

AICN Newsletter

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Workshop Review: Austin, Texas

BY HERMANN AMAYA, CHAIR, IEEE-USA'S ALLIANCE OF IEEE CONSULTANTS NETWORKS COORDINATING COMMITTEE (AICNCC)



The Alliance of IEEE Consultants' Networks Coordinating Committee has provided excellent quality consultants workshops to local consultants networks over the past year. Bill Martino, [IEEE Central Texas Section Consultants Network](#) (CTCN) Chair, recently invited the AICNCC to partner with CTCN in Austin, Texas, the weekend of 13 September 2014, to hold another consultants workshop.

The Central Texas Consultants Network did an excellent job of organizing this workshop. Organizers obtained these additional sponsors for the workshop:

- IEEE Central Texas Circuits & Systems/Solid State Circuits Chapter
- IEEE Central Texas Council on Electronic Design Automation
- IEEE Central Texas Communications Society/Signal Processing Society
- IEEE Central Texas Education Society (EDSOC)
- *IEEE Central Texas Women in Engineering (WIE)*

The speakers presenting at this full-day workshop have extensive experience in their subject areas. Both organizations thank Dr. Gary Blank, IEEE-USA President, who was able to break away from the multiple duties of his office, to present a very thorough and instructive topic: *From Employee to Consultant, How Can I Do It?*

The morning's first presenter, Bob Krause, an AICNCC member, broke the ice with: *How to Stimulate and Hone Your Networking Skills*. This presentation was a very comprehensive and hands-on activity that illustrates, in a very practical way, the concept of networking. The end result demonstrated to attendees how they can effectively network.

The next presenter, former engineer turned entrepreneur William R. Kassebaum, P.E., and vice president, IEEE-USA

Career and Member Services, has extensive experience with start-ups.

In his presentation, *Start-up Tactics*, he shared his views about the growing pains of a start-up, along with sound advice to all consultants on the do's and don'ts of starting a business.

Strategic Pathways CEO David Smith, also president of Social Care, offered attendees *A Sea of Changing Waters--HealthCare Technology--The Perfect Storm*, a presentation discussing the current state of healthcare, and how it could become more efficient to improve Americans' quality of life.

Sharon Drew Morgen, author of *Dirty Little Secrets: Why Buyer Can't Buy and Sellers Can't Sell, and What You Can Do about It!*, spoke on *Selling Doesn't Cause Buying*, introducing her concept of the Buying Facilitation Model to workshop participants.

And Leslie Martinich, founder and principal consultant at Competitive Focus, gave a presentation titled: *Focus Your Career*. Martinich offered several ways for consultants to be more aware of their surroundings, and concentrated on the actual requirements needed to have a career as an independent consultant.

The Alliance of IEEE-USA Consultants Networks Coordinating Committee members extend their appreciation to the Central Texas Section Consultants Network members for their invitation, and for their kindness while we were in Austin.

Hermann Amaya is chair of the Alliance of IEEE Consultants Networks Coordinating Committee (AICNCC). He is director of engineering at AMHER Corp. in Tampa, Fla. He is also the chair and founder of the IEEE Florida West Coast Consultants Network Affinity Group.

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Larry Nelson's War Stories — Part V: Become a Hero by Solving Your Clients' Problems Quickly

BY LARRY G. NELSON, SR.

When a client is under the gun to solve a problem, ship a product, or simply clean up the paperwork, time is of the essence. They need results--and they need them now. This time crunch could have been caused by numerous factors, but regardless of how the client got into the situation, they are running out of time.

A very powerful skill a consultant has is the ability to hit the ground running and get the job done. This speed to completion is facilitated because the consultant can often work outside the company system. You can talk to people in different departments, and put facts together swiftly, without all the red tape. Companies have a life of their own, with built in personalities. Solve their problems faster than they think possible, and you are a hero.

I did work for one company where the manufacturing engineers, not design engineers, were supposed to go onto the production floor minimally to reduce interruptions to the line workers. Management felt the engineers could communicate to the production floor by meetings with the production supervisors. This strategy was supposed to make the line workers more productive by limiting interruptions. I went onto the production floor, and spent 15 minutes speaking to one of the line workers. I was able to create a simple design modification making the assembly easier to put together and reducing cycle time. Cost savings came from time savings and reduced material scrap. Remember that someone in production that has spent years creating a product may have learned something about the product that will assist you. Be open to, and aware of, all of your potential resources.

Here's another tidbit of advice. Clients have failings. That is one of the reasons they want to give consultants money.



There are many failings, and any given client may have only one, but more likely they have a combination. You want to identify these failings--but if you want a successful career as a consultant, never ever bluntly tell them what their failings are. You want to **solve** their problems--not rub their noses in them.

You may be superior in the areas where they are asking for your help. This experience is good because you can provide needed assistance quickly. Pass on some of the credit to them, and be a little modest. This humbleness makes the contact person that hired you into a hero; with a strong likelihood that person will call you in the future with more work. Their peers will want some glory too, so they will contact you when the need comes their way. This situation is a win/win.

Larry G. Nelson, Sr. can be contacted at L.Nelson@ieee.org; or at Nelson Research at <http://www.mchipguru.com/>.

AICN Welcomes a New Consultants Network in Kerala, India

The Alliance of IEEE Consultants Networks Coordinating Committee (AICNCC) congratulates Amarnath Raja and the IEEE Kerala Section Consultants Network on forming their Affinity Group.

This newest Consultants Network became official on 18 August 2014. If you want to wish them well, check the IEEE-USA website for contact information for the Kerala Section Consultants Network. If other IEEE Sections want to form a consultants network, the IEEE-USA website contains [step-by-step instructions](#) about how to become a formal consultants network.

We encourage new consultants networks to register as “Affinity Groups.” After groups form a network, they can take advantage of IEEE’s branding and resources, and also qualify for funding through IEEE Section rebates.



If an IEEE member belongs to a Consultants Network, but you don’t see the network listed on IEEE-USA’s website, contact Daryll Griffin at d.r.griffin@ieee.org.

WEBINARS

Upcoming IEEE-USA Webinars

Difficult Conversations — Strategies that can help make you a better listener, a better speaker, and a better person!

On 30 October 2014, at 2:00pm EDT, Dr. Julia Williams, educator and communications expert, will present an IEEE-USA/IEEE Professional Communication Society webinar on handling difficult conversations. The term “difficult conversations,” was developed by Douglas Stone, Bruce Patton, and Sheila Heen in their book *Difficult Conversations: How to Discuss What Matters Most*. In this presentation, Dr. Julia Williams will introduce attendees to the principles that can help engineers negotiate through difficult conversations, resulting in better listening and communication. She also will give examples of how the principles can be applied to real world situations that engineers may face in the workplace. [Register Today!](#)

Legislative Update Webinar

Stay up to date on recent events in Washington that affect IEEE members. Interested learning about IEEE-USA’s position on immigration reform, education policy and the federal budget? Come listen to IEEE-USA’s Director of Government Relations brief you on what Congress is doing for, and to, our profession. This webinar will take place 13 November 2014, from 1:00pm – 1:30pm EST. [Register for this Webinar Today!](#)

There's Gold in that Database!

Being on the Alliance of IEEE Consultants Network Coordinating Committee (AICNCC), I have monitored the development and progress of the Directory of IEEE-USA Independent Consultants--from the hard copy versions published in the late 1990s--to the present day, searchable, web-based database version, located on the IEEE-USA Website.

The present version of the [IEEE-USA Consultants Database](#) allows companies seeking consultants to easily search through the database by industry, location, consultants' backgrounds, special skills needed, and numerous other search criterion to find someone that can match their needs. However, we have received complaints from some consultants that they are not receiving any contacts from their listing in the IEEE-USA Consultants Database.

Many of these complaints are from engineers recently entering the field of consulting, who are not familiar with the necessary soft skills needed to actually drive clients to the database. A listing in a database is like a yellow page ad. Customers only search through a yellow page ad once they know what they want to buy. Customers use many sources to determine their needs, and to find needed talent. One of the first things they do is tap into their personal and professional networks of people they know to discuss their needs.

Successful consultants will tap into their own networks to search for opportunities that will meet their potential clients, in a way that their paths can cross. Getting involved with industry activities to increase exposure will also help. Successful consultants will advertise their IEEE-USA Consultants Database listings on their business cards. And they will advertise their IEEE-USA Consultants Database listing on their websites. Even the Yellow Pages needs advertisement to drive customers to its pages--and successful consultants must do the same.

However, don't expect instant results. I listed in the IEEE-USA Consultants Database for a year before I received my first hit. And what a hit it was. It was an international

company that used many, many different sources to find me. The source that paid off for them, and for me, was that listing in the Database. That one response to my listing started me off on a long chain of future contracts in the international arena. For 12 years, I have consulted internationally on lucrative USAID and U.S. State Department contracts--and I owe it all to my listing in the IEEE-USA Consultants Database.

There's gold in the IEEE-USA Consultants Database--for those consultants that go digging for it...



A screenshot of the IEEE-USA Consultants Database login page. The page features the IEEE-USA Consultants Database logo at the top. Below the logo is a 'Login' section with two input fields for username and password, a 'Remember me' checkbox, and a 'Forgot your password?' link. A prominent blue 'LOGIN' button is at the bottom of the login section. A yellow sticky note is placed over the login fields with the handwritten text 'Don't forget to renew!'. Below the login section, there is a bold text prompt: 'Renew your IEEE-USA Consultants Database subscription today!'.



IEEE GLOBECOM 2014 Opens Registration

IEEE GLOBECOM 2014 (www.ieee-globecom.org/2014), the premiere global conference dedicated to driving advancement in nearly every communications field, has opened registration for its 57th annual event, to be held from 8-12 December in Austin, Texas, a thriving national center for entrepreneurialism and innovation. Commonly known as “the Silicon Hills” for its high concentration of technology startups and corporations, Austin will serve as the ideal backdrop for international experts attending more than 1,500 presentations--detailing the latest breakthroughs in such key areas as: e-nanotechnology, green communications, cloud computing, eHealth, the Internet of Things (IoT), SDN/emerging applications, game theory, power-line, satellite, space, green and 5G cellular networking communications.

The conference will provide worldwide attendees from industry, academia and innovation centers, with opportunities to learn from top-level industry executives, and interact with industry leaders and key subject experts. See industrial demonstrations showcasing prototypes and innovative ideas from researchers and

practitioners in the industry, academia and government research institutions. Network with the most influential communication engineers, industry leaders, government officials and academics, from more than 60 countries.

Officially commencing on Monday, 8 December, IEEE GLOBECOM 2014 will begin with two full days of tutorials and workshops, exploring such topics as Green Broadband Access: Energy Efficient Wireless, Evolution Toward 5G Cellular Networks, Emerging Technologies for 5G Wireless Cellular Networks (Wi5G, Formerly B4G), Mobile Communications in Higher Frequency Bands (MCHFB), Optical Wireless Communications (OWC) and Cloud Computing Systems, Networks, and Applications.

Over the next three days, Tuesday through Thursday, the conference will then proceed with a comprehensive schedule of keynotes, business panels, forum discussions, peer networking events--and more than 1,000 technical presentations. This conference will be highlighted from 9-11 December by 12 individual symposia sections, and an Industry Forum & Exhibition Program (IF&E) focused on the innovations and research representing virtually every

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area of broadband, wireless, multimedia, data, image and voice communications.

Themed The Great State of Communications, IEEE GLOBECOM 2014 will feature an industry all-star, keynote line-up:

- Edward G. Amoroso, CSO, AT&T Inc., Recent Advances in Cloud Security
- Wen Tong, Huawei & IEEE Fellow, 5G Wireless beyond Smartphones
- Alicia Abella, AVP, AT&T Labs, Cloud Computing: A New Strategic Infrastructure
- James Truchard, President, CEO & Cofounder, National Instruments, Next-Generation Tools for Next-Generation Wireless Research

- Pankaj Patel, EVP & CDO, Cisco, Are You Ready for the Internet of Everything
- Rajesh Pankaj, SVP, Engineering, Qualcomm Research, Future of Wireless

IEEE GLOBECOM 2014 offers a full slate of events for everybody--engineers, scientists, students, technologists, entrepreneurs, business leaders, and policy makers. For detailed program information, visit www.ieee-globecom.org/2014/program.html.

[Register](#) by Saturday, 1 November to receive the reduced registration rate.

[Reserve](#) your accommodations at the Hilton Austin Hotel by Tuesday, 4 November to receive the conference rate.

IEEE-USA Releases 2014 Consultants Fee Survey Report

In the spring of 2014, IEEE-USA conducted its annual consultants fee survey, focusing on the compensation of independent engineering consultants. IEEE-USA has now published the results from the annual survey as an IEEE-USA E-Book in the highly anticipated *2014 IEEE-USA Consultants Fee Survey Report*.

The findings in this new 2014 edition show if the median hourly rate has changed for consultants in the past year. The report also provides insight into what business sectors are hiring independent engineering consultants. To get the full story, please purchase this excellent publication from the [IEEE-USA E-Books](#).

The report represents only those IEEE members identified as self-employed consultants--defined as the 619 individuals who indicated that 50% or more of their consulting hours came from working independently, with partners, or who we incorporated.

