

❖ Consultants in Minnesota ❖

October 1997

Presidents Letter

by Ray J. Giske

Just yesterday, I returned from doing a presentation in Alexandria, MN on behalf of MN-ICCA. The subject was "Selecting a Consultant". The request for a speaker came to Ben Moyle several months ago and because I knew the organization which had submitted the request, I decided to follow up on it. The conference was the Third Annual Telecommunications for Rural and Urban Minnesota with the theme of "Community Networks and Electronic Commerce - So What?" Although I was there for only a portion of the conference, the sessions I did sample and the people I talked to suggest that the Internet is opening up opportunities for commerce in Greater Minnesota which were not previously available. At the same time, there remains a lot to be learned as to how it can all be used effectively.

Although the audience for my presentation was small (it was one of the last sessions of the conference), it nevertheless was an enthusiastic and receptive one. People indicated that several points had been helpful, they were very interested in getting the number for chapter referral service, and, at least one person, wanted additional information in what specific points should be included in a consulting contract. The presentation was based on seven transparencies which I had assembled, based on a variety of resources, not the least of which was some presentation materials Bill McTeer had put together some time ago. The topics, each one a different transparency, included:

- Roles of a Consultant
- Types of services/firms
- Cost and Benefits
- Choosing a Consultant
- Evaluation Criteria
- Consulting Agreements
- Sources for Locating Consultants

Should any of you have interest in using the material for doing a presentation of your own, please let me know. I would think the points are generic enough to allow adapting to individual audiences.

A note of thanks to those members who volunteered to assist with the MN-ICCA participation in the recent NetCom conference at the Minneapolis Convention Center. In particular, it includes Norm Nelson, Bill Buending, Gordy Schesel, Steve Roetzel, Don Peplinski, Bill Smale, Joan Barnes, Larry Bremer, Jane Bersie, Karl Hella, Ben Moyle and Bill McTeer. Special thanks to Robert Kelsey for doing his presentation on comparing mainframe and PC connectivity. A number of people stopped by the booth and left their cards in order to get more information about ICCA.

The Minnesota Chapter ICCA Board will be meeting just prior to our regularly scheduled October dinner meeting. There are two agenda items which would benefit from input from the general membership. The first is program planning. Several of you may have suggestions for future programs. Gordy Schesel, the chapter VP and program planning "honcho" should know about them. Contact him at 429-8280 and leave a message or contact me at 861-6054. We'd love to hear from you! The second item is the election of officers for the next calendar year. The Board will appoint a nominating committee for assembling a slate of candidates. Anyone interested in serving as an officer or interested in finding out more about the duties and responsibilities of an office should let me or one of the Board members know.



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Newsletter of the

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Minnesota Chapter

Virtual Offices are the Future - and the future is now

by Gordon Schesel 103011.3513@Compuserve.com

(excerpted from the Strib, July 18, Business section; by Sherwood Ross, Reuter News Service)

In the past, managers have been concerned that it would be too difficult to appraise the productivity of workers who ask to work from home; so have discouraged requests to do so. This type of reaction was typical of many managers, but the number of managers with this belief is decreasing. The attitude was that an employee who can't be seen working may not be working. The consequences of this somewhat arrogant viewpoint is that it will cost them a person with topnotch skills.

In actuality, the only obstacle to allowing a computer expert from doing their job from home is a manager that doesn't have a clue how virtual office technology can be utilized. These managers are becoming a minority and may soon be left behind unless they learn to adapt to this popular trend.

A study of human resource executives at the largest U. S. companies found that nearly one in four have employees who regularly telecommute either part- or full-time. More than half of the companies with telecommuters found that workers enjoyed increased productivity and job satisfaction and one-third of the companies reported lower real estate costs and reduced employee turnover. The trend began with entrepreneurial companies and new technology companies, and now it is becoming more common in corporate America.

A virtual office is defined as technology enabling workers to work anywhere, anytime. The arrangement commonly requires a notebook or a desktop computer and a modem to communicate with a company's office.

Most virtual offices are located in the employee's home, however they may also be

at a customer site, in an airport or in leased office space that is part of a shared business center. It is estimated that the number of Americans who work in virtual offices ranges from 3 million to 12 million.

In recent years, IBM has participated in a campaign to relocate employees to virtual offices. About 20,000 of IBM's 118,000 U. S. employees now work at home, from customer locations or in satellite offices. The change was initiated by IBM as a cost-cutting step, but turned out to be a money-maker: productivity was boosted 10 percent on average.

Managers who ask how they would track the productivity of a virtual office worker are admitting that they are under-informed about what their employees assignments are and what they are doing. By utilizing an objective performance appraisal system, it wouldn't matter if the employee was working in the office or across the country. Managing employees is not by what they are observed doing but by what output they're generating. Managers need to be rewarded based on the productivity of those who report to them.

It was estimated that by the year 2010, as many as 30 percent of the nation's work force will work out of virtual offices. This is attributed to the belief that virtual offices do more than reduce corporate space costs and improve productivity. They are credited with cutting commuting time and air pollution and even saving employees money on clothing and lunches.

[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!!.

Synopsis of September program:

by Gordon Schesel(103011.3513@Compuserve.com)

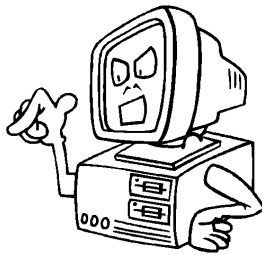
Our thanks to Bill McTeer for leading an impromptu presentation and open discussion on all of the benefits and services your membership entitles each of us to as members of the ICCA. Bill himself and other long-time ICCA members, who have first-hand knowledge of the value of these benefits and services, provided us with valuable information it would have taken us years to obtain through our own experience.

Services provided by ICCA National Headquarters, St. Louis:

- Standard Form Consulting Contract
- National Conference, annually
- Tax and Business Handbook for Consultants and Clients
- Computer Software Industry Association
- Client Brochure
- Institute of Certified Computer Professionals (ICCP) board membership
- The Independent, a bi-monthly newsletter of the association
- Internet, ICCA home page with links to member home pages
- CompuServe, the CONSULT forum for networking discussions
- Directory, hardcopy membership listing
- ICCA logo, to promote your professional association with ICCA
- Chapters nationwide including the Minnesota Chapter
- Educational materials, for marketing, accounting and legal matters
- Code of Ethics, for the computer consulting industry as a whole
- Standards and Practices, to use in conjunction with the Code of Ethics

Benefits:

Too numerous to mention individually; however, they include networking promote your business, insurance (business, health, and disability), discounts on subscriptions to industry periodicals, auto rentals, long distance service, and others.



Beginning Computer User

It takes brains...

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

Original Text, Actual dialog of a former WordPerfect Customer Support employee:

"Ridge Hall computer assistant; may I help you?"
 "Yes, well, I'm having trouble with WordPerfect."
 "What sort of trouble?"
 "Well, I was just typing along, and all of a sudden the words went away."
 "Went away?"
 "They disappeared."
 "Hmm. So what does your screen look like now?"
 "Nothing."
 "Nothing?"
 "It's blank; it won't accept anything when I type."
 "Are you still in WordPerfect, or did you get out?"
 "How do I tell?"
 "Can you see the C:\ prompt on the screen?"
 "What's a sea-prompt?"
 "Never mind. Can you move the cursor around on the screen?"
 "There isn't any cursor: I told you, it won't accept anything I type."
 "Does your monitor have a power indicator?"
 "What's a monitor?"
 "It's the thing with the screen on it that looks like a TV. Does it have a little light that tells you when it's on?"
 "I don't know."
 "Well, then look on the back of the monitor and find where the power cord goes into it. Can you see that?"
 <pause> "Yes, I think so."
 "Great! Follow the cord to the plug, and tell me if it's plugged into the wall."
 <pause> "Yes, it is."
 "When you were behind the monitor, did you notice that there were two cables plugged into the back of it, not just one?"
 "No."
 "Well, there are. I need you to look back there again and find the other cable."
 <pause> "Okay, here it is."
 "Follow it for me, and tell me if it's plugged securely into the back of your computer."
 "I can't reach."
 "Uh huh. Well, can you see if it is?"
 "No."
 "Even if you maybe put your knee on something and lean way over?"
 "Oh, it's not because I don't have the right angle-it's because it's dark."
 "Dark?"
 "Yes-the office light is off, and the only light I have is coming in from the window."
 "Well, turn on the office light then."

"I can't."
 "No? Why not?"
 "Because there's a power outage."
 "A power... A power outage? Aha! Okay, we've got it licked now. Do you still have the boxes and manuals and packing stuff your computer came in?"
 "Well, yes, I keep them in the closet."
 "Good! Go get them, and unplug your system and pack it up just like it was when you got it. Then take it back to the store you bought it from."
 "Really? Is it that bad?"
 "Yes, I'm afraid it is."
 "Well, all right then, I suppose. What do I tell them?"
 "Tell them you're too stupid to own a computer."

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				
Thu	Nov 20	Lido	Year 2000	t.b.a.
Tue	Dec 9	Nicklows	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 Gordon Schesel to get the topic of your special interest.

Food for Thought!

How come 250 million computers are making the world so productive that everybody is working harder and longer than they ever have?
 (Alan Freedman, Technology Editor,



Meeting Reservations: Members may phone your reservation to Joan Barnes' office at 257-2570, **by 3:00 PM, Monday, October 13.** Non-members should mail this form to ICCA Minnesota, c/o Sheridan Timms, 6940 Tartan Curve, Eden Prairie, MN 55346.

Name: _____ Company: _____
 Address: _____ City: _____
 State: _____ Phone: () _____

Grilled Flank Steak _____ Members \$20 Non-members \$23 x _____ =



Next Meeting

**Wednesday October 15
Video Conferencing**

Wyndham Garden Hotel
4460 W 78th St. Circle
831-3131

Social Hour at 5:30PM
Dinner at 6:30PM

For reservations call
Joan Barnes @ 257-2570

FUTURE MEETINGS

Thu. Nov. 20 Lido
Year 2000 - t.b.a.

Tue. Dec. 9 Nicklows
Holiday Fun - Larry Bremer

October Meeting:

by: "Jerry Stiff" <stiff001@maroon.tc.umn.edu>

The October speaker will be Keith Kullman, informing us about the current capabilities of Video Conferencing. This will include desktop situations and large group conferencing. Transmission media options run from dial-up lines through satellites. Companies frequently point to video conferencing as ways to include more people in the decision process and reduce travel expenses. You may have seen video conferencing demonstrations at trade shows. You have probably seen v.c. equipment in recent movies.

Keith is the past president of the Twin Cities chapter of International Teleconferencing Association. He has presented this & other topics to technical audiences before. His career in telecommunications covers more than twenty years. He has even plug-wired patch panels.

Bring your questions for dinner conversation, too. Keith can discuss other telephone, telecommunication, or related security topics.

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