Madison Section NEWSLETTER

Entrepreneurs Network Chapter

Date/Time: Thursday, February 20, 2003, 5:30 PM meet & register, 6:00 PM dinner

Speaker: Gary L. Blank, Ph.D., Vice President, IEEE-USA

Location: Quiveys Grove, 6261 Nesbitt Road (map at <http://www.quiveysgrove.com/> under "Contact Us"), 608.273.4900

Menu: menu & cost to be determined

RSVP: by February 17th to Tom Yager via email (tyager@ieee.org) or call 608.821.0821 ext. 342

Non-member guests are always welcome!

You are a consultant or considering becoming a consultant of engineering services - in simpler terms, a private practitioner. You are an IEEE member and you would like to be associated with other Consultants. Where do you go?

An IEEE Consultants' Network is an invaluable resource for consulting information. You will meet experienced practitioners as well as others new to consulting. Speakers discuss such topics as taxes, self-marketing, entrepreneurship, finances, fee setting, software and liability insurance. The network is also a source of potential clients.

There are active IEEE Consultants' Networks in thirty areas of the United States and others are in the formative stages.

Organizing a network can be exciting and rewarding. This talk describes how to start a Consultants' Network, and the benefits to the members and the Section.

Gary Blank received his B.S. from Illinois Institute of Technology, his M.S. from the University of Idaho, and his Ph.D. from the University of Wisconsin at the age of 24. All degrees are in electrical engineering. Since then his career has advanced along parallel paths in industry and in academia.

For many years he was a full-time consultant in industry while concurrently teaching part-time at the University of Florida and at UCLA.

He also held full-time faculty positions at Marquette University, Northern Illinois University, and Illinois Institute of Technology, while concurrently consulting part-time in industry.

Dr. Blank is the author of numerous published articles and papers. He is a Vice-President of IEEE-USA. He is a Senior Member of the IEEE. He is the founding chairman of the IEEE Consultants' Network of Chicago/Rockford. He was the National Chairman of the IEEE-USA AICN (Alliance of IEEE Consultants' Networks) from 1998 to 2001, coordinating the activities of 30 Consultants' Networks, and starting several new Networks. He was the Chairman of the IEEE Region 4 Student Activities Committee and the Chairman of the IEEE Region 4 Major Conferences Committee. He was a member of the Midcon Board of Directors and was the Convention Director for Midcon 1991. He was a member of the IEEE Educational Activities Board's Committee on the Engineering Skills Assessment Program. He is a member of the IEEE Individual Benefits and Services Committee. He is a national S-PAC speaker.

He is currently consulting full-time in industry in the areas of Control Systems, Digital Signal Processing, and Electronics. He teaches engineering courses live, and on home-study videos for review for both the PE Exam in Electrical and Computer Engineering and for the Fundamentals of Engineering (General Engineering) Exam. He also conducts seminars and workshops internationally on how to start and expand a successful consulting practice.

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The word engineer has its roots in the Latin word ingeniare, which means to devise in the sense of construct, craft, etc. Several other words are related to this word, including ingenuity. (Source: Professor John Lienhard, University of Houston)

Madison Section Mailing List

Some of you may not realize that the IEEE Madison Section has a email mailing list (madison-section). This list is very low volume and is only used for meeting announcements and general announcements that may be important to the membership. Only the list moderator is allowed to post messages so you won't receive any advertising or spam. Instructions on how to subscribe may be found on the IEEE Madison Section web site located at <http://www.bugsoft.com/ieee>. Just look under "Madison Section Mailing List". Basically you just send an email to <majordomo@majordomo.ieee.org> with `subscribe madison-section` in the body of the email (the subject is ignored). The list moderator will receive your request, verify your membership, then add you to the list. You will then receive notification that you have been subscribed to the list. This process may take a few days, so be patient.
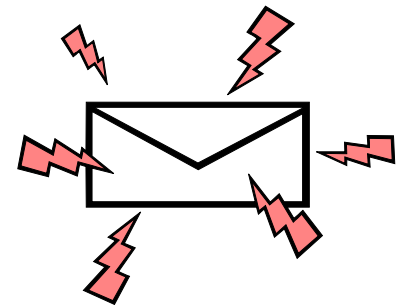
Effective Meeting Management Can Make Your Career

by Paul J. Kostek

Meetings are an essential component of most engineers' workday. It seems that some meetings are so satisfying that time flies by, while others drag on forever and simply take otherwise productive time away. What's the difference between a good meeting and a bad one? The answer lies in planning and control.

THE INGREDIENTS OF A GOOD, PRODUCTIVE MEETING

PLANNING

When you are leading a meeting, you should plan it well. Start by asking yourself why you are calling a meeting in the first place. Do you have a specific purpose or goal in mind? For example, will this be a general staff meeting? Do you want to conduct a peer review of a particular design? If you don't have a solid reason for taking people away from their work, you probably don't need a meeting in the first place.

DEVELOP AN AGENDA

Develop an agenda that centers around your reason for scheduling the meeting. List specific topics your group should be prepared to address. Then collect the materials you will need to support the meeting and distribute them in advance, so your attendees can prepare before they arrive.

Also, will this be a one-time meeting or one in a series of ongoing gatherings? Identify the meeting as such on your agenda. For ongoing meetings, provide meeting summaries whenever possible. Future meetings should include time for reviewing action items.

DECIDE WHO SHOULD ATTEND

Be sure you invite the right people to the meeting. Consider your meeting goals when putting your attendee list together, keeping in mind that if decisions need to be made, you should keep your group small. If you are not sure whom to invite, ask your manager or colleagues to help you identify the right people.

In addition, if your meeting will include customers or other off-site representatives, make arrangements for the visitors to access your facility and send them the agenda and meeting materials in advance, so they will be prepared to actively participate in the meeting.

MANAGE TIME AND STAY ON TASK

Managing a professional meeting equates to managing time: you need to start promptly and end on time. To accomplish this, manage your agenda and stay on the topic. Assign one person to record meeting minutes and action items. Review the action items before you adjourn, so everyone knows what needs to be done, by whom, and by when. If you need to schedule a follow-up meeting, do it while everyone is still together, and then be sure to distribute the summary and action items well before the follow-up meeting.

A well-planned and well-executed meeting reflects positively on your ability to organize and lead an activity. You'll get a positive response from colleagues and leaders when you run meetings that have a start, middle and end, and that produce results. We all spend too much time at non-productive meetings. Make sure yours have a positive impact.

REFERENCES

"How to Make Meetings Work: The New Interaction Method," by Michael Doyle and David Straus, 1976, New York: Berkeley Publishing Group of Penguin Putnam. Paperback, $6.99

Paul Kostek is a principal at Air Direct Solutions, a provider of systems engineering services, and 2003 chair of the American Association of Engineering Societies (AAES). He has served as IEEE-USA President and as Region 6 PACE Coordinator.

National Engineers Week Slated 16-22 February 2003

National Engineers Week, which runs 16-22 February 2003, is coming up fast. This year's co-chairs, the American Society of Heating, Refrigerating and Air-Conditioning Engineers, Inc. (ASHRAE) and Lockheed Martin, are launching "The New Faces of Engineering," a program that will spotlight the outstanding contributions of America's youngest engineering professionals.

For more information, visit http://www.eweek.org

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