



## Newsletter of the Society for the Advancement of Consulting® - January 2021

*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.*

### Ready for Rebound

We did it! We survived 2020! Yay!

Last January, we decided a good theme for the year might be *Thriving Through Ambiguity*. We had no idea at the time how prescient that choice would be.

We don't expect ambiguity to disappear just because we turned the page to a new year. However, we do think 2021 will be a year when individuals, businesses, and the world in general focus on moving on to something better.

That's why our theme for this year is **Ready for Rebound**: How can we help our clients, and ourselves, move forward to reach higher goals and improved results?

To that end, our programs this year will focus on giving you the tools you need to take your practice to the next level in 2021.

This month, we're starting the year with [Liz DeClifford's Speak Up](#) business accelerator workshop and [Gene Moran's](#) webinar on growing an advisory practice.

February follows with [Steve Markman](#) sharing his tips on how to get speaking engagements, and [Shelly Archambeau's](#) presentation on breaking the rules. [Linda Popky's](#) lab, **Write Now**, is back again by popular demand.

In March, our focus is on thought leadership. [Peter Winick](#) will follow-up his popular annual meeting presentation on thought leadership and [Lisa Anderson](#) will offer her business accelerator lab, **Get Known**. [More information](#).

And that's just the first quarter!

We're expanding our [SIG program](#), too. Technology and Health science groups have recently launched, and a new coaching SIG will be starting soon.

Even with vaccines in distribution, this year is likely to still be mainly one of remote interactions. That's why in lieu of our spring in-person regional event, **in April we're planning an online event** focused on helping you take your virtual practice to the next level—from producing outstanding remote speaking presentations to leading client strategy and implementation sessions through the magic of Zoom and similar platforms. Stay tuned for more details.

We're looking forward to sharing this journey with you. Please [let us know](#) what we can do to support you. Stay well.

Linda and Lisa

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## VIRTUALLY THE BEST CONTENT ON THRIVING THROUGH AMBIGUITY...

### Available now!

Recordings of each session are available on the password-protected annual event page. Check out the sessions you missed, or go back to relisten to those you found most valuable.

**If you didn't attend the meeting, don't feel left out.** The set of recordings is available for purchase at \$199 for members; slightly more for affiliates and non-members. [Learn more.](#)



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## HOW CAN YOU BUILD BETTER THOUGHT LEADERSHIP? WE NEED YOUR INPUT

Annual Meeting speaker **Peter Winick** has agreed to join us in March for an expanded discussion on some of the hot topics he presented in October. Peter would like our input on which specific topics from his Annual Meeting presentation you'd like him to cover in more depth. Whether or not you attended Peter's presentation, **tell us what thought leadership topics you'd like him to tackle** for us in March.



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## SIG UPDATE: COACHING GROUP TO LAUNCH SOON

The **Supply Chain and Nonprofit SIGs** are meeting regularly and the **Technology and Healthcare/Life Sciences** groups have had their kickoff meetings. Next up will be a **Coaching SIG**.

Members of the Supply Chain SIG are telling us this is extremely valuable to them. If you're interested in joining one of these three new groups, please [let us know](#).

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## IMPORTANT NOTE ABOUT MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS

You SAC membership will renew automatically at the end of each 12-month period unless you cancel it on the member website or send us an email. You'll receive a heads-up notice 45 days prior to the scheduled renewal date. **If for some reason you don't want to renew, please [tell us at least 3 days before the renewal date](#).**

[More information.](#)

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## JOIN THE COMMITTEE TO REIMAGINE THE 2021 ADVANCING CONSULTING AWARDS

SAC established the annual **Corrie Shanahan Memorial Awards for Advancing Consulting** in 2019 to honor SAC members who have done the most to advance the profession in the previous year. [Previous honorees](#) are Andrew Hollo, Amy Segami, and Gene Moran.

As the business environment and the world profoundly changed during 2020, the profession of consulting has evolved as well. That's why we're looking for awards committee members who will work together to reimagine the awards moving forward.

Does this describe you? Team player, creative, committed to advancing the profession of consulting. If so, let's arrange a time to talk. Contact [Pam Harper](#), 2021 Committee Chair.



Growth by Association

**ADVANCING  
CONSULTING**  
2021

## Accelerate This!

Our [Business Accelerator Labs](#) have been well-received. Last month's session featured SAC member Mark Wolf teaching us how to be a more effective virtual facilitator.

### Join us for one of the next upcoming sessions:

January: Speak Up! – Liz de Clifford  
February: Write Now – Linda Popky  
March: Be Known – Lisa Anderson  
April: Facilitate This – Mark Wolf

[Learn more and to register.](#)

## SAC IN PICTURES

Have photos of a SAC event? [Send them](#) to us and we'll share them with the community!

### SAC Ambassadors Call - December 3, 2020



### Wine Down-Wake Up Event - December 17, 2020



**Karen Eber Davis with her blue SAC cup.**

Are you using yours?

Send us a picture!

## Start the Year Right: Get the Most out of SAC

Why not utilize SAC to increase your visibility and success? Take advantage of one of the following opportunities. We have a new social media campaign and will be including in our promotions:

- [Update your profile](#). Make sure your profile has the most current information.
- [Submit an article](#) for the [SAC blog](#)
- [Submit a quote](#) for our bi-monthly [press release](#). Our next release will be in February—see below.
- Join our [local, regional and global meetings](#). Check out [photos](#) and other news from our recent events.
- [Submit your book](#) to “[SAC in Print](#)”
- If you could be an editor, consider taking on the role for [SAC Press](#). This will provide great exposure for contributing members.
- [Access past webinars](#) through the archives. Both video and audio versions are available.

Please add/update your social media handles in your profile so that we can follow and tag you.

We’ve updated our website with the list of benefits available to SAC members. The list includes some items that are not being utilized by all of our members.

[Check this out.](#)

## NEW BENEFIT: SAC DISCOUNT ON INDIE BOOKS INTERNATIONAL



Do you want more impact and influence in 2021?

Bring your laptop and your running shoes, because best-selling author Henry DeVries has a deal

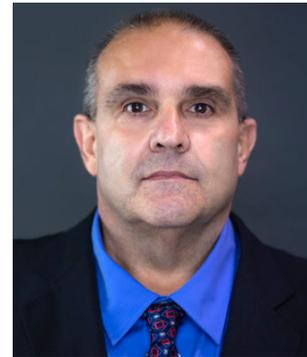
for SAC members on his **Book Kickoff Master Class**—a three-hour interactive Zoom workshop. Henry has helped 300 consultants create the right book, and he will help you find the right book inside you to give you more credibility and high-paying clients. **The next class is scheduled for January 28<sup>th</sup>**. More details at [www.indiebooksintl.com/events](http://www.indiebooksintl.com/events). To register at the discounted SAC price of \$265, contact Henry [henry@indiebooksintl.com](mailto:henry@indiebooksintl.com)

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## Meet Our Members: John Kenney

*This month we're profiling John Kenney. [Contact John.](#)*

**John Kenney** has over 45 years' experience in the roofing industry. John started his career by working as a roofing apprentice at a family business in the Northeast. He also managed many successful projects in the New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania markets before continuing his accomplishments in Florida.



### **What is the one thing that most differentiates you from others in your field?**

We are roofers helping other roofers build their business. We are experts in the Roofing and Construction industry with over 45 years of experience in the field. We have developed technology, consulting, and business process solutions to help business owners launch, upgrade, and expand their operations.

### **What is something you've learned about business that you would have liked your younger self to know?**

I have learned a lot I would like to tell my younger self, but Michael Jordan sums it up best when he says, "Talent wins games, but teamwork and intelligence win championships."

### **What do you find most valuable about SAC?**

The community of consultants from around the world coming together in fellowship and learning from each other. The wealth of knowledge among the membership is priceless.

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### ***Want to Be Featured?***

*Complete your profile on the SAC website! 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.](#)*

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## IN MEMORIAM

We are sad to share that [Voss Graham](#) has recently passed away. Voss was a long time member of SAC and the Alan Weiss community, and a frequent attendee at SAC programs and events. He will be missed.



## 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.](#)

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## January 13th Deadline for Next SAC News Release

Topic ideas for upcoming releases? [Let us know](#).

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

**Topic:** *What advice do you have for businesses to retain or acquire talent, as the world recovers from the COVID-19 pandemic?*

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 January 13<sup>th</sup>**. Please remember to check your grammar and provide your name with attribution!

Note that the word count **includes** your personal information. In order to keep the releases concise and readable, we are unable to accept contributions that are longer than the guidelines.

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### Weiss Advice:

## PERFORMANCE IN UNCERTAIN TIMES, WHEN OTHERS ARE ACCEPTING MEDIOCRITY!



The opposite of success isn't necessarily failure, it's often mediocrity. Failure is usually readily identifiable: the Mars lander crashes, the prospect rejects the offer, the dog food doesn't sell.

But mediocrity is invidious. You haven't succeeded, perhaps, as much as you had planned, but you're doing "okay." You've come closer to your ideal.

Of course, we're often using the wrong metrics. This is one of the reasons I urge my clients to look *internally* for best practices rather than externally. When Mercedes Benz North America was a client of mine many years ago, they wanted me to research Lexus and other brands which received much higher service marks on surveys than Mercedes.

Instead, I suggested we compare the best Mercedes dealerships against all the others within the company, with the understanding that there was a strong probability that every one of them could be equal to the best at the moment. And that's exactly what transpired.

### **Blissful "averageness"**

We're fond of recording calls for "quality purposes" and of sending the ubiquitous surveys after every dining experience, hotel stay, and oil change. But surveys are incredibly self-selective in terms of response (only the very unhappy and the very happy reply, not the middle group, who may entirely apathetic—the real danger) and I've never observed a company improve its customer service, no matter how many calls they've recorded (which are really only to protect them legally).

Thus, businesses land in the falsely blissful "average" where no one is complaining inordinately and no one is so ecstatic with the products and services that they are sending referrals to you (which is THE huge marketing advantage in businesses such as automotive, insurance, and realty, for example).

Once it's discovered that someone else is delighting customers, it becomes a usually-losing game of "catch-up." United, Delta, and American Airlines were accustomed to dominating the US market, but then Southwest Air provided a great, low-cost alternative, and later Jet Blue has provided far better service in both first class and economy travel. On every Jet Blue flight I've found happy, positive people. On American, it's a crapshoot.

### **Changing markets**

Success isn't about solely to whom you're listening at the moment, as counterintuitive as that might sound. To escape the threat or onset of mediocrity, you have to question to whom you should be listening in the future. In other words, who is your ideal *future* buyer?

Harley Davidson has just abandoned the Indian market, a huge democracy with the second greatest number of people on earth (and 17 percent of the global population as a whole). They couldn't rely on manufacturing there, they claim, but more importantly, neither the streets nor the economy support large, powerful, expensive motorcycles.

In the US, the largest economic market in the world, Harley's traditional buyer demographic has aged *to the point where many can no longer straddle a bike* or lift one up if it has fallen on its side. So Harley produced "trikes," three-wheeled vehicles that can support an older and much heavier rider, a vehicle that the bikers themselves would have laughed at when younger.

But they haven't produced a product that appeals to younger generations or a global population. Motorized scooters for rent on a smart phone app are being used worldwide. Why didn't Harley enter and dominate that market, for example?

This is why: they've been breathing their own exhaust.

### **Avoiding mediocrity**

Mediocrity is worse than abject failure. We know the Mars lander had to be fixed for the next try (it turned out the scientists had mixed centimeters with inches in their calculations), the sales presentation has to be changed based on the rejections, and we need to bring in the dogs to sample the new food, not just the marketing people.

We can avoid mediocrity by using disruption and volatility as offensive weapons, and shake up our markets by claiming the innovative lead. When I introduced value based fees for the consulting profession in the mid-90s in *Million Dollar Consulting*, it created what became a seismic shift. Today I have the strongest brand in the world in solo consulting, because I've continued to introduced "radical" concepts (such as the fact that a quality 20-hour week is superior to a quantitative 40-hour week, the latter merely perpetuating mediocrity).

If you consider Netflix, Amazon, Uber, Apple, Emirates Airlines, the Mayo Clinic, FedEx, and so forth, they are organizations which constantly innovated, gladly accommodating failure in order to pursue excellence. Sears, an early innovator, never morphed into Amazon as might have been expected, because it gave up innovation in favor of short-term profits. It became mediocre and is largely gone.

Your business, and your customers or clients, can attain excellence in turbulent, volatile times, if you can learn from failure instead of tolerating mediocrity. That's the royal road to success.

© Alan Weiss 2020

Note: Join my [50-week Deep Secrets](#) video and audio learning series: Learn quick techniques to improve your control and your language.

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

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## **Upcoming SAC Events**

**January 12**

**Liz de Clifford: Speak Up!**

SAC Business Accelerator Lab (via Zoom); 12pm PT (3 hours)

[More info.](#)

**January 14**

**Gene Moran: Strengthen and Lengthen Client Engagements: Building Your Advisory Practice**

SAC Best Practices Webinar; 11am PT. No charge for members.

[More info.](#)

**February 9**

**Steve Markman: Attaining Speaking Engagements: Action Steps to Boost Visibility, Generate Business Leads, and Create Thought Leadership**

SAC PRACTICUM Webinar; 11am PT. No charge for members.

[More info.](#)

**February 16**

**Shellye Archambeau: Unapologetically Ambitious: Take Risks, Break Rules**

SAC Best Practices Webinar; 11am PT. No charge for members.

[More info.](#)

**February 25**

**Linda Popky: Write Now: How to Create Content That Drives Your Business in Today's Environment**

SAC Business Accelerator Lab (via Zoom); 11am PT (2.5 hours)

[More info.](#)

**March 3**

**Peter Winick: Thought Leadership**

SAC Best Practices Webinar; 10am PT. No charge for members.

[More info.](#)

**March 16**

**Lisa Anderson: Get Known**

SAC Business Accelerator Lab (via Zoom); 12pm PT (2.5 hours)

[More info.](#)

**April 7**

**Charmaine McClarie: Working Effectively with Clients in the C-Suite**

SAC Best Practices Webinar; 12pm PT. No charge for members.

[More info.](#)

**April 13**

**SAC Regional Event: Taking Your Virtual Practice to the Next Level**

This will be a virtual event. More details to come.

**April 20**

**Mark D. Wolf: Facilitate This: How to Uplevel Virtual Meetings and Workshops**

SAC Business Accelerator Lab (via Zoom); 12pm PT (2.5 hours)

[More info.](#)

*Mark your calendar!*

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

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