at the Renaissance Hotel in majestic downtown Asheville, NC, March 13 through 16, 2017.



The program will begin with world-class training from professional staff at the Center for Creative Leadership. Each registrant will receive a full day's worth of high-level professional development focused on the skills needed to excel in his/her management position. Both you as a Middle Manager as well as your organization will reap the long-term benefits of an investment in your development such as this one. Come ready to soak up a lot of knowledge!

We will also have excellent sessions on best management practices from colleagues around the Southern Region. During the first week of December, North Carolina will begin seeking presentations for these sessions. So, if you know of a colleague that has an excellent example of great practices that would be willing (oh the agony!) of coming to Asheville, please reach out to one of the co-chairs.

The registration website will be up the first week of December as well, and we will send out an email once it is live. The cost will be \$500 for registration, which includes 3 breakfasts, 3 lunches, and one dinner, as well as the training and tours. Hotel costs are separate.

We look forward to seeing you in Asheville!

Your Co-Chairs

Sheri Schwab (sheri_schwab@ncsu.edu) and Barbara Board (baboard@ncat.edu)

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Greetings Fellow Middle Managers!

by Sheri Schwab, NC State Univ.

I am thrilled to be serving as your chair this year. The work of Middle Managers is critical in the success of every organization. I have seen this time and again throughout my career, especially when I worked in Human Resources. It was plain to see that, no matter what the executive team said, it was the Middle Managers who make the culture and develop the people. Likewise, they can break it too. That's why it is of top importance to those of us in Extension to devote our effort and focus on the development of Middle Managers.

My focus this year will continue the work set by our previous chairs and the committee – with a strong focus on the skills and attributes needed for success of this core group of people.

Research from the Center for Creative Leadership (CCL) shows that Social Intelligence is the key significant predictor of success for Middle Managers. As we all know, what got us here won't get us there!

Dr. Bill Gentry with CCL's research shows that "It's important for middle managers to develop their social intelligence by obtaining developmental experiences or leadership training so they can enhance their workplace relationships," said Gentry. See the full study report, visit <http://www.ccl.org/leadership/pdf/research/IronyOfIntegrity.pdf>.

Our upcoming Middle Managers Conference will bring the world-class training of CCL on this exact topic. We look forward to seeing you in Asheville in March 2017!

Throughout the upcoming year, please know that I am here to best serve what you as Middle Managers in the Southern Region need.



2016 Southern Region Middle Managers Officers

Chair: Sheri Schwab (North Carolina State University)

Vice-Chair: Dee Cooper (Oklahoma State University)

Secretary: Sharon Reynolds (University of Arkansas)

Past Chair: Jeff Young (University of Kentucky)

Newsletter Editors: Eric Simonne and Kayla Butcher (University of Florida)

Understanding Employee Engagement through Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs!

by Matt Benge, Extension Assistant Professor, University of Florida



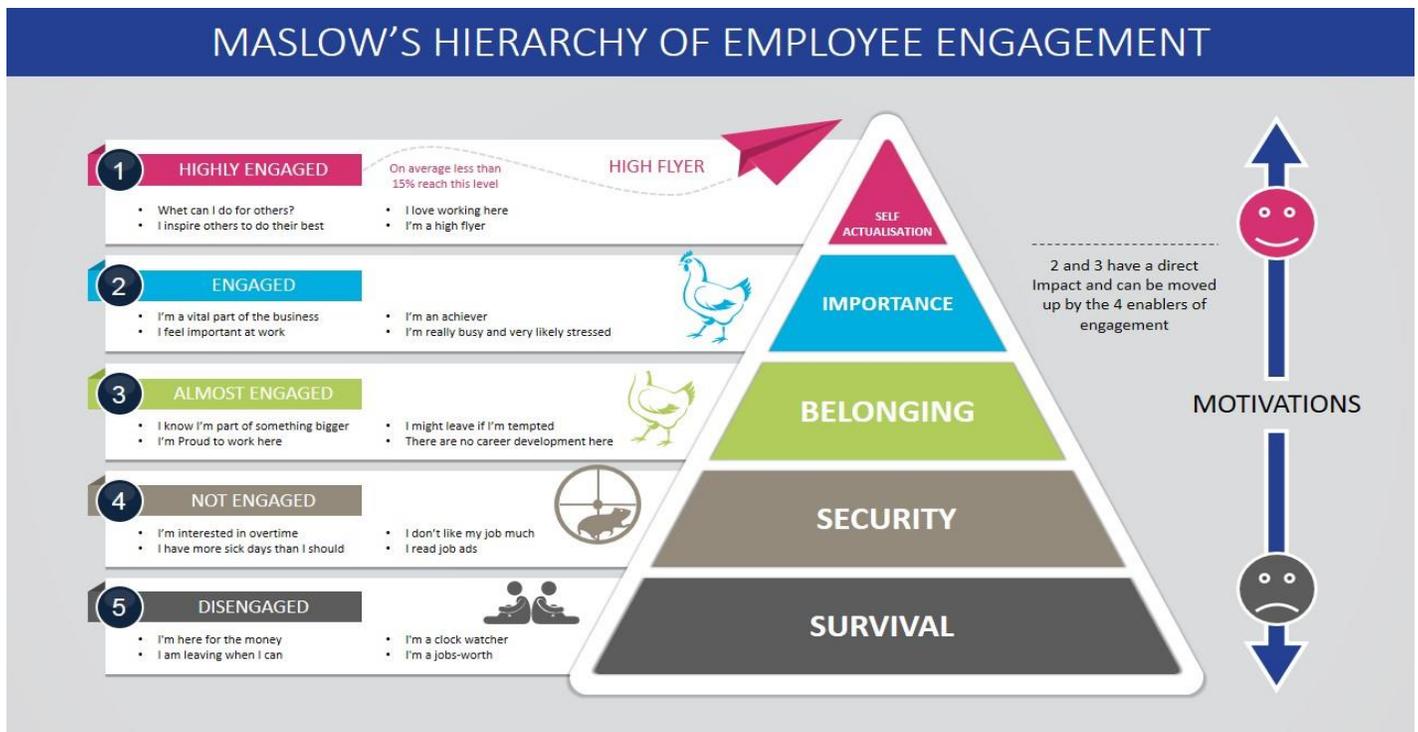
Famed psychologist Abraham Maslow developed the Hierarchy of Needs to explain the motivation behind human behavior. Maslow suggests that we seek first to satisfy the lowest of needs (survival needs, such as food, water, and shelter). Once these needs are met, a person can seek to satisfy each higher level until all needs are met to reach self-actualization.

The Hierarchy can also be used to help explain employee engagement and motivation. Employees whose lowest level needs have not been met will make job decisions based on compensation, safety, or stability concerns. Also, employees will revert to satisfying their lowest level needs when these needs are no longer met or are threatened (such as during an economic downturn).

The point? Employees desire to work in an environment where they are accepted in the organization and have positive interactions with colleagues. If low level needs go unmet, employees will become disengaged, dissatisfied, and will likely leave the organization.

For Extension managers and supervisors, I've outlined some reflective questions for you to consider regarding employee engagement:

1. How many of your employees are in 'survival' mode"?
2. Do I have more unengaged employees than engaged?
3. What am I doing to help employees, both new and veteran, to become engaged within the organization?



A Word from the Administrative Liaison to the Southern Region MM Committee

Innovation in Extension

by Doug L. Steele, Director Texas A&M AgriLife Extension



Director liaison to the Middle Managers Committee has provided me an opportunity to closely interact and communicate with what I believe to be the front lines of programming in Extension: County, District, Regional and State administrators who focus on staffing, program delivery and outcome evaluations. Over the past five years, the Extension Committee on Organization and Policy (ECOP) has invested considerable energy in addressing issues which are common across state lines: The Brand Value of Extension (marketing and communications); Extension's Role in Health and Wellness; The 21st Century Extension Professional; The Value of a National Extension System; and, The Extension Task Force on Innovation, just to name a few. Each topic was focused not on where Extension is at today (although a self-assessment is critical), but more importantly where Extension needs to be tomorrow. I remember a speaker once stated, "What We Invest in Today Defines Our Strategic Plan for Tomorrow," and I often find that to be true when you consider program priorities, emerging issues, maintaining a work force and limited resources for targeted investments.

I was recently part of the ECOP Innovation in Extension Task Force. Under the leadership of Dr. Keith Smith, retired director from The Ohio State University Extension, our charge was to "explore innovation, and what it means to Extension, and how we can incorporate it." The Task Force addressed the following topics: 1. Innovation in leadership; 2. Innovation in learner engagement; 3. Positive change in Extension culture; and 4. Innovation in our hiring practices. The final report is in draft form and under review before publication, but the over-riding, basic premise is (to quote from the draft) that "if Extension is to continue to assist local communities, citizens and interest groups to solve problem and improve the quality of life, it needs to continually change and adjust, or, in other words, it must *innovate*. Extension needs to adapt to new ways of learning, new technology, new teaching methods, and new ways to educate."

Remember to participate in our MM Conference Calls!

**(10:00am EST/9:00am Central)
by dialing (712) 432-0931 enter
participant code 911522#**

(2nd Thursdays)

**February 9th, 2017
April 13th, 2017
June 8th, 2017
July 13th, 2017**

While we await the final report, along with recommendations for consideration at the national and state level, all Middle Managers need to thoughtfully understand the role of leadership in promoting and advancing innovation: Leaders in Extension must act as change agents to create a culture that encourages and sustains innovation throughout our organization. Innovation and Leadership, two keys to the future of Extension.

My Early Impressions on the Job as a New Middle Manager

by Anita Neal, Southeast District Extension Director, University of Florida

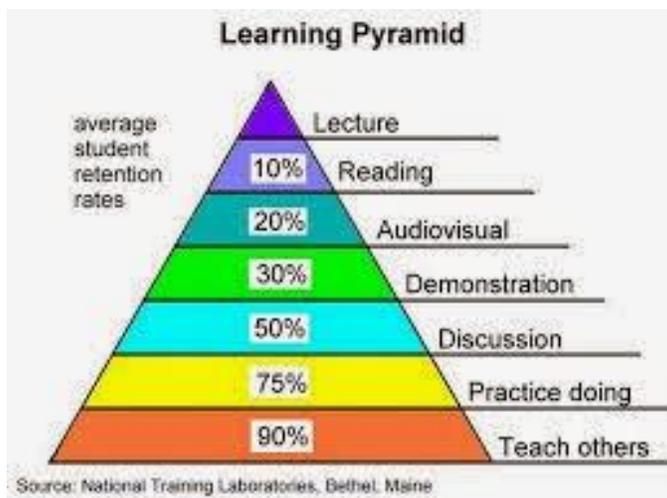


Starting Extension as a county horticulture agent, becoming a county extension director and now a district extension director or “MM” has been my best professional move. Throughout my travels down the extension path, there have been resources, namely other educators to assist with the on-boarding process. I have found that no one person is the gatekeeper, but everyone can direct you to the right resource(s). This has been the case with my Florida MM’s, they have been there to advise which sail to raise, which path is well-traveled, who to ask, along with encouraging me to experiment with new ideas.

As a horticulturist, I must admit I miss examining plants and insects, interacting with volunteers, and the team atmosphere of a county extension office. I do not miss the end of the year reporting, because I have replaced it with providing advice to agents on their own annual reports. I was easily accepted as administration, although I have to admit I do not totally see myself framed in this picture. Yet, I am very happy with the tremendous efforts made by county faculty and staff and eagerly embrace my MM responsibilities. The accomplishments of faculty and staff are my greatest reward. I will do whatever it takes to help faculty to be successful in fulfilling their educator roles within their communities.



Knowledge is key, we all thrive on it; it is the endless learning experience that satisfies us. I would like to ask the MM’s from the southern region to share their most promising/engaging, teaching/learning method/experience. I have offered a start with a program from OSU.



Tips for County Coordinators to Avoid Financial I\$\$ues

by Judy Ashley, Northeast District Extension Director, UGA

I recently had the opportunity to teach a workshop for our new County Extension Coordinators on Fiscal Management within their county programs. Of course, we went over our version of the County Funds Policy, shared various forms for budget management and discussed our state's requirements for monthly and annual accountability. Much of this would only be appropriate for our Georgia audience but I did present a brief summary entitled, "Avoiding Financial Issues in Your County" that was general in nature. I hope you will find it helpful. It consisted of five points to follow.

1. **Know and follow your County Funds Policy.** It was written based on actual best and worst practices. Learn from your peers. Our Ag Business Office even has a presentation called, "The Dark Side" in which they discuss actual scenarios that have happened within county offices that have led to reprimand, loss of jobs, and even criminal indictment.
2. **Charter your volunteer-led clubs and organizations associated with your county program.** Chartering must include training on your County Funds Policy. Volunteers must follow these policies in order to have use of the 4-H and Extension name, emblem and branding. Failure to follow funds policies should result in a loss of charter.
3. **Plan ahead to avoid last minute decisions or crisis.** Hold regular office conferences, work as a team to develop program area budgets and be knowledgeable of your staff's programs to advise them wisely on expenditures.
4. **Find a balance between being in control and being controlling.** There is a fine line between the two. Agents and staff need the freedom and empowerment to creatively run their programs but the oversight and guidance to be fiscally responsible in doing so.
5. **Communicate, communicate, communicate.** So many problems are a result of poor communication within an office. Financial issues are no exception. Regular and open communication regarding money matters, fundraising and expenditures is the best prevention for potential pitfalls.



Each of our states have our own fiscal management policies which pertain to our specific operations. If you would like to view Georgia's County Funds Policy and Best Management Practices in regards to our County Funds Policy, visit <http://intranet.caes.uga.edu/coextopr/fiscalcomp/index.html>.

"As you advocate for Extension, remember the 80% urban residents in the US. Let's work together so Extension can be as successful in the city as it has been everywhere else."

-Dino DeCiantis, Director of The Penn State Center

My Early Impressions on the Job as a New Middle Manager

by **Brenda Rogers**, South Central District
Extension Director, University of Florida

I never learned to play chess, but I believe serving as a DED is much like the game. You constantly need to determine the best move, anticipate the actions of others, evaluate the unintended consequences, position your team for success, and be familiar with your other resources. I love the professional challenge of the position. My career with Extension started as a 4-H youth and included service as an Agent, County Extension Director, and County Government Department Head (Extension was a unit). So, coming in to this MM Position, I had a very good idea of what

the job entailed, but must admit there have been a few surprises.

I am fortunate to have a patient and supportive team on both sides of me in the org chart!



My DED colleagues approach their work in different ways, each has been very open in discussing issues and strategies for helping me with mine. I also rely on the resourceful support team that is part of our University of Florida administration. The retiring DED and longtime Extension volunteers have continued to be mentors for me. I've always viewed Extension as a family and that connection is very strong in this position too. There are many sources of support, including the Southern Region MM Group.

We, at UF are fortunate to have leadership that embraces tradition while encouraging innovation and creativity. There are some



very exciting Extension programs being conducted and I get to have a role in most of it! Whether it be participating in a field day, listening to Extension professionals deliver a program, engaging with county faculty, connecting with county partners or attending a 4-H awards event each adds dimension to the organization and interest to my day. I am grateful for the opportunity entrusted to me and constantly tell people, "I'm in a very good place!"

"We don't control the weather; we don't control the markets. We have to take chances"

*-Reggie Brown, Florida
Tomato Commission
Manager*

UGA Middle Manager Greg Price Retires

by Joann Milam, Southeast District Extension Director, UGA

Greg Price's retirement will leave a void not only in Georgia's Extension program but for the entire Southern Region. Greg's involvement as a leader with the Middle Managers has spanned nearly 10 years. He has served as Director of County Operations for University of Georgia Extension for the past 3 ½ years and prior to this appointment was District Director for an additional 6 years. Greg has served in roles from County Extension agent, state 4-H faculty giving leadership to curriculum development and international programs and 4-H Program Development Coordinator prior to his administrative duties. He also served as the first Cooperative Extension liaison with the



Association County Commissions of Georgia (ACCG) in addition to providing statewide leadership to program planning and reporting for the college. This extensive background laid the foundation for Greg's understanding of all aspects of extension.

Greg's exceptional working knowledge of Cooperative Extension positioned him as one of the premier authorities in the extension arena. Many of us have looked to Greg for guidance and leadership over the past 10 years. He has always been willing to dig for solutions to problems, share his insight and serve as a mentor and friend. He dedicated himself to the mission of extension for over 30 years.

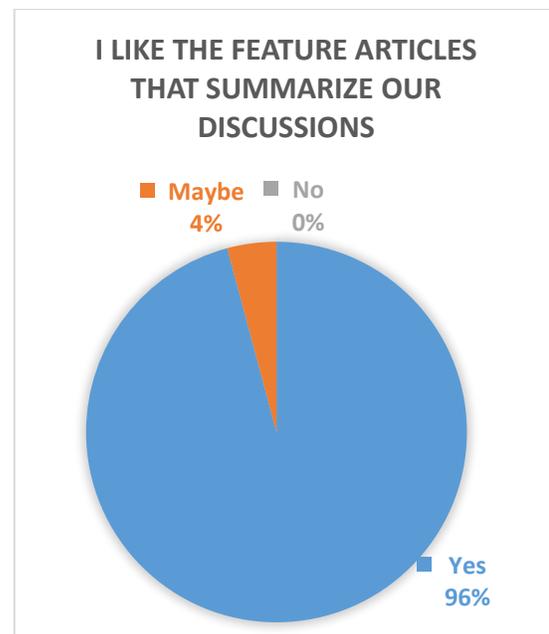
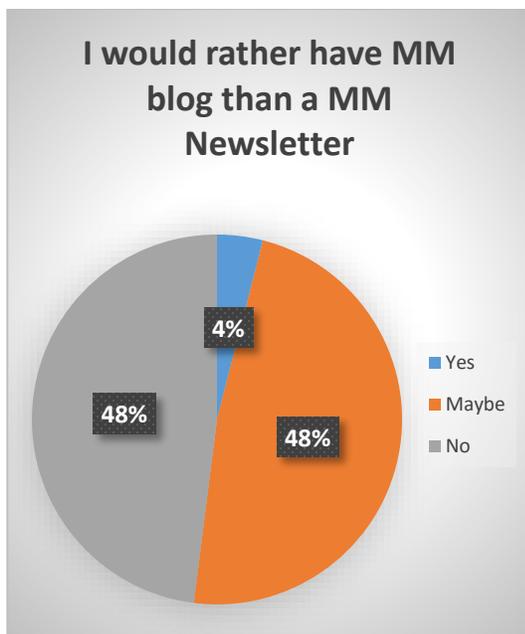
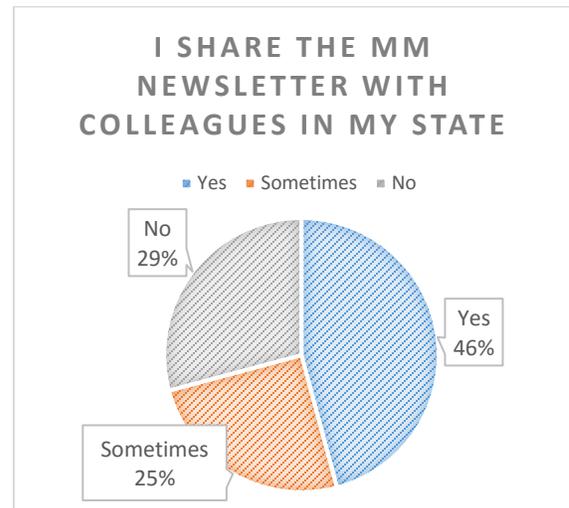
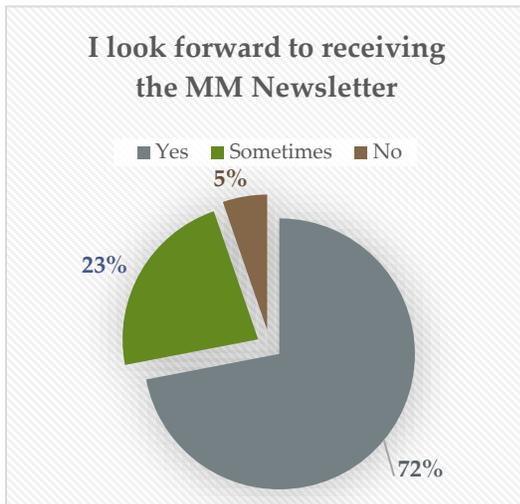
Greg's place at the table in Georgia Extension and with Middle Managers will be void, he will be deeply missed. We all wish Greg the best in his retirement!

"The greatest leader is not necessarily the one who does the greatest things. He is the one that gets the people to do the greatest things."

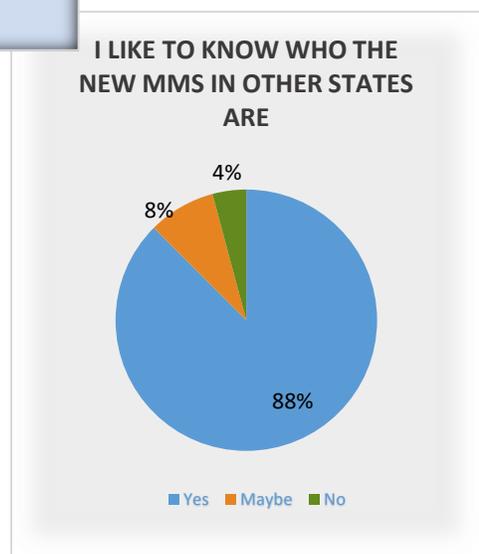
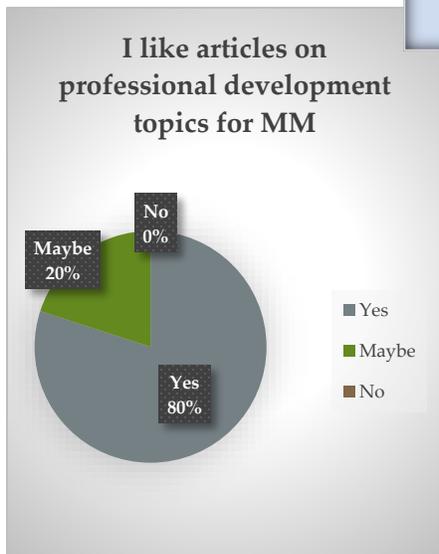
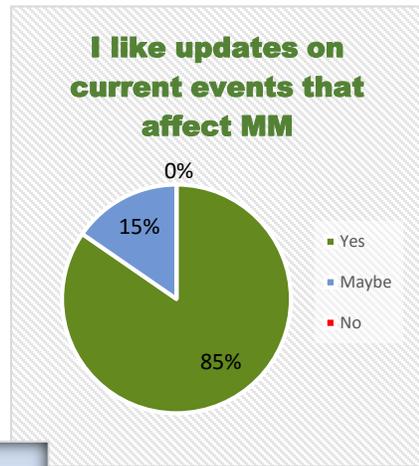
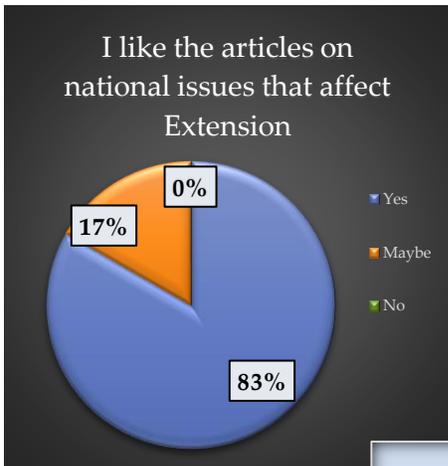
-Ronald Reagan

What MMs Expect from their Newsletter

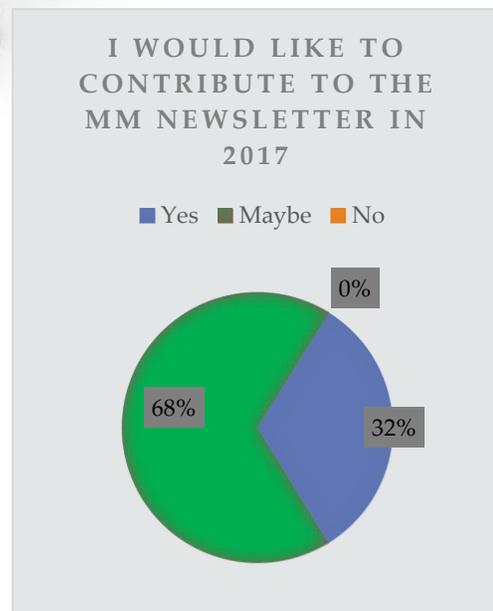
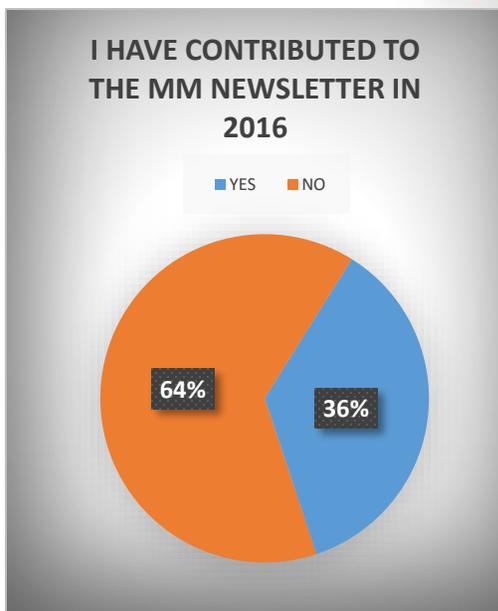
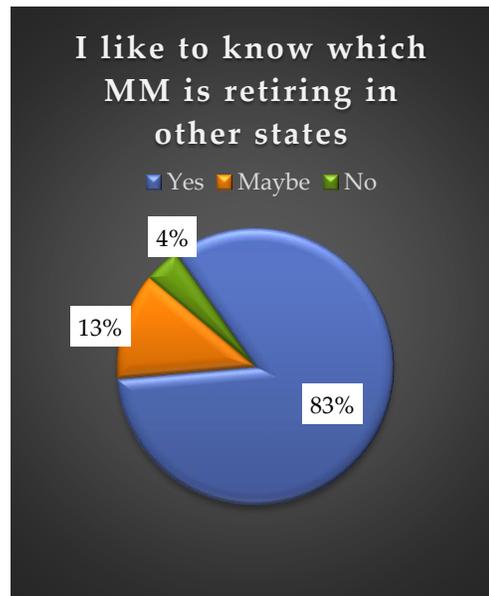
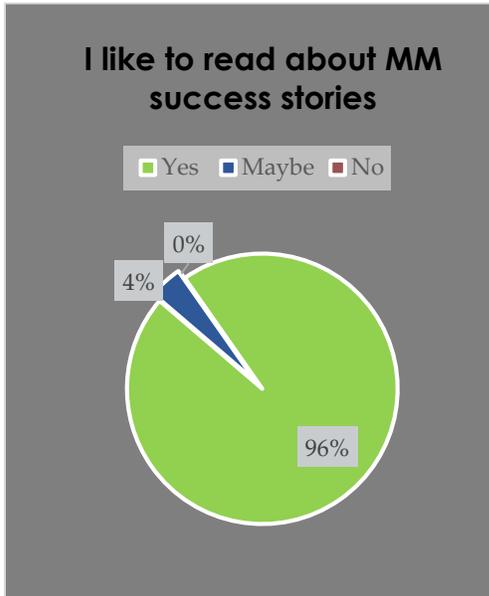
During our last Middle Managers Meeting at the 2016 PLN Conference, present members answered the following 13 questions about our MM Newsletter. Thank you for your candid responses and ideas. Together, these responses suggest that “New Heights” Newsletter fulfills its role and is a valued part of the Southern Region MM Group. Please relay any Thoughts and Comments to Eric Simonne (esimonne@ufl.edu.) The last two questions were about contributing authors – yes, you! Remember this is our newsletter. Thank you to those who read and to those who contribute!



What MMs Expect from their Newsletter (ctd.)



What MMs Expect from their Newsletter (ctd.)



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West Virginia
VACANT



"We have been telling our Extension story – mainly to each other."

-Tim Cross, UT Extension Director