THE ASSOCIATION OF CONSULTANTS TO NONPROFITS

ACN NEWS

December 2016 Newsletter

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Happy Holidays & Happy New Year!

As we wrap up the year, help us spread ACN's message - a simple share on Facebook, LinkedIn, or post on Twitter is all we need! The more we share, the more we will connect, collaborate and support each other. Thank you so much for thinking of us this year - we look forward to what's next!

Is your organization Mission-Driven or Mission-Challenged? DAVIDOFF

President's Message

Dear Colleagues/ACN members,

Since our last newsletter, three very important leadership transitions have come to pass: 1) The Cubs won the World Series; 2) The U.S. elected a new President; and 3) ACN has contracted with a new executive director and his team. While I will leave it up to you to decide how you might rank order the relative importance of these events, I can tell you that each of them have made me think in a different way about what true leadership means. Whether it is David Ross telling Anthony Rizzo to "Just continue to breathe," President Obama awarding the Presidential Medal of Freedom to Ellen DeGeneres while reminding us of the courage it took to come out "on the most public of stages," or seeing Ed Graziano and his team work quickly to help ACN support and unify a sector that is under more pressure than ever -- I can say without hesitation that i have seen real leadership happening in all kinds of places. Ed's group is already making a huge difference for ACN by enhancing our member experience, connecting more consultants with us, and helping us deepen our communications and thought leadership program.

Every day, ACN members are in the trenches with our clients as they sort through budgetary calamities, political opposition and the general vagaries of an under-supported sector. Today, this collaboration with our clients has never been more essential. Large swaths of our city, state and nation are wrought with some combination of violence, joblessness, food insecurity, poor-quality education, housing uncertainty and environmental risk - outcomes of a long history of structural inequality and systemic bigotry. If we expect this to change, it is our task and our promise to find the leader within us to fight against these entrenched forces. How can we do this? By continuing to breathe. By standing on any stage we can find. And by supporting and unifying.

I hope all of you take the opportunity this holiday season to gather, relax and rejuvenate with your loved ones.

Best,
Catherine

Programming Update 2017

by Kedest Kassahun Lanum, VP of Programming

Save the dates for future ACN programs:

Feb 16: *Managing Your Projects and Workflow* (Consultants)

April 20: *Topic to be determined* (Nonprofits + Consultants)

June: *Annual Meeting* (Nonprofits + Consultants)

Note: Guests who are referred to programs by members enjoy a 50% discount in the event fee. They should include the name of the referring member on the registration form for the discounted rate.

This year's programs are providing more interaction and networking opportunities for attendees. Please see the key takeaways from each event posted to the member's-only section of ACN's website, and use the social forum to continue the discussion topics. We hope you will offer your feedback via each program's evaluation form -- we value your opinion and will continue to improve our programs for our members and guests.

From November 17 program -- Voice of the Client: Effective Collaboration with Consultants

The November 17th program, Voice of the Client: Effective Collaboration with Consultants, welcomed over 30 attendees. Board member Brenda Berman moderated a panel consisting of three nonprofit leaders: Jan Boden, Director of Communications & Marketing at Lutheran School of Theology Chicago; Nylan Diab, Director of Strategic Initiatives at Concordia Place; and Barb Thayer, Chief Operating Officer at Robert Crown Center for Health Education. Each of the speakers shared with the successes and challenges they experienced while collaborating with consultants for their unique projects. Following the panel discussion, our guest speakers joined our members to individually discuss specific, key topics with our members such as setting expectations, communication, managing collaborations and managing project timelines.

These discussions zeroed in on the importance of:

- Setting clear expectations between consultants and organization leaders and decision makers
- Communicating clearly and often
- Obtaining a signed contract before starting work, and
- Assigning a project manager both on the organization and the consultant side.

Networking Events 2017

By Meegan Bassett, Director-at-Large

January 11th Met Club Happy Hour: Ring in the New Year and Plan for the Future

Following the success of our first ACN Met Club coffee, ACN members and guests will celebrate 2016 and get tips on planning for the future personally and in your practice at our first Met Club Happy Hour. Experts Florence Hardy (Small Business Development Center) and Antonio Lugo III (Smart Wealth Strategies) will be on hand January 11th during networking to answer questions about business and financial planning. Join us to tip one back to celebrate the New Year!

When: January 11, 2017 5:30 – 7:30 pm

Location: The Metropolitan Club, Willis Tower, 233 S. Wacker Dr., Floor 67,

Chicago, IL 60606

Topic: Planning for Success

Schedule: 5:30 PM Open Networking

5:45 -- 6:15 PM Introductions and Speed Networking

6:15 –7:30 Open Networking

Experts needed: We are looking for non-member experts for our networking events in March and May! Please contact Meegan Dugan Bassett (meegan@duganbassett.com) with suggestions for:

March 22, 2017 10-11:30 AM Met Club Coffee -- Experts who can share tips for how to make it through challenging times in your business, including when business is slow or when projects are particularly difficult. Experts could also include veteran consultants from ACN.

May 24, 2017 5:30-7:30 PM Met Club Happy Hour – Experts in work life balance, such as lifestyle coaches, personal organizers, and fitness and wellness coaches or trainers.

*These networking events also take place at The Willis Tower, 233 S. Wacker Dr. Floor 67.

Membership News

by Barb Vicory - VP of Membership

New Associate Member Level

ACN has launched the new Associate level of membership, which is designed especially for new and emerging practitioners. In addition to an invitation to the New Member Orientation, Associate Members can:

Attend four complimentary educational programs per year | Attend all networking events, and | Receive a member discount to our Annual Meeting

As this is for new consultants, Associates will not receive RFPs or RFIs and also will not have a profile in the ACN directory.

Member Benefit Reminders:

We wanted to remind you that as a member of ACN, you can reserve up to 2 hours per month for free at the IOS suites (455 N. Cityfront Plaza, Floor 3100), with certain restrictions and pending availability. This member benefit will be discontinued in June - so take advantage of it while you can. If you are interested in reserving space, contact Ed at execdirector@acnconsult.org.

Also, ACN is now receiving Request for Information (RFI) from nonprofits â€“ individual and organizational members will be receiving these as well as RFPs through email from ACN. RFIs are intended as a way to help nonprofits request assistance when they don't have a more formal RFP - the majority of RFIs will not have the kind of detail you would receive from an RFP. We hope you find this new benefit helpful.

New Member Orientation:

ACN Board of Directors welcomes new members each calendar quarter and provides a forum to talk about how to best take advantage of your ACN membership. The orientation includes a brief presentation and time to meet new colleagues.

Our next orientation will be: January 18, 2017, 12:00 - 1:30 PM | ACN Office (NBC Tower/IOS Suites),455 N Cityfront Plaza Dr, Suite 3100 | Admission: Free to all New Members | Register Here

ACN would like to welcome our new members. Please visit their profiles and connect with them!

Diane Brown | Joenell Henry-Tanner | Nina Kantrowitz | Colleen McElligott | Michael Mete | Kristin Patton | Ellen Romberg | Lidia Varesco Racoma | Christopher Wojcik

We are also very pleased that the following members have recently renewed their membership:

Meegan Bassett | Jane Beckett|Meghan Beer| Elizabeth Cole | Jonathan Eisler| JeffGordy | Kelly Kleiman| Sarah Mayeda | Jill Misra | Heather Parish | James Provenza | David Schreier | Catherine Siebel | Wendy Siegel| Padma Tumuluri | Barb Vicory| Joseph Villinski | RenaHenderson Mason | Roger (Whit)Shepard

****If you are interested in learning more about joining the membership committee or have any questions about your membership, please contact Barb Vicory, VP of Membership @ bvicory@wg2consulting.com****

The ACN Blog

by Andrew Shafer, Social Media

ACN is pleased to announce that we are renewing our blog publishing program and are asking for your participation! Starting in mid-December, we are planning regular new posts to highlight our members' expertise and build our community. To these ends, we invite you to:

- Let us know if you have a business blog you would like to link to ACN's website.
- Recommend individual blog posts - whether your own or another member's that you feel would make an interesting contribution to the ACN blog. We will consider all suggestions in light of our blog policy and content strategy (under development).
- Write a new post -- we are looking for contributors on any topic related to members' practice areas

Please email Andrew Shafer (aashafer@gmail.com) or ACN (info@acnconsult.org) with any suggestions.

Get Involved!

Volunteer: If you would like to volunteer to help with ACN Communications, Membership, or Programming, please email us at info@acnconsult.org.

Experts Needed: We are looking for non-member experts for our networking events in March and May! Please contact Meegan Dugan Bassett (meegan@duganbassett.com) with suggestions for:

- **March 22, 2017 10-11:30 AM Met Club Coffee -** to slog it out when the going is slow or tough
- **May 24, 2017 5:30-7:30 PM Met Club Happy Hour -** Work/life balance

These networking events take place at The Willis Tower, 233 S. Wacker Dr. Floor 67.

Share Your Knowledge: ACN is looking for quality content to share. If you would like to submit a blog post (see â€œFrom the ACN blog,â€ above), please contact us at info@acnconsult.org or aashafer@gmail.com.

Sponsorship Thanks

Thank you to our inaugural newsletter sponsor for 2016-17, Davidoff Communications! This year we expanded our sponsorship opportunities. If you are interested in the visibility gained through sponsorship, please contact us at info@acnconsult.org.

ACNWebsite

Join/Renew