

Sometimes you need help.

That's a hard lesson for many of us (men, admit it – we *really would* rather drive in circles than ask for directions...), but once in a while life delivers that message in ways you can't ignore.

For most of August, contractors rebuilt the roof and installed new air conditioning equipment on the NACM Southwest building. For weeks, we endured rotating 90-degree zones in our workspace, and the stench of welding torches and boiling asphalt. One evening as I finished some work on deadline, I noticed a slightly different smell over the background odors we were used to. A quick check around the building revealed smoke drifting down through the recessed light fixtures – not a good sign.

But to be honest, I spent several minutes debating with myself about whether to place a fire emergency call. You may remember we had another smoke-filled-room incident last year, the net result of which was no fire – just the residue from a burned-out rooftop compressor. That experience (on my watch as well...) plus the major roof repairs in progress made me hesitate, since it might...literally...be another false alarm. It was late, I was hungry, and calling the fire department would mean hours more on the scene.

Finally, though, it sunk in that I needed help fast, no matter what my reservations. After a 911 call, the result was a quick and thoroughly professional response from the Irving Fire Department, and a potentially disastrous fire was put out with minimal damage done.

So what does this have to do with collections?

You may find yourself in situations with debtor accounts where you just can't connect – the accounts literally won't speak to you, or you end up arguing over the facts, or you lose control when the accounts push the right buttons. You need help.

You may be overwhelmed by the pressures of ageing reviews; performance metrics; re-negotiated terms and workouts; bankruptcies...the stress factors never stop. You need help.

You will have moments when you wonder if you're stuck forever chasing debtor accounts with little to show for your hard work, little or no positive feedback from your employers, and little opportunity for professional advancement. You need help.

When you reach the point when you know it's time to make your own professional 911 call...make it 972-518-0019. We are your best resources for helping deal with challenges, finding better solutions, and *putting out fires* in your collection work.

NACM Southwest is here – and didn't burn to the ground – for one reason: to help make you successful in your career as a credit and collection professional.

Questions or comments? Contact Park Smith: park@nacmsw.com.