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SHARPENING THE SAW

BY
VICE PRESIDENT JACK ROSE

A man is walking in the woods and happens upon a workman busily cutting some logs down to firewood. The saw blade, dull from years of use, binds in the work. The man notices the going is slow, and suggests:

"You know, the work might go faster if you stopped long enough to sharpen the saw."

"I haven't time for that," replies the workman. "I'm too busy sawing!"

If you've read the Seven Habits of Highly Effective People by Stephen Covey, you'll recognize sharpening the saw as the seventh habit - the one that supports and surrounds the other six habits because it makes all the others possible.

For a consultant, sharpening the saw can

Next Meeting

Wec, Feb 18

**RISK Management and
7 DEADLY SINS
Of INVESTING**

**Wyndham Mpls Airport Hotel
4460 W 78th St. Circle**

Bloomington MN

2540 North Cleveland Ave.

Mentoring 5:30PM Dinner 6:30PM

Members \$25 NonMembers \$28

RSVP 612.245.ICCA

mean more than keeping your skill set up-to-date. Dag Hammarskjöld spoke of this: "The more faithfully you listen to the voice within you, the better you hear what is sounding outside. And only he who listens can speak."

So while it's a good thing to add memory, buy a big disk, add a faster processor and sign up for the latest .NET seminar, that isn't the whole meaning of sharpening the saw. In addition, stop to look around, assess the situation and make mid-

course corrections.

Here at ICCA-MN, we're looking for new ways (and evaluating the old ways) of offering professional development opportunities and business support programs for independ-

(Continued on page 2)

ARE YOU GUILTY?

BY
ERIC.GIBSON@MUTUALOFOMAHA.COM

Are you guilty of making any of the following investment mistakes?

- Not making investment decisions because you are confused by the number of alternatives available?
- Buying a hot stock based on a hot tip that quickly became a cool stock?
- Purchasing so many investments that you have a difficult time monitoring their performances?
- Selling an investment based on someone else's market prediction that never came true?
- Using short-term investments to save for long-term goals?
- Investing in a vehicle you don't understand?
- Assembling your portfolio on a piece-meal basis, never reviewing your overall portfolio mix?

*Special thanks to
Jack Rose for
substantial
contributions to
this month's
ICCA Newsletter
—Editor*

Security & Privacy ABC's

Thu, Feb 5
7:30A Check-in
8:00A—10:00A
James J. Hill
Reference Library
80 W. 4th Street
St. Paul
Next to Rice Park.
6:30PM

Admission: Free
Register:
952.401.8965

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SHARPENING THE SAW

BY JACK

ent computer consultants, and informing potential clients of the products and services available from independent consultants.

We see outreach opportunities in three directions:

1. To our members
2. To unaffiliated consultants in the area
3. To the Minnesota business community.

Here's where we're going with several new initiatives.

Our most recent effort, of which we're quite proud, is the January 20 Build-Your-Business Workshop. This brought in five unaffiliated consultant attendees (and drew the interest of a handful more who couldn't attend). Several of your colleagues invested their own resources to insure the success of this venture, and judging from the comments we solicited and received, success is the operative word.

Attendees who answered our questionnaire made comments like: "Very good and covered so many topics in a short time. It brought out ideas I'd never have thought about." "Overall it was great presentation - thanks." There were also helpful suggestions for improving future workshops.

The speakers received nineteen "excellent" ratings, fifteen "good," five "OK" and four "fair."

The dinner, ambience and take-home material received eleven "excellent" ratings, three "goods" and one "OK."

The overall workshop experience was rated "excellent" by three and "good" by two attendees.

All attendees received printed workbooks at the seminar, then later, we mailed them the workshop materials on a CD-ROM. Enclosed with the CD was a personal letter in which chapter secretary Larry Bremer invited non-members to consider joining the ICCA.

If you attended the workshop but haven't commented on it, please do so - there's still time. Visit <http://www.icca-mn.org/workshop/evaluation.html>.

One mid-course correction we made last year was the decision to suspend the printed Member Directory. The printing and postage were expensive, and there was no way to evaluate its benefits. The current one is available online now - visit www.icca-mn.org and click "Consultant Directory."

Our web page has a new look, and the content is more outward-directed. It's part of our ongoing effort to make the business community and unaffiliated consultants aware of ICCA of Minnesota, its mission and its benefits.

The chapter now has a telephone - 612-245-ICCA. It's answered "ICCA" when attended. The voicemail announcement contains a brief commercial for the chapter and a description of our next meeting. We're promoting it on our web page as a referral hotline. If you have a consulting opportunity, please phone it in or email referrals@icca-mn.org; we'll then broadcast it to all members.

The chapter phone can also be used for small conference calls - the limit seems to be about 7 participants. Call ahead if your business needs it for that purpose.

Working with media consultant Rita McCormick, we've landed a few radio interviews for our members and are lining up a couple of print articles in local trade journals. This effort, along with our web page outreach, focuses on improving ICCA's "brand awareness."

Well, that's what we're doing at the chapter level to keep our saw sharp. Please let us know how we're doing. Your comments and suggestions are always welcome. (Send them to dev.null@icca-mn.org -- just kidding! -

Jack

WAKE-UP CALL

BY MR. ROSE

Would you like to receive an automated phone call reminding you of an upcoming meeting? We can now do this at no cost to the chapter. To set yours up, call 612-245-ICCA or email reminders@icca-mn.org.

ARE YOU GUILTY?

CONT.

- Perpetually looking for the perfect investment vehicle - one with low risk and very high returns?
- Wishing this investment geek would stop writing all these boring articles?

Almost all of us are guilty of making at least one of these mistakes. If you are a self-employed technologist wishing you could learn how to design a retirement plan for yourself which you can understand, you should attend the ICCA meeting on February 18th. I will show you how to effectively manage risk in your retirement plan and avoid the Seven Deadly Sins of Investing. Try and stay warm, I'll see you on the 18th! —Eric

Eric Gibson has been a Financial Services Professional since 2002. Since that time, Eric has enjoyed helping his clients through an educational process which allows them to maximize their dollars, minimize their taxes, and protect their assets.



JOIN THE 4AM CLUB

BY JAQUES ROSE

It's a well-known fact that Minnesotans, descended from hardy Scandinavian stock, are early risers. Radio stations know this, so they start their news coverage at 5 AM. News editors are at their desks at 4 and sometimes earlier, looking for local angles on current stories.

As business relies more and more on Information Technology, our chapter has an opportunity to place ICCA into the public eye by identifying ICCA of Minnesota and ICCA consultants with technology issues as those issues find their way to the front pages of today's general circulation media.

We'd like to get multiple ICCA consultants onto broadcast news editors' Rolodexes. One way to do that is to let them know it's OK to interview you in the wee hours of the morning to provide a local, authoritative viewpoint on a story of national or regional significance. (Example: The current "MyDoom" virus has been on the front page of the business sections.)

So - if you're the sort who doesn't mind 4AM wakeup calls - let us know. Email 4am-club@icca-mn.org or call 612-245-ICCA.

"I've been informed this is not connected or in any way related to the mile-high club."

— Editor

REFERAL HOTLINE!!

BY ICCA PR-MASTER

Does your business need a consultant? Does your consultancy need an assignment?

ICCA National offers a View Contract Listings page <<http://www.icca.org/listcontracts.asp>> for consultant members. In addition to that, we'll pass along to the general membership any referrals that come in through referrals@icca-mn.org or our Referral Hotline, 612-245-

ICCA.

If your business is looking into engaging a consultant or contract programmer, may we invite your attention to ICCA National's Find A Consultant page <<http://www.icca.org/findaconsultant.asp>>. We'll back that up at the Minnesota chapter via referrals@icca-mn.org and our Referral Hotline, 612-245-ICCA.

CONSULTANT DIRECTORY-ONLINE

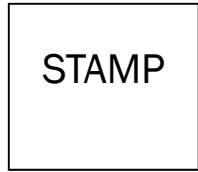
BY ICCA WEB-MASTER

If you miss the printed ICCA of Minnesota Member Directory (we suspended publication after the 2002 edition), you can now look yourself up on the web. Go to <http://www.icca-mn.org> and click "Consultant Directory." Spelling errors to mispints@icca-mn.org, please.

Minnesota Chapter
www.icca-mn.org • 612-245-ICCA



5930 N. Oakview Lane
Plymouth, MN 55442



First Class Mail



CALL FOR ARTICLES

BY JACK ROSE

Got a story to tell? We'd like to hear it.

Can you write a few paragraphs on an interesting topic related to what you do for a living? ICCA of Minnesota is looking for articles for this newsletter, for our web page, and for submission to larger-circulation journals. It's an effective and inexpensive way to get your firm -- and ICCA -- into the limelight.

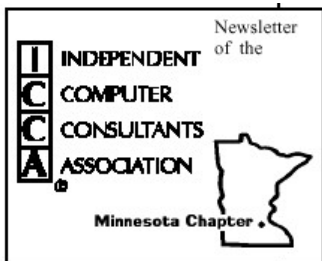
Here are some of the discussion topics that have been suggested in the past several months. You can write on any of these, or suggest another.

How you rescued a client's data, saved him money, or kept him out of the doghouse.

- "I don't usually criticize other consultants, BUT ..."
- The client from hell!
- I have a small business. I don't need consultants and I couldn't afford one.

- Why is software so expensive?
- I haven't updated anything in my system in the past 18 months. I don't read the trade papers as I imagine you do. What's out there that I ought to know about?
- I use my computer every day. What should I do RIGHT NOW to make my computer less vulnerable?
- It's difficult finding good consultants. What are the key questions I should ask to find out if the candidate is a good guy? How do you screen who to use and who to lose?
- How can I tell if my computer has a virus?
- When is it OK to copy software?
- If you're unsure about your journalistic skills, we'll be happy to rewrite your stuff for you. You have final say over what gets submitted for publication.

Please help! Send your articles or story ideas to editors@icca-mn.org, or call our chapter's new number, 612-245-ICCA.



*When You Hire One of Us, You
Get Our Collective Knowledge and
Experience*