

Dear COMMON Colleague,

One of the honors available to a COMMON President is an opportunity to bestow the President's Award upon someone who I believe has made a substantial contribution, either to this organization or to the broader community. I have given out that award.

At a recent company staff meeting I presented **Dave Feters**, my boss, the COMMON President's Award. It would have been ideal to give it to him during our Annual Meeting in Nashville, but he was not able to be there.



Vaughn Dragland

Randy Dufault

Now, before you write this off as a completely self-serving, egotistical act on my part, let me explain.

While I did present the plaque to Dave, this award truly is to recognize all of the business owners, IT directors, CIOs, and other bosses that support COMMON by allowing their team members to volunteer. While I personally believe that companies gain much more than they lose by allowing their staff to participate in their peer community, I do recognize that there are some very direct costs involved. If you are a boss, and you or a member of your team are volunteering for COMMON, I thank you for that.

I've volunteered some of my time to COMMON in a number of different capacities for twenty years now. I have been a speaker assistant, a speaker, a program manager, a member of the board of directors and, for nearly four years now, an officer of the organization. I say that I volunteer MY time, but in reality a good share of that time belongs to the company I work for. I work for a technology services firm, and any time I spend doing the work of COMMON (at least during typical working hours) is time that directly impacts my company's bottom line. Time interrupted by calls during the day, time at remote meetings, time spent at the Annual Meeting, is all time that I am not able to bill or otherwise charge to a project.

I gave Dave the award to recognize the substantial investment he has made in COMMON and in this community. I cannot even fathom the amount of lost revenue and actual costs he has tolerated over the years in order to support my participation in this endeavor. Dave, I thank you for that.

I would be remiss if I didn't mention all of the self-employed individuals that volunteer time to make this community better. Many of our speakers and long-time volunteers work for themselves and are the ultimate example of employer support for this organization. When, for at least one week a year and usually more, someone gives up any

and all opportunity for income in order to help out—that is a distinct sacrifice. If you are self-employed and are volunteering your time to COMMON, I thank you for that.

COMMON is great organization only because of its volunteers. And it only has volunteers because forward thinking bosses understand how COMMON helps everyone involved be just a little bit better at what they do. Of course being better at what you do is always important; it is important for your company, it is important for you, and it is important for this community.

So if you are volunteering, please thank your boss (even if it is yourself). If you aren't volunteering, please consider it. My boss lets me volunteer, I'll bet your boss will too!

Sincerely,

Randy Dufault
COMMON President
randy_dufault@common.org

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Randy Dufault". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.