



September 2017

Independent Consulting TIG Newsletter

CHAIR'S CORNER: The IC TIG Community by Laura Keene, 2017 IC TIG Chair



I'm taking a break from the parenting analogies this quarter. Instead, I wanted to share a recent "so glad I'm the boss" moment.

One of the many reasons I jumped ship was that there wasn't room for evaluation capacity building at the organizations where I worked. It wasn't in the budget. It wasn't a priority. (Despite my efforts to convince people otherwise.)

Now, I have the flexibility to bring my clients along for the ride and last week I had a wonderful opportunity to try something new (at least new to me). .

[Read More](#)



Networking for introverts: how it plays out by Norma Martinez-Rubin, Evaluation Focused Consulting

The invitation has been in my inbox a couple of weeks now; it's for an outdoors get together to stir camaraderie. I haven't replied. The event is in a few days. Had I sent the invitation, I would've promptly tabulated the number of people to accommodate, monitored responses, and repeatedly checked weather forecasts. A task orientation can bump any doubts about my role at social events.

But I'm at the receiving end this time and realize, as courtesy to my hosts, I should have replied earlier and haven't. I can't roll back time so I fashion a reason for not showing up. My conscience bothers me. I conclude I'll fare better if I use my creativity differently (e.g., for data visualizations to meet a report-writing deadline).

The truth is, in anticipation of a networking event, I wonder how interesting I'll have to be for conversation beyond cursory introductions. I wonder, too if I might get stuck with other event guests who also find social get-togethers unusually difficult. Will we end up flopping the conversation? But, wait! Maybe our common awkwardness will lead to intriguing discussion, or an exchange of precious information bits about each other. [Read More](#)



Meet IC TIG member Carrie L. Giovannone-Jordan, PEDLS

What I love most about being an evaluator is having the opportunity to immerse myself in a program...I love learning about new programs/processes and trying to figure out the best way to evaluate them.

Please describe your independent consulting practice.

My business' official name is Giovannone Consulting Services, Inc., however, I have the tradename, PEDLS: Program Evaluation and Data Literacy Services, registered with Arizona and New Mexico. I prefer to go by the tradename, so my business cards and website reflect PEDLS. This journey into liberation from following orders from a boss began slowly on February 22, 2017. That was the date when the state of Arizona finally recognized my consulting business. I have worked in evaluation, research, and assessment since 2002. I started out working in the field at Kent State University's Bureau of Research and Training Services while attending grad school for my Master's and Doctorate in Evaluation and Measurement. My specialty is program evaluation with an emphasis on mixed methods when the evaluation questions require it. I am currently based in Gallup, NM enjoying the beautiful summer and fall days. I'm new to Gallup so in my off-time I'm exploring our old western town and Native American community.

Describe your favorite evaluation experience.

My favorite evaluation experience, thus far, was working with the Arizona Commission on the Arts to consult with their grantees on evaluating their programs. [Read More](#)



Balance by Stephen Maack, Owner, REAP Change

*Finding balance in our personal and professional lives is a concern we all face. Here, in the second of three parts, our former Chair, **Stephen Maack**, shares his thoughts on balance in time and timing with us.*

Time and Timing. With relationships "quality time" may be as important as, or more important than, the quantity of time one spends with others. Figure out ways to make sure that the time spent with significant others is "quality time," however you and they may define that.

Time management is important when doing evaluations. It is a learnable skill. Here are some approaches that I am still working to perfect:

- Estimate the time needed for various evaluation tasks (data gathering, analysis, report writing, communicating with the client, etc.), and track actual time spent against expected time. Analyze the difference, build that into your next proposal, and repeat.
- Figure out what you want to go into the final report or presentation and outline that toward the start rather than end of a project, then allocate your time to fill in the blanks.
- Poke holes in a project. Push one aspect along as far as you can and, even if not done completely, go on to another matter and push it along as far as you can before finishing up the first. Repeat until done, moving back and forth. [Read More](#)



FAQs and what to do about them!

by Gail Vallance Barrington

President, Barrington Research Group

QUESTION: Is there a minimum contract size?

Answer: Recently at dinner with Amy Germuth and Sally Bond, our conversation turned to contract size. What is a *small* contract, we wondered. Is there a minimum size? What are the pros and cons of small projects?

For Sal, small contracts run between \$10,000-\$20,000. Her goal is to have a mix of 1-2 small projects, and 3 or more medium to large ones. On the other hand, Amy says she sometimes enjoys working on very small contracts in the \$4,000-\$6,000 range. They allow her to work with special populations such as church congregations who are resource poor and unable to hire her at her regular rate.

There are several reasons why small contracts are appealing. [Read More](#)



Evaluation and the honoring of human life

by Rita Fierro, Fierro Consulting

I took a vacation this year. Yoo-hoo! My first real vacation since I began my consulting firm ten years ago. I went to Cuba. The experience of being in a country with free education (primary school to Ph.D.) and free healthcare

(including dental) and zero (official) unemployment deeply affected me.

Cuba is far from perfect, political freedom of expression is still a dream for many. Even so, it is a country that: [“regards accessibility to healthcare as a fundamental right of its citizens.”](#)

Cuba’s residents, as of 2015, had a slightly higher life expectancy than the USA residents [at a tenth of the per capita healthcare cost of the USA](#) (\$831 vs \$9,431). Cuba is also first in the world for percentage of GDP invested in education—[13%](#), by comparison, the [USA invests only 7%](#) in education.

The impact these policies had on me were more than intellectual. It was quite evident in my experience there, that in Cuba, human dignity was not bound to how much money, property, or education someone had. There was a way even the poorest person approached me, that woke up our shared humanity. [Read More](#)

Check out the IC TIG's book club: Evaluation Connection

Do you want to connect with other evaluators? Want to stay on top of what’s happening in the field? Or maybe need some external motivation to read those articles or books on your shelf? **Evaluation Connection** is a book club that meets virtually to discuss articles and books related to evaluation. We meet twice a month to have a casual conversation about either a few journal articles or chapters from an interesting book.

In October, we will start reading *Building Evaluation Capacity: Activities for Teaching and Training*. As one reviewer said: “This book is a go-to resource for anyone teaching program evaluation.” Each chapter covers a topic related to evaluation and examples on how to teach it to others. We will also read a few articles from the September 2017 Issue of *American Journal of Evaluation*.

Join the [mailing list](#) to get updates.

Join us for these great IC TIG sessions!

We encourage you to check out this year’s IC TIG-sponsored sessions at the AEA conference:

Session Title	Date	Time
Meet the Pros: Intermediate Consulting Skill Fair	Wed, Nov 8	4:30PM – 6:00PM
Other People Are Smart, Too: Management Lessons from Our Colleagues in Different Sectors	Wed, Nov 8	4:30PM – 6:00PM
Everyone Deserves Beautiful Data: Affordable and User-Friendly Tools to Collect and Visualize Data	Thu, Nov 8	8:00AM – 9:00AM
Using Community Responsive Approach Consultants to Build Out your Team	Thu, Nov 9	11:30AM – 12:15PM
Federal Consulting 101: Fundamental Skills and Capabilities for Independent Evaluation Consultants and Small Business Owners	Thu, Nov 9	1:15PM – 2:00PM
Evaluation on a Limited Budget: Negotiating the Evaluation Scope of Work	Thu, Nov 9	2:15PM – 3:00PM
Partnering with Other Evaluators: Maximizing Learning, Minimizing Challenges	Thu, Nov 9	3:15PM – 4:15PM
Independent Evaluation Consultants as Change Agents: Going Beyond the Buzz Words to Inspire Positive Outcomes	Fri, Nov 10	8:00AM – 9:30AM
Restorative Circles in Evaluation: An Emerging Practice and Methodology	Fri, Nov 10	8:00AM – 9:30AM
Engaging Clients through the Art of Adult Learning	Fri, Nov 10	1:45PM – 3:15PM
Tough times call for tough measures: Challenges, reactions and results of three federally-funded evaluations	Fri, Nov 10	3:30PM – 4:15PM
Consulting After 50: Career Transition Issues	Fri, Nov 10	5:30PM – 6:15PM
Increasing Interpersonal Competencies in Evaluators to Prevent Identify, and Manage Problems	Sat, Nov 11	8:00AM – 9:00AM
Can you save the world through evaluation? What every international development consultant should know	Sat, Nov 11	10:15AM – 11:00AM

development consultant should know

[Negotiation tactics that get you the best deal: Learning from our mistakes](#)

Sat, Nov 11

11:15AM – 12:00PM

Announcements and Reminders

Evaluation 2017: From Learning to Action: Make your travel plans to attend [AEA's annual Conference](#), November 6-11, 2017, Washington, D.C. If you go to the conference, make sure to attend the **Independent Consultant TIG Business Meeting**, November 9, 7:00 - 8:30 p.m.

IC TIG gatherings at Evaluation 2017: Instead of our usual Thursday night dinner, there will be a reception at the hotel for the IC TIG and several other TIGs, 6:00 - 7:00 p.m., November 9, just prior to our business meeting. There is also a multi-TIG dinner outing in the works. Details to follow in October!

Ways to stay in touch:

Like us on [Facebook](#) -- Engage with other IC TIG members on our [website](#).

Next newsletter deadline: November 27, 2017.

Please send questions, submissions or suggestions to [Loretta Kelley](#).

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This newsletter is sent to members of the American Evaluation Association's Independent Consulting topical interest group.

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