

What's Trending on the Web

Are you really a consultant?

Facing a stagnate economy and an unemployment rate that has hovered around nine percent all year, many people are turning to consulting to provide for their households. Not surprisingly, this trend has also prompted some to question just who is and who is not a consultant?

In the [Institute of Management Consultants USA \(IMC-USA\) "Daily Tips"](#) column, the following question was posed: "As the economy worsens and people are laid off, won't that increase the number of people who call themselves consultants?" The Institute responded: "Yes, it is easy for someone who has been laid off to put up a shingle and call himself a consultant."

Additionally, in a [Staffing and Recruiting LinkedIn Discussion](#), a conversation started with the statement "Few people view consulting as a permanent career choice... In the U.S., consulting is increasingly being used solely as a means to provide income to those who are transitioning between employers."

Also, the lead story in the 18 September *Arizona Republic* newspaper's business

section was entitled "[More Jobless Aim to Consult](#)."

For long-time consultants, this phenomenon is nothing new. However, in reading through some of the web comments/responses to these statements, it is clear that IEEE consultant members can glean some useful information from the comments made and advice offered.

IMC-USA's Mark Haas, President, Research and Organization Management, states that "rather than fear or resent new consultants, welcome new consultants into your network and professional associations to evaluate where their knowledge and skills might be useful to you and your clients."

The *Arizona Republic* provides a tips column for consultants which tells new consultants who are committed to becoming full-time consultants to "create a strong website, blog and social-media presence with content that you have written about your business and your target industry."

In responding to the LinkedIn posting,

Eric Saint-Guillain, Independent Financial Consultant, Interim Manager & Entrepreneur, offered some sage advice for all consultants: "Following Lynda Gratton, professor of management practice at the London Business School, and author of "The Shift," about the business and career evolution, some companies will become larger, but a lot of people will not want to work as employees for these companies. There will be more and more micro-entrepreneurs with specific expertise who will work for these companies on specific projects and assignments. I have been working as a financial contractor and interim manager since 2007, and I think that this work matches the needs of the market: flexibility and expertise. During crisis time, business is much more difficult, but with the flexibility that contracting offers, you can always find more opportunities."

We at IEEE-USA encourage our local networks to recruit new and practicing consultants to their networks to build their network and also to build IEEE.

IEEE Creates Risk Management Webpage

Feeling exposed? IEEE members deal with the concept of risk in every project. A [new Web page](#) provides



IEEE members with links to some risk management resources, ranging from an integrated risk management process used at NASA to IEEE-USA's webinar series on risk management. The page links to the ISO 31000 standard for risk management, and free online training such as an IEEE course on risk management. The list

of resources provided is culled from a variety of IEEE publications, products and activities.

In today's business environment, we are all affected by the consequences of risks that were not properly identified and mitigated, be they financial, environmental or criminal. Whether you work for a research center, a manufacturer or run your own design business from home, you need to know how to identify, assess, document, manage and mitigate your risks. Businesses and individuals can be sued for negligence, and risk

management procedures can certainly help minimize those exposures. Consultants and small business owners will find the page contains examples of contracts, a primer on how to protect one's intellectual property rights, and links to apply for liability insurance in the U.S. and Canada.

No doubt, many members will want to share other examples of risk management resources to add to this body of knowledge, and they are encouraged to suggest additional links to the page or make use of virtual communities for further discussion.

Blog Post

What Do Your Clients Want and Need: Consultant or Advisor?

By Betsy Buckley

Late last week, I got a very interesting email from someone on my email distribution list, a person I'd met only once, socially. He invited me to come to his offices and see whether or not I might be able to offer some wisdom to his company.

I did my homework, as best I could, and went off to the meeting. I really didn't know what he wanted, or why me... and I gave myself permission to use our time together to explore.

What's interesting about the open ended nature of our 100 minutes of conversation, laughter, questioning and exploring is that I went in thinking he might be looking to solve a problem. But, I came out realizing that perhaps he was more interested in (and would be better served by) someone who could also help test the ideas he'd already tried, consider the pros and cons of each and serve as a third party neutral in identifying and exploring which approaches would bring the best, most sustainable resolution.

It was work we could do together—as opposed to either the resolution of an immediate problem (consulting, in my book) or advising (problem re-definition, then option analysis).

Many sage business gurus see these two roles as different and believe one person/firm can rarely serve in both capacities. In the complex world we are living in, it's my experience—and strong belief and daily practice—that clients are often best served when that single firm/person can and will do both.

It takes total focus on what's best for the client, an ability to step in their shoes and a commitment to build something with them (vs. designing an elegant solution for them to pull off the shelf, only to realize it doesn't fit). It also takes a willingness to roll up our sleeves (and insist they do the same), get fully immersed, simplify processes and clarify thinking.

It takes an ability to consult, advise, create a plan and help coach the plan's implementation. It means that we transfer expertise, raise competence, instill confidence and integrate new resources... and then gradually, as they are growing ever stronger, work our way out.

Does your organization get this kind of support from your consultants/advisors? Do you want or need it? Are you someone who does this work for clients? I'm curious— and would love feedback.

Betsy Buckley, often referred to as the rainmaking coach for professionals, has spent the last 16 years working with professional service firms —engineers and architects, CPAs and attorneys, consultants of all kinds — who want more clients and more business from current clients. By following her “We Guide, They Decide” system, her clients receive customized coaching, consulting and/or training and become comfortable, competent and confident rainmakers. And, her results are guaranteed. For more, please visit her company www.what-matters.com.



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The AICN is now on Facebook.
Check us out at: <http://www.facebook.com/pages/IEEE-Consultants-Network/116356868419773>

ieee-usa.in.action

iPad/iPhone users, download the new *IEEE-USA in ACTION* app from the iTunes store. Read reviews, get customer ratings, see screenshots, and learn more about *IEEE-USA in ACTION*.



Webinar

Introduction to IEEE-USA's Consultants Database

If you are already a consultant and are not already listed in the IEEE-USA Consultants online searchable database, you should join immediately. This database employs a powerful search engine that allows thousands of potential clients and employers to find your profile.

Recently, IEEE-USA conducted a free instructional webinar to show participants how to create an effective profile on our Consultants Database. The webinar guided participants, step-by-step, through the process of creating a profile, and provided recommendations for using key words to improve search results. In addition, local consultants networks were briefed on how they can use the database to create their own local directory.

Why list with IEEE-USA?

There are many other business-oriented social networks, so why list with IEEE-USA? Hiring managers have told us that they are more likely to hire IEEE members than random engineers. For more than 20 years, members have asked to have their names listed in the Consultants Directory which is now an online searchable database. IEEE members have reported to us that, the fact that they are in an online searchable database with other IEEE colleagues, it provides additional credibility to their skill, experience and background.

How much will it cost me to join the database and what do I get?

For \$79 a year, you will be able to post your professional consulting profile on the IEEE-USA Consultants Database. And, as a special offer, Consultants who sign-up in the Consultants Database before the end of 2011 will receive a free copy of our eBook *IEEE-USA Consultants Fee Survey Report: 2011* valued at the member price: \$7.99. Non-member price is \$9.99

In addition, by signing up, you will be included in the forthcoming AICN National Affinity Group Membership. The AICN will be grandfathering in all Consultant Database members into this new IEEE membership category.

Where can I watch the webinar and sign up for the database?

Visit <http://www.ieeeusa.org/careers/webinars/2011/webinar-11-07-11.html> to view a recording of the webinar and then go to: <http://www.ieeeusa.org/business/consultants/> and sign up to be a part of the Consultants Database.



E-Books on Consulting



[The Best of Today's Engineer: On Consulting \(Vol. 2\)](#)

This E-Book addresses such topics as reasons for becoming a consultant; how to become a better networker; and how to incorporate the new social media into your practice. Having these topics in a centralized location will be convenient for your reference, as you build and incorporate new ideas into your practice.

Members: \$4.79
Non-members: \$5.99

The Quarterly Publication of the Alliance of IEEE Consultants Networks
Fall 2011

Networking Through Traditional Channels and Social Media

The AICN is always looking for ways to give IEEE consultant members a leg up when it comes to networking. We have come across two webinars that may interest consultants in how to use their local network meetings and LinkedIn to improve their personal networking.

Building a Support Group

Sherri Edwards, an HR consultant from the upper northwest, offers a webinar, [*Engineering Collaborative Job Search Strategies: Building a Support Group*](#), originally directed towards helping individuals get the most out of their job search when they join an Employment Network/Job Club. However, her tips can be easily substituted for consultants joining local IEEE Consultants Networks.

The webinar focuses on:

- The value of group support
- Defining the group's goals
- Developing a structure
- Sharing information
- Developing relationships
- Getting results

It's well worth watching in a group setting or individually.

Using LinkedIn

With the advent of social media, most professionals are always looking for tips on how to use LinkedIn, Facebook and Twitter to improve their business. The IEEE-USA webinar team has come across a webinar, [Use LinkedIn Like A Champ To Grow Your Business](#). Katie Baird describes herself as Head Communications Geek at Schipul - The Web Marketing Company. Ms. Baird takes the participant through a very detailed session about how to best use LinkedIn. She provides details on many popular LinkedIn function as well as lesser known functions and provides a tutorial that will help the participant to understand and use LinkedIn.

(Use LinkedIn Like A Champ To Grow Your Business is not an IEEE-USA sponsored webinar and IEEE-USA takes no responsibilities about the effectiveness of advice given during this webinar.)

