



CONSULTING MATTERS

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

www.iccadelval.org

September 2005

From The President...

The Ideal Marketing Position to be in as a Consultant

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From a market perspective, have you ever thought: What is the best marketing position for you, the consultant, to find yourself in? This ideal position will vary from consultant to consultant, and might include affirmatives to many of the following parameters.

- You deliver high value to your customers at a reasonable price?
- Highly demanded skills in a growing, undersupplied market?
- High experience level in highly demanded, highly compensated business areas?
- Skills, experience and subject areas that at not easily off-shored?
- A niche market with less threat of competition?
- Many companies demanding your services?
- Highly qualified – an expert in your field for the opportunities you seek?
- Rates that will sustain you and the business?
- A systematic plan for business development?
- Self sufficient marketing you control and direct?
- Degrees and certifications in areas important to your clients?
- Little idle time - More work available than you can handle all year round?
- Your “Plan B” is as good as or better than your current strategy?
- Forward looking to where the future market trends are going?
- Long list of satisfied customers?

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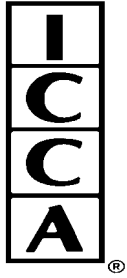
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The Worst Position to be in as a Consultant?

On the other hand, what is the worse marketing position for you, the consultant, to find yourself in?

- You deliver mediocre value?
- Stale skills with low market demand and high market supply?
- Skills, experience, or business areas that is easily off-shored?
- A commodity market ruled by low cost suppliers?
- Very few companies in need of your services?
- Light credentialing?
- Poorly qualified for the opportunities you seek?
- No plan for business development?
- Reliant on third parties for all of your opportunities?

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**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

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



**TOP TOPICS at
ICCA DeVal
2004-2005**

by Kathleen Conti, WebSquared, LLC

The pizza meeting sponsored by Devon Consulting was a great way to start the year. Peace of Pizza was a great location and the chance to have a social beverage was very enjoyable...

The programs for the 2005-2006 season are slowly coming together. So far we have locked in **Microsoft** for our kickoff meeting on **September 8th** and **Fred Kaplan** for our **October meeting** speaking about **Sarbanes Oxley**.

Our September meeting will be held at the **Microsoft Office in Malvern**. The presenter Michael Feuda will be talking about SQL Server 2005 which will be officially launched on November 7th. I think this will be a good opportunity for all those working with SQL Server to get some insight into the new features and functionality and a great opportunity for those who have never visited the Malvern Microsoft office to check out the facilities as other training and seminars are often available.

The September meeting will be held at
Microsoft's Malvern Office
45 Liberty Blvd - Suite 210
Malvern, PA.
610-240-7000

Directions:

<http://www.microsoft.com/mscorp/info/usaoffices/greaterpa/malvern.msp>

Any suggestions on topics you would like to hear about or speakers that you can suggest as always are greatly appreciated. We are also looking for new venue suggestions. We are hoping to do a few pizza meetings and buffet options this year so if can suggest any restaurants or facilities that would be appropriate please let us know.

You can contact me
via email at: kconti@websquared.com
or call 610-344-9446.

From The President

Continued from page 1

- Low rates?
- Too much idle time - Insufficient opportunities to keep you billable throughout the year?
- No “Plan B” in the horizon if your current strategy fails?
- String of unhappy customers and engagements?
- No clue as to what’s coming up next week?

Where do you find your consulting business or practice?

I would guess that most consultants don’t view themselves at either extreme, but somewhere in the middle. So, you may ask, how do you move towards the Best positioning and away from the Worst positioning?

Be True to Yourself and the Market

In all fairness, if you consistently find yourself near the Worst case scenario above, you might want to consider choosing another profession besides consulting. But, regardless of where you consider your positioning, you will benefit from taking a periodic personal and professional inventory of your Strengths and Weaknesses. There are many people who have become successful and stayed successful by simply determining what they are good at and focusing on their strengths and taking steps to minimize their weaknesses.

But looking inward at one’s own capabilities is only half the equation. The market is ruled by external forces, as will your consulting business, so a periodic evaluation of your opportunities and threats helps determine if you have the good potential for success in the market. The rule here is to move towards opportunities that have high potential, but have the risks of excessive competition and other risks reduced.

Planning/Transition

You’ve heard the cliché, “Those who fail to plan, plan to fail.” It’s as true in consulting as in anywhere. The plan that works for you today may not meet the needs of a changing market tomorrow. Your plan should identify where you are today, where you want to be in the future, and your steps on getting from “A” to “B”. Your plan is a road map designed to get you to a better market positioning, and should help you to avoid finding yourself high and dry in a market that has left you.

Training/Education

Have you invested in yourself and your company lately? If you’re already good at something, consider getting yourself some additional formal training or experience that will make

you great. Educational programs are available from many universities and specialty training firms. Certification programs are available from a variety of sources including from our sister organization, the ICCP.

Change is constant, and changing is the market for consultants. If you determine that your skills and expertise have become more of a commodity and less of a specialty, you may wish to take incremental or quantum steps toward a more desirable niche where you may excel. Take some time to evaluate the market for opportunities that are something for which you can become the expert, but are in greater demand than what you may currently do. Once you have identified your target niche, set this as a goal and pursue the training and opportunities that will better help you move toward this goal. You may need to repeat this process several times over your career as a consultant.

Networking/Business Development

Do you spend some time each week doing business development and networking with those that may lead to opportunities? One of the business functions that many consultants fail to do, especially those in solo practices, is to develop future opportunities before the current one ends. It is challenging to devote some portion of your very busy week to this task, but it is so important in order to avoid excessive idle time. While brokers may be able to assist you with your marketing efforts, you gain better control of your market and can deliver better value to your customer if you can market your consultancy directly.

Have you built relationships with many customers, some of whom may be repeat customers, or has your career been dependent on just a few customers? With multiple customers, you will have better resiliency in the market, more potential leads and less reliance on third parties to assist you with your marketing.

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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 October Issue of *Consulting Matters* is **September 23rd**.

From the President

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The Future of Consultant Marketing

“Would the person with the crystal ball that accurately predicts the future please give me a call? Immediately! My number is 215-...”

But seriously, how does one determine the Best marketing direction one should take in the positioning of their businesses? Each consulting practice may have a different solution that is right for them. There are analytics that can be performed, market studies, and assistance is available from third party firms that specialize in helping you develop your business and marketing plans. There are also free or inexpensive resources available at universities and other sources. And there are your own eyes, ears and brain.

For many, a big factor in helping determine the direction is to trust one’s gut, if this has guided you successfully in the past. Does it feel right?

ICCA Upcoming Dinner Meeting September 8, 2005

Topic: A Preview of SQL Server 2005

Location: Microsoft Malvern Office
45 Liberty Boulevard – Suite 210
Malvern, PA 19355

Speaker: Mike Feuda, Microsoft

Description:

SQL Server 2005 will officially launch to customers on November 7, 2005. **SQL Server 2005** is the latest version of Microsoft’s industry leading database and business intelligence platform. It includes powerful tools that deliver productivity gains for database administrators, IT professionals and developers.

In this “*Briefing for Technology Decision Makers*,” Mike Feuda, a Microsoft Technology Specialist will provide us with an overview of the value and key benefits of **SQL Server 2005**. We will also have Microsoft Licensing experts to review the best way for your organization to upgrade or purchase SQL Server 2005.

ICCA Delaware Valley Shirts

\$25 per shirt. Various colors available.

Size	S	M	L	XL	XXL
Color	Green	Ecru	White	Navy	

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\$5 each

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Lansdowne, PA 19050

Or call/email your VISA/MC/Discover card number, expiration date, and total dollar amount of order to

610-394-9090

info@iccadelval.org

Shirts/mugs will be ready for pickup by the following meeting.

September Tech Calendar

8- Sept

Delaware Valley ICCA Meeting
SQL Server 2005 Overview
Presented by: Mike Feuda
Microsoft in Malvern, PA
6:00 PM Networking & Cash Bar
7:00 PM Dinner
8:00 PM Meeting & Program
<http://www.iccadelval.org>

13- Sept

TEMPO

Finding BLIS - Is an LMS really what you need?

12:45pm - 4:00pm
Independence Blue Cross
1901 Market Street, Phila., PA
<http://www.tempo-train.org/>

Registration needed by September 9th attendance is open to the first 40 sign-ups

20- Sept

CPCC

Computer Professionals of Center City (Networking Event)

7:00 PM at the Irish Pub
2007 Walnut Street
Philadelphia, PA
<http://cpccentercity.com>

20- Sept

NWCT

“WiFi in the City of Philadelphia”
Dianah Neff -
CIO, City of Philadelphia
5:30 pm - 9:00 pm
Sterling Glen ([directions](#))
<http://www.nwct-phila.org/>

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● 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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