



## Newsletter of the Society for the Advancement of Consulting® - September 2020

*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.*

### Our Heads are Spinning!

There's so much going on right now...COVID-19, wildfires, hurricanes, presidential nominating conventions, social justice issues, kids going back to school (or not)...and that's not even considering all of the ongoing business challenges we all face.

How do you stay centered when everything is whirling by at 100 miles per hour? By focusing on a stationary object—something that isn't in flux or morphing right in front of you.

**For the top independent consultants in 14 countries, that stable force is SAC.** We are here to help you market your business, build skills, run your business more effectively, be recognized for your accomplishments, and, of course, to grow through association.

**You'll find all that and more in this year's amazing Annual Meeting, scheduled for October 20 and 21<sup>st</sup> in the privacy of your own office.** We've gathered an incredible array of high quality speakers on topics that will help you move forward effectively—no matter what's spinning out of control around us.

See below for more information about the conference. This is THE place to be in October. We already have twice the number of attendees that attended last year. If you haven't already signed up, the question is why not? Prices go up October 1<sup>st</sup>.

Thinking about podcasting? Plan now to attend **Gayle Carson's** September 17 webinar on Podcasts for Pros. [More information.](#) Wondering how to navigate the maze of health care options? Put November 11 on your calendar when **Anna Grubbs-Hodel** will help put all of this into everyday language. [Learn more.](#)

We continue our series of **Wine Down-Wake Up** online Meetups—come join us soon. Bring your SAC cup with you!

Please stay healthy and [let us know](#) how we can support you at SAC.

Linda and Lisa

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### LOOK WHO'S COMING TO THE PARTY!

#### SAC Virtual Annual Meeting: October 20 and 21<sup>st</sup>

We've been busy confirming an incredible roster of

speakers for this year's event. In addition to a keynote and Q & A with Million Dollar Consulting guru Alan Weiss, this year's event features speakers from all over the world.

**Topics include:**

- Courage in Consulting
- Breaking through Roadblocks
- Financial Resilience
- The Pandemic Pivot: Finding Your New Normal
- Building My New Business From the Ground Up
- Developing Your Advisory Business
- Selling in the Face of Uncertainty
- Seeing What's Next: Innovation in a post-COVID world
- Making House Calls: How Healthcare is Evolving
- SAC SIGs: Building Thought leadership through Association
- Thought Leadership in the New World
- Building What's Next: Using Innovation to Reimagine and Reinvent Business in 2021 and Beyond
- Resilience: How to Recover and Reload Faster
- Open and Close: Generating Leaders and Closing More Business
- Building Viz-IP-ility
- Social Justice: What You Need to Do to Support Your Clients
- So You're New Around Here: Tips for Quick Success
- Systematically Multiplying your IP to Rapidly Build Visibility
- Creating Virtual Events That Rock

**THRIVING**  
WITH CLIENT WINS

BREAKING  
**THROUGH**  
BARRIERS

BEYOND  
**AMBIGUITY:**  
WHAT'S NEXT?

...**plus** client panels from Europe, North America, and the Pacific Rim, wine-down networking and Birds of a Feather sessions on getting speaking engagements, coaching, book writing, online courses, and public relations. [Learn more.](#)

**Here's the best part.** Our virtual format allows us to offer expanded sessions at time zones friendly for European, North American, and Pacific Rim attendees. Everything will be recorded and archived, so you can watch sessions as many times as you like, whenever is convenient.

[Register now](#) to attend this unique event.

**Registration Fees - until October 1st\*:**

SAC Members \$179

Affiliates \$199

Non-Members \$249

**\*Prices go up October 1st!**

*We will return to the Andaz Wall Street in New York City on October 6 and 7, 2021—presuming it is feasible to do so.*

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## Check the SAC Webinar Archives...NEWLY ORGANIZED

Now that we have over 50 webinars archived for SAC members, we've revamped our webinar access page. It's now much easier for SAC members to search webinars by speaker, topic, or other criteria. [Check this out now.](#)

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## UPCOMING BUSINESS ACCELERATOR LABS:

### Get Known – October 6th

Now, more than ever, you must be not only findable, but also compelling as a thought leader to draw attention from clients and prospects. During this hands-on workshop, **Lisa Anderson** will help you create a short thought leadership piece and a plan for communication and promotion.

You'll walk away with a new piece for your portfolio and an understanding of the next steps to build thought leadership. Seating is limited to allow for an effective interactive experience. [Register now.](#)

### Speak Up! November 10th

You will walk away with a short speech that fits well into what works into today's speaking world as well as tips for finding and giving the speech in today's environment. Because of the interactive nature of this workshop, attendance is extremely limited. **Liz de Clifford** has more than 20 years of experience collaborating with business leaders who need to improve their presence, connect with audiences, and achieve results. [Register now.](#)

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## SAC IN PICTURES

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

### SAC Wine Down / Wake Up Zoom Meetup - August 13th



### SAC Supply Chain SIG meeting - August 17, 2020



**Diane Garcia is enjoying her blue SAC cup.**

Are you using yours?

Send us a picture!

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## Are You Getting Everything You Can From Your SAC Membership?

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:

- [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.](#)

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## WEBSITE UPDATE: SAC IN PRINT

We’ve updated our list of published books written by SAC members to be more attractive and

make it easier for your books to be found.

Do we have your books listed? If not, [submit the information](#) now.

SAC member books are all featured on the SAC Bookshop, and we have a separate list of books by our founder Alan Weiss. [Check these out now.](#)



The screenshot shows the SAC website header with the logo and navigation menu. Below the header is a section titled "Books by Our Members - 'SAC in Print'" with a search bar and introductory text: "SAC members have extensive experience and well-regarded expertise in their fields, and many of them are published authors. Check out books written by our members."

## Meet Our Members: Gail Bower

*This month we're profiling Gail Bower. [Contact Gail.](#)*

Gail Bower is the founder and president of Bower & Co. Consulting LLC, a revenue strategy firm that works with mission- or purpose-driven organizations to uncover and develop reliable sources of revenue that also drive their social or environmental missions. Gail is the author of the guidebook *How to Jump-start Your Sponsorship Strategy in Tough Times*.



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

I work at the intersection of nonprofit and for profit collaboration, helping organizations put more money in their missions and more mission in their money. Trained as a futurist, I study where society is headed, what trends are on the horizon, and how these trends impact my clients' businesses. My approach allows clients to leverage opportunities that strengthen capacity and grow their businesses and reputations.

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

I wish I could have encouraged my younger self to trust that more opportunity and satisfaction in life will come from following my curiosity, passions, and creativity.

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

Unlike many professional organizations, SAC is dedicated to providing tremendous value to its members, and therefore has attracted excellent practitioners and interesting people who enrich my life.

### ***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.](#)*

## Follow Us On Twitter - We're Following You!

Our twitter handle is @consultingassn. 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.](#)

## September 11th 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:** : *What advice do you have for steps businesses should take now to thrive in 2021?*

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 September 11<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:

#### **WE NEED TO DO A 180 ON THE 360:**

#### **It's spinning so out of control you can call it a "ten-eighty"**

I'm dizzy from dealing with coaches who operate as if they're running a grocery store, hauling items off shelves to meet customer requests.



There are some interventions which are just ridiculous. I've found purported personality profiles that rely on forced-choice responses to be ludicrous with the results reading like some kind of horoscope. "You're nice to people except when you're not." To me, that's like being "on the cusp of Mercury with Leo tendencies." In other words, I don't find an iota of value in either statement.

Usually, these are used to explain away behavior, not try to understand it. "What do you expect from an INTJ?" How is that less defamatory than, "What do you expect from a woman?" or "...from someone his age"? I think, to most true professionals, "high D" and "blue" and "introverted, progressive analyst" are truly laughable.

#### **The 360 spinning top**

But some things are not so obviously ridiculous and have edged their way into holy grail status. Such is the ubiquitous "360-degree review," wherein, supposedly, peers, superiors, and subordinates (and perhaps others, such as customers) are interviewed to provide feedback for the subject of the coaching. Presumably, everyone is honest, they believe their confidentiality is sacrosanct, and their feedback is accurately supported by empirical evidence. Oh, and the interviewer is skilled in more than just asking rote questions.

In other words, we have here, theoretically, a jury influenced only by facts and not by lawyer rhetoric or courtroom drama. (It's the lawyers who advise to argue a case on its merits, but if you don't have the merits argue the law. Consider that the venues are "courts of law" *and not* "courts of justice.")

We all know this is beyond ludicrous. And it's particularly loony when "coaches" are using off-the-shelf 360 tools to conduct these interviews instead of at least attempting to tailor them to the client environment. The off-the-shelf stuff, which often includes the personality testing above, is just an attempt to try to enhance appeal and stature (and income) by using "tools." And, of course, many will have a coaching "university" certificate which will further attest to their standing. That "diploma" and about two dollars might get them on a New York City bus. (Every excellent consultant I've ever met has to have been an excellent coach, as well.)

#### **But did you tell them that?**

I was comparing notes recently with a colleague, who is both a pre-eminent clinician and corporate consultant. I asked her if she used 360 reviews in her corporate work. Her answer was fascinating:

"When someone tells me something negative about the executive being discussed, and provides evidence of the behavior, I ask, 'Well, have you told him that?' The answer is they almost never have. That's what I want to change about the dynamic, to create honest interpersonal feedback,

and not merely give questionable feedback from sources who believe they're safely anonymous."

My friend, co-author, and über-coach, Marshall Goldsmith, uses 360s but only when every person providing feedback goes through the same process herself or himself. He believes that to give feedback properly under these conditions, you must receive it properly yourself.

### Why the 360 is dizzying

With rare exceptions like these, and both people cited are tops in their fields, I believe we need to stop believing that the 360 review is mandatory or even useful in executive coaching in most instances, primarily because:

- People giving feedback are often describing *how they'd prefer to be treated* instead of how the subject interacts with people. Everyone deserves respect, of course, but not promotions and higher pay when they're not performing as well as others.
- Responders feel obligated to comment, even when they actually have nothing to say, no complaints, no high praise, just a feeling of well-being.
- The interviewer often biases the responses by repeating past comments, trying to search for patterns. "Have you noticed that she cuts people off in meetings?" will often prompt a willingness to agree.
- Opinion isn't always backed up by evidence or observed behavior. "He's just not a team player." Really? By what metric?
- Vindictiveness, retribution, and revenge are often not filtered out. Interviewers seldom ask, "What prompts you to be so critical? Do you and your boss have any particular history that colors your response?"
- Respondents aren't candid because they fear identification. I met a woman who wanted to complain to a consultant during a 360 about very poor accommodation for people with serious medical conditions and her boss not acting on the situation, but since she was the only one who fit the description she was positive she'd be identified and treated even worse.
- Cultural accommodations are rarely made. Some people are very forthright, but some are very reserved and are not comfortable speaking less than positively about others, especially to strangers.
- The process serves as a palliative, and obviates the more honest and useful approach of providing candid feedback in a timely fashion. It's also seen as an "event" and really has little lasting impact on long-term behavior change.
- It can easily create hard feelings and exacerbate poor conditions rather than improve them. The process can actually undermine trust, not improve it.

Thus, it's time to do a 180 on the 360 and return to what great coaches do best: observe, cite evidence, provide corrective actions, and monitor for improved behavior, which should then be reinforced.

### Get out of the rut

Let's face it: Is a coach telling you that, after interviewing 16 people among your inner circle, the findings were that you're aloof and a poor listener, going to cause you to change your behavior *or try to change their behavior?*

Enough 360s and you're in a spiral that will corkscrew you right into the earth. Then you'll need a legitimate coach and a sound process to help you back to the surface.

© 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

September 17

Gayle Carson: Podcasts for Pros

SAC Best Practices Webinar; 11am PST. No charge for members.  
[More info.](#)

**October 6**

**Lisa Anderson: Get Known**

SAC Business Accelerator Lab (via Zoom); 1pm PST (2.5 hours)

[More info.](#)

**Oct 20-21**

**SAC Annual Meeting - VIRTUAL MEETING**

[More info.](#)

**November 10**

**Liz de Clifford: Speak Up!**

SAC Business Accelerator Lab; 1pm PST

[More info.](#)

**November 11**

**Anna Grubbs-Hodel: Understanding Health Insurance Options**

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

[More info.](#)

**December 9**

**Penny Daniels: Managing the Media to Build Your Practice**

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

[More info.](#)

*Mark your calendar!*

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

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