

# AICN Newsletter

*The Quarterly Publication of the Alliance of IEEE Consultants Networks*

## AICN Committee Chair's Report

### Expanding the AICN's Reach

By William R. Kassebaum

Earlier this year the Alliance of IEEE Consultants Networks Coordinating Committee (AICNCC) was excited to announce a new effort asking IEEE Consultant members to become "[A part of the AICN](#)." This new effort involves combining our IEEE Consultants Database, eBooks and webinars into a unique program where IEEE members can sign-up for our Consultants Database and with that annual listing receive a free eBook and invitation to an exclusive consultant webinar. IEEE consultant members who sign up for this program along with having membership in a local consultants network will be able to remain current on all the matters that affect consultants.

We believe this effort is both for new and experienced consultants. This service gives engineering consultants a leg up in staying informed about new consulting trends and provides enhanced marketing of their services. In addition, it provides a great balance to the face to face networking and training consultants receive at their local consultants network meetings. This service is a win win for all of us. For a listing of the local consultants networks please go to the [Consultant Services](#) page on the [IEEE-USA website](#).

In addition, we are trying to do some direct outreach to those IEEE consultant members who have an interest in consulting and want to stay abreast and informed, but are still holding onto their full-time jobs. We have added a

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## A Tribute to Irwin Weitman (1932-2012)

By Gary Blank and Bob Gauger

On 12 May 2012, Irwin Weitman passed away. Irwin was the founding father of IEEE Consultants Networks.

In July 1996, I (Gary) received a call from a gentleman I did not know. He introduced himself as Irwin Weitman, and explained that he was given my name and phone number by a mutual acquaintance. He wanted to know if I would be interested in starting an IEEE consultants network in the Northern Illinois area similar to the first IEEE Network he had started for the Long Island Section. I replied that I was not familiar with the concept. Irwin went on to explain how the network would provide an invaluable service to our members, and how it would function. With his guidance, I agreed to try it.

Our network was so successful that Irwin invited me to be a member of the Alliance of IEEE Consultants Networks (AICN) Coordinating Committee. I was privileged to serve on the committee, and Bob Gauger became the chair in 1997 and 1998. In 1999, I succeeded Bob, and I was appointed to chair the committee. Irwin volunteered to be a member of the committee.

Conducting meetings with Irwin Weitman present were delightful experiences. He always had many good suggestions. Although he was passionate and serious about the success of the program, he found ways to add humor.

I asked Bob Gauger for some of his thoughts and memories about our good friend and colleague. He replied with the following:

"Gary, as promised, I pulled my AICN history file when I reached home, and took a look at the many things that Irwin accomplished...

"My first notes about Irwin Weitman go back to 1990. As you can see, Irwin was a speaker at an IEEE seminar on *Benefits & Pitfalls of Using Consulting Engineers*. At that time, the Long Island Section was already publishing an IEEE Consultants Network newsletter, and I think that they and the New Jersey network had been in operation for several years.

When I first met Irwin in early 1992, he was at a PACE conference, trying hard to get PACE chairs to sponsor a consultants' network in their own sections. I was a PACE chair, and he convinced me — he was good at that. He was also very active in trying to

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# Small Business Administration (SBA) Resources for Independent Contractor

The IEEE-USA Entrepreneurs Activities Committee (EAC) has often turned to the Small Business Administration for resources to provide to IEEE members interested in starting their own businesses. In a recent review of the SBA website, we have learned it does provide some basic guidance to people interested in becoming consultants. This information ranges from sections devoted to How to Become an *Independent Contractor to Federal Tax forms for Sole Proprietorship to Government Contracting Opportunities*.

Over the next few AICN newsletters, we'll try glean some information from the SBA website that IEEE consultants may find useful. We'll start with *Government Contracting Opportunities*. Consultants may find this entire [webpage](#) of interest to review.

## Steps to Registering as a Federal Contractor

### 1. Obtain a D-U-N-S Number

You will need to obtain a Dun & Bradstreet D-U-N-S® Number. This is a unique nine-digit identification number for each physical location of your business. The assignment of a D-U-N-S Number is free for all businesses required to register with the federal government for contracts or grants. Visit the [D-U-N-S Request Service](#) to register, or read a quick overview [here](#).

### 2. Register your Business with the System of Award

### Management (SAM)

You need to register your business with the federal government's [SAM](#), the primary database of vendors doing business with the federal government. Federal Acquisitions Regulations (FAR) require all prospective vendors to be registered in SAM prior to the award of a contract, basic agreement, basic ordering agreement, or blanket purchase agreement.

Using SAM, you will be able to register your business size and socio-economic status, while completing the required solicitation clauses and certification. By completing these steps, you certify that the information provided about your company and its business activities are correct. The certification information required on SAM is explained in the Federal Acquisitions Regulations, Section 52.212-3 [https://www.acquisition.gov/far/current/html/52\\_212\\_213.html](https://www.acquisition.gov/far/current/html/52_212_213.html) (Offer or Representations and Certifications - Commercial Items).

SAM is also a marketing tool for businesses. SAM allows government agencies and contractors to search for your company based on your ability, size, location, experience, ownership, and more. SAM also informs searchers of SBA-certified firms, under the [8\(a\) Development](#) and [HUBZone programs](#).

U.S. Small Business Administration



Your Small Business Resource

### 3. Register in ORCA

You need to complete the solicitation clauses and certifications of the [Online Representations and Certifications Application \(ORCA\)](#). This registration requires you to certify that the information provided about your company and its business activities is correct. Information ORCA asks for is explained in Federal Acquisitions Regulations, [Section 52.212-3](#), (Offeror Representations and Certifications - Commercial Items).

### 4. Find the NAICS Codes for Your Company

You may also find that you need a North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) code for administrative, contracting and tax purposes. The code classifies the economic sector, industry and country of your business. For federal contracting purposes, you will need to identify all the NAICS codes (industries) applicable to your business in the Central Contractor Registration (CCR). Read [Identifying Industry Codes](#), for more information.

### 5. Obtain Past Performance Evaluations

Businesses interested in getting on the U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) Schedule for contracts should obtain an [Open Ratings, Inc. Past Performance](#)

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**Evaluation.** Open Ratings, a Dun & Bradstreet Company, conducts an independent audit of customer references, and calculates a rating based upon a statistical analysis of various performance data and survey responses. While some GSA Schedule solicitations contain the form to request an Open Ratings Past Performance Evaluation, vendors may also submit an online request directly to Open Ratings.

#### Items Needed for Registration

Below are some of the items that you will need in order to complete registration processes.

- Your [NAICS codes](#)
- Your Data Universal Numbering System ([DUNS](#))
- Your Federal Tax Identification Number (TIN or [EIN](#))
- Your Standard Industrial Classification ([SIC](#)) codes
- Your [Product Service codes](#) (optional but useful)
- Your [Federal Supply Classification](#) codes (optional but useful)

#### More about Government Contracting

Contracting with the federal government can open the door to many opportunities for your small business, and can aid your business' growth. Visit the following pages for more information:

- [SUB-Net](#)
- [Mentor-Protégé Program](#)
- [Federal Business Opportunities](#)

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subscription service for our [AICN Quarterly Newsletter](#) for this type of IEEE member. This free subscription gives new consultants a chance to stick their toe in the water of consulting while maintaining their full time position. The subscription will also provide a way for IEEE members not serviced by local networks to stay abreast and informed.

Our last way in which we're trying to expand the reach of the AICN is to expand upon the Committee itself. We have a few opening on the Committee and will start looking very soon to fill those slots. We'll be doing some outreach to local network chairs to get recommendations for consultants they believe can add value to this Committee. Thanks in advance for any recommendations you may provide.

With these new services, we believe the AICNCC will be well positioned to provide meaningful guidance and information to those IEEE members that choose the fruitful endeavor of independent consulting. ■

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find a place for the consultants in the IEEE structure. This effort preceded affinity groups, and we did not fit. Irwin chaired the first Private Practitioner Task Force meeting in November 1992, with representatives from ten consultant networks. It was this group that later became the AICN-CC — and you know the rest of the story from there.

We all know that Irwin was a fighter. He fought the IEEE structure to get support for consultants, and to find a place for them in the IEEE organization. And, fortunately for us, he won. We owe him our gratitude and remembrance." ■

## Consulting Tips

### It's Always Good to Share Knowledge

By **R.H.Gauger, P.E.**

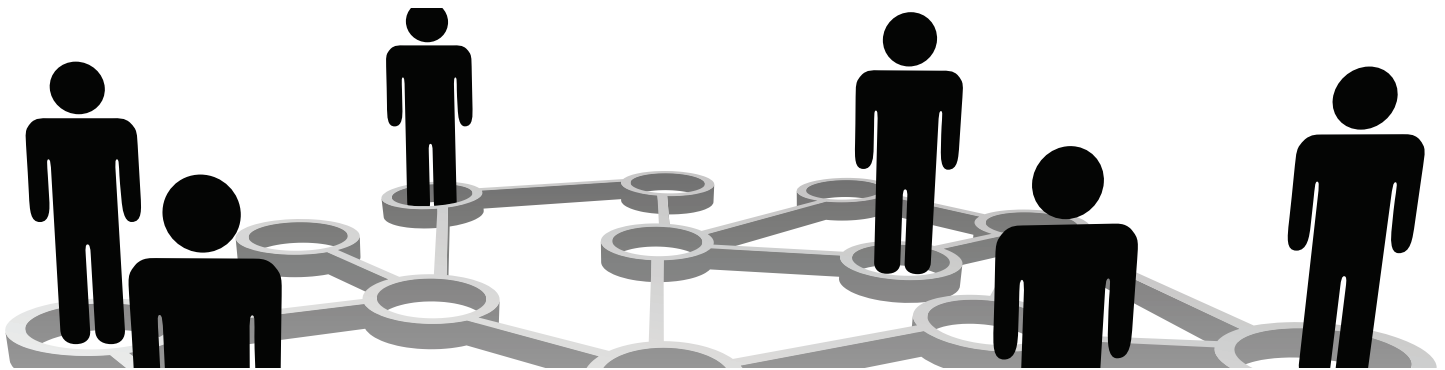
As consultants, we have often heard that we should write papers and publish articles to advertise our businesses. Well, I concur with that belief because it does pay off—but not right away.

My specialty is reliability engineering, and in 1983,

I wrote a paper on *Black Start Reliability*. Black Start Reliability is the probability of starting an on-site generator when a complete blackout occurs. As a result of my presenting the paper at a conference, it was published in the conference proceedings, and subsequently listed in the IEEE Xplore.

Recently Kawasaki, a Japanese turbine manufacturer, found the paper and called me. As a result, I just completed a six-week contract—updating the work I did almost 20 years ago!

I have written many papers—it helps to get contracts and add credibility to my reports—but this paper was the first one that resulted in a direct payback. ■



## Build the Network You Think You Don't Need

By Mark Haas, CMC FIMC

*The following story is taken from the Institute of Management Consultants' USA Daily Tips (IMC USA) column. For six years, the IMC USA provided a daily tips guide to its members. This daily tip is from 23 December 2012:*

I've never found networking events to be particularly productive in the consulting business. I'd rather be getting to know potential clients, rather than other consultants, or professional service providers. If the goal is to build our consulting firm, shouldn't we focus on clients?

Networking is taken as an article of faith among consultants—as well as other professional service providers, and business people of all stripes. You may be asking the important questions in reverse order. The third question is: How valuable is networking? The second question is: What do you mean by networking? The first question is: What is the objective of networking?

Robert Kiyosaki, author of *Rich Dad, Poor Dad*, says: “*The richest people in the world look for and build networks, everyone else looks for work.*” His point is that, regardless of the size or breadth of your consulting practice, the pace, complexity and uncertainty of the business environment means that you will increasingly need fresh relationships, resources and information sources to thrive. A few colleagues or data sources are no longer sufficient to give you what you need. This is what networks are all about.

The next question about what networking is should not focus on “networking events.” Regardless of how well such events are designed, they are largely semi-structured aggregations of people who, if you are lucky, can connect with each other. Networking events may be what most people mean when they say “networking,” but it is not the same as building a network.

Building a network requires defining the people, information, skills, resources and access necessary to keep you current with trends in your industry and discipline. A network is defined, explicit and intentional. It is also continuously redefined. The final question about how valuable a network is, can be answered in terms of how critical network(s) are to your professional (and personal) growth. How damaging to your business is a loss of prospects, partners, or revenues when the market changes, key staff leave, or technologies or competitors devastate your market? Your networks are your safety valves. We can never have too many networks, and few consultants have enough.

### TIP

Start by defining what you need to be agile in your business, to anticipate and respond to emerging trends. Like making a packing list for a trip, write down what you need to have, and be, over the next five years. What people or skills do you need to achieve these goals?

What different networks do you need to develop or strengthen? You may need 5-10 different networks. What is your plan to build, support and evaluate the effectiveness of those networks? How do you intend to not just connect others into your network, but to connect to other networks? The LinkedIn model of a “network of networks” is a good way to look at your own networking approach.

Finally, since you don't know what you will need a few years from now, how will you build your networks—so you have access to information and people you may think you don't need?

*Source: Institute of Management Consultants USA, 725 Daily Tips, 12/23/2011. ■*