



CONSULTING MATTERS

A publication of the Delaware Valley Chapter of the Independent Computer Consultants Association

www.iccadelval.org

November 2003

From the President

by Keith Mast
Access Consultant
President
ICCA/Delaware Valley



Keith Mast
Access Consultant
President
ICCA Delaware Valley

Five More Reasons to Join ICCA

In last month's newsletter, I gave the top 5 reasons why I joined the ICCA. In this article, I would like to give **five more reasons to join ICCA**.

Over the last four years, I have enjoyed meeting the guests and members who come to our monthly meetings. Some of those people have become trusted colleagues and friends. This is especially true with our board members since we spend more time together promoting ICCA. That leads me to reason number one.

Reason 1: Consultants are People Too

We all come to the ICCA for business. To find more contracts, to find better ways to run our business, and to improve our skills. But what I have also come to realize is that ICCA members are not only skilled technicians, they are quality people. In our profession, it's a subtle, perhaps understated benefit to find other professionals that you can trust.

Reason 2: Get Contracts from Fellow Members

For me, getting contracts from fellow members has been an unexpected benefit. That's *not* the reason why I joined ICCA. But it does happen from time to time and when it does, it is always very much appreciated. Recently, fellow member **Michael McAndrews, Logic Choice, Inc.**, asked me to help with a website project. We are collaborating in order to utilize the best of both of our skill sets.

Reason 3: Give Contracts to Fellow Members

You know the saying, "It's better to give than to receive." In business, this saying may not always apply. But it is rewarding to give a fellow ICCA member a lead. Or a contract. You will build a level of trust and loyalty that will last a long time. There is no formal policy at ICCA for the exchange of business. However, when I recently needed a VBA consultant, I first looked at our ICCA member list. I found member **Andrea Conti, WebSquared, LLC**, who quickly solved my problem. Whenever I am asked to recommend someone, I always look to members first.

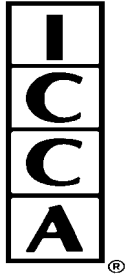
Reason 4: ICCA National Website

Publicizing your business and your skills is essential. Without publicity, contract opportunities dry up and you find yourself

(Continued on page 4)

In this issue.....

<i>President's article</i>	1
<i>Meeting information</i>	2
<i>The Saga of the Shredded Suitcase</i>	3
<i>Welcome New Members</i>	4
<i>New Member Profile</i>	5
<i>Effective Websites Make Money. Period!</i>	6
<i>Member Recognition</i>	7
<i>Delaware Valley Tech Calendar</i>	8
<i>Board of Directors</i>	8



**Meeting
Information
610-394-9090**

**info@iccadelval.org
www.iccadelval.org**

6:00 P.M. Networking & Cash Bar
7:00 P.M. Dinner
8:15 P.M. Meeting & Program

Entire Evening Prepaid	\$30 Members	\$40 Guest
Entire Evening at Door	\$40 Members	\$45 Guest
Networking/Speaker	Free Members	\$5 Guest

First time guests pay member rates. Prepayment must be received and cancellations for refunds must be made by Monday before meeting. Credit Cards accepted (MC, Visa, Discover). If there is more than one person in your party, we request that you pre-pay. Note that making a reservation is a promise to pay. "No-Shows" will be billed.

Mail Check Payable to:
ICCA Delaware Valley
125 N. Highland Avenue
Lansdowne, PA 19050

**Meeting Locations:
(Please call the hotel for directions.)**

Philadelphia Airport Hilton

215-365-4150
4509 Island Avenue
Philadelphia, PA

DoubleTree Guest Suites

610-834-8300
640 W. Germantown Pike
Plymouth Meeting, PA

Clairon Hotel

856-428-2300
Route 70 & I-295
Cherry Hill, NJ

Holiday Inn Select

302-792-2700
630 Naamans Road
Claymont, DE



**TOP TOPICS at
ICCA DeVal
2003-2004**

by George Smith, GRS Associates

I wasn't able to attend the October meeting in Delaware. From everything I have heard however, I missed one of our better meetings. A good sized crowd turned out to hear **Walt Johnson (Precision Systems)** talk about getting in the door at large companies. This is a topic that had been requested often, and we were pleased to find a speaker who could address it. I'm very sorry I couldn't be there.

In November we have a rather different event. We will be having a **joint meeting** with the **Institute of Management Accountants** at the **William Penn Inn in Gwynedd, PA.** The first important thing to notice is that the date **November 18th** is **not the usual second Thursday!** Next is that WE are the topic. IMA members were surveyed in advance as to their most pressing IT issues/questions. At this meeting, those questions and other will be answered/discussed by the ICCA. The discussion will be moderated by our chapter president, Keith Mast. The topics will be facilitated by ICCA members:

- Topic 1: Computer Virus Protection
Kathleen Conti, WebSquared, LLC
- Topic 2: Controlling Spam
Michael McAndrews, Logic Choice, Inc.
- Topic 3: Using the Web to conduct business
Leigh Weber, Weber Consulting Svcs, LLC
- Topic 4: Backup and Recovery systems
Patricia Pickup, Pickup Consulting, Inc.

This unique meeting is a chance to introduce ourselves to a group of potential customers.

Finally, although you must register through Linda as usual, you need to pay at the door. Check (to IMA) or cash only for \$22 with a registration and \$25 without.

Keith has put a lot of effort into organizing our part of this event. I hope you all turn out on November 18th at the William Penn Inn to support the our Delaware Valley ICCA chapter, to assist Keith and the presenters, as well as to distribute your business cards.

See you there!

Saga of a Shredded Suitcase

by: Naomi Karten, Karten Associates

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As a frequent flier, I've had that disconcerting experience in which I go to Point A and my luggage goes to Point B. Once, my luggage went to a more exotic destination than I did. I have a fantasy that some day, my luggage will go to Point A and I'll go to Exotic Point B.

On one trip, though, rather than parting company with me, my luggage parted company with itself. As my suitcase emerged on the conveyor belt, I saw, with horror, that it was mangled. Ohnooo!! The zipper was ripped halfway open, and the top of the suitcase was bent back so as to reveal its contents. (We are warned to wear clean underwear in case of an accident. To that I now add, *pack* clean underwear in case of nosy onlookers as your shredded suitcase passes by on the conveyor belt!)

Normally, I see these zany experiences as stories for future presentations. Not this time, though. This time I was angry! Off I went to the Customer Service Desk, dragging my tattered suitcase behind me. And there, I had that rare experience of service personnel who excelled at anticipating customer needs.

Anticipation aforethought

The service rep peered at my suitcase and said it must have gotten caught on the conveyor system in back. Oh great, I thought, picturing my unmentionables strewn all over the place. But before I could vent my concern, she said she'd check in back in case anything had fallen out. When she returned, she said she hadn't found anything, but I'd better look in my suitcase and make sure nothing was missing. To open my suitcase, I had to rip apart the rest of the zipper. Oh, how much happier I would have been if it had simply gone to Exotic Point B.

I riffled through my stuff. Nothing was missing. Unfortunately, though, my suitcase had just taken its last trip. Just as I was about to screech, "NowwhatdoIdo?" the service rep said she'd get me another bag. It was a skimpy substitute, but for this brief trip, it would suffice. Before I could ask how I'd return it, she explained that it was mine to keep.

But what about my own suitcase? Just as I was about to demand that it be fixed, she said she'd send it out to be repaired. And just as I started wondering whether it might be beyond repair, she said that if they can't fix it, they'll replace it. And before I could inquire how I could check on the status of the repair, she gave me the phone number of the repair shop.

And just as I was about to ask how I could call the Customer Service Desk if I had questions, she said, "Here is my name and phone number. Please call me if you have any questions."

As exasperating as this experience was, it aptly illustrated one of the key attributes of a savvy service provider: the ability to anticipate customer needs, particularly during times of stress. And (once I simmered down), I realized that I did indeed have a story for future presentations. I hope that one day I'll get to tell it in an exotic location, and that both my suitcase and I will enjoy the trip.

* * * * *

About the Author: Naomi Karten specializes in helping organizations improve their service strategies, client relations, and teamwork. Her background includes a B.A. and M.A. in psychology and extensive corporate experience in technical, customer support and management positions.

Since forming her business, Karten Associates, in 1984, Naomi has presented seminars and keynotes to more than 100,000 people internationally. She is the author of several books including "Communication Gaps and How to Close Them", "Managing Expectations: Working With People Who Want More, Better, Faster, Sooner, NOW!" and "How to Establish Service Level Agreements." Naomi's delightfully illustrated newsletter, **Perceptions and Realities**, offers ideas and advice on how to deliver superior service, manage customer expectations, build strong relationships, and improve communication.

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If you would like to learn more about Naomi Karten and Karten Associates please visit her website at www.nkarten.com



New Member Company Profile

In each issue of Consulting Matters, we introduce you to one or more new members and firms. In this issue, we introduce you to **Chris Gordon, The Computer Fixer on Campus**.

Whether you need a computer fixed or installed, whether you need a laser printer repaired or your data recovered, whether you need a service contract or your warranty program managed, whether the problem was faulty hardware or software with bugs, **The Computer Fixer** is able to cure most problems encountered by computer users anywhere in the Philadelphia area.

To assist in this task, **The Computer Fixer** is an authorized service provider for Apple, Hewlett Packard, Dell and Microsoft. Indeed, Philadelphia magazine has awarded its "Best of Philly" for computer service to **The Computer Fixer**.

In addition to the on-site service provided to business, organizational and professional customers, **The Computer Fixer** has established two carry-in centers -- one at The University of

Pennsylvania and the other at Drexel University -- to provide the same high level of support for computers belonging to students, faculty, and staff members of those educational institutions.

The General Manager is Jay Powell, for service requests please contact Jay at jpowell@thecomputerfixer.com

In addition to being "The Computer Fixer on Campus," Chris has recently begun marketing his services as a Business Development Consultant. He provides 17 years experience, marketing and sales expertise to computer service businesses. He helps companies market and sell their services to specific markets such as non-profit organizations, educational institutions, and businesses that are large enough to need regular IT support but small enough not to have a full time IT staff.

ICCA Upcoming Dinner Meeting Dates 2003

✱ 11/18 William Penn Inn, Gwynedd, PA

A joint meeting between IMA and ICCA will be held on November 18, 2003, at the William Penn Inn. The meeting will be hosted by IMA, the **Institute of Management Accountants**, an organization whose mission is to provide to members personal and professional development opportunities in management accounting, financial management and information management through education and association with business professionals and certification in management accounting and financial management. At this joint meeting, the members of ICCA, Delaware Valley Chapter, will present answers to the most common I.T. questions that IMA members have. Showcase your IT expertise by attending this meeting and providing advice and guidance to IMA members.

✱ 12/11 Clarion Hotel, Cherry Hill, NJ

Topic: Geographic Information Systems - GIS
Speaker: William Lutz, Principal, WEL Associates

William Lutz, principal of WEL Associates will discuss location based technologies (Geographic Information Systems -- GIS) and how he built a successful consulting business around them. This is our member showcase meeting.

6:00 P.M. -- Networking & Cash Bar
7:00 P.M. -- Dinner
8:15 P.M. -- Meeting & Program

Entire Evening Prepaid
\$30 Members \$40 Guest

Entire Evening at Door
\$40 Members \$45 Guest

Networking/Speaker
Free Members \$5 Guest

First time guests pay member rates.
For reservations,
call 610-394-9090
e-mail info@iccadelfval.org

See page 2 for complete information.

Effective Websites Make Money. Period!

Copyright © 2003 American Eagle Group, All Rights Reserved
By David A. Zimmer
American Eagle Group

Effective websites make money for their owners. The more I think about it, all the tips and techniques that I teach about building effective websites boil down to that simple statement. All the clever designs, hours of human factoring, carefully crafted auto-responder messages, and visitor tracking systems lead to one purpose: make money for the business which owns the website.

Whether the money made is tangible or a gesture of goodwill, the website has become a necessity for today's businesses. Potential customers of the business like to anonymously know more about the business before they do business. So, the website becomes a mechanism to build a relationship with a customer before they even step in the door.

The problem with websites is that they end up being expensive, and in many cases, hard to dollar-justify. First, there is the development costs, then the ongoing hosting costs, update and maintenance costs, and finally, planning for the next go-round and budgeting the expense. In many cases, the website is not enabled to sell products or services, therefore, return-on-investment (ROI) is tough to calculate into real dollars. Consequently, the website is seen as a cost-center and not a profit-generator.

I work with many small and medium-sized businesses to help them maximize their profits and minimize expenses through proper use of technology. Recently, I came across a service that makes the website a revenue generator without requiring it to sell products or services. This service has a unique way to increase its business by paying its customers for referrals.

Paying for referrals is nothing new, but it is novel in the webhosting business, especially in the manner of this company. It pays its customers a recurring referral commission on a monthly basis. And the manner in which it does so, one customer helps another customer make money from simply hosting its site on the webhosting service.

For an example, I referred three companies to this service. For each referral, I receive a monthly fee. I then referred a fourth company, but rather than simply pay me for the referral, the service places the fourth company in such a way that the first company derives a commission also. When I referred a fifth company to the service, the second company begins to receive a commission – I also receive a commission for my referrals of the fourth and fifth companies. This process continues as long as I continue to refer companies to this service.

Essentially, I begin to reward my customers through monetary means simply because they do business with me. The commissions continue to increase until the hosting fee that the company is paying to host its website on the service becomes zero – free – nada – zippo – zilch.

But, it doesn't stop there. As I continue to refer customers to the service, my commission continues to grow and so do those companies' commissions that I referred to the service. In fact, the commissions can grow as large as \$1000 per month! That means that a website simply providing information and goodwill to customers could be passively generating \$12,000 per year for its owner.

So where is this wonderful service, you ask? Well, it's not entirely a secret. Approximately fifty of my customers know. You can learn more about this service at www.getpaid4hosting.com. I hate to tell and run, but I must go and make commissions for my customers and me. That's only fair. I can be reached at dazimmer@prodigy.net or 215-491-9966. ☺

Join the ICCA!

Become a part of the region's premier association for Independent Computer Consultants.

Membership rates are:

- * \$100 Local Chapter Dues
- * \$175 National dues for 1 person firm
- * \$225 National dues for 2-9 person firm
- * \$275 National dues for 10+ person firm
- * \$25 National Processing fee
(1st time only)

This Translates to:

- * \$300 for a first-time 1 person firm
- * \$275 subsequent years for 1 person firm

Call 610-394-9090 to request an application, or fill out membership application on line at

www.icca.org

October 9th -- Member Recognition Night

Did you know...

- that almost 40% of our chapter membership have been ICCA members for 5 years or more?
- that almost 20% of our chapter membership have been ICCA members for 10 years or more?

Each October, we hold our annual "Member Recognition Night" during which we honor all of our "anniversary members" -- those who joined the ICCA 5, 10, 15, and 20 years ago (yes, we have several 20 year members).

See the box (right) for the list of the 2003 honorees. Congratulate them next time you see them!

ICCA Delaware Valley Shirts	
\$25 per shirt. Various colors available.	
Size	S M L XL XXL
Color	Green Ecu White Navy
Qty _____	Total Enclosed: _____
Name _____	
Address _____	

Email _____	
ICCA Delaware Valley Mugs.	
\$5 each	
Qty _____	Total Enclosed: _____
Send this form with check payable to:	
ICCA	
125 N. Highland Ave	
Lansdowne, PA 19050	
Or call/email your VISA/MC/Discover card	
number, expiration date, and total dollar amount of	
order to	
610-394-9090	
icca@erols.com	
Shirts/mugs will be ready for pickup by the	
following meeting.	

- | |
|---|
| 20 year members (joined in 1983) |
| George Smith
GRS Associates |
| Michael Seiden
Seiden Consulting, Inc. |
| 10 year members (joined in 1993) |
| Mark Ezzo
Columbus Consulting Corp. |
| Ken Keefer
Keefer Consulting, Inc. |
| John Ashmead
Ashmead Software & Consulting |
| Barry Cohen
Planning Data Systems, Inc. |
| David Zimmer
American Eagle Group |
| 5 year members (joined in 1998) |
| Audrey Jaffe
Jaffe Consulting, LLC |
| Matthew Manzi
Project Specialists |
| Peg Pacella, CCP
M.A.P. Consulting Services, Inc. |
| Howard Jasper
Gold Lion Associates, Inc. |
| Tom Dockray
Dockray Consulting |
| Suzanne Montenegro
Dark Star Software, Inc. |
| Grace Burrows
Grace Burrows Consulting |

November Tech Calendar

3-6 Nov

EDF Enterprise Data Forum
Hilton Philadelphia
Cherry Hill, Cherry Hill, NJ
www.ca.com

5-6 Nov

NBC 10 Technology & Lifestyle Expo
Fort Washington Expo Center
www.techcouncil.org

11- Nov

e-Learning and Performance
Conference
1/2 Day e-Learning Boot Camp
Penn State, Great Valley PA
<http://www.padla.org>
610-449-5899

12- Nov

Developing a Portal: From
Vision to Value
Anne Mullins
Manager of Transformation, Lockheed
Martin
www.nwct-phila.org/

18- Nov (Tuesday)

ICCA Del Val Chapter Meeting
Joint meeting with Institute of
Management Accounting
William Penn Inn, Gwynedd, PA
6pm - 7pm Networking
7pm - 8pm Dinner
8pm - 9pm Presentation
www.iccadelval.org

12-13 Nov

Philadelphia ITEC
Valley Forge Convention Center
Valley Forge, PA
www.goitec.com

If you hear of an event that
would be of interest to our
members, send the meeting
notice to
newsletter@iccadelval.org

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