

❖ Consultants in Minnesota ❖

June 1997

1997 National Conference Update

by William A. Buending

The days dwindle down, to a precious few..." As this is written, the Conference is just 28 days away.

Fortunately, most of the loose ends have been eliminated. On the other hand, if you are still pondering your attendance at the Conference, the Early Bird deadline has passed. And that bright idea to do back-to-back "one day's" at \$200 apiece won't fly, Bunky. The second day is full fare.

The tote bag stuffers are all set. A letter reminding them of their commitment will go out May 27.

There is an immediate task to be completed. A while back, we sent out letters to 1,600 local vendors, asking them to participate with us in the Conference. We're looking for

sponsors, exhibitors, and products for door prizes. At the recent Strictly Business show, I visited the booths of 90 vendors at the Expo that were also on our vendor mailing list. My conversations with 35 went well enough that they took another copy of the vendor letter and we exchanged business cards.

What we need to do is make some follow-up calls to these folks, and some others from the vendor list. I've received a script from

the National Office to aid us in our calls. What I am going to do is make up lists of 10 - 12 vendors to be called, include a copy of the calling script and a copy of the vendor letter, and send the package out to you folks. Here is an important way that you can help with the conference.

These are not cold calls. The vendors have already received the original letter, and some have even received a second copy. So, you will be talking to people who already have had at least one contact. You will be calling to answer any questions they might have, and to encourage them to join with us in having a bang-up Conference. Look for my letter next week.

I have also selected some people to be proctors at the sessions. The proctor introduces the speaker, makes sure that nothing goes awry during the session, reminds folks to complete their session critique sheets, and then presents the speaker with a gift. About half of the people needed already have volunteered, as soon as I informed them it had nothing to do with proctology. The others are getting a "may I impose" letter from me. What's the sense of being the Big Kahuna if you can't be dictatorial once in awhile?

That's it for this time.



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Newsletter
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Minnesota Chapter

Recap of speaker at April meeting

by Gordon Schesel <103011.3513@compuserve.com>

At our last ICCA monthly meeting on April 17, we all learned about **Writing Effective Sales Proposals** from Julia McGregor representing Dashe & Thomson, Inc.; a services company specializing in technical communications including writing of policies and procedures for information systems.

Julia defined the process of writing of a proposal as having multiple components:

1. A communication situation with a purpose and an audience
2. Know how persuasion works; a client's problem or need can be resolved by agreeing (buying into \$\$ \$) your solution
3. Your client's problem (need) resolved by your solution's features and benefits
4. Developing proposal strategies
5. Learn basic elements of a proposal
6. Putting together a proposal

Her talk began with describing a proposal as a communication situation where there is both a purpose and an audience. A communication is like a triangle having these three facets: audience, purpose, and content. The content of a communication is determined by the audience and purpose.

The process begins with thinking about who the *audience* is and the *purpose* of the communication: What is it that you want then to think; to feel. Develop strategies for conveying this information or *content*. The objective is to obtain a certain result.

The purpose of a sales proposal is persuasion, to persuade a customer to agree to purchase a service. A proposal may be dealing directly with a customer, a user community, members of a team, or decision makers.

A first step is to "establish an understanding of the problem." Explain the problem (or need) in a problem

statement followed by the offer of your solution. Note: Be sure to use an Executive Summary format and be more concise if the audience is upper management or even, perhaps, middle management.

Another noteworthy mention: A detailed proposal may reveal too much! When a customer acquires detail knowledge of your solution, your services will not appear to be as necessary.

It is important to try translating features of your solution into customer benefits, particularly if customer may not realize the benefits you suggest and describe. Get customer to focus and zero in on these benefits. The #1 skill the customer is seeking is the ability to identify what the real problem is.

A quick reference:**Proposal Strategies**

- Cost (long/short term)
- Savings (long/short term)
- Innovation (or instead, reliability)
- Reliability
- Technical expertise
- Flexibility
- Top-of-the-line
- Quality control
- Service: quick delivery and/or start, up-time, availability of personnel, troubleshooting, follow up

Basic Elements of the Proposal (an effective proposal always contains these basic elements:)

- A clear understanding of the client's situation and need
- A solution that will produce the client's desired results
- Enough detailed information (some, perhaps, in an appendix) to reinforce the argument for your solution. (Put statement of assumptions and glossary of terms in front of document.)
- Convincing evidence of your own qualifications and capability to carry out the plan properly
- Information about cost and timing

Putting Together a Proposal

1. Introduction: the background, the situation, the problem, the need, the opportunity
2. The solution to the problem: features and benefits
3. Discussion: detailed explanation of solution (product and/or service)
4. Implementation: schedules and timing
5. Your company: qualifications and experience (never put this first in your document)
6. Cost analysis (should be last because all that is 'said' previously is said to lay a foundation for "cost" of solution)

Twin Cities IEEE Computer Society Presents --

From: "William B. Smale" <smale002@gold.tc.umn.edu>

This notice is being sent to the Twin Cities IEEE Computer Society members and persons attending past Computer Society Events. If you want to be added to or removed from this mail-list-email j.d.masyga@ieee.org

SCHEDULED MEETINGS for 1997

Tuesday, June 24, 11:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.
Fault Tolerant Systems Architectures

Tuesday, July 22, 11:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.
Collaboration Technologies - Habanero

Tuesday, August 26, 11:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.
Residential Broadband Networks

Tuesday, September 23, 11:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.
Digital PCS

Tuesday, October 21, 11:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.
Intelligent Agent Technology

Tuesday, November 25, 11:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.
Operating System Wars

Please post and/or distribute this notice

Please Note: The Twin Cities IEEE Computer Society needs your help to continue to put together these luncheon seminars.

Please contact Jon Masyga at 612.912.3353 or j.d.masyga@ieee.org for more information on presentation For further information on this and other upcoming Twin Cities IEEE Events, see our webpage at <http://www.tc-ieee.org/>



Barnes Bags Pronto Pool

By William A. Buending <76212.1045@CompuServe.COM>

Following a day pressing the flesh at Strictly Business, Chapter and some guests members adjourned to Pronto's for the post-game wrap-up, May Chapter dinner meeting. It had been a successful day for ICCA. Visitors to the table in Hall 3 picked up 72 Conference brochures, so it is to be expected that an equal number of ICCA application forms and related documents may have also been in their hands as they drifted away. Bill McTeer enthralled 25 people at his session on "How To Be A Consultant." At session's end, he continued to answer questions in the small gathering at the front of the room, and later met with some of them again at our table.

All day at the table outside our room, other questions from the passing parade were answered in full by the changing guard of Chapter members personing our site. I must confess, and certainly hope that someone else is writing about the day's activities, that I do not know who all was involved. If memory serves, which is getting more problematic, I saw Joan Barnes, Ray Giske, Karl Hella, Sheridan Timms, Ben Moyle, Larry Bremer, and Bill McTeer conversing with the interested passers by. I am sure I have missed one or more. Inside at the show, Gordon Schesel, was on the floor in the IBM Lotus Pavilion.

At any rate, our reservations at Pronto's were at 6:00 PM for a goodly crowd. The contingent of Barnes, Giske, Hella, Timms, McTeer, and Buending met Don Rykowski already on-site. Shortly after the connoisseurs had jointly settled on a jug of grape, and the less-elegant of us had selected a choice day of Samuel Adams, we were joined by Alan Hill, Norm Nelson, and Jane Bersie. Jerry Stiff, Steve Roetzel and Don Peplinski arrived just about the time that the seals were being cracked on the third and fourth jugs of wine. Our den mother, Joan Barnes, then thought we should have appetizers; plates of fruits, vegetables, and assorted things that should never have left the sea.

Entrees were next. You could order the dinner version of the "primo" items, or a combination of the "primo" and "secondo" offerings. One supposes that an order for a couple of "secondos" would not be ignored. Old friendships were renewed, new friendships started. Concerns that have tied up local and national legislatures for months were quickly laid to rest.

Mother Barnes then ordered a dessert that she would split with Bill McTeer, which gave the waitron pause. For a brief moment, Bill considered selling

off shares of his share, but thought better of it. When the dish arrived, it was an artistic presentation of swirling chocolate, puddled chocolate, strawberries, and selected lesser things. Any attempt to "split" this would have been an assassination, so they settled the plate between them and attacked from both sides.

About this time, the thought occurred that we would have to pay for our meal. Which immediately inspired the Pronto Pool. What would the total bill be, without gratuity? Flowcharts, calculators, envelope inventories, queries, all came into play. The results ranged from \$350 to \$580. Joan Barnes, having spent more time at Pronto's than is good for anyone, easily proved to be champion, missing the real total by a mere \$7.46.

Since it was a table full of consultants, it is also easy to see why, in the heat and exuberance of achieving a pool entry, an appropriate objective of what the winner would gain was completely overlooked. Process over results every time.

ICCA MN schedule

Almost 1/3 of the members responded to a survey about the after dinner topics. As requested, more than one topic was usually indicated. Here is the resulting schedule for 1997 and early 1998.

DAY DATE	LOCATION	TOPIC	SPONSOR
1997			
Sun Jul 27	Fort Snelling	Summer Fun	Joan Barnes
Thu Aug 21	Wyndham	New Ways to Office	t.b.a.
Tue Sep 16	Lido	Self Improvement	Gordon Schesel
Wed Oct 15	Wyndham	New Consultants Forum	Bill McTeer
Thu Nov 20	Lido	Year 2000	t.b.a.
--- Dec	t.b.d	Holiday Fun	Larry Bremer
1998			
--- Jan	----	Annual Mtg / Broker Fair	Ben Moyle
--- Feb	----	Voice Systems	t.b.a.
--- Mar	----	Business Accounting	t.b.a.
--- Apr	----	Mktg /or/ Collab. Rel.	t.b.a.

Any of the "t.b.a." is an opportunity for you to sponsor a speaker. Contact Jerry Stiff to get the topic of your special interest.

June Meeting!**Airport Marriott****ICCA National Conference**

Next Meeting

**Fr-Su Jun 20-22: Airport Marriott
National Conference**
Bill Buending

FUTURE MEETINGS

**Sun Jul 27: Fort Snelling
Summer Fun**
Joan Barnes

Thu Aug 21: Wyndham
New Ways to Office

TOP TEN EXECUTIVE MEALS AT BILL GATES'S HOUSE

By William B. Smale <smale002@gold.tc.umn.edu>

Bill Gates recently had 100 of his closest friends over to dinner. Service was impeccable and highly personalized. To wit, the top ten dinners served to the high-tech CEOs visiting Bill Gates:

10. Andy Grove, Intel: chips 'n' bugs
9. Larry Ellison, Oracle: picks off Bill Gates's plate
8. Al Gore, the United States: pork
7. Kim Polese, Marimba: just coffee, thanks
6. Scott McNealy, Sun: 100 percent-certified Sun chips
5. Halsey Minor, CNET: TV dinner
4. Esther Dyson, EdVenture Holdings: salad 1.0
3. Michael Cowpland, Corel: day-old bread
2. Bill Gates, Microsoft: thrice-cooked spaghetti code
1. Lou Gerstner, IBM: Chessmen cookies

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