



IEEE-USA

AICN NEWSLETTER

The ALLIANCE of IEEE CONSULTANTS' NETWORKS
by the IEEE-USA's Coordinating Committee

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CHAIR'S CORNER By Dr. Gary Blank



HOW TO FIND CLIENTS

As promised in earlier issues, I will continue to use this column to share some successful methods of finding clients. These are methods (of more than twenty) I have used, and which I discuss in detail in my seminar on consulting. This method is one of my favorites. It is easy, comfortable, and it gets results. I have had success with the Commerce Business Daily (CBD). It is published every business day by the U.S. Government Printing Office. This publication provides a daily list of U.S. Government procurement invitations, contract awards, subcontracting leads, and foreign business opportunities. Of special interest to consultants are the sections describing the needs for services in Research and Development, Studies and Analyses, ADP and Telecommunications, Quality Control and Testing, Electrical and Electronic Equipment, Fiber Optics, Electric Wire and Power Distribution Equipment, Instrumentation, and Training. It also includes a list of recent contract awards which can be used as subcontracting leads. The GPO (Government Printing Office) can be contacted at (202)502-1800. It is possible to get a sample before subscribing. The printed copy comes in the mail (it takes a few days) and costs about \$320 for a one year subscription. It is also available on the Internet at http://www.access.gpo.gov/sc_docs, and http://www.access.gpo.gov/sc_docs Copies are available at libraries and although it costs nothing, the information can be outdated by the time it appears on the shelf of the library. Many believe that it is difficult to get business through the CBD because of the extensive readership. Consequently, there are fewer applications. And this
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AICN's NATIONAL CONSULTANTS WORKSHOP BOSTON, 4 NOV. 2000

The IEEE Alliance of Consultants Networks in conjunction with the Boston Local Consultants Network will be holding a workshop for seasoned and first time consultants on Saturday, 4 November. It will be held at The Westin-Waltham Hotel, located at 70 Third Avenue, Waltham, MA from 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

The featured luncheon speaker will be Janet Ruhl, creator of <http://www.realrates.com>, an extensive web site for computer consultants. Ms. Ruhl is also author of a recent publication entitled, "Computer Job Survival Guide".

For more information about the workshop, please visit the IEEE USA web site, <http://www.ieeeusa.org/business/workshop.aicn.html> or contact Scott Grayson at s.grayson@ieee.org or at +1 202 785 0017, ext 8376. Admission to the workshop is \$125.

11th Biennial Careers Conference

San Jose, CA

2-3 November 2000

Contact: <http://www.ieeeusa.org/careercon>

The conference theme is, *Utilizing and Retaining Technical Professionals in Today's Marketplace*. This unique conference has been conducted for over 20 years and provides CEOs, human resource professionals, engineering managers, engineers and academics

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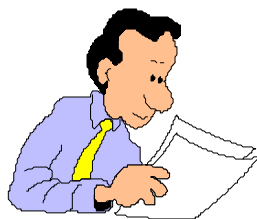
CONTRACT CORNER

By Henry A. Burger, PE

I have previously warned everyone I have seen about accepting contracts offered as purchase orders. Many larger companies must issue contracts with consultants through their purchasing departments, and these departments use their standard forms. On the back of every purchase order are the standard "Terms and Conditions". These are in fine print, usually gray ink on white paper, and are all totally in favor of the company. I say to watch out for these because this purchase order is in fact a contract, and one of the terms will say words to the effect that "... this is the entire agreement between the parties ...". In other words, any previous contract you just signed, even yesterday, is voided by this purchase order clause.

There is a way out of this that saves face for all. The first way is that the purchase order can refer to your contract, and thereby include it in the "Entire Agreement" by reference. The second way is to line out the clauses that you do not wish to accept, initial them, and return the form to the purchasing department along with a letter explaining the terms you do not accept and you will proceed as amended unless you hear otherwise by a certain date.

If Purchasing does not respond, then you can proceed. If it is ever challenged, just refer to the "Last Letter" rule of common law (ask your attorney). If you wrote the last letter and it was not challenged in any way, you are home free. This is especially true if you include a reasonable response date. This is all part of the art of negotiating, and believe it or not purchasing departments deal with this all the time. They expect it, and if they want the order filled they will work with you. If they do not want to negotiate like gentlemen, no offense to you ladies but that is the standard term, then you probably are well advised to find a client elsewhere.



Looking for
something ?
go to . . . [http://
www.ieeeusa.org](http://www.ieeeusa.org)

Connecticut Connections

By Tom Freehill

Greetings from Connecticut Consultants Network (CCN). A lot has happened since the Connecticut Network (CN) hosted the AICN Consultants' Workshop last fall. We have updated our website and registered our domain name(s). We have begun to charge an annual fee and that's not as bad as it sounds.

For the IEEE National Database, the cost is \$65/person (individuals), or \$50/person, if the entire network signs up. We charge \$65/head and that gets you listed on the national website <http://www.ieeeusa-consultants.org/> and the CN website <http://www.ct-consultants.org>. Our "profits" are used to pay for the registration of our senior members on the national database. I am not sure what the effect will be on our overall membership, but the annual fee has not stopped new members from joining. Meeting attendance is as high as it has been since I joined.

Within the CCN, some of us have begun "partnering". Often, potential projects come along that are too big for one person, or have some portion requiring expertise that is outside one's principal area. The ability to call another consultant with the requisite knowledge and form a temporary "virtual company" has the potential to markedly boost a lot of incomes. The one drawback with this approach is figuring out who to partner with, both from the standpoint of expertise and "chemistry". It is usually the "lead" consultant's reputation at stake and as often as not, the project is for an established client. While we may expect a potential client to hire us "sight-unseen", it is a very brave person who would partner under the same conditions.

As it turns out, if you attend meetings even fairly regularly, it doesn't take much to decide who, and under what conditions, you could work with. I am currently in the proposal stage, on two separate projects with various CCN members (all of whom are regular (attendees). This year's Fall Workshop is being held by our neighbors, up in Boston. It promises to be a good one (they all are). If you have never attended a workshop, particularly if you live in the Northeast, you should be there.

On IT Consulting

By Neil Clark

In my opinion, Information Technology (IT) is not engineering. Nevertheless, many EEs are enthusiastic about it because there are plenty of jobs and it pays pretty well. In fact you can get over \$100K/yr. IT is sort of a hybrid involving programming, system analysis, business acumen and PC knowhow. It's a good new career for older engineers and a good first career for computer geeks. No degree or formal training is required. You simply must know how to do it! But, a degree in Computer Science is really helpful.

Rob Gottschalk, 28 years old, is a fine example, living now in Minneapolis. He acquired a B.S. in biology at the University of Minnesota. To continue his interest in conservation he started a PhD program in Tropical Plant Ecology at Louisiana State University. It was not going where he wanted, so he took an Master of Science in Ecology, and decided he liked working on a PC writing scripts for the programs he used in manipulating all the statistical data.

From his experience at school, Rob had a pretty good idea of the expanding variety of PC software and the need for more to cover the applications popping up everywhere. Early excitement provided by the Internet was compelling. An address was possible for anything in which a chip could be imbedded. The possibilities were endless! But, he was especially challenged by web site development, and has decided to take on internet connectivity with wireless cell phones and other like devices.

In preparation, Rob knew he needed to know about data bases, so he got books on relational data bases, structured query language (SQL), and the basic programming connections to application programs. In the process he had to learn some other program languages such as *Visual Basic* which he prefers over C++. Books for study can be obtained in a regular book store in the programming section. He recommends Community Colleges to get a basic understanding of established software. They are inexpensive, convenient, and the class structure and references provide a good basis for learning if you are eager and willing to work hard. However, for new, high demand software products, classes are rare because of the difficulty in hiring teachers.

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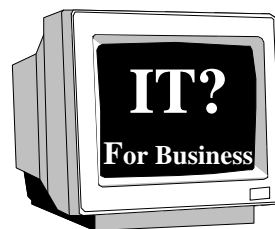
Rob quit his previous job because they wouldn't give him a vacation to go to Europe for a month. But, he had made arrangements before he left for a new job that would allow him to do exactly what he wanted. He feels he is very fortunate to be in a job he really likes and believes IT should be better known by consultants.

As his abilities matured, Rob turned to more specialized software in his field of interest, e.g.: *Java Script, XML, HTML, ASP, Personal Web Server (PWS), Wireless Markup Language (WML)*. Books to study are usually available after a search in a data base such as provided by Amazon.com. Especially valuable in book selections are the reviews by experts. IT speciality conferences are very good if you can find them and can afford to attend. They are usually listed in publications such as *Computer World, Web Techniques, Internet Week*, etc. Also listed are the kinds of specialties that are needed so as to give some direction to a search for hot skills to master.

The IT field provides opportunity for many interests especially since IT requires solving business problems with PC software. If people interest you, then you can aspire to being a manager, or get into sales and marketing with IT credentials. If travel interests you, there are lots of opportunities for doing training all over the world, including maintenance and consulting. If teaching is interesting, the community colleges need you, as do most businesses for in-house classes. Working more or less alone on a development project is certainly available and it provides opportunities to learn a business, interact with peers and sharpen your skills. One of the rewards of IT work is esteem and admiration from your peers, especially if you become an expert (alpha-geek). There are always additional rewards for high achievers such as more money, bonuses, perks and more vacation.

Rob established himself in IT by working hard on the textbooks and practicing on his PC while in school. He worked with many consultants and other

temporary personnel on projects to fix corrupted software, customize standard software and develop applications for PCs. He has great respect for foreign
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On IT Consulting

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H1-B workers who are the cream of the crop at home and are looking to get a green card in the U.S.

Most companies that hire ITs, he admits, are interested in you only as a producer. You are not a person, but rather a worker on the market for which they will pay the going rate to keep you producing. You must take care of your own training and direction by letting your employer know what you need. Maybe you will discover your employer is not going where you want to go. Then you must take care of yourself. Loyalty is a thing of the past and personal opportunity is the vision of the future. Consultants in IT must continuously train and practice.

“Knowledge Worker” is a big difference in the description of IT employees. They accumulate lots of knowledge and knowhow about PC software products - especially products that enable one to develop software for business. The objective of all this is to improve the productivity of a business so they need fewer people. The means of production, PCs and software, are trivial in cost compared to the cost of IT employees. IT workers are accumulating knowledge capital which can be successfully leveraged in the market. This personal technology skill set is yours alone.

Rob admits he is continually studying and learning, trying to keep up with the endless new requirements he sees. He remarks often how much fun it is doing things you like. He is quick to say that working for his PhD was excellent training because it taught him how to study, how to learn, and how to reason logically. He now has a salaried job with the realization that there are some advantages, including a steady income and a management that appreciates IT specialists by providing good equipment, a liberal literature allowance, a training allowance, development software and all the books he wants to study. Telecommuting may be provided as a perk for some ITs.

Rob maintains that some day in the future he may want to be an independent consultant, but for now he's still learning. He highly recommends IT as a field for consultants and says that working for a temporary employer is excellent training. An idea of IT positions that are open can be seen on <http://www.monsterboard.com>.

MEMORIAL TO JOHN PARRY

By Irwin Weitman

John Parry was my valued friend for more than 49 years. We spoke to each other once a week by phone for the last 20 years, since he moved to California. Before that he lived in Glen Cove, Long Island. He was ethical, honest, helpful and everything one could want in a friend.

John and I were friends since January, 1951. We met on the job at a company called Air King (later acquired and named CBS Columbia by CBS.) I was a technician studying to become an engineer and John joined the company as an engineer with two years experience. (I earned \$39 per week and John earned \$65 per week). We worked on black and white television, and later on, the CBS “Color Wheel”. We remained fast friends until the day he died. I last spoke to John three days before he passed away. Even though I knew how ill he was and I feared the worst. It still came as shock when his wife called to tell me the sad news. Although he was ten years older than me, I somehow felt that he was immortal and would not die in my lifetime. His attitude and outlook was so positive. The last time I saw John was on June 13, 2000 at his home, in California.

John worked for General Bronze, AIL (Airborne Instrument Laboratories), New York Community College, New York State Maritime College, California Maritime College at Vallejo, and the California Department of Transportation until his retirement. After he retired he became a consultant to the California DOT. Several months ago when he was in the hospital he still spoke about continuing to work for DOT when he got out.

John knew of my activities in getting the local Consultants' Network and then the PPTF and the AICN started. He was instrumental in getting the San Diego Consultants' Network started and holding it together during the early years of its existence. John served as a member of the AICN Coordinating Committee for several years. John was the type of person everyone liked. You couldn't help it! John Parry was a dear friend!

His address was:

John Parry
224 Hannalei Drive
Vista, CA 92083

Phone: (760)941-3738

WHAT WORKS FOR YOU?

By Bob Guager

[Editor's note: Bob Guager started this column in the last issue of the newsletter. His experience, insight and advice continues.]

When you are busy, it is easy to overlook the ongoing need to develop new clients. One of the ways to find clients, or rather for them to find you, is through directory listings, such as our own Directory of Electrotechnology & Information Technology Consultants. The Directory works for me and I hope that you are using it too.

There are other directories too. Some are free and some are pricey (hundreds of dollars). I have long promised to tabulate them and publish my findings in this Newsletter. You can help me do that.

If you look on the AICN web page <http://www.ieee.org> and go the AICN menu, you will find a list of a number of other web resources for consultants. Just clicking on their name in the AICN page brings up their web page, or you can use the web addresses that I show below:

Independent Computer Consultants Association

<http://www.icca.org>

International Computer Professional Associates

<http://www.icpa.com>

National Society of Professional Engineers

<http://www.nspe.org>

Janet Ruhl's Computer Consultants Resource Page

<http://www.realrates.com>

Software Contractor's Guild www.scguild.com

Professional and Technical Consultants Association

<http://www.patca.org>

Independent Professional Services

<http://www.iprofessional.com>

National Consultant Referrals www.referrals.com

Directory of Computer Consultants & Developers

<http://www.iversonsoftware.com/directory.asp>

EWork Exchange <http://www.ework.com/700>

Guru.com <http://www.guru.com>

IcPlanet <http://www.icplanet.com>

Request America <http://www.RequestAmerica.com>

<http://www.drblank.com> (Our own Gary Blank)

Access It Resources <http://www.dice.dlinc.com/access>

Your Consultant <http://www.yourconsultant.com>

ConsultLink <http://www.consultlink.com>

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ProSavvy <http://www2.prosavvy.com>

Consulting Engineers and Scientists

<http://www.consultingengineers.com>

Consultant's Comer <http://www.pwgroupp.com/corner>

Consultants Mall <http://www.consultants-mall.com>

Data Processing Independent Consultant's Exchange

<http://www.dice.com>

Directory of Computer Consultants & Developers

<http://www.iversonsoftware.com/service.html>

Society of Professional Consultants

<http://www.spconsultants.org>

Web Consultants Association <http://www.just4u.com/webconsultants>

Alliance of Consultants <http://www.allianceofconsultants.com>

Experts Directory <http://www.experts.com>

Contract Professional <http://www.cpuniverse.com>

Independent Professionals <http://forker@experiencenet.com>

The Exchange <http://www.ework.com> (a newsletter)

RealRates <http://www.realrates.com>

Hello Brain <http://www.hellobrain.com/welcome/default.asp?engineer>

Hot Gurus <http://www.hotgurus.com>

What I would like is your feedback concerning any experience you have had with any of these referral resources and your suggestions for others to add to the list. If you don't want me to use your initials, let me know.

In publishing the next list (I will make it a table) should I also include firms that do not take independent consultants? There are hundreds of them and I would prefer not to list them unless you have been working with one that you recommend. There are also many directories of safety engineers, expert witnesses, and forensic engineers. I have not tried to include them.

The next time that you are on the web, try searching for a consultant with your skill or specialty. I did and did not find much. If you are not too specific and are looking for an electrical engineering consultant, you will find frequent referral to the AICN Directory and many of our network's directories. If you are looking for an Electrotechnology Consultant (and I can't imagine anyone using that term), you will be swamped with referrals to our AICN Directory.

Please send your evaluations and recommendations to r.gauger@ieee.org

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CONSULTING SKILLS AND SURVIVABILITY

By Bob Gauger

Recent news stories (probably biased) project that in the next few years, the U.S. will have only half the number of technology workers (largely Information Technology skills) that will be needed.

During the April dip in the stock market, several analysts were projecting that many of the dot.com startup companies will not survive and that thousands of engineers will be looking for other jobs. The current market scare has already caused some of these engineers to start looking to shift to stronger companies.

One forecaster predicts that every IT worker will be a consultant for 15 minutes.

Supporting this, the forecaster also predicts that the company IT department, as we know it, will vanish in about seven years. In order to survive, employees, including engineers, will have to change and learn new technologies, often on their own.

Each of these situations offers an opportunity for consultants - either to step in and fill the changing needs or to offer a new mode of survival for the displaced IT engineer. Contract workers, part-timers, retirees, and consultants will be needed to meet the company's new needs. Evidence of this is that many firms are already moving toward

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just-in-time staffing and independent consultants. In order to take advantage of this situation, we, as consultants, will have to anticipate and train for these needs, be flexible, and willing to take risks.

CHAIR'S CORNER (contd. from page 1)

tions. And this is the secret of success. Do the opposite. I was the only applicant (virtually I won the contract) for one study for which you would expect that there would be dozens of applicants.

SAD PASSING OF JOHN PARRY. John Parry died in August in San Diego after a lengthy illness. John served on the AICN Coordinating Committee and was instrumental in the success and growth of the AICN. We will miss his friendship, his wisdom, his wit, and his sense of humor. John was a true champion of our profession.

11th Biennial Careers Conference

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with the most up to date research and information about best practices for employing technical professionals in the current work force.

The conference will have the following breakout sessions from which to choose: (1) Alternative Staffing Approaches; (2) Career Development and Mentoring; (3) Changing Workforce Environments (4) Educational Opportunities; (5) Enhancing Engineering Careers; (6) Maintaining the Vitality of Your Technical Professionals Society's Role in Career Development Needs; (7) Tools For Retention; (8) Using Technology.

The conference will open Thursday, 2 November 2000 at 8:30 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. On 3 November the Conference will resume at 8:30 a.m.- 3:30 p.m. Each morning a continental breakfast will be served at 7:30 a.m, with a morning break on both days and an afternoon break on Thursday.

These important breaks provide attendees the opportunity to discuss conference subject matter and network. Lunch will be served both days at 12 noon and we will have luncheon speakers.

Who Should Attend? CEOs, human resource professionals, engineering managers, managers of technical professionals, academics and engineers.

