

# ❖ Consultants in Minnesota ❖

November 1999

## President's Message

By Gordon Schesel

Please note that the topic of the upcoming chapter meeting has been changed. The planned activity, the tour of the Seagate facility, ran into a scheduling snag, it would have required a daytime rather than evening timeframe. Your chapter treasurer, Roger Montague, the volunteer sponsor for the November meeting, will himself present to the group, the topic being Power Quality. A "bio" of Roger and a brief description of his presentation appear elsewhere in this Newsletter. My thanks to Roger for volunteering to, first of all, sponsor the meeting and now to also respond to the opportunity to present to us.

Also in this newsletter, I am asking Magne to publish a document authored by Ray Giske outlining the process of sponsoring a monthly meeting. Please study it, save it for future reference, and, of course, please put it to use. We urgently need your help in planning the schedule of topics for the coming year. Please speak with Larry Bremer about how you can help.

One other noteworthy item related to "active involvement in ICCA". Let me direct you to an article in The Independent for September/October. The article is from Dave Zimmer, our National Board president and is titled "Active Involvement in ICCA Is Profitable". Being actively involved in ICCA and making it work for you doesn't take too much of your time and the rewards are great... Getting involved leads to handsome rewards. We get most by giving to others.

Leonard Shostak is the chair of the ICCA Chapter President's Council (CPC). He has been very busy working for all of the chapters by holding meetings and discussions with us chapter presidents. The following is a recent e-mail:

Dear Chapter presidents,  
The results are now in, I would like to thank those of you that voted in a timely matter to help the CPC keep moving forward. I am now happy to say

that we can officially vote using email and have on-line discussions. And will be starting many that I hope will become a regular place where we communicate and get and give Business and ICCA advice.

The results are as follows

\* You voted to get rid of the regional rep position, thank you John and Phil for your service and I would like to inform you that as of November 1st the position no longer exists.

\* We have also voted to have on line meetings using emails. You all have received the rules and they will be posted to the New ICCA website when it is finished. Please be patient with the new webmaster since he is working to get it up and implement some improvements to get the sections that did not work to be functional.

Here is a reminder to come one, come all, to The Independent Computer Consultants Association 23rd Annual National Conference "Independents' Freedom Trail" June 8-10, 2000 at the Rolling Green Ramada Inn & Conference Center Andover, Massachusetts in the greater Boston area.

In June, 2000, members and colleagues of The Independent Computer Consultants Association (ICCA) will gather in Andover Massachusetts, near the birthplace of the American Revolution, to promote the entrepreneurial spirit of the independent consultant, hone business skills, learn about new products, and network with colleagues. Attendance at prior conferences has ranged from 100 to 200, and this year's event is sure to be another spectacular opportunity for members and vendors to make connections and improve their businesses. If you have any questions, please contact: Joyce Burkard, ICCA Executive Director at (314) 892-1675. Please announce the above at your next meeting and via email to your chapter membership.

Leonard H Shostak

L&D Computer Consulting Corp

See you on the 17th at the Wyndham.

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Minnesota Chapter

## Marketing the Independent Computer Consultant

By: Jackie Harte

How can you successfully market yourself as an independent computer consultant? This was the topic of October's presentation. Paul Nakanishi of Master Design Inc. and Don Hollerich of Eue Rachie and Associates presented answers to the question. Master Design Inc. sells technical services and projects. They can help ICCs by providing the services of selling, presentations and writing contracts. Mr. Nakanishi's background is in electrical engineering and project management. Eue Rachie and Associates provide project and firm placement services. Mr. Hollerich works in sales, and also has experience as a business owner and a programmer.

So how do you effectively market yourself? The first thing you need to know is what you do. Be specific, not general. Mr. Hollerich stated that when he talks with consultants, he writes what they do in the corner of their business card if it isn't stated on it already (e.g. Oracle or Java).

This brings us to the **business card** – your best marketing tool. It should state clearly who you are and what you do. You can have several different cards for specific situations or targets.

What else?

**Brochures** should describe your business and what services you can provide. Mr. Nakanishi recommends that you write the text for the brochure yourself to help make clear in your mind what you can and are willing to offer. Create an electronic brochure that you can incorporate into your emails.

**Resumes** describe your experience and credentials. It is the document that tells what you have done and determines your rate for the next project.

**Networking** is another great tool. Mr. Hollerich recommended joining your local chamber of commerce and networking with the other members. He emphasized the importance of doing networking and not just socializing. The goal is to get your message

out.

Get a **WEB site**. Obtain the URL for your site. Even if you are not putting up a page now, get the URL before you have to buy it from someone who beat you to it.

Use the **Internet** to build a database of contacts. Register with free directories. The Star Tribune has a database at StarTribune.com/workavenue that is worth checking out. Other sites to look at are Skillweb.com, Ixmatch.com, and Itskillsmatch.com. Also, consider registering with the Minnesota Directory of Engineering at 612-448-5907.

**Phone calls** (no groans please). Mr. Nakanishi recommends having 5-10 live conversations per day when you are actively seeking work, and a couple of calls a day when you are employed to keep a hook in the water. While difficult to do, it can produce results by keeping your name out there.

An example given was this. You call a company and ask for the IT department. The receptionist asks for a name. You don't have one. She can't help you because she needs a name. Ask for accounts receivable. Sure, she can put you through to them. And, an accountant will most likely be glad to talk to you because no one ever calls him. He will give you the name of the IT manager; he may even give you the number and transfer you through! When you get to the IT manager, read him the first two lines of your brochure and resume (tell him what you can do and what you have done). Offer to send him something. Call him back in a week and ask him if he had a chance to read your brochure. He will tell you he has it somewhere on his desk. This way, you will have gotten your name in front of him three times over the course of a couple of weeks.

### Be proactive, not reactive.

When you are on a job, actively seek out the client's objectives and perform to those, rather than what you deem the objective should be. Your on-the-job performance is your best tool for repeat customers and word-of-mouth advertising.

Advertising in the yellow pages provides a limited return. It works better for large companies who can offer a wide array of services. Give-away items and direct

mailings, which can average \$1 per piece, also have a limited payback.

In summary, know what it is you do. Revamp your business cards. Use Mr. Bell's invention. Set up a Web site. And network, network, network!

\*\*\*\*\*

**Access Consulting Group** recently joined ICCA to learn more about industry trends and meet other consultants in the Minneapolis, St. Paul area. We have 10 consultants and one marketing/sales/recruiting person. We focus our attention on Software Application Development in our five Areas of Excellence.

- \*Database Application Development
- \*Internet and Web development
- \*Platform Migrations
- \*Software Configuration Management
- \*Full Cycle Application Development

Our most active area at present is Internet and Web development. Over the past two years, we have developed a database driven tool using Active Server Pages that helps us rapidly produce results for web page development and Intranet and Extranet development. We use this tool for custom application development for our clients as well as market it as an assembly line web page development tool. We are expanding into new offices in St. Anthony Main across from the old Winfield Potters restaurant site. We look forward to learning from this group and contributing our experiences as well. You can contact us at [www.access-consulting.com](http://www.access-consulting.com).



**ICCA PROGRAM SPONSOR GUIDELINES**

Author: Ray Giske  
March 21, 1996

A Program Sponsor is an ICCA member who has assumed responsibility for the program for a single ICCA Monthly Meeting. It provides the member the opportunity to ensure that a topic of interest is presented at an ICCA meeting, to get to know people who may be knowledgeable in the topic of interest, and to provide other ICCA members with information about the skills and interests of the Program Sponsor member. The Program Sponsor is **not responsible for arranging** for food, meeting location, taking reservations for members attending, and so forth...only for making arrangements with the presenter.

The following guidelines have been prepared to give potential Program Sponsors some idea of the role and responsibilities as well as to provide assistance in the orderly execution of those responsibilities once the decision is made to proceed. Keep in mind that these are only guidelines and may need to be adjusted or modified depending upon the specific circumstances surrounding the topic and the meeting agenda.

- 1- Select a topic of interest or choose from among the potential topics recommended by other ICCA members. The stronger your interest in the topic you choose, the more likely you will enjoy the experience of being a Program Sponsor. You may have a contact that might serve as a presenter, or alternatively, other ICCA members may have suggestions. One of the benefits in finding a presenter whom you don't already know is the benefit of networking.
- 2- Contact the ICCA Vice-President to discuss the potential topic, obtain possible meeting dates for presenting the topic, and to develop an approach for finding the presenter. The topic or a related topic may already be scheduled.
- 3- Contact possible speakers several months in advance of

the scheduled date to determine their interest in presenting, the content and approach (i.e. demo, panel, etc.) in the presentation, and a general understanding of the arrangements.

- 4- With tentative arrangements established, contact the Vice-President of Programming so that the meeting date can be reserved for the topic and so that the topic can be listed in subsequent issues of the ICCA Newsletter. It is helpful to know well in advance if the presentation will be held at a location other than the standard ICCA meeting locations (e.g. at the presenting vendor's office).
- 5- Approximately 45 - 60 days before the scheduled meeting date, contact the speaker to confirm arrangements, obtain a brief summary of the presentation and presenter background and experience. This material will be used to prepare a program announcement to be carried in the Newsletter. Note that material for the Newsletter must be submitted about 30 days in advance of the scheduled program to appear in the Newsletter just prior to the program.
- 6- On the day of the meeting, be prepared to introduce the topic and the presenter. During the introduction, you may wish to indicate your interest, background, and experience in the topic being presented.

[ed. note]

: A "Bio" of **Roger Montague**, the presenter at the November 1999 ICCA meeting, was supposed to appear here!!.



Meeting Reservations: Members may phone your reservation to Joan Barnes at 651-257-2570, **by 3:00 PM, Monday, November 15, 1999.** 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: Tortellini with tomato basil sauce or Grilled Salmon Members \$20 Non-members \$23 x \_\_\_\_\_ = \_\_\_\_\_

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



# Next Meeting

**Wednesday, November 17, 1999**

## Power Quality

### Wyndham Garden Hotel

4460 W 78th St. Circle  
(612) 831-3131

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

For reservations call  
Joan Barnes @ 651-257-2570

## FUTURE MEETINGS

Thurs. Dec. 16, 1999 – Holiday Party

Tues. Jan. 18, 2000 – Broker Fair

Feb, Apr, Jul,

## Visitors at the ICCA Minnesota meeting October 19, 1999

A hearty welcome to our visitors at the last ICCA meeting. We all hope you will visit again and become part of our association:

*Guests attending:*

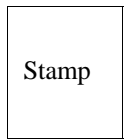
Bob Treumann  
Paul Nakanishi (Speaker)  
Don Hollerich (Speaker)

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