

# ❖ Consultants in Minnesota ❖

May 2000

## President's Message

By Larry Bremer

Greetings

Let me begin by thanking John Saxby for his excellent presentation on project management. John is a very knowledgeable speaker, gave an informative presentation and provided great handouts. Thanks John.

There is still a need for additional program chairs. Being a program chair is a great way to become involved in the chapter, meet some knowledgeable people in your field of interest (networking) and to learn more about your topic of interest. Trust me when I say it is a rewarding and (mostly) enjoyable experience. Please call Gordy Schesel (651-429-8280) with ideas for programs and your willingness to assist.

There is also opportunity is to staff the booth at the strictly eBusiness Solutions Expo. Mark your calendars for June 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> for attendance and reserve a two-hour block of time to staff the booth. This show provides great networking opportunities, i. e. meeting influential

people (contract labor buyers and other independent contractors). Watch for more information on the Strictly Business Expo. Gordy S. is the person to call to volunteer to staff the ICCA booth on June 7<sup>th</sup>.

By now, everyone should have received registration brochure from National for the 23<sup>rd</sup> National Conference, June 8<sup>th</sup> -10<sup>th</sup>, in the Boston area.. If you schedule allows, plan to spend an additional couple of days in the Boston area. For ideas about how to spend the extra time visit: <http://travel.boston.com>. If you haven't received it yet and would like to attend I have a few extra brochures.

Looking forward to seeing you at the Lido, Wednesday, May 17<sup>th</sup>, to learn more about making legacy data accessible from the Internet.

## Visitors at the April 2000 Meeting.

**Information Technology Solutions, Inc.**, services the Twin Cities metro area as both a consulting firm specializing in technical project management, and as a total solutions provider integrating hardware and software for small businesses. **Brad and Bev Aho**, co-owners, have expertise as consultants in the following areas:

- Enterprise storage area networking
- ISO 9000 certification
- Computer system integration
- Technical project management
- Networking – Windows NT / 98 / Terminal Server
- Wireless networking
- E-commerce projects

3420 Kilmer Lanc North  
Plymouth, MN 55441  
952.944.9400 (voice)  
952.944.8300 (fax)

\*\*\*\*\*

**Nathan Neely**  
5405 West Brenner Pass  
Fridley, MN 55432  
612-571-3295

IT Professional

I've worked for Micron Electronics Inc., ADC and IBM Global Services over a period of three years. I have been interested in started my own business for years and have finally come to the point in my life where I feel I could confidently be an independent consultant. This is why have I have come to this meeting to find out more information about becoming a consultant.

Skills:

- DOS
- Windows 3X
- Windows 95
- Windows NT
- Arcserve 6.X
- Minor LAN administration

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ASSOCIATION

Newsletter  
of the

ICCA<sup>®</sup>



Minnesota Chapter

## Last Month's Topic: IT Project Management

By Gordon Schesel

Again our thanks to John Saxby, PMP, of Impel Solutions Corporation, for presenting to us on IT Project management. The overheads and hand-out were so well done. John also related some of his life experiences in teaching us the benefit of effective project management. Project management is a science. In his presentation, he let us know that knowing and understanding Project Management is "A Prescription to Ensure Success".

A project is a temporary endeavor undertaken to create a unique product or service. A project has a beginning and an end. Did you know that the Standish Group, a market research and advisory firm specializing in mission critical software, has discovered that 84% of projects fail because they are over budget, beyond schedule, or cancelled?

Project management has having nine knowledge areas:

1. Project Integration Management
2. Project Scope management
3. Project Time Management
4. Project Cost Management
5. Project Quality Management
6. Project Human Resource Management
7. Project Communication Management
8. Project Risk Management
9. Project Procurement Management

The project life cycle includes five processes:

1. initiating
2. planning
3. executing
4. controlling
5. closing

Managing an IT project uses the same generally accepted principles, knowledge, and practices; however, more emphasis is placed on project scope and project risk management. A major benefit is the documentation that produced in scope management, such as the Work Breakdown Structure (WBS). Scope changes often require adjustments to cost, time, quality or other project objectives. What areas cause the most problems?

- Ambiguous and vague statement of work
- Irregular schedules
- Unstructured or unstable requirements
- Poor documentation

After Initiation and Planning...Execution, Controlling and Closure:

- Plan the project well
- Execute the plan

- Continually assess risk
- Escalate issues that impact the project
- Keep the scope in focus
- Keep everyone informed – no surprises
- 80 hour rule (optimum activity duration)

The previous paragraphs are only a summary;



some of the highlights of John's discussion of IT Project Management.

### Legacy Systems Brought to the Internet By Joe Harte

Joe Benedict Director of Sales and Business Development for Insightformation will be giving the talk on Legacy systems brought to the internet. Founded in 1991, **insightformation** is an IT consulting firm specializing in leveraging business intelligence tools and developing custom analytical reporting applications for companies throughout North America. Specific areas of focus include, data mart development, Microsoft Office 2000 application development, document management, and OLAP services. IFI is a Microsoft Certified Solution Provider, a Premier Partner of the Cognos Corporation, an Ardent Software DataStage partner, and a Valued Partner of Eden Prairie-based IntraNet Solutions. Recognized by CityBusiness Magazine in 1997 as one of the fastest growing privately held businesses in the Twin Cities, IFI has been experiencing an annual growth rate of more than 45%. For more information visit the **insightformation** web site at: [www.insightformation.com](http://www.insightformation.com). Joe joined IFI in 1999.

### PRESENTATION OVERVIEW

We've all heard that "knowledge is power". Never before has the ability to quickly ana-

lyze and understand your data been so critical to business success. Would you like to make better decisions faster? Increase your competitive advantage? Enhance your customer service? Refine your business processes? This seminar will show you how the smartest companies:

- § Gain a competitive edge using proven information analysis and access technology
- § Benefit from Data Marts, Data Warehouses and OLAP
- § Convert data into high-value reports for improved decision-making
- § Deploy user-friendly solutions that save time and enable people to work smarter
- § Add customized reporting, analysis, and business process automation solutions to their ERP system or other packaged applications
- § Replace tangled sets of "home-built" spreadsheet applications with professionally developed solutions – using existing software

You will also see an overview and demonstration of the latest Business Intelligence technologies. This includes instant slicing, dicing, and drill-down with leading multi-dimensional analysis (OLAP) tools, powerful (easy to use) customized analytical solutions built with Microsoft Office and Visual Basis for Applications. You will also learn the value of a solid foundation and what Microsoft is doing to make SQL Server 7.0 the fastest growing database for data marts and data warehouses.

# Marketing Flash! The Erin Brockovich Effect

From: Ray Giske

The author of the attached was a presenter at last summer's ICCA National Conference.

Ray

Marketing Flash!  
The Online Marketing Newsletter for Professional Service Businesses from Action Plan Marketing and Robert Middleton

Hello and Happy Spring!

This is a \*BONUS\* issue of the Marketing Flash. It's an article I wrote about client service that I think you'll enjoy. I'd love to get this out to as many people as possible, so free to forward it to whomever you fee would appreciate it. All I ask is that you also include the email signature at the bottom

\*\*\*\*\*

## The Erin Brockovich Effect

If you haven't seen the movie Erin Brockovich yet, certainly you've heard of it: The true story of a single down-and-out mom who dresses provocatively and swears like a sailor, becomes a legal assistant for a small law firm and almost single-handedly wins the largest settlement ever paid in a direct-action lawsuit in U.S. history.

We cheer for Erin, hiss at the opposing attorneys and empathize with the victims. But if we take the movie just on that level, we really miss a much more profound message -- especially if we are professionals trying to deal with and attract new clients.

In my model of the "5 Ps of Professional Service Business Marketing," the final P is about Performance (the other Ps are Positioning, Packaging, Promotion and Persuasion). Although Performance is possibly the most powerful of the 5 Ps, either we don't pay much attention to it or we take it for granted. OF COURSE we provide great service and go the extra mile for our clients!

Oh, do we really? Watching Erin Brockovich in action proves that most of us do a pretty miserable job. Erin, in my opinion, is the consummate master of the fifth P.

Erin Brockovich does much more than go the extra mile. I'd like to highlight her actions throughout the film so you can see exactly what I mean.

\*\*\*\*\*

Erin is curious. Even though the case she's been handed is a pro-bono one, Erin is interested enough to pursue a puzzling question: Why are the client's medical records included in a supposed real estate case? No one else in the law office seems to care.

How curious are you about seemingly unrelated facts regarding your client's situation? If you were more curious, what could you learn? Of course, you don't want to step over certain boundaries, but my experience is that most of us don't even go near those boundaries.

\*\*\*\*\*

Erin asks the right questions. From the very first interview with her client, Erin digs deep, trying to understand what's really going on. And she doesn't stop. She keeps asking the questions that ultimately break the case wide open.

Do you ask the right questions or enough questions or questions that go deep enough? Are you more interested in a quick-fix than you are in discovering what's really going on?

\*\*\*\*\*

Erin is warm and friendly. In the film, dealing with small-minded, dishonest or unfair people brings out the worst in Erin. However, when she's dealing with her clients, she treats them like close family. People trust her because she likes and care about them and treats them with respect.

Do you make a real, personal connection with your clients or are you aloof, unfeeling and "professional" like the stiff-mannered woman attorney in the movie?

\*\*\*\*\*

Erin is passionate. This quality is communicated more obviously than any other in the film. Of course we expect our heroes to be passionate, to care, to go out on a limb -- to get shot down and get back up again. We forget that this is a rare quality in real life.

How passionate are you about your clients, about your projects, about your results? When was the last time you took an unpopular stand in the face of overwhelming opposition and kept going until you produced the result you were after?

\*\*\*\*\*

Erin works hard. Very hard. Endless back and forth trips to her clients' town take their toll on her kids and her relationship. But she knows she's on a mission and that what she's doing will make a difference.

How hard do you really work for your clients? Do you keep slugging away until you discover a workable solution or do you settle for just "good enough?"

\*\*\*\*\*

Erin works smart. Very smart. I think the most moving scene in the film is when Erin is challenged about the facts of the case. Not only does she have a complete grasp of the facts, she has memorized every single phone number of the 660 plaintiffs!

How familiar are you with the intimate details of every client you work for? Do you care enough to dig into the minutia, realizing that without knowing these details you are next to useless?

\*\*\*\*\*

Erin takes advantage of her best assets. Perhaps the most discussed aspect of the film is how Erin dresses. We're talking cleavage, bare midriiffs and short, very tight skirts. In his review, movie critic Roger Ebert thought that this actually ruined the film. I beg to differ. For one, Erin really does dress as portrayed in the film. She knows that one of the biggest things she has going for her are her looks and she uses them to her advantage when she must.

Do you take advantage of your best assets? We all have natural gifts: humor, intelligence, an eye for detail, etc. Are you using them to help your clients succeed?

\*\*\*\*\*

Erin gives her clients the bad news. No one wanted to hear that the best course of action

(Continued on page 4)

was to bring the case to binding arbitration instead of to trial. But she and her boss tell it to them "straight" and are so up-front that all of them agree with Erin and her boss's recommendations.

Do you give it straight to your clients when it's not what they really want to hear? Do you build a solid case for your course of action and do it because it's in their best interests?

\*\*\*\*\*

Erin is approachable. The case finally gets the big break it needs when a rather unsavory character approaches Erin with some vital information. He says, "I feel I could tell you anything." It's not just a pick-up line. People do feel they can tell Erin anything.

Can your clients tell you anything and everything? Are you, like Erin, approachable, open, non-judgmental, caring and sincere? If you're not, you'll never reach the level of trust vital to building a relationship of true collaboration with your clients.

\*\*\*\*\*

Erin shares the victory. In the final scene of the movie, when she tells her first client in the case about the final, successful outcome, she shares the win with George who took care of her kids all the time she was away or working late. She admits that she couldn't have done it without him.

Do you acknowledge those who support you? Do you thank those who participated in the success of your projects and allow them to share the win?

\*\*\*\*\*

Besides being an inspiring and highly entertaining movie, Erin Brockovich has a lot to teach us about the 5th P of marketing. If most of us performed at half her level, we'd experience success beyond our wildest dreams. And we wouldn't need to worry so much about the other 4Ps of marketing either!

If you haven't seen Erin Brockovich yet, go! If you've already seen it, go again! It's certainly more fun and less expensive than most marketing workshops!

\*\*\*\*\*

Watch this web site for more Information on my next Tele-Clinics series starting May 2 and the one-day workshop in Santa Clara on Saturday, June 10 (which I guarantee will be even more fun than seeing Erin Brockovich!).

Tele-Clinics: <http://www.actionplan.com/teleclinics.html>

Workshop: <http://www.actionplan.com/liveworkshop.html>

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All the best until next time, Robert Middleton

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Helping Professional Service Businesses  
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If you know of others who would like to receive Marketing Flash! for free, please forward this copy so they can sign up. They can subscribe on the web site or by sending a blank message to <mailto:join-actionplan@mh.databack.com>

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including live web site link and e-mail link. Please also notify me where the material will appear.

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### More on the Strictly e Business Solutions Expo

From Gordon Schesel

#### Day 1:

09:30 Dennis Raney, CFO & Senior Vice President, Novell, Inc. "Novell's e Business Strategy: Making Business on the Net Efficient and Secure"

11:00 Bob Young, Chairman Red Hat, Inc. "Transparent Technology"

01:00 Mark Templeton, President and CEO, Citrix Systems "Digital Independence for the New Millennium"

02:30 Jean-Yves Dexmier, President and CEO Informix Software "What Will it Take to Win in the Radically New Internet Economy?"

#### Day 2:

09:30 Thomas Dolby, CEO, Founder and Chief Beatnik / Former Popular Techno-Rock Musician, Beatnik, Inc. "New Horizons for Music on the Internet"

09:30 Tom Kieffer, President and CEO, Agiliti "The ASP Gold Rush: What to Expect from this New Internet Delivery Model"

11:30 Gary Bloom, Executive Vice President, Oracle Corporation "e Business, Beyond the Hype"

01:00 Jim Smith, President and CEO, US West Dex "Helping Small Businesses Integrate Real World and Internet Marketing"

**Cisco Seminar**

From Joan Barnes

The power of convergence is changing the way companies are communicating with customers, suppliers, partners, their workforce...the world.

Join us at a new Cisco Seminar. During this half-day seminar, discover how to build the IP-based converged network for your clients utilizing Cisco AVVID (Architecture for Voice, Video and Integrated Data). As the world's most complete, end-to-end converged network solution, Cisco AVVID provides a clear road map for your client's converged network.

You can attend either the morning or afternoon sessions (not available in Mpls) or choose to attend both sessions...your choice. In those selected cities with an afternoon session, lunch will be provided at noon for those who are signed up to attend.

During the morning seminars, you'll:

- \* Learn how to develop a converged network utilizing an existing infrastructure.
- \* Have the opportunity to discuss migration strategies one-on-one with

Cisco networking experts.  
\* Immediately following the morning session, attend live demonstrations of Cisco products and system solutions.

Please respond by simply calling this toll free number (877) 407-6936 so that we can ensure you are registered for the sessions you choose to attend.

Regards,

Gisele Ferras  
Consultant Program Manager  
Cisco Systems, Inc.



June 22, 2000  
Radisson Hotel South and Plaza Tower  
7800 Normandee Boulevard

Minneapolis, MN

There is an afternoon session exclusive to Consultants in some of the other cities. It will include:

- \* A brief recap of AVVID along with an overview of newly released products and a product roadmap.
- \* How to plan, design and implement a converged network.
- \* Some case studies.
- \* Tools for creating RFPs for converged networks. I'll bet there's more info on the Cisco web site.



Meeting Reservations: Members may phone your reservation to Joan Barnes at 651-257-2570, **by 3:00 PM, Monday, May 15, 2000.** Non-members should mail this form to: ICCA Minnesota, c/o Roger Montague, 2738 Winnetka Ave. N, New Hope, MN 55427.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Company: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City: \_\_\_\_\_

State: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: ( ) \_\_\_\_\_

Menu: The Lido Italian Buffet

Members \$25 Non-members \$28 x \_\_\_\_\_ = \_\_\_\_\_  
Late Charge \$2 x \_\_\_\_\_ = \_\_\_\_\_

Enclosed is a check for: \_\_\_\_\_



# Next Meeting

Wednesday, May 17, 2000

## Legacy Systems Brought to the Internet

**Italian Market Deli by Lido**

2801 North Snelling Ave

651-636-9721

(north of Rosedale)

Social Hour at 5:30PM

Dinner at 6:30PM

For reservations call  
Joan Barnes @ 651-257-2570

## FUTURE MEETINGS

Jun 07 @ Strictly e Business Solutions Expo

Jul 18 Business to Business @ Wynd-  
ham

### ICCA Disclaimer notice.

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[ed. note]

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**Attention all ICCA members:**  
Get involved, write a story for  
the newsletter. I need stuff to  
fill these white(blue) pages!!.



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