

Career Craftsmanship: Building Skills through Author Chats

Jamilex Gotay, editorial associate

Reading is key to personal and professional growth, knowledge gain and cognitive enhancement. NACM and FCIB's [Author Chat](#) webinar series allows members to interact with authors and discuss their books, providing valuable insights relevant to their fields. Hear from regular attendees about how these Author Chats have influenced their careers.

#1 Knowledge Gain

Author Chats enable credit professionals to broaden their understanding on a wide range of subjects like leadership, public speaking and psychology. These topics can be applied in both professional and personal settings. “The webinars provide insight and information to assist you on our credit journey,” said Alisha Gray, purchasing manager at Orgill Inc. (Collierville, TN), who attended her first Author Chat last year to prepare herself for her credit management role.

Heidi Lindgren-Boyce, CCE, NACM board director and senior credit manager at Star Rentals, Inc. (Kent, WA), attended her first Author Chat as additional research for a [Credit Congress](#) session she’s leading. “The author had a presentation that wasn’t just about the book, and it was a very informal atmosphere in asking her questions,” she said. “Now if I see a book being covered that would help my team, I will definitely recommend the author chat to them.”

#2 Foster Innovation and Creativity

Sharing insights about books in the Author Chat can stimulate innovative thinking and inspire new professional strategies. This can also help your organization understand team priorities, sparking ideas for employee engagement or essential changes. “The webinars provide ideas, possible solutions and different ways to do job processes and build skills,” Gray said. “I believe it is important because it equips us with more useful tools and information to improve in our roles.”

#3 Gain New Perspectives

Book preference is subjective, rooted in personal views rather than facts. Even if a book or topic in the Author Chat doesn't appeal to you, it can offer fresh insights from others, expanding your knowledge. “Gaining others perspective on topics always gives you new insight or food for thought,” said Ellen Wodiuk, CCE, ICCE, national account executive at Law Offices of Mark A. Kirkorsky (Mesa, AZ). “I find you always get that one perspective that you had not thought of or one piece of information to add to your tool belt.”

#4 Challenge Yourself

Taking the time out of your schedule to read is easier said than done—especially as a credit professional. But doing so challenges you personally and professionally. “Not only are you challenging yourself, but you’re investing in yourself by continuing to expand your field of knowledge and you never know where that will take you,” Wodiuk said. “It would be a good assignment for a larger staff to have one or two

participate on a rotation basis and then bring what they learned back to share take-a-ways with the team.”

#5 Form and Strengthen Connections

Regularly bringing employees together to meet outside of work allows cross-functional relationships to develop and grow organically. Engaging in group discussions and providing valuable insights can help you build relationships and establish your professional reputation. “I believe it makes for stronger relationships at work because of the information presented in and learned from the webinars,” Gray explained. “I have invited a few other credit managers and hope to attend more as often as possible.”

Reading about different types of people and their adversities helps you understand others better and fosters empathy. In business, empathizing with others can enhance employee relationships, fostering a positive work environment, boosting engagement and retention.