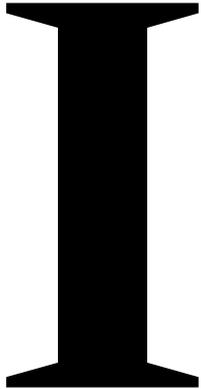


# A Day in the Life of a Property Professional... At the Shooting Range

By Carolyn Richelmi, CPPS, Federal Center Chapter



IN THIS ISSUE of *The Property Professional*, dedicated to movement, I wanted to focus on a topic that would be different from the case studies, best practices, and technology used to track the movement of assets. Instead I am focused on the tremendous opportunity we have for movement in our careers through the asset management industry. While many may view career movement through the narrow lens of organization hierarchy and monetary compensation, I view our opportunity for movement through the broad lens of the opportunity to interact with and experience the unique. I strongly believe that these types of opportunities drive our career and personal development.

Last week, I experienced something that I never thought I would do in my life – I went to the shooting range with federal agents. I was invited by the agents that I work with daily to have a better understanding of their full-time duties. Since I am a contractor, I assist these agents with tracking firearms and ammunition. Being a property professional and a woman who grew up in a small town in Northeastern Pennsylvania, I was completely out of my element. I had never fired a weapon in my life.

When I walked into the building that morning, I was greeted by familiar faces. All of the agents were excited that I was joining them for the day, but didn't know that I was terrified on the inside. Soon after greeting everyone, I was escorted into the shooting range and given ear and eye protection. As I was standing in the back of the room, about ten feet from where the action was about to take place, my heart started beating faster and faster. Though I listened to the instruction from the safety officer, my concentration was interrupted by my worrisome thoughts. I kept thinking,

“Is this really a good idea?” “If I sneak out the door behind me, no one will notice!” My nerves started to get the best of me the longer the safety officer spoke. Then came the dreadful moment; the agents took their stance and... Ready, Aim, Fire! Boom! The shots rang loudly despite my ear protection and the clink of brass shells on concrete sounded like nails on a chalkboard. I thought I was going to be sick by the first sound of the firearm shot. As the agents continued their training for the next hour my nerves abated, the noise lessened, and I became at ease being so close to gunfire.

After the hour had passed, the agents took a break from their training. I could hear my name faintly in the background. “Carolyn, it's your turn!” My initial thought was, “There is no way that I'm going to shoot a firearm. I've already accomplished something today – being a spectator! Wasn't that enough?” But of course, my adrenaline was running and I thought that if I didn't participate now, when will I ever be in a safe environment and have this opportunity? I decided to participate.

The safety officer was very patient and gave me a twenty minute lesson on the fundamentals of firearm safety. I learned how to properly hold the firearm, how to load the ammunition and the proper way to stand. Once again, my nerves built and I started to feel that terrifying feeling inside when he handed me the Glock 19. I gripped the weapon with both hands and aimed at the target. I could hear the words in my left ear, “Okay, are you ready? On the count of three, shoot!” I shot the Glock 19 and hit the target. I did it a second and third time! I was proud of myself for doing something I was previously terrified to do. Though I still want to stay away from fire-

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arms, I'm much more comfortable around such powerful objects. I never thought that I would have such an incredible experience working as a property professional.

There are many careers that invite the question "why did you become an (insert career here)?" A number of business surveys indicate that people are either motivated by money or the possibility of the stories they can tell, the camaraderie they establish, or the execution of a common purpose. Property professionals choose the latter.

My day at the firing range moved me out of my comfort zone and satisfied the non-tangible motivators I just described. It also brought me closer to my clients and deepened my understanding of their work and their mission. Sitting on the outside looking in, I had a general sense of the duties of my client. I conduct training sessions on our management system on a daily basis and assist the agents with updating firearms records and the input of many types of ammunition. Most importantly, I conduct system training for all users. I've become their "go-to" woman for weapons management. Until this day, however, my experience with their day-to-day lives was just passive. My day in the shoes of a Federal agent instilled a more active understanding of why assets must be properly tracked. I learned first-hand the importance of how the agents keep track of their firearms, how to properly store ammunition and most importantly, the importance

of wearing protective gear in that environment. Even if you have a busy schedule, move outside of your comfort zone and engage your clients on their turf. You will learn the intimate details of their business, earn further respect and trust, and you might even fulfill your own motivation as a property professional.

In an industry where we regularly work with space shuttles, firearms, transportation and energy infrastructure, seized and forfeited assets, scientific equipment, and biological agents, we have an incredible opportunity to track the movement of our careers and the careers of our colleagues! One of the most important interview questions that helps move careers is "tell me the neatest thing you've done this past year?" When asked this question, I can now answer that I became the go-to woman for firearms management for a federal agency. I expect they will remember me and you'll watch my career move again! ♦

#### ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

**Carolyn Richelmi**, is a Senior Consultant at Sunflower Systems where she has two years of asset management experience with a focus on federal agencies. Ms. Richelmi is a member of the Federal Center Chapter. She holds a bachelor's degree in Elementary Education from King's College in Wilkes-Barre, PA.