



CONSULTING MATTERS

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

www.iccadelval.org

January 2004

From the President

by Keith Mast
Access Consultant
President
ICCA/Delaware Valley



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Access Consultant
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ICCA Delaware Valley

A Consultant's New Year's Resolutions

I like New Year's Resolutions. It's a chance to at least *think* about what I can accomplish if I just set my mind to it. Resolutions are usually about things we either don't want to do or haven't made the commitment to do. They're not usually from our ordinary to-do list. My own personal expectations for completing resolutions has diminished somewhat over the years. Now I just think of several things I want to accomplish in the upcoming year, then I pick one at a time and see if I can make some progress.

Here are a few of the items from my list of a *Consultant's New Year's Resolutions*.

Resolution #1: Form an LLC.

This is one that has been around for a while. I have wanted to complete this one for quite a while. So it makes my new year's resolution list for the upcoming year. A quick scan of our members shows that at least ten other firms are incorporated as an LLC. (I may be contacting you.) Any other sole proprietor's out there thinking of converting? Here's an online service that you can use: <http://www.legalfilings.com>, estimated cost of \$239. Another: <http://www.llc.com>, estimated cost \$199.

Resolution #2: Redesign my website.

My website has been around for a while and it is starting to look a bit outdated. This is a tough one for me since it will take a lot of effort to give my site an overhaul. But, on the positive side, I also enjoy working with this medium. I use [macromedia](#) tools: Dreamweaver, Flash and Fireworks. I recently looked through our ICCA member websites. Take a look a few of the sites I liked:

In this issue.....

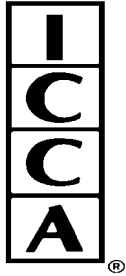
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- <http://www.acetechgroup.com>
- <http://www.conversational-technologies.com/pages/1/index.htm>
- <http://bobcatconsulting.us>
- <http://www.holben.com/default.htm>
- <http://www.landenbergconsulting.com>
- <http://www.opphumb.com/>
- <http://www.tapestryconsulting.com/html/nf/Home.html>
- <http://www.vecs.com>

Resolution #3: Enroll in an art class.

This one is indirectly related to #2. Whenever I am working on a website (for myself or for a client) I find myself in need of a wider range of *artistic* skills. Specifically, I would like to improve in the art of placing elements on a web page.

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**Meeting
Information
610-394-9090**

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



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

by George Smith, GRS Associates

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

The **December 11th** meeting in Cherry Hill was the annual Member Showcase. **Bill Lutz**, principal of **WEL Associates**, discussed Geographic Information Systems, and how he has built a successful consulting practice around them. He touched on a variety of application areas (the political ones interested me most), and recommended several tools. The audience was very involved, and the questions continued well after the meeting ended.

For the **January 8th** meeting at the Airport Hilton, we have been very fortunate to catch **Bonnie Huval** passing through the area on her way back from an assignment in England to her home base in Texas! Ms. Huval made a very favorable impression on several of our members at the last national conference. She has titled her talk after her most recent book, "**Make Sure You Get Paid, And Other Business Basics.**" Needless to say, this is an important topic, especially in a tough economy. This will be a meeting worth making an extra effort to attend.

Following up on last month's column, ICCA member surveys of the November IMA meeting were very positive. The board is continuing to consider how best to incorporate this sort of meeting into our schedule - most likely as extra meetings instead of replacements for the regular meetings - and how to best encourage participation. There will be more forthcoming on this subject. (I have also received a few restaurant recommendations that will be followed up on. The 'better' hotels are really pricing us out of the market --break even at Plymouth Meeting is nearly \$32, for example-- so the time is ripe for a change.)

I will be resigning as program chair at the end of this season. In the remaining columns, I want to briefly discuss the position with hopes of encouraging one of you to come take over. I joined the board about eleven years ago. David Moskowitz was chapter president at the time. My recollection was that meetings were only announced shortly before the meeting date, and that many of the meetings were basically 'panels' of members. Shortly thereafter, John Genzano was elected president, Don Trevoy became program chair, and I joined the program committee. Don laid down the goal of publishing the entire program in advance, and we succeeded with the 1993-94 program. The following year, Don left the board and I took over programs. Since then, I am reasonably proud to say, we have had a total of only two or three TBA blocks out of 10 years of annual programs. I believe that only the Chicago chapter publishes a full year schedule, and I think we did it for a few years before them - most likely why we have won the national Best Program award several times (does anyone know how many??)

That's enough of this for now. Get the **January 8th** meeting in your calendar right away. I look forward to seeing many of you there.

The Powerful Realm of Geographical Information Systems

W.E. Lutz, Managing Member, WEL Associates

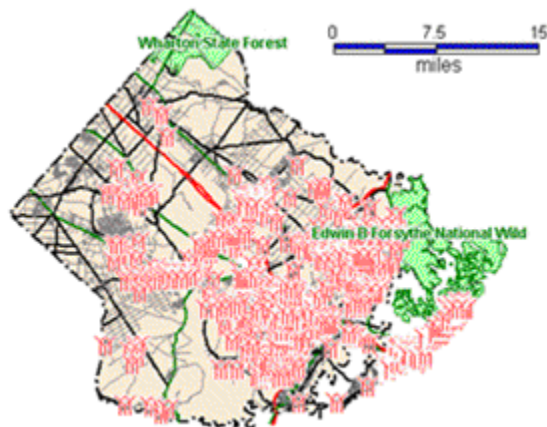
Maps are as old as mankind, enabling us to find paths to friends, food and now with the recent introduction of advanced – and yet cost effective technology – profit. Previously GIS (Geographical Information Systems) were the purview of large, somewhat cumbersome computers geared toward engineering and/or corporations conducting terrain analysis (energy companies did, and still do, find GIS an invaluable tool). With recent advances in modern hardware technology coupled with software / programming advancements, GIS is readily available for a wide variety of applications ranging from desktop systems to large-scale server systems.

GIS helps determine ideal telecommunications site locations, conduct election mapping, perform advanced market research seeking out potential clients along with assist in managing both mobile and fixed assets. GIS is often applied in conjunction with GPS (Global Positioning Systems) employed by multiple trucking / shipping transport as well as tracking individual services – such as LowJack anti-theft car systems. GIS is also widely used in a variety of government services – not the least of which involving military or Homeland Security applications – as well as crime prevention and public infrastructure maintenance.

Effective GIS requires using quality information (any map is only as good as the information it displays) specifically stored in databases – such as Access, SQL or Oracle. These databases – or ‘datasets’ – are then made ready for GIS usage through the process known as ‘geocoding’. Realizing that every point on our planet possesses a ‘latitude’ and longitude’ (also known as an “X” and “y” coordinate), geocoding is process whereby we match a given location – such as a street address – to its longitude and latitude.

Whenever we create a map, we create what are known as ‘layers’. Each layer can

2nd Legislative District: Latino Registered Voters



Using the latest elections data available, WEL Associates, in conjunction with EGovCast, created this map depicting known registered Latino voters within the age category of 35 years old and younger. Users can also, upon review, see individual voter political affiliation. Election mapping creates hidden associations, voter comparisons by income levels as well as allow for the ready creation of walking lists, customized mailings, telephone listings along with a wide range of other options. To learn more about the tactical edge election mapping offers, contact WEL Associates. NOTE: Information contained within this map is not to be duplicated or used without prior authorization.

GIS applications can be established on desktop platforms, large-scale server routines or have their maps accessed through Internet / Intranet portals without requiring specialized equipment or software. Depending upon the GIS software employed, users can also safely view their data within a securitized environment through wireless services. In addition, users need not have any specialized training or, in some instances, require only their Internet Explorer present on their computer.

consist of individual datasets made to ‘overlay’ one on top of another. For example, one layer can consist of a listing of registered voters, while another layer may consist of streets and roads. What GIS does is mix and match a variety of layers together to create useful maps enabling users to see (in this example) where registered voters may live on what street.

Mapping information may consist of public records, while others can be subscription based, merging a wide variety of information – such as age, affiliation, ethnicity, income levels, location of fiber optic lines, signal stations, police stations, rivers, bicycle trails, park lands – anything we want mapped. Successful GIS efforts rely on imagination and careful planning (coupled with practical experience), creating a wide range of other useful datasets, enabling users to ‘drill down’ and find overlooked information stored within their databases by creating overlays. GIS can make us see relationships where none were readily viewed before. GIS creates mass-marketing services, pinpointing the ideal means of transporting materials, target potential service areas or function as an invaluable means to manage a variety of databases employing address sets. Larger businesses long since learned that mass mailings and heavy dependence upon television advertisements become cost-inefficient depending upon a given target segment and budget. For some entities, the real impact is achieved through cost-effective GIS applications determining key market segments and potential customers. In fact, an entire industry is growing within the realm of GIS, with such giants – such as Experian (formerly TRW) and Claritas – geared toward creating new and powerful services using GIS applications.

If you or others want to learn more about the realm of GIS and how it could readily benefit you and your business, feel free to contact us at welutz@welutz.com. Examples of GIS inaction can be viewed by visiting <http://www.welutz.com> and clicking on the “Mapping Gateway”; try out and see some selected examples of GIS in action.

"Flex!"

by Carol Leavitt, MBA. Sunscape Partners

This week, one of my clients asked me what traits classically define leadership. It was a simple question - but it has a profound and complex answer! Through my years of working with corporate leaders, I have informally surveyed clients, associates, and colleagues on this important question.



The most enlightened responses include:

- Visionary / strategic thinking
- Courage
- The ability to influence others
- Tenacity
- The power to motivate, inspire, and engage others
- Strength of character that includes working from a place of integrity.

It's not often that the word "flexible" comes up in casual conversations about leadership, yet I believe it is one of the most important traits of a leader — as Andrea argues in her article (*Editor's Note: see the "Gumby Leadership" article in last month's Consulting Matters newsletter*) — especially in these times of increasing customer demands amidst diminishing resources.

The Perfection Deception

There's another dimension of "flexibility" that I believe is worthy of further exploration. The clients we work with who are stepping into a new leadership role express anxiety about this dimension. I call it the Perfection Deception. It includes:

- Thinking that they must have all the information, resources, and answers in order to lead others
- Thinking that they have to be perfect in everything they say or do as a leader.

Wow! As if leadership isn't daunting enough, such pressure on you makes leadership downright unattainable, from the start! This Perfection Deception belief assumes that the leader is the source of power, information, know-how, and all other resources, and completely negates any contribution to be made by the employee. How disempowering! That's why the Situational Leadership® II model is so helpful. SLII® offers guidance and tangible tools for the leader, yet gives her the berth and options by which she can bring her expertise and judgment to the situation. All the while, the leader taps and encourages the employee's contribution, whether it's loads of questions from the Enthusiastic Beginner or significant skills and confidence from the Self-Reliant Achiever.

An "Assorted" Approach

In her article, Andrea discussed the leader's approach to leadership situations. Let's explore that further...

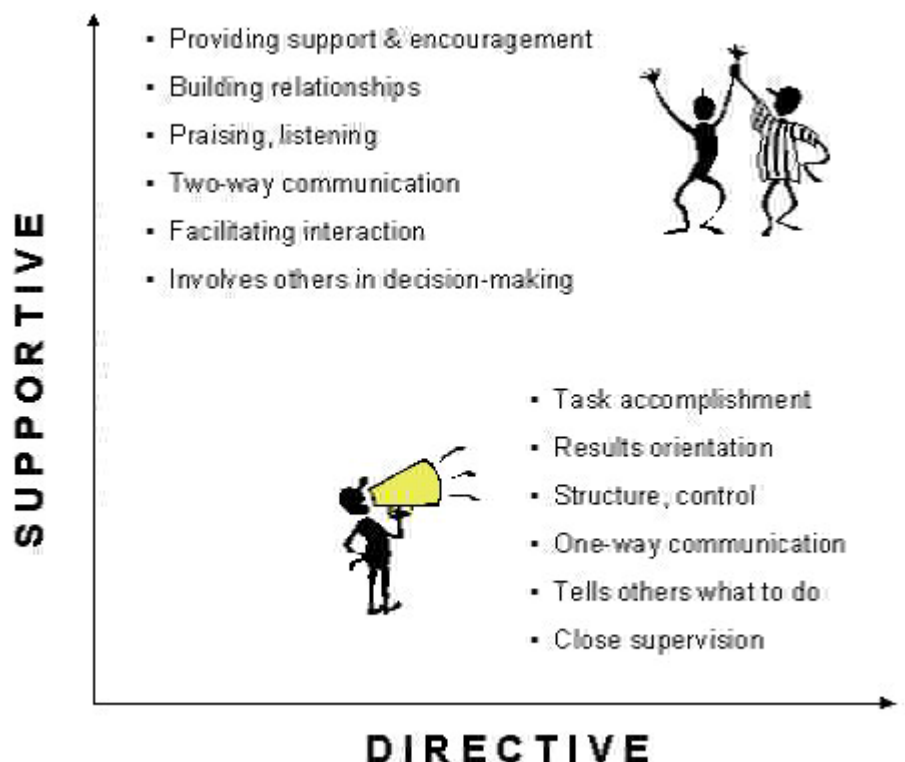
The two key skills for the leader are direction and support. However, the Situational Leadership® II model doesn't assume only one or the other — the beauty is in the blending of varying levels of each. It looks like this on a grid:

Thus, a leader uses low to high levels of **Directive** behaviors, combined with low to high levels of **Supportive** behaviors, resulting in a variety of leadership approaches, as defined by the Situational Leadership® II model:

1) *Directing*

(High Directive, Low Supportive) — The leader defines roles & goals for the employee, provides specific instructions, and closely supervises accomplishments.

(Continued on next page)



"Flex!"

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2) Coaching

(High Directive, High Supportive) — The leader explains decisions while soliciting the employee's suggestions, and oversees accomplishments.

3) Supporting

(High Supportive, Low Directive) — The leader and the employee make decisions together, and the leader supports the employee's efforts toward task accomplishment.

4) Delegating

(Low Supportive, Low Directive) — The leader turns over decision-making and problem-solving to the employee, who assumes responsibility for accomplishing the task. The leader remains available as a resource, if needed.

The Situational Leadership® II model doesn't set rigid formulas in which the leader must operate. Rather, it offers a wider and flexible array of leadership options to be applied according to each unique situation.

No "Labeling for Life"

One of the important caveats I would underscore on the heels of Andrea's article is the necessity for leaders to assess an employee's development level for *each* task, assignment, or opportunity. I've seen a tendency to label an employee who has been in the same role for many years as a *Self-Reliant Achiever*, in everything — across the board! The assessment is not an assessment of where this person is in his career, but rather where he is in performing a specific task at hand. This assessment could be right-on if the employee — let's call him Bob — has been a computer programmer for ten years and is asked to write code for a new accounting process. However, if Bob is being asked to participate on a task force to design a new marketing campaign — which he has never before done — the new task puts him in the development position of being an *Enthusiastic Beginner* once again — excited for the opportunity, but clueless about the skills and processes needed to interact in a dynamic work team on a project outside of his direct expertise.

The excellent leader, grounded in Situational Leadership® II, will approach Bob on this new assignment in a completely different style than if Bob were doing his usual tasks. Where the leader likely offers encouragement and praise, but no real guidance, when Bob engages as a *Self-Reliant Achiever* in his usual programming activities, this new task force assignment requires the leader to more directly supervise and instruct Bob, an *Enthusiastic Beginner* on this task. If the leader sticks to a heavily **Supportive** way of working with Bob instead of being more **Directive** in this new role, Bob will

likely get frustrated for lack of guidance and resource — and potentially fail.

Andrea and I use the Situational Leadership® II model with many of our clients — at the individual and management team levels. If you find you are seeing your strong and senior employees as *Self-Reliant Achievers* in all their tasks — be wary! They are not likely to be growing and developing. We all need some *Enthusiastic Beginnings* every once in a while to challenge and inspire us.

On the other hand, if you find your staff or team members never moving beyond *Disillusioned Learners* or *Cautious but Capable Performers*, chances are you don't know when to let go. You may be overly supportive and holding the employee (and your team!) back from excellent performance.

About the Author: *Andrea Sigetich, MS-HRM and Carol Leavitt, MBA* are management development consultants and leadership coaches who serve as catalysts for powerful choice among individuals, teams, managers, and leaders. Visit their websites, www.SageCoach.com (Andrea) and www.SunScapePartners.com (Carol) for more information.

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

From the President

(continued from page 1)

Resolution #4: Create a postcard mailing to market my business.

This marketing technique has a big impact. How do I know? Because whenever I receive a postcard in the mail, I always LOOK at it. And sometimes I am interested in the message. I don't know what message I will try to deliver, but it will most likely be to introduce a new service I hope to offer.

Resolution #5: Go to bed by midnight.

I find myself up at night – past midnight that is – working at my computer. Just me and Conan. There are benefits to working at night. No phone call interruptions. All the email you get is spam and you can easily delete it. Everything is quiet. However, I think I might be more productive by starting earlier and quitting earlier. This may also be a healthier option in the long run.

The ICCA/Delaware Valley board also makes new year's resolutions. However, we usually make them in July as we prepare for the new program year running from September to June.

Here are some of the *brainstorming resolutions* that were mentioned this past July. We may not always accomplish all of our goals, but these are the areas that concern the board.

- o Need more companies to join ICCA
- o Our Consultants need jobs
- o Reach out to Chamber of Commerce
- o Build the ICCA name
- o Need SBA connection - State & Federal
- o Create a speaker's bureau
- o Get anti-spam sponsors
- o Upgrade benefits for members

Best Wishes to all of you as you start the new year. Time for me to turn in. Conan has already signed off!

CELL PHONES WANTED

In conjunction with the International Myeloma Foundation, Debra Exner, Exner & Associates is collecting old cell phones. These will be sold for 'recycling' and the proceeds will be split 50/50 between the IMF and our local Philadelphia Multiple Myeloma Networking Group. This is an ongoing project, so you have time to ask friends and relatives about their old cell phones!

If you have old cell phones, beepers or associated accessories to donate or if you have a business or know of a business where we could place a box for donations, please contact Debra Exner, Exner & Associates @ dexner@exnerassociates.com or 302-478-5919.

Upcoming Dinner Meeting Dates 2004

* **1/8 Philadelphia Airport Hilton
Philadelphia, PA**

Topic: Make sure you get paid
**Speaker: Bonnie Huval,
Seneschal Incorporated**

Will your new big customer put you over the top, or take you down? Keep your business thriving where others fall apart. Bonnie Huval, of Seneschal Incorporated, gets paid on time even when other companies in the same project do not. Find out how to get even large customers to pay on time, and techniques for "covering the float."

* **2/12 Holiday Inn Select
Claymont, DE**

**Topic: Defining & Implementing Standardized
Process & Workflow Across An
Organization: The Key to Good
Corporate Governance**
**Speaker: Steve Knapp,
Product Manager, MKS Inc.**

Steve Knapp, Product Manager, MKS Inc., will speak on the importance of defining and implementing standardized processes and workflows across the entire organization. Learn what to consider both culturally, and technologically, when establishing a process management system, and how you can move from chaotic and ad hoc processes to a higher level of maturity.

January Tech Calendar

8 - Jan

ICCA Del Val Chapter Meeting
"Make Sure You Get Paid"
Bonnie Huval, Seneschal Incorporated
Philadelphia Airport Hilton
Philadelphia, PA
6pm - 7pm Networking
7pm - 8pm Dinner
8pm - 9pm Presentation
www.iccadelval.org

13 - Jan

Lessons Learned: Converting Classroom Training to Distance Learning
Jean Scattergood
Instructional Designer, Lipient
12:45-4:15 pm
WHYY - 6th/Race St.,
Philadelphia, PA
<http://www.tempo-train.org>

22 - Jan

DVCUG
"Building Support For Your Ideas"
Crys Sheets, Blessing White
[Williamson's City Line](http://www.williamsonscityline.com)
Bala Cynwyd, PA
5:30 PM Roundtable & Cocktails
6:30 PM Dinner
<http://www.dvcug.org>

Consulting Matters

always welcomes newsletter article submissions.

If you have an article that would be of interest to the computer consulting community, send your article to:
newsletter@iccadelval.org.

MS-Word or plain text is preferred. Article submission deadline for the **February** Issue of Consulting Matters is **January 23rd**.

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