

Message from the President

*Message from Beth English,
President SCTC*

Happy 2017! With so many initiatives underway, it's a great time to be an SCTC Member. I'd like to take a moment to thank our dedicated and hardworking Consultant and VAC Board of Directors. We have many short and long term initiatives under way, and their unwavering commitment is propelling us forward.



One of our top priorities is moving the membership portal to a platform that better meets our needs. Over the past year, the Infrastructure Committee has evaluated options. We've selected MemberClicks as our new platform and are planning the transition with an eye towards going live by the end of March. The new platform will provide better tools for our members as well as more intuitive access for potential members, clients, and other visitors.

As part of our marketing strategy, we will be present at several upcoming trade shows and a university career fair - which launched an internship program! Several SCTC members will be panelists at a consulting track adjacent to Mobile World Congress in Barcelona in February. In March, our Executive Director, Meagan, will be at the Enterprise Connect SCTC booth to greet conference attendees and potential new members. We are working with organizers of UC Expo in London to have a presence in April. Since trade shows are a great place to gather leads for potential members...

We have formed a Recruitment Committee and process to follow up with leads. In addition to making personal contact with potential members, this committee is developing a protocol for keeping in touch with current members on a regular basis.

We are committed to transparent, regular communication with you. This newsletter is an example of the type of communication you can expect. As part of our commitment to transparency, financial reports are now available to members on the SCTC website. [LINK HERE](#)

If you are looking for opportunities to network this spring, consider attending one or more SCTC Regional Meetings. We have planning teams in place in North-East/Mid-Atlantic (NEMA), Midwest/Great Lakes, Southwest/Texas, and the West Regions; and are in early discussions in the Southeast and Rocky Mountain Regions. The Canadian Regional Group (CRG) is also planning a unique event later this year. Stay tuned for details.

Planning for the 2017 Fall Conference in Seattle is underway. We have reserved the entire Washington Athletic Club for the event, and will have unique opportunities to take advantage of the space and location. The call for speakers is out, so sharpen your pencils and submit a presentation to share with your colleagues.

As you can see, we are very, very busy and also very excited about the progress being made. All of the different tasks and activities we have taken on require diverse skills and resources. If you have a few hours or a particular skill you would like to contribute, we'd love to have your help. Reach out to Meagan or any Board Member to plug in.

Beth K English

Upcoming Events

SCTC 2017 Calendar of Events

Mobile World Congress – Barcelona, SP
February 27 – March 2, 2017

Enterprise Connect – Orlando, FL
March 27 – 29, 2017

UC Expo – London, UK
May 17 – 18, 2017

SCTC Annual Conference – Seattle, WA
September 11 – 14, 2017

IP Expo – London, UK
October 4 – 5, 2017

Sneak Peak

Speaker's Bureau Interview
with Jon Arnold

Legal Update from Martha Buyer
Regional Conference Schedule

SCTC Contact Info

Society of Communications Technology
Consultants International

230 Washington Ave. Ext. Suite 101
Albany, NY 12203

Phone: 800-782-7670

Fax: 800-859-3205

Website: <http://www.sctcconsultants.org>



Consultant Spotlight Randi Smaldone

Tell us a little about your practice/ business.

TRAK Communications is a bill auditing firm that looks for ways to reduce the ongoing, out of control communications expenses. We also look for billing errors that can result in a one-time refund or credit. Our specialty is conducting physical inventory services where we send technicians out to the demarc to test and inventory lines. As a boutique firm, we adapt easily, and pride ourselves on becoming a member of our clients team.

Fun fact – TRAK stands for Tony, Randi, Anthony, Katie (my family)

How did you get in the Telecommunications Industry?

Great story here – I graduated from high school at 16 and after only a year in college I decided to venture out and get a job in the great big city. No experience, no idea on what I could do but knew that I needed to work before I could select my college major. My friend offered me her temp job which was simple data entry working for none other than our Jane Laino! Long story short, Jane offered me a job as an administrative assistant and in a very short time, I was a junior consultant. After several years, I decided that system selection and implementation wasn't what I wanted to do and saw a lot of potential with the newly developing field of auditing. Telecom was the first and only industry I have been in, for almost 35 years. *(I started when I was 2??)*

What is the best advice you ever received to work as a consultant?

I can't say this is specifically for consulting but a few things I learned:

- a) Don't be afraid to say "I don't know but I'll find out and get back to you" rather than guessing
- b) Don't bad mouth the competition EVER
- c) Don't anger the vendors because your clients will have to continue working with them long after you're gone

What is your best client ROI story?

In the world of auditing there are so many ROI success stories. My favorite is probably "auditing the auditor" that resulted in a 36% savings to the client. This client was utilizing a software to conduct the audits on a recurring basis and we were brought in to measure their capability. At the end of the day we worked WITH the other firm in order to help them improve their services as a result of our findings. We weren't looking to replace them.

2017 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Molly Zraik, *Executive Vice President*

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Message from VAC Board of Directors

Message from Dave Clardy, President SCTC VAC

I am immensely proud of the progress that the SCTC Board of Directors has made since joining in November. In a short time, the Board of Directors have exceeded expectations across every metric – from website, budget, regional events, expanding an international footprint to membership recruitment and improved awareness as a global organization. With everyone on the board in place, outside of the VAC board members, we continue to need significant contributions to various committees that are evolving and need VAC participation. We are currently looking for VAC members for 2017 Conference Planning and VAC night. We also need a volunteer for Membership Recruitment. As a valued VAC member, please contact myself or any board member if you're interested in helping.

In the meantime, as a friendly reminder I want to stress importance of getting your 2017 SCTC membership renewals paid. We are in the second month of the 1st quarter of the New Year. I like to see 100% of VAC members renewed by March. Looking forward to seeing you at a Regional SCTC event soon!

VAC Board Members

Dave Clardy, *President*

Diane Smith & Dana Rhodes,
Secretary

Fran Blackburn, *Past President*

Ian Mofford & Marki Callaway,
*Directors International Global
Expansion*

Christian Adler, *Director*

Marsha Bailey, *Director*

Nancy Gates, *Director*

Larry Kollie, *Director*



J - The Speaker's Bureau is something new for the SCTC, and it looks like a great idea. How did it come about?

D- Yes Jon, it is new. As you know, last year was a transition year for the SCTC as we opened membership to Analysts, such as yourself, and started to actively recruit new VAC members, among other things.

When Cathy announced her retirement, and the decision was made to hire a professional management company, the board was able to spend more time on improving the organization and less on everyday operations tasks.

During the summer, Beth asked me what I thought of a "Speaker's Bureau" for SCTC consultants. I thought it was a great idea. After our annual conference in October and the election of new board members, Beth asked me if I wanted to go ahead and head up the Speaker's Bureau. I jumped at the opportunity.

J - How would you summarize the goals of the Speaker's Bureau, and how does this tie into the SCTC's overall plans?

D - While the SCTC is not a marketing organization, we want to bring leads and exposure opportunities to our members. We see the Speaker's Bureau as a vehicle to let our members know of different events in which there are technology forums, requests for technology communications professionals to speak. Other events may provide opportunities for our members to present, help build the SCTC brand name, and gain individual exposure that will hopefully culminate in more business for them.

We are fortunate in that once a consultant joins the SCTC they tend to stay members for a very long time. We also are fortunate in that most members are generous with their time, and want to help support their organization. We have a very dedicated and focused Board of Directors and Executive Board. We have several goals that we would like to achieve, including providing an enhanced member and VAC benefits.

Current changes underway include:

- Establishing a new and user friendly website to both visitors and internal users.
- We are coordinating and prioritizing board tasks to make sure we complete our goals.
- Membership is re-vamping their process so we can vet and process applicants in a timely manner.
- Another big push this year will be to recruit new consultants and VAC members.
- We are looking at starting new marketing campaigns and other activities to help grow and make the SCTC a better and more professional organization.

As you know, everyone on the board and all the committee members are volunteers. It has always been the policy of the SCTC and the STC to have our members participate in organization activities, so while none of us are "professionals" so to speak, we are all responsible business professionals.

However, not everyone can set aside the time on a regular basis to join a committee or the board. The speakers Bureau would be an opportunity for those members who want to participate,

but can't dedicate specific blocks of time to a committee. They would be able to pick and schedule events that fit their schedules.

Ultimately, we would like to see the SCTC become the "de-facto go to" brand whenever anyone is looking for a consultant.

J- It sounds very ambitious, but also a good way to add value for members. How will you operationalize these plans?

D- For members to realize this benefit, we need volunteers.

The SCTC already has a calendar with major industry events. We will start off using that to find speaking opportunities. We will also work with our VAC members to find out about other events in which they would like to have an SCTC speaker address their reseller partners, regional conferences and customer seminars.

The goal is to find regional events such as tech conferences, business groups (i.e. accountants, professional office managers) education webinars, and Chambers of Commerce in which a consultant can address potential client engagements.

Regarding consultants, on our new platform, they will be able to include a profile about themselves and their availability to speak. This will be searchable on the new website and the consultant can make their own arrangements from there.

J- I can see where this can be a big benefit to members. I am sure members will want to know if there is a compensation component associated with this, and if there is a fee that is collected by the SCTC.

D - This isn't really meant to be a lead generation program. The main goal is to provide exposure opportunities for SCTC consultants and promote the SCTC brand through speaking engagements. Also it is a vehicle in which the industry and other technology organizations can include a professional independent communications technology expert at their events.

As you know, we as industry experts often speak at events without financial compensation. On the other hand, we wouldn't expect a consultant to have to pay for the opportunity either.

This is a new benefit we are trying to implement for our members. Our current structure and charter is not set up for the organization to receive fees for member benefits. The main goal is to provide exposure opportunities for SCTC consultants and promote the SCTC brand through speaking engagements. Being a professional volunteer not-for-profit organization, if there is something we can do in-house without incurring a third-party fee, we will try to include that in the annual membership dues. So, in this case there is no fee due back to the SCTC.

Consultant compensation would really depend upon the specific opportunity. First and foremost, the engagement cannot violate the SCTC Code of Ethics that each SCTC consultant member must agree to and sign. Reimbursement of expenses is certainly acceptable if offered. Any other compensation is also acceptable by the consultant if it doesn't violate our Code of Ethics. If members aren't sure about a particular opportunity, they can query Meagan at Capitol Hill or directly to the Ethics Committee for clarification.

Oh by the way, to close things out here, did I mention that we need volunteers?

Legally and Practically what Avaya's Chapter 11 Filing Means to Consultants and Their Clients

Given the quiet (and not-so-quiet) rumblings that have been making their way around the consultant and other communications industry virtual watercoolers for the past few months, no one in this industry should have been taken totally off guard when Avaya filed its Chapter 11 bankruptcy paperwork on January 19th. Phil Edholm, Marty Parker and others have written eloquently about what this could mean from a consultant's perspective to Avaya customers, but I wanted to provide a legal summary about what this step could mean to the same constituency. While my experience with bankruptcy law is limited (make that zero), I consulted with well-respected and very smart bankruptcy attorney Bill Brown of Phillips Lytle who gave me not only a thorough tutorial, but a volume of documents that were filed by Avaya.

Let me say first that when Bill provided me with the documents, he suggested that generally, in a Chapter 11 filing, the initial documents tell a story and provide a background for the bankruptcy judge and Avaya's shareholders, although at a minimum, these documents provide at least a legal perspective on what Avaya is thinking and how it hopes to resolve its current dilemma.

First, some facts. According to the company's filing, in its current form, Avaya is made up of 176 different entities, only 18 of which are covered by the Chapter 11 filing. By its own description, Avaya is a "global provider of contact center, unified communications, and networking products and services" supporting more than 200,000 direct and indirect customers, "consisting of multinational enterprises, small and medium sized business, and 911 services." The company currently employs 9,700 worldwide, with 3,800 of those employees working for one of the 18 entities covered in the bankruptcy filing. Of these 3,800 employees, 550 are "subject to collective bargaining agreements."

Avaya (technically "Avaya Enterprises"), by its own admission, is currently obligated (some might say "burdened") with \$6.0 billion of secured debt, which includes, but is not limited to, \$1.5 billion in underfunded liabilities from two employer-defined benefit pension plans, as well as other pension plans and post-employment benefits. Avaya currently has

approximately 9700 employees worldwide, 3800 of whom work for the 18 debtor companies. Of this 3800, only 550 are covered by collective bargaining agreements with the Communications Workers of America (CWA) and the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW). It is important to note that Avaya's non-US affiliates (all 158 of them) are not debtors in these proceedings currently, and Avaya does not anticipate that they will be brought into to the bankruptcy filing in the future.

Avaya breaks its business into four slightly-overlapping market segments including unified communications (58% of revenue), contact center (27%), networking (7%) and managed and outsourcing services that support customers' own communications environments (8%). As consultants and VAC are well-aware, Avaya also relies on both direct and indirect sales models to generate its income. Avaya has also placed significant value on its own intellectual property including patented products and services (it currently estimates approximately 5,400 of them) and licenses for the manufacture, use and sale of its products, along with copyrights and trademarks. All of which is to say that Avaya retains valuable assets. The question is whether or not the assets are sufficiently valuable, and whether the strength of those products in the marketplace will be enough to enable the company to extract itself from its current predicament.

There are two primary types of bankruptcy financing, use of cash collateral and DIP (debtor in possession) financing. Avaya has gone with the DIP approach, which is what vendors typically prefer. In this model, the debtor has continued access to credit for the purpose of funding its business following the filing ("post-petition."). This approach provides assurance to both Avaya customers and suppliers that the company should be able to pay its post-petition debt. This is not a guarantee that the debtor (Avaya) will be able to pay its debt, but an assurance. Often in Chapter 11 bankruptcy cases, trade vendors will shorten up terms if they can in an effort to secure payment while simultaneously being acutely sensitive to the terms under which they'll continue to do business with the debtor.

While Phil has previously pointed out that time is of the essence in these cases, Avaya's initial request

to a bankruptcy judge to receive funds from a financing package that was approved prior to its filing met a chilly reception when it came before the court the day after the filing. Such ups and downs are not unusual. In fact, according to Bill Brown, “A bankruptcy is a little bit like watching a heart monitor. You have this initial peak and then a horizontal plane and then you have another peak. Right now, Avaya is still in the initial peak. The interim first day hearings have occurred. At that time, the bankruptcy judge granted some, but not all, of those interim requests. A final hearing will occur within the next few weeks where the court will consider the full amount of the proposed DIP financing, after creditors have had a chance to organize.”

Advice for Consultants and Their Clients

If you’re advising Avaya customers, we’re still in a “wait and see” place. Despite claims that may be made by current Avaya competitors, it’s far from time to abandon Avaya products and services—particularly in the U.S. However, key indicators, particularly related to maintenance, repair and overall service will be critical in the next few months as the company attempts to right its own ship. As Avaya has moved away from capex products in favor of opex items, careful vendor monitoring and management will provide just about the best indicator possible of how the reorganization is going and what the longer term outcome will be. It’s important to remember that the debt is significant, but not insurmountable, and that Avaya, which continues to create valuable products and services in the marketplace, remains an important player.

Teaming in the SCTC

One of the unexpected benefits I experienced when joining the SCTC in 2014 was the opportunities for teaming. Since that time we have outsourced close to \$700,000 in billable work to SCTC members, over \$400,000 to one consulting company in particular. They were all win/win/win scenarios, with the client getting the specific experience they needed, other firms getting work and ComStrat making a fair profit on markup. We were able to strengthen our relationship with our client, add to our resume and learn at the same time. Two of the firms we used were not at that time members of the SCTC but have both since joined. In past when we uncovered opportunities both with existing clients and new prospects that were outside of our core competencies we would pass, now we reach out on the SCTC listserve to find a qualified resource. Often we get multiple responses, which allows us to look for the best fit for our clients. We currently have pending over \$400,000 of proposals to clients involving teaming with other members. The income generated by these engagements will cover by SCTC membership for many years to come.

SCTC WEBINAR SERIES BROUGHT TO YOU BY THE VAC

In 2016 the SCTC extended its regular educational webinar series to include VAC members, and the VAC was thrilled to participate in this first-ever vendor series exclusively for SCTC consultants. With the first session in July of 2016, the series is slated to run for 12 months with the final session being June of 2017. That gives you five more opportunities to hear what the VAC members have to say – with no sales pitches allowed, just educational information. These one hour sessions on the third Tuesday of each month, start at 2 PM EST. If you had to miss one of the previous sessions, but would like to get the information, please contact Meagan Bowker for a link to the recording. Here's the schedule:

July 19, 2016	Interactive Intelligence	Product Differentiators and Case Study
August 16, 2016	Cisco	Cisco Spark
September 20, 2016	Avaya	New & Updated Product Overview
October 18, 2016	Microsoft	Office 365 and Skype for Business Update
November 15, 2016	Phybridge	Extending Your IP Network
December 20, 2016	Year End VAC member update session featuring VAC member highlights for 2016	
January 17, 2017	ShoreTel	ShoreTel's Hottest New Announcements for 2017
February 21, 2017	AVST	Millennials at Work: Creating a Mobile First, Digital Environment
March 21, 2017	Eclipse Technology Solutions	Meraki Access Points & Data Collection through WIFI
April 18, 2017	NEC	Smart Enterprise
May 16, 2017	Fusion	Fusion, the One Source Cloud Game-Changer
June 20, 2017	Birch Communications	Becoming the Trusted Advisor: How to Preserve a Happy Customer Base

Join an SCTC Committee

Newsletter Committee

Membership Committee

Education Committee

Marketing Committee

Marketing Subcommittees

- Trade Shows
- Social Media
- Marketing communications
- Web Marketing
- Recruiting
- Speaker's Bureau

Infrastructure Committee

Conference Committee – 2017

Long Term Conference Planning Committee

Regional Conference Planning Committee

Global Strategy Committee

Regional Conference Schedule

Southwest Regional Meeting

Thursday, April 20, 2017

Irving, TX - Las Colinas Chamber of Commerce

West Regional Meeting

Monday, April 7, 2017

San Jose, CA - Holiday Inn - Silicon Valley

Northeast Regional Meeting

May 1, 2017

Mt Laurel, NJ TBD

North Central Regional Meeting

May 5, 2017

Detroit, MI area TBD

Canadian Regional Meeting

June 8, 2017

Toronto, ON TBD