



December 2017

Independent Consulting TIG Newsletter

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



Holy kazoo, this is my last article as Chair. That went by fast. It's been a fabulous year and I'm so grateful to everyone who contributed.

As most of you know, organizations that run entirely on volunteer people-power have their ebbs and flows. Finding time to contribute even a little can be a tall order, especially for us as independent consultants. We're up to our eyeballs in projects, marketing, business development, compulsive time-tracking (maybe that's just me), other volunteer work, life, family, and more. I know I've had my challenges staying engaged over the years.

Given all that, I was absolutely THRILLED when almost 20 people came up after the business meeting at this year's AEA conference and expressed interest in getting involved! (Probably helped along by a pep talk from Steve Maack, 2014 IC TIG Chair.)

Balance by Stephen Maack, Owner, REAP Change



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

As evaluation entrepreneurs, sole proprietors, owners of small firms consulting full-time or part-time, we have to try to maintain balance in several ways to stay productive.

Your Personal Needs. Remember to build in "downtime," time for sleep, and time for yourself – whatever that means. Yes, you can take a vacation (understanding that it won't be a paid vacation). Employees have vacations, why not you? Just let your clients know when you'll be gone and back.

During planned downtime or vacation please do try to have fun, relax, and enjoy yourself. You probably will do a better job as an evaluator, within the limits of your skills, if you are less stressed, healthier, and more relaxed.

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AEA2017 Conference Recap

Thanks for another fun year everyone! Here's a quick recap of the conference.

Wednesday evening, we went to Duke's Counter and had drinks with people from the Nonprofit/Foundations, Community Psychology, and Systems TIGs.

Thursday evening, we connected with folks from a bunch of different TIGs at AEA's TIG reception.

Then, it was onto the business meeting. Laura Keene, this year's Chair, started the meeting by recapping 2017:

- **Conference sessions:** We had 32 proposals and ended up with 15 high quality sessions.
- **Communications:** We continued to use our [newsletters](#), [discussion group](#), [website](#), and [Facebook page](#) to keep members informed and connected.
- **Book Club:** Members discussed books and articles throughout the year.

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FAQs and what to do about them!

by Gail Vallance Barrington

President, Barrington Research Group

Question: How Can I Market Without Being Pushy?

Answer: This is a great question from a new consultant who sees herself as an introvert. For her, marketing is a scary enterprise. Many evaluators are shy, yet they are usually very successful in their business lives. Here are five tips to remember:

1. **Have a Zen approach.** Think about baking. You take the right ingredients, mix them together in the right way, pop the cake in the oven and, voilà, out comes golden perfection. There was no stress involved, yet timing was critical. Marketing is the same. You have a great portfolio, meet with the client, and something happens. It may be a contract, it may be a great connection. Don't let sales pressure mess with your head. Either way, something good will happen—if not this time, then the next.
2. **Focus on the problem.** When meeting your prospect, assess their needs and ask good questions. It's not about you, it's about them. Let them do the talking and listen well. Be sure they know you share their concern about this important problem and that you may have a way to help. _

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IC TIG: Meet a member
Chair-elect Tamara Hamai, Hamai Consulting

Please describe your independent consulting practice.

I started consulting in 2007, went full-time in 2008, and founded Hamai Consulting in 2010. I have been in the research and evaluation field since I starting my undergraduate studies in 2003 and started working in internal evaluation first. Over time, I've found my strength in collaborative, utilization-focused, systems, and capacity building approaches. I specialize in helping nonprofits use data to more effectively and efficiently make a bigger difference in the lives of children.

What's unique about the work you do?

We are unique in our model – it is adapted from a model proven effective in the for-profit sector, but also an empathetic, holistic, and results-oriented approach shaped by the values and context of nonprofits. We are unique in our delivery method – it is training, consulting, and coaching combined into a process that is deeply useful, practical, and efficient for our clients.

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Meet the Pros:
Routines to tame the chaos and improve your productivity
IC TIG chair-elect Tamara Hamai, Hamai Consulting

At the November Annual Meeting several of our members participated in a session called Meet the Pros in which they shared their evaluation expertise. For those of us who were not able to attend this informative and interesting session, we will be including synopses of the presentations in this and subsequent issues of this newsletter.

Set constraints for yourself to leave more space in your head for more important activities. Identify an area where you'd like to be more effective or efficient. Consider how you can:

- Automate
- Delegate
- Simplify
- Systematize

Explore other powerful routines to implement in your life. Make a list of all the routines/behaviors/rituals you'd like to:

- Start
- Stop
- Do less of
- Do more of
- Continue

Consider each stage of the routine cycle: Trigger, action (environment, ease, efficiency, and effectiveness), and reward. What can you do throughout the routine cycle to make the desired change in the frequency of routines/behaviors/rituals?

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Is your New Year's resolution to read more? We can help you with that.

Evaluation Connection is a virtual evaluation book club for evaluators who want to connect with others, or for those who need some extra motivation to read. Every month we meet once to talk about recent articles, and a second time to discuss a book of our choice. Participants help select the readings and dates/times.

Help us pick our [next book](#).

Or our [January articles](#).

Check out our [website](#) for more details, or join our [mailing list](#).

Announcements and Reminders

New officers for 2019:

New officers for 2018:

Congratulations to the IC TIG's newly elected officers!

Chair – Myia Welsh

Chair-Elect – Tamara Hamai

Outgoing Chair – Laura Keene

Program Co-Chair – Robert Perez

Program Co-Chair – Jeremy Braithwaite

Social Media Chair – Nina Sabarre

Print/Web Media Chair – Mary Nash

Ways to stay in touch:

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

Next newsletter deadline: February 26, 2018.

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

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