



Newsletter of the Society for the Advancement of Consulting® - February 2019

Founded by Million Dollar Consulting guru Alan Weiss, the Society for the Advancement of Consulting is the premier association for independent consulting professionals who subscribe to an industry code of ethics and provide significant consulting results among their clients.



February is the month of love, and we *love* what's happening with SAC! Our membership ranks continue to grow, seats at our upcoming regional events are filling quickly, and we are attracting top-notch presenters for our upcoming programs.

Check out what's happening this month:

Early Bird Pricing Extended For Boston Event

Don't miss our spring east coast event in the Boston area on May 29th. Early Bird pricing runs through February. [Register now.](#)

It's not too late to register for the San Francisco event in March. Limited seats are still available. [Register now.](#)

A Webinar Doubleheader !

We have 2 great webinars for you in February: In our next Best Practices webinar on Wed February 6th at 10am PST, Million Dollar Consulting guru Alan Weiss will share his thoughts about what keeps consultants from being more successful (hint: It has nothing to do with the economy!). Our Practicum Webinar series continues on Thurs. February 7th at 10am PST, with writing coach and author Anne Janzer sharing her expertise on *Writing to Be Understood—Effective Writing for the Rest of Us*. [More information.](#)

Prior webinars are archived and posted in the members only section of the SAC website. Non-members are welcome to attend webinars or purchase prior sessions for a small fee. [Learn more.](#)

And There's More...

We're launching a new monthly feature, profiling one SAC member each month. Check out the interview with John Martinka below. We're also spotlighting one of our member benefits each month to make sure you're aware of what's available to you as a SAC member.

Finally, we're thrilled to announce that Patrick Daly has taken on the role of SAC ambassador for Europe, in conjunction with Hamish MacKenzie. Also, Steven Hunt, a SAC member from Germany, has taken over editing of our bimonthly news releases. See below for his first piece, which focuses on how to beat the talent/skills gap.

Looking forward to seeing you online this week...or at one of the upcoming events in person over the next few months.

Lisa and Linda



Breaking Through: Take Your Business to the Next Level

Spring will be here before you know it! Don't miss our two regional spring events:

San Francisco: March 27, 2019

[Join us](#) on March 27, 2019 at the Crowne Plaza San Francisco Airport in Burlingame, CA. Alan Weiss will speak in the morning, with three powerful sessions in the afternoon:

- *Take Control of Your Business: How to Have the Courage to Succeed* – Soulaima Gourani, Tradeconductor.Com
- *When Less is More: The Power of Advisory Work vs. Hands-On Consulting* – Robbie Kellman Baxter, Peninsula Strategies
- *Ready, Set, Launch! What Clients Expect From Consultants* – Jennifer LeBlanc, ThinkResults Marketing, and a panel of clients from Intel, Nektar, and TRPE Ventures

Co-sponsored by IMC, Watermark, and Women in Consulting

Boston: May 29, 2019

[Join us](#) at the Embassy Suites in Waltham, MA on May 29, 2019. Alan Weiss will speak in the morning, with another three powerful sessions in the afternoon:

- *Getting Better Results: Using Influence Based Negotiation to Build Your Consulting Business* – Eric Bloom, IT Management and Leadership Institute
- *The Perfect Pivot: How to Reach New Heights by Rethinking Your Business* – Christie Lindor, Slalom Consulting
- *Published! A Look at Publishing Alternatives for Consultants* – featuring Roberta Matuson of Matuson Consulting, Rita Allen of Rita B. Allen Associates, and Juliette Mayers, of Inspiration Zone LLC, and moderated by SAC Executive Director Linda Popky

Co-sponsored by SPC, IMC, and The Boston Club

SAC members can attend both of these events at a low member rate, while members of Partner organizations will receive a discount from regular prices. **Special early bird pricing for Boston has been extended until February 28th.** [Learn more.](#)

SAC members will also receive a 20% discount on Alan's event, *The Workshop Workshop*, to be held in San Francisco on the following day, March 28th. [Learn more.](#)

Meet Our Members: John Martinka

Welcome to our new feature, where we spotlight a different SAC member every month. This month's star is John Martinka.

Located in the Seattle, WA area, John Martinka is known as *The Escape Artist*[®] because of his work in helping executives and small businesses escape their current situations, so they can either buy or sell businesses as effectively as possible. He is the author of three books, *If They Can Sell Pet Rocks Why Can't You Sell Your Business (For What You Want)?*, *Buying a Business That Makes You Rich*, and *Company Growth by Acquisition Makes Dollars & Sense*. He is a Board Certified SAC member.



We asked John 3 questions:

What differentiates you from others in your field?

I am one of the only people in the buy-sell industry who works with both buyers and sellers. Doing this gives me better insights on what each side usually desires. It also helps when talking to business owners, as I can tell them what will make their business more attractive to a buyer. This is all based on experience, not just the stuff you find in books and manuals.

What have you learned about business you wish your younger self would have known?

- First, you have to be yourself. You can't try to emulate someone else, especially if they have a different style than you. I learned this the hard way after trying to emulate my friend who got me into this business.
- Second, it's all about people and relationships. It took a while once I was on my own, I got it, and Alan Weiss super-reinforced it. I tell business buyers and sellers they must build a relationship because, "Nobody will buy from or sell to someone they don't like." And it's so very true because in my world a business transition is like finding a good home for a puppy.
- Third, from Alan, be aggressive, shameless, faster, and edgy. For a nice guy like me the edgy part took some time to develop!

What do you find most valuable about SAC?

The general insights and the annual meeting, which I make whenever I can. I'm in a completely different day-to-day world than most members of SAC, and yet I find it beneficial to see, hear, and learn the things most find applicable to the corporate world. It's good to get perspectives from smart people in different niches.

Want to Be Featured?

Then you need to complete your profile on the SAC website! How will people find you if you're not on the site? Set up your profile now! If you don't remember your password, go to the Member Login and ask for a password reset. Any questions? [Contact us.](#)

Membership Has Its Benefits

OK, we sort of borrowed that line from American Express. But you *do* have access to benefits and discounts as a SAC member.

This month we're highlighting two new marketing programs.

MyeVideo can help you create an explainer video that is one of the most powerful tools available to your business. They've worked with clients of all sizes, from startups to industry leaders like Pepsi, Goodyear, and Caterpillar. SAC members receive a 20% discount on MyeVideo explainer videos.

WebEditor Design Services has been designing websites since 1995. Whether you need something simple or packed full of features like ecommerce and blogs, WebEditor can help. SAC members who are new customers can get a 20% discount off your first year of website hosting or a free hour of time for consulting or web design work.

[Learn more](#) about these offers and other SAC member discounts.

Follow Us On Twitter - We're Following You!

Our twitter handle is @consultingasn. Our goal is to follow all of our active members and to retweet your posts when appropriate. If we're not yet following you, it's because we don't have your Twitter handle. Send us a DM and we'll add you to our list. [Follow us.](#)

SAC February News Release: Hiring Top Talent With Passion and Enthusiasm Key to Beating Talent/Skills Gap

The old adage, “Hire for attitude; teach the skills” still holds true, in spite of perceived gaps in the availability of talent, according to The Society for the Advancement of Consulting® (SAC). Businesses still get ahead by hiring top talent with passion and enthusiasm for the work and people who have (or who want to) develop skills that make them fit for the future, the organization noted. [Read more.](#)

March 10th Deadline for Next SAC News Release

Have you been quoted in a recent SAC press release? Why not? Here’s the information for our next release. Join us!

Topic: *How can organizations drive more disruptive, yet effective, innovation?*

*****IMPORTANT: NEW, EASY TO USE, SUBMITTAL PROCESS*****

Use this [link](#) to submit your input of less than 150 words formatted into 2-3 paragraphs in the same format as the prior releases no later than March 10th. Please remember to check your grammar and provide your name with attribution!

Thanks to SAC member Stephen Hunt, who is our new press release editor.

Weiss Advice:

CHANGING AN ASSIGNMENT FROM CERTAIN LOSER TO SURE WINNER

Inevitably, we are all faced with assignments we salivate over but which seem incredibly difficult, if not impossible, to conclude successfully. There is a good reason for this: many of them are impossible!



Someone asked me recently how to develop leadership skills among two dozen senior executives who were resistant to changing their authoritarian style of leading, and who demanded that the session take up no more than 90 minutes of their time. The human resource person, caving in more quickly than an Alpine avalanche in a storm, immediately sought “vendors” for the work. My friend was stumped.

The problem here, of course, is that the request is impossible to fulfill. And the result is that the consultant (or speaker) who accepts it, even if allowed to keep the money, will never get work in that organization again. (What better way to infuriate every senior buyer of consulting services than to get them all in a room and disappoint them?)

This principle applies to long-term consulting assignments as well. One general manager told me to “name my price” if I could help improve morale while he diligently reduced the work force by over 20% on a rolling, six-month basis! I told him my price was some sanity, and talked him off that particular ledge.

A project is going to be unsuccessful when:

- There are insufficient funds to support it.
- There are no sponsors, champions, or exemplars.
- No one agrees on objectives or metrics for success.
- There is entrenched political and/or emotional opposition.
- The implementers are given no hearing, stake, or ownership.
- Stronger, more pressing priorities overwhelm it.

We could all name another dozen “red flags,” but you get the idea. We know when a project is threatened, unwieldy, impractical, or just plain dumb. Yet we still want the opportunity to engage the client and make some money. There’s nothing wrong with that.

The key here is to challenge the basic premises supporting the impossible project. That doesn't mean threatening the buyer or casting doubt on his or her mental agility. It means providing new information which will save the buyer's ego, therefore allowing for a tactical retreat.

In my friend's case with the leadership session, I counseled against trying to convince the human resource person, who had no motivation to oppose the original request. We used that to our advantage. My friend asked the HR person for an introduction to the executive who had triggered the request to begin with. After all, she had to learn his intent and expectations, right?

In a few minutes with him she learned that his concern was valid: Employee surveys were showing tremendous dissatisfaction with militaristic management edicts, turnover of key talent was growing, and even customers were becoming indignant about the firm's service attitude (employees always follow their superiors' examples in terms of behavior with the public). She suggested that the concern was valid but that the proposed solution might not be, since it was an equally authoritarian response: Go to this session and change your style.

The buyer conceded that she had a good point which he hadn't considered. She then went on to describe a project in which she would interview the executives in question, talk to their subordinates, analyze the environment, and then develop both a group session and individualized one-on-one coaching protocols. With this "new" information, the executive could gracefully reverse his decision, and my friend was able to put together a \$65,000 proposal (rather than a \$7,500 training session that wouldn't work).

Don't accept impossible assignments nor abandon a prospect who proposes one. Instead, change the loser to a winner by challenging basic premises and providing new information which enables the buyer (and it must be the buyer) to take an informed new direction.

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Stay in touch with Alan Weiss's events [here](#).

Upcoming SAC Events

February 6

Alan Weiss

SAC Best Practices Webinar Series; 11 am PT/ 2pm ET. No charge for members. [More info.](#)

February 7

Anne Janzer—Writing to Be Understood - Effective Writing for the Rest of Us

SAC PRACTICUM Webinar Series. [More info.](#)

March 4

Best Practices to Build a Consulting Business

Melbourne, Australia

March 13

Dorie Clark and Alisa Cohn—How to Build a 7-Figure Consulting & Coaching Practice

SAC Best Practices Webinar Series; 11 am PT/ 2pm ET. No charge for members. [More info.](#)

March 27

SAC One-Day Regional Event in San Francisco Bay Area with Alan Weiss

[More info and to register.](#)

April 5

Marshall Goldsmith

SAC Best Practices Webinar Series; 11 am PT/ 2pm ET. No charge for members. [More info.](#)

April 10-12

Million Dollar Consulting Convention

Washington, DC – *See us at the MDCC!* [More info.](#)

April 24

Chicago Area Local Get-Together

May 15

Dan Weedon—Navigating the Insurance Maze - A Consultant's Guide

SAC PRACTICUM Webinar Series; 11 am PT/ 2pm ET. No charge for members. [More info.](#)

May 29

SAC One-Day Regional Event in Boston, MA with Alan Weiss

[More info and to register.](#)

June 11

Robin Farmanfarman—The Thought Leader Formula: *How to Strategically Leverage Your Expertise to Drive Business & Career Goals*

SAC Best Practices Webinar Series; 11 am PT/ 2pm ET. No charge for members. [More info.](#)

November 5 and 6

SAC Annual Meeting in New York City

[More info.](#)

Mark your calendar!

Webinars are included in your SAC membership. [Join or renew](#) your membership now.

Society for the Advancement of Consulting

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