

NEWSLETTER



13 Ways to Kill Your Community

Russell County Leadership had in depth discussion of the 13 Ways to Kill Your Community book centered around key insights from three chapters, facilitated by Connie Blanke, Beth Pfeifer and Kayla Schneider. Focusing on how certain mindsets can quietly undermine local progress. Conversation included the damage caused when communities ignore seniors—overlooking their needs, wisdom, and contributions—leading to weakened civic engagement and missed opportunities for intergenerational support. Leaders also reflected on the tendency to avoid taking responsibility, recognizing that blaming external forces rather than owning your part, can stall momentum and discourage involvement. Complacency was a highly discussed topic bridging the gap of personal and professional habits and how that can limit the ability to attract resources or new ideas. Positive change requires deliberate, accountable action; waiting for someone else to lead only deepens stagnation. Together, these themes urged Russell County to prioritize inclusion, ownership, and proactive leadership to ensure long-term growth and resilience.

Join us for our next Linking with Leadership event, where we continue to foster collaboration and meaningful connections across our community. We encourage you to bring a friend, colleague, or someone who might benefit from the experience—and if you're interested in becoming part of Class V, this is a perfect opportunity to meet others, ask questions, and see what the program is all about. More details to come. We hope to see you there!

JANUARY 19TH, 5:30PM-7:00PM



Clifton Strengths Deep Dive

In the afternoon session, a certified CliftonStrengths coach guided associates through a deep dive into their individual strengths, helping them move beyond basic awareness to true application. J.J. Jones from Cultivated Conversations explained how understanding one's unique talent themes can enhance communication, decision-making, and collaboration. They were encouraged to recognize not only what they do well, but why those strengths show up the way they do. Through group discussion and personal reflection, participants explored practical ways to leverage their strengths—from aligning tasks with natural abilities to partnering with others whose strengths complement their own. Learning that when associates intentionally develop and apply their strengths, they can improve performance, boost confidence, and contribute more effectively to their teams and organizations.



The Power of Professionalism

Kicking off our day with Andrea Krauss - associates explored the power of professionalism and how it directly shapes their reputation, relationships, and long-term success. Andrea reviewed key do's—such as communicating clearly, following through on commitments, showing respect, and presenting themselves with confidence—and important don'ts, including oversharing, inconsistency, and allowing personal frustrations to spill into professional interactions. The discussion also highlighted strategies to maximize networking opportunities, from preparing strong introductions to actively listening, asking thoughtful questions, and maintaining connections over time. Finally, associates considered what it means to be a professional in a rural community, where visibility is high, word travels quickly, and trust is built through authenticity, reliability, and community involvement. Together, these insights reinforced that professionalism is not just a workplace expectation but a daily practice that opens doors and strengthens credibility.