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IMC USA is the premier professional association and sole certifying body dedicated to individuals consulting to management. The IMC USA mission is to promote excellence and ethics in management consulting through certification, education, and professional resources.

IMC USA awards the profession's internationally-recognized designation of the **CMC® (Certified Management Consultant)**. The CMC®, attained by 10,000 individuals worldwide, acknowledges extensive experience, technical competence, peer reviews, client satisfaction, and oral and written examinations of and adherence to the **IMC USA Code of Ethics**.

As stated in its bylaws, the mission of the Institute of Management Consultants USA is to promote excellence and ethics in management consulting through certification, education, and professional resources. Benefits include professional development, a public presence in business and management issues, and skill development and business networking through its [26 US chapters](#).

www.imcusa.org

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Compete on Creative Thinking

By Baldwin Tom CMC®

Want to know how to compete? Think in ways no one else is thinking!

Ten years ago I attended a conference in Toronto, which was co-sponsored by IMC USA and the Canadian Association of Management Consultants. One particular panel captured my attention: a panel of corporate executives tasked to tell the audience what they expected from a consultant. The panelists expressed the unanimous opinion that consultants need to be creative and innovative if they want to assist executives such as these.



Guess what? That's exactly what we need in today's business environment. While my comments are derived from my work with federal government agencies, the concept is valid everywhere. Organizations have cut staff, reduced services, and still hope to be relevant and competitive in providing products and services to their customers. They are left with daunting tasks: How does one do more with less, with greater effectiveness at less cost, and still be able to elicit high praise from customers?

My firm, The Baldwin Group (TBG), is seeking to address this critical need to generate new, effective solutions by seeking the most creative and innovative ideas we can come up with on any given issue. The other impetus to do this is to be competitive in a large pond. TBG is very small in the land of giants like Booz Allen Hamilton, Accenture and McKinsey. These giant firms often compete for the same contracts we do. So we have a survival motive as well as an altruistic one to become the "go-to" company for new and useful solutions.

The idea to develop a creative and innovation focused Community of Practice (COP) as the solution to become singularly competitive arose from a question from one of our clients, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). They asked, "How can we get our people to apply their coastal management expertise and technology to the problem of climate change?"

Our client's mission is to provide technical and management expertise to government-agency managers along all U.S. coasts.

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As our staff at NOAA has told us, “Our work does not provide us much time to be creative and innovative.”

It was in this environment that we suggested providing two workshops – “Creative Thinking” that engages the right side of the brain, followed by “Strategic Thinking and Exploration” to engage the left side. These two trainings combined provided tools for the staff to become more creative and innovative. The positive feedback we received from our NOAA workshop participants suggested that the idea of providing creative and innovative solutions to other agencies would be well received.

I will describe the COP concept and then tell you why I am convinced what we are attempting will succeed. The COP concept has several factors that can attract federal buyers:

First, we will have a team of consultants and firms who represent different set-aside groups such as a small, disadvantaged business, a minority-owned business, and a disabled veteran-owned business. Second, this mix of set-aside groups gives federal agencies a powerful incentive to contract with us because it helps them satisfy their internal set-aside mandates. Corporations that do business with the federal government also have set-aside requirements. Additionally, the breadth of expertise that this alliance brings together will also be very attractive to the client, giving us more of a “large company” look.

Here is what we envision for this COP: First, we will determine what we can do together that leverages the collective knowledge of our individual groups. Second, we plan to learn all we can about thinking *outside-the-box*, which includes hiring a trainer who has successfully energized other firms to think creatively. Third, we will take a few of the common areas of expertise we offer and - by using creative processes - document step-by-step procedures that will lead to innovative solutions. Alternatively, we may take a current challenge facing most federal agencies and develop innovative solution plans that any agency can use.

While we have not tested the COP in the market yet, we are convinced that, based on a set of observations and gut instincts, it will work!

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Here’s why: during a recent contract with the Department of Transportation, our client got into a bind by delaying our funding for three months, while still needing to complete six projects within the one-year contract period. Our team reviewed the expected deliverables and determined that it would be impossible to complete each project if the work were to be carried out sequentially. Only with a parallel project implementation approach would we have a chance to complete all the work.

The only challenge was that the client had to agree to have all six projects run simultaneously, and accept the disadvantage of not being able to avoid duplication of efforts, nor derive the benefit of lessons learned from one project to another. Once we secured the client’s agreement, we brought on six senior project leads and developed a constant and consistent communication approach to minimize “bad practices” as much as possible and to learn whatever lessons we could. At the end of the contract period, we completed all deliverables and more. The client applied for and won two awards (in 2008 and 2009) from their peers for the work that we did.

These experiences creating innovative solutions for clients only just whet our appetite and enthusiasm to do this on an ongoing basis. We already know that collective thinking about a problem generates the best of solutions. However, if one brings together people who are all trained in creative thinking, I can only imagine the high potential to uncover all manner of distinctive and unique solutions! That is our goal in bringing together this Community Of Practice.

Perhaps IMC USA chapters can create such Communities of Practice, or you can create one in your own consulting environment.

Baldwin Tom CMC® is a past national Board chair of IMC USA and CEO of The Baldwin Group (www.tbgroupconsultants.com), with offices in Washington, D.C., Manassas, VA and Charleston, SC. TBG focuses on the human side of the enterprise by empowering people for performance excellence through consulting, supporting, coaching and training.

Business, more than any other occupation, is a continual dealing with the future; it is a continual calculation, an instinctive exercise in foresight.

~ Henry R. Luce

Raising the Visibility of the CMC[®] through ISO 17024 Accreditation

By Loraine Kasprzak CMC[®]

Clint Burdett CMC[®] chats with *The Connector's* Loraine Kasprzak about ISO 17024 accreditation and what it means for CMCs[®].

Why is IMC USA undertaking ISO accreditation?

CB: The Certified Management Consultant designation has been around for about 40 years in the U.S., but there has been low awareness of it among those who could benefit from retaining CMCs[®]. Accreditation gets IMC recognition for the CMC[®] certification process from the American National Standards Institute (ANSI), which is a member of the International Accreditation Foundation (IAF) and ISO.

Why is ANSI or IAF recognition important?

CB: It's all about what's going on globally. The IAF's primary function is to develop a single worldwide program of conformity assessment for certifications like the CMC[®]. This makes it less risky for a global or local firm or government entity to retain someone who is a CMC[®]. The firm or entity can be confident that certain standards of knowledge, skills, and ethics will be met.

How does the IMC certification process stack up?

CB: We've been right on the mark. In the U.S., IMC already has a rigorous, impartial and thorough process for certifying its members. It is well thought-out and respected worldwide – in fact, the upcoming global standard for consulting will be based on the CMC[®]. ISO accreditation takes the CMC[®] process to a new level of professionalism, with even greater focus on maintaining impartiality and confidentiality of records.

What does ISO accreditation mean for Certified Management Consultants?

CB: It can put CMCs[®] at an advantage when competing for contracts outside the U.S. – for example in the European Union or the Middle East – where RFPs require that contractors have certain certifications.

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ISO 17024 At a Glance

- Sets out the criteria for an organization's certification program for individual persons
- Designed to harmonize the personnel certification process worldwide
- Focuses on competencies, knowledge, skills, and personal attributes
- Says a certification examination must be **independent** and must be a **valid test of competencies**.

Source: Wikipedia.org

New Member Welcome

We welcome these professional and student members who joined IMC USA this month. Please take a few minutes to email or call and welcome a new member. You'll both benefit!

At Large: Brent Warren Brien, Dr. David Williams

CO: Dave Sheanin

NCR: D. Paul Jennings, Michael Pobat

NJ: Patrick Lefler

PNW: Carl Valente, Alan G. Weave



We offer heartiest congratulations to **James Mahoney** of our San Diego Chapter, who earned his CMC[®] designation this month.

Not Yet Certified? Find out how to get your CMC[®] ...

... on the IMC USA website (www.imcusa.org). Our Certification Committee has been hard at work streamlining the process and creating the new "[How To Become Certified](#)" and [FAQs page](#) underlying it. Both pages are now live on the site, with a concise process overview, all the documents and study materials needed and the certification standards.

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There will also be official U.S. government recognition for the CMC[®] and for those who achieve certification – an additional advantage for those competing for government contracts. Outside of government work, there are large manufacturing companies and those that have instituted ISO or quality processes that are increasingly requiring certification.



Clint Burdett CMC[®], is part of the team that is working to raise the visibility of the CMC[®] by getting the Certification process recognized under ISO 17024.

Member News



Career and management coach **Bruce Blackstone Hazen** has co-authored a chapter on Career Coaching in The Complete Handbook of Coaching (Sage Publications, December 2009). The book is a comprehensive look at the theoretical foundations of coaching and the different genres (career, leadership, life, development, etc.) and the contexts for each. The book includes critiques, comparisons and reviews of professional issues in the coaching field. For more information about the book, visit the [Sage Publications website](#).



Forrestal Consultants International, LLC, was awarded recognition as being among New Jersey's Top Consulting Firm for 2009 by NJ Biz magazine. **Forrestal**, headed by president **Al Sagarese CMC[®], PE**, is headquartered in Princeton and focuses on helping its clients make better, more informed strategic decisions through superior market, business and competitive intelligence.



Kudos



Many IMC members demonstrate professionalism and dedication “above and beyond the call of duty” to IMC, the consulting profession, or their clients. These folks deserve recognition and praise.

This month, we extend kudos to:

Willie Carter for his consistent and full participation in Chicagoland Chapter activities, including the Board and Board level committees. “Willie is what we look for when we look for new members. He gets involved, participates to the fullest, and produces superb results.” – Patrick Lucansky CMC[®], Chapter past president.

Joe Walker CMC[®], who has been organizing and running DFW Chapter's monthly Practice Development Workshops over the past year. “Our monthly meetings start at 7:15 a.m.; by the time we arrive he has the room set up, the nametags, coffee and food ready for us to have a productive and educational meeting. Joe always has a smile on his face and lines up great speakers. As a result, this program attracts a lot of members and prospective members to our chapter.” – Linda Hanson CMC[®], Chapter President.

Know someone who deserves a kudo? Tell us! Nominations for kudos can be submitted by chapter presidents, fellow IMC-ers, a client, an employee – almost anyone. Two rules:

1. You can't nominate yourself
2. The information must be verifiable

Send your kudo nominations to IMC USA Chair Drumm McNaughton at drumm@imcusa.org.

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Editor

Jane Blume CMC[®] Owner & Principal, Desert Sky Communications
www.desertskycommunications.com 505.294.1976

Assistant Editor

Loraine Kasprzak CMC[®] Managing Director, Advantage Marketing Consulting Services
www.advantage-marketing.com 908.233.6265

Design and Production

Gene and Gary Sorrell, Sorrell Associates Customized Newsletter Service
www.newsletterville.com 740.824.4842

Consultant

Mark Haas CMC[®] President, Research and Organization Management, Inc.,
www.rominc.com 301.320.5889 / 888.684.5889

The IMC USA Academy for Professional Development offers monthly webinars that can help you grow your expertise and your practice. The Academy offers a variety of topics for novice through experienced and senior consultants.

February 11 & 18, 2-2:30pm EST. [Five Secrets to Explosive Online Growth: A Consultant's Guide to Sustainable Success.](#) *This webinar contributes to the requirements for CMC® certification. The Core Competency focus area is Business Acumen, Advanced Level.* Presented by Steve Winokur, president of Turning Point Strategies (www.tpstrategies.com), this course teaches the philosophy behind the Growth Gap - the five levers that make up the revenue formula. Learn More...

Want to find out what's coming up later in the year? Check the [Academy calendar](#) regularly, and watch for email updates in your Inbox. For all course listings, see the [2010 Academy course catalog](#).

[Click Here](#)

To Subscribe to IMC USA Consultant's Tip of the Day

A Customer's Expectation for Service

All customers have certain expectations about what good service should be. Listed below are examples of customer expectations of service. Check those you feel are important. Use this at your next meeting or in your internal newsletter.



Customers expect –

- ✓ **Value** for their money – fair prices
- ✓ **High quality** goods and services from a company
- ✓ **Clean, safe and pleasant** atmosphere
- ✓ **Employees to be knowledgeable** and show interest in their jobs
- ✓ **Courteous, friendly service** – employees who really care
- ✓ **Consistent value, treatment and good service**, each time they come in the door
- ✓ **A variety** of goods and products from which to choose

~ All rights reserved worldwide. Gary Sorrell – Sorrell Associates, LLC

There is only one boss. The customer. And he can fire everybody in the company from the chairman on down, simply by spending his money somewhere else.

~ Sam Walton

Working a Room

A standup cocktail party can be a fun way to network effectively. To get started, approach effectively. Approach people you know first. Then have them introduce you to others. When you meet someone new, tell him or her briefly who you are and what you do. Spend most of the time building a personal relationship with him or her. Exchange business cards. Make notes about each person you've talked to on the backs of their cards. To develop the relationships you've begun, send follow-up notes expressing pleasure meeting them, and indicating an interest in talking later.

