

Chair's Corner: Training Opportunity for IEEE Independent Consultants

BY MOHAMMED BILLOO



For the past 10 years, one of this committee's major goals has been to provide training for consultants and would-be consultants. On 15 November, we're returning to those roots by partnering with the [IEEE Southeastern Michigan Consultants Affinity Group](#) for a

half-day workshop. Sessions will include *"Building a Client Base"* by Theresa Brunasso, *"Creating the Business that is Right For You"* by Jacob Beningo, and *"It Looks Like We Need to Hire a Consultant – NOW WHAT?"* by Charles Lord. For those in Detroit, Auburn Hills, Rochester Hills, and surrounding IEEE Sections in Michigan, we hope you can attend. We promise if you're a consultant or considering

consulting as a new career path, it will be well worth your time and effort to attend. [Register Today!](#)

In addition to in-person training, this committee also provides virtual training to IEEE members. In September, this committee produced the IEEE-USA webinar, [Consulting and AI](#). We received very positive feedback and would like to continue to produce other free webinars that are of interest to you. Please send any feedback and webinar topic recommendations to Daryll Griffin at d.r.griffin@ieee.org.

Lastly, the 2025 IEEE-USA Consultants Fee Survey Report will be published in October. We thank everyone who took the survey, and hope this report will be an informative resource for IEEE consultants. ■



SPOTLIGHT ON
Cash Sutton III, P.E., F.I.A.E.
BY GEORGIA C. STELLUTO



Each quarter, IEEE-USA InSight is profiling a consultant listed in the [IEEE-USA Consultant Finder](#), so you can become familiar with some of the excellent technical experts our database has to offer. Our second Spotlight is on Cash Sutton III, P.E., F.I.A.E., president and CEO of Sutton Enterprises. This article originally appeared in IEEE-USA InSight in August 2025.

Cash Sutton is a licensed electrical engineer, in the state of California, who graduated from Drexel University in 1973. He is president and CEO of Sutton Enterprises, an electrical engineering consulting firm — as well as an affiliate marketing distribution group; a licensed insurance agent in California; and an Adjunct Professor at Los Angeles Trade Tech College, where he teaches classes in Applied Science.

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Renew Your Subscription to the IEEE-USA Consultant Finder

You still have time to renew your subscription for the [IEEE-USA Consultant Finder](#). IEEE Collaboratec powers the IEEE-USA Consultant Finder for independent consultants. This service's key features include:

- Simple and advanced search features
- An assignment placement portal
- A full consultant profile for paid subscribers

The main purpose of the IEEE-USA Consultant Finder is to let clients, project managers and HR professionals search for consultants to hire — for free!

The IEEE-USA Consultant Finder's visual design makes it easy to use. It also has web crawlers, so even more potential clients will be able to find this website — and individual consultant profiles. IEEE-USA is also actively trying to promote this service to professionals through constantly updating Search Engine Optimization (SEO) tags.

All IEEE members considering, or jumping into, the gig economy should check out the IEEE-USA Consultant Finder for marketing their services. This service also includes international independent consultants (those

working outside of North America).

The IEEE membership renewal period is the best, and easiest, time to get started.

When you renew your IEEE membership, just add the IEEE Consultants Network Membership Premium to your cart. This step allows your IEEE Collaboratec profile to be listed in the IEEE-USA Consultant Finder.

We look forward to your continued support of this product, by subscribing, or renewing your subscription.

Current Membership Premium subscribers — please note: Now is a great time to review your consultant profile. Log in via IEEE Collaboratec (or the IEEE Collaboratec App) — and consider adding, or updating, your photo; reviewing your biography; and updating your desired salary, or hourly rate. ■



Local IEEE Consultants Network News



On 15 November, the [IEEE Southeastern Michigan Consultants Affinity Group](#) is partnering with the [IEEE-USA Consultants Committee](#) on a half-day workshop. The workshop will take place at Oakland University in Auburn Hills, Michigan, educating beginner and seasoned independent consultants on the issues affecting their practice. For those interested in attending the hands-on workshop, please [register](#) today!

In the coming months, the [IEEE Consultants' Network of Silicon Valley](#) (IEEE-CNSV) has two upcoming events for their members:

- Tue, 14 Oct, 7pm: [3D Modeling for Cardiac Surgical Planning](#) (at new location: Covalent Metrology, Sunnyvale)
- Tue, 11 Nov, 7pm: [Bell Labs' Critical BELLMAC-32 Microprocessor Legacy](#) - presenting an underappreciated story by 3 of its designers

Past Meetings

Other local networks have started the fall strong by engaging with their members on a variety of topics. In September, the [IEEE Consultants Network of Long Island](#) (LICN) held a Zoom session on Everyday Ethics

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for Consultants. The [Consultants' Network of San Diego](#) partnered with their sister society, the IEEE Oceanic Engineering Society, for their monthly meeting. They met, networked and discussed everything about oceanic engineering, science, Blue Tech, and more. In August, this same network sponsored the presentation "Consulting Nuts and Bolts." After a summer hiatus, the [Twin Cities Consultants Network](#) held their first meeting of the fall

to determine what pressing issues they would address during the remainder of 2025. On 25 September, the newly formed IEEE Virtual Consultants Network held its introductory meeting outlining how they would organize and set up their regular meetings dates. Lastly, if you missed it, the IEEE-USA Consultants Committee produced an IEEE-USA webinar [Consultants & AI](#). ■

AROUND THE WEB

The Great Career Shift: Independent Consulting Becomes Long-Term Career Choice, Not Just Freelance Gig

A new report shows the continued rise of independent consulting as a long-term career choice, rather than a temporary gig. A [July 2025 report](#) from The Barton Partnership found that more than half of independent consultants have been working for themselves for five years or more, and more than 50% plan to continue for at least six more years.

The Issuing of 1099 Forms to Freelancers Now Starts at \$2000

A [provision](#) under the *One Big Beautiful Bill Act* (OBBBA), passed in July, alters the threshold for legal requirement of issuing an independent contractor a 1099 form. Beginning January 2026, businesses will only need to issue 1099 forms for freelancers they pay \$2,000 or more — a significant bump from the previous \$600 threshold. Additionally, for freelancers who give to charity, there is more good news. Recent legislation has reshaped how charitable contributions are treated under federal tax law. *The Charitable Act* (S.317) and the *One Big Beautiful Bill Act* (OBBBA), both passed in 2025, introduce new opportunities for tax deductions — especially for those who do not itemize — and new limits for high-income donors. Here is [what you need to know](#) to make the most of your giving strategy starting in 2026.

Six Components of a Skills-First Talent System

Skill proficiency is now the key to workforce agility, said Shrikant Pattathil, president and chief technology officer at Harbinger Group, in a recent [HRchat Podcast](#) discussion about the importance of a skills-first approach in HR technology. [Pattathil outlined six components](#) of a skills-first system, and highlighted the significant role of artificial intelligence in personalizing learning and development.

From Tools to Teammates: Navigating the New Human-AI Relationship

A new report from [the Upwork Research Institute](#) shows that, while workers report a 40% increase in productivity thanks to AI, 88% of those who are most productive are burned out. The report discusses what freelancers can teach you about healthier AI collaboration and how to redesign AI strategy to support people — and performance.

Free Resources for Consultants

IEEE-USA's previous webinar speaker Laura Burford ([What Do The Best Consultants Do To Get Clients?](#)) has been busy building her [YouTube Channel](#) that provides free resources to independent consultants. If you need help in building your practice, you may want to check out a few of her videos.



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Introducing Simplified Renewal: A New Renewal Option for IEEE Members

The IEEE Member Group Insurance Program has listened to your feedback about the professional liability insurance policy renewal process. As the administrator of the IEEE Professional Liability Insurance Program, AMBA continually evaluates how to improve the member experience in collaboration with our carrier partners.

That's why AMBA has introduced a new option* to simplify the renewal of your IEEE-sponsored professional liability insurance policy. No application required.

What Is Simplified Renewal?

Simplified renewal allows your current professional liability insurance policy to renew, without requiring you to complete a new application. If you meet certain eligibility criteria, you'll receive a renewal quote based on your existing policy information. Once you return the signed quote and your premium payment, your coverage continues without interruption.

Why It Matters for Engineers: Stress-Free Coverage, Year After Year

- **Avoid Coverage Gaps** - Missing deadlines can leave you exposed. Simplified renewal helps keep you protected from claims arising from past or ongoing projects.
- **Saves Time and Hassle** - Engineers have better things to do than paperwork. Simplified renewal means fewer calendar reminders and less administrative action.
- **Maintains Retroactive Coverage** - Professional liability policies are "claims-made," meaning

coverage is tied to when a claim is made. A lapse, even brief, could reset your retroactive date and jeopardize long-term protection.

- **Peace of Mind** - Focus on your engineering work, knowing your professional insurance is reliably in place.

How It Works:

1. **Notification** - Before your renewal date, you'll receive a notice indicating whether you qualify for simplified renewal of your policy.
2. **Review** - You'll receive a Renewal Quote based on your current policy. If updates are needed, contact AMBA.
3. **Acceptance** - Return the signed Renewal Quote and premium payment.
4. **Issuance** - AMBA will issue your policy for continued coverage.

For electrical engineers working in a high-risk field, consistent in-force liability coverage means one less thing to worry about. In short, simplified renewal is designed to keep your coverage continuous, convenient, and low-stress, so you can stay focused on what you do best. ■

*Simplified renewal eligibility is based on your expiring limits of liability, firm revenues and Areas of Practice. Engineers must be claims-free with no license revocations, suspensions or disciplinary actions. Eligibility is designed for practices continuously insured with Certain Underwriters at Lloyd's of London for no less than 2 years.

Have You Posted Your Profile to the IEEE-USA Consultant Finder?

<https://ieee-collabratec.ieee.org/ieee-usa-consultants>



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Most of Sutton's experience has been associated with the design, construction, startup and maintenance of electrical power systems. He has developed his management skills from meeting the demands of his job responsibilities and organizational affiliations.

Sutton has been working with students of all ages since 1969. He places emphasis on communicating the importance of getting a good education, so that we can contribute to discussions about solutions to our common problems. Sutton is an advocate of national and world energy policies promoting the efficient use of energy resources, without destroying our planet. He believes our most important energy resource on earth is human energy. Sutton has provided the electrical design for more than 14MW of solar power, since his first design of an 11.2 KW solar power plant in 2003, for Christ Church Parish in Ontario, CA.

In addition, Sutton is a founding member and secretary of the CRW Energy Corporation. He is also a founding member and treasurer of the Council for the Advancement of Black Engineers. Sutton is a life member of the Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc.; and he is chair and an active member of the Iota Zeta Lambda Chapter of Compton, California. Sutton is also chair and a life member of the Business Development Committee of the Los Angeles Council of Black Professional Engineers. He is the last vice president of the National Council of Black Engineers and Scientists. Sutton is an IEEE Senior Life Member, as well as Chair of the Foothill Consultant Network.

Further, Sutton is an active member of Christ Church Parish in Ontario. He is a past member of the Board of Directors of the Future Scientists and Engineers of America (FSEA). Sutton is also on the Board of Good Shepherd Manor. He has received numerous certificates and notes of appreciation for speaking to and working with community organizations and schools. Sutton received the IEEE Community Service Award in 1985. He traveled to Belize in 1987, with State Senator Diane Watson, on a fact-finding mission.

Sutton is listed in the International Who's Who of Information Technology for 1999. He is the 2003 & 2004

Western Region Alumni Brother of the Year of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Incorporated. Sutton has many varied interests and hobbies, including his affiliate marketing distribution business; his continued study of advancements in engineering; sailing; skiing; flying; golfing; swimming; bowling; playing chess; camping; reading; traveling; photography; and astronomy as well, and other interests.

Sutton is grateful for his 45-year marriage to Jacqueline; and for their daughters, Diamond and Star.

IEEE-USA InSight: How did you become interested in engineering?

I was excited about school when I started, because my three-year older sister had left me every day to attend. As a result, I excelled and actually skipped two semesters, (a complete year of school) upon graduating from elementary school. I also suffered with deformed fingers that limited my involvement in sports. In the 4th grade, my teacher recognized me by giving me a special assignment of assembling a quiz board. I assembled it without difficulty, but was amazed that the light functioned whenever the correct answer was selected. Obviously, I completed the circuit, and the current flowed, but I've been studying electricity ever since. In middle school, I assembled a transistor radio and made a lamp. At home, I discovered I could repair small appliances by replacing failed tubes. I also enjoyed my Erector Set containing an electromagnet. While in High School (and trying to identify a course of study for my career), I wanted to include math and science — and electrical engineering provided that opportunity.

IEEE-USA InSight: I see you are listed in the IEEE-USA Consultant Finder. Why did you become interested in consulting?

I like solving problems, having some control of my time, and the ability to provide for myself. Unfortunately, I grew up during the height of the Civil Rights Movement. I seldom felt that my skills were enough to succeed in the construction arena of corporate America, especially with my birth defect. After recognizing my experience with my P.E. license could help to accomplish my goals, I became a consultant.

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IEEE-USA InSight: What led you to become a member of/become listed in the IEEE-USA Consultant Finder? What is the best thing about it?

I am an IEEE Senior Life Member; and I have been, since I was a student member at Drexel University. IEEE is the international organization that has set many of the standards followed in our industry for using electrical energy. I have been fortunate to work with many of those experts. Since I know that I don't have all of the answers, I depend on our members, and their references, when I need help. I became listed in the Consultant Finder, with the hope of securing work and expanding my business.

IEEE-USA InSight: What is your engineering specialty — and what do you enjoy most about it?

I am a versatile electrical engineer, with more than 50 years' experience designing, implementing and maintaining electrical systems used in residential, commercial and industrial facilities and power plants. My expertise includes project management, leadership, quality control, technical innovation and planning skills. I like solving problems!

IEEE-USA InSight: What do you enjoy most about consulting — and what advice would you give someone wanting to make the transition to, or become a consultant?

My greatest pleasure as a consultant is finding solutions for difficult problems — but I also like having control of my time, and being able to care for myself. I teach and mentor other engineers, and tell them all that there is no shortage of money in our world. Money was created as an exchange medium. Our job is to communicate our capability to solve some of the world's problems! If you solve the problem, you should get paid. Unfortunately, when solving the problem becomes too much fun, you may have trouble making ends meet financially. So, you should get help for the business aspects of your consultant business.

IEEE-USA InSight: What is one thing — industry related or not — that you have learned in the past month?

AI note takers for Zoom, and I expect Teams (haven't used personally), have really advanced.

IEEE-USA InSight: What is a recent project or initiative you have been involved in that you are particularly proud of?

I pulled a team together to develop the design for what has been coined as a "Gig Station," where a combination of EV charging stations, solar and battery storage are included onsite — with office space, food and observation areas added to make the charging experience functional.

IEEE-USA InSight: How has being listed in, and/or a member of the IEEE-USA Consultant Finder impacted your career, and your personal and professional growth?

Only one potential client has found me so far but I'm still optimistic.

IEEE-USA InSight: If someone wants to hire you as a consultant for a job — describe how they would go about using the Consultant Finder — to find you...

Go to <https://ieee-collabratec.ieee.org/ieee-usa-consultants> and type in my name, Cash Sutton III, or Sutton Enterprises.

IEEE-USA InSight: What does a typical day in your role as an engineering consultant look like?

I spend much of my time solving problems, looking for new problems, teaching, volunteering, and enjoying my family and friends.

IEEE-USA InSight: How do you stay up-to-date on industry trends and developments?

I get information from such technical organizations, as the AEE, IAEE, IEEE and the NEC. I also study the California Energy Code, and the codes of the local agencies where my designs are implemented.

Georgia C. Stelluto was IEEE-USA's Publishing Manager, and Manager and Editor for IEEE-USA E-Books. She retired in September 2025, after 37 years of service to IEEE-USA, to pursue her own personal writing, and other creative interests. And to care for her new chihuahua puppy, Izabelle (Izzy for short). You can reach her at georgiastelluto@gmail.com.