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March 2010 Newsletter

Practitioner Gold

By Randy Robinson, Chair, CPMS randy.robinson@mac.com

"Thar's gold in them thar hills." Language purists must squirm when viewing this famous phrase of obscure origin (probably the movies), although they might grudgingly admit it sounds catchy.

After I joined CPMS long ago (not quite back to the California gold rush days), it took me time to discover the pure gold in the CPMS hills. Allow me to point out where I eventually found it, and where you can easily find it right away.

First, some background. Who exactly is CPMS serving? The answer is practitioners of operations research and the management sciences (OR/MS). "Practitioners" means the entire family of full-time practitioners, part-time practitioners, and researchers with practice interests. That's possibly the vast majority of us in the ORMS community, including those whose day jobs are in universities.

Moreover, to cite another famous statement, this time with clear origin (Benjamin Franklin just before signing the Declaration of Independence): "We must, indeed, all hang together, or we shall all hang separately." As practice goes, so goes the whole field.

One more bit of background. Just as Lon Chaney, silent-movie actor, was "the man of a thousand faces," OR/MS is the field of a thousand names. Although you can't reliably spot OR/MS in action by listening to the name the technical professionals are using, usually you know it when you see it. In other words, when we talk about the practice of OR/MS, we all understand what that means.

Now for the gold. Expertise comes from immersion. In OR/MS practice, immersion is illusive. Full-time practitioners typically get involved in relatively few projects (as a percentage of the possible combinations of application and analytical method), even over a professional lifetime. Part-time practitioners and those non-practitioners who are interested in what happens in
practice are still more disadvantaged.

What's the remedy? See more practice examples, and get immersed to the extent feasible.

The core activities of CPMS provide such opportunities across a broad range of applications and methods. To mine the gold, participate!

A superficial view might be that voluntary participation is an altruistic act, a selfless donation to a good cause. Looking more deeply, I believe you will discover that it directly, and at times dramatically, benefits the participant.

Consider the Edelman Award, a crown jewel of practice, which seems to be increasing in prestige and number of international finalists. Volunteer to help screen the applications to select semi-finalists. After you gain some experience, volunteer to help verify the semi-finalists. With still more experience, volunteer to be an assistant coach for a finalist team. A bit more experience and you can be eligible to serve as a lead coach, a judge, or eventually chair of the competition.

Edelman semifinalists and finalists give prime examples of successful OR/MS practice. While you certainly may view the competition presentations live at the spring practice conference or later on DVD (or on forthcoming streaming videos), and may read the Interfaces papers, the volunteer roles just noted offer an experience closer to immersion, and thus are more expertise-building.

Similarly, the Wagner Prize competition, which complements the Edelman, while offering fewer roles can further broaden opportunities for those who have arrived at the Edelman coach-judge level.

Yet another opportunity for those at the coach-judge level is afforded by service on the committee for the INFORMS Prize. Although this long-term-practice award is not administered by CPMS, it complements the Edelman and the Wagner and is celebrated at the same gala award ceremony during the spring practice conference.

The gold just described is by no means the only gold in the hills. Participation in any CPMS committee (or other practice-oriented committee within INFORMS) can be highly rewarding.

Join us! Experience the personal benefits. At the same time, contribute to the profession.

Have a comment or question? Don't hesitate to send me a message at randy.robinson@mac.com.
It seems like everywhere I go, the term "analytics" keeps popping up. Last week, I was in a strategy meeting at our corporate office and decided to stroke count the number of times someone mentioned that word. I stopped at thirty. Is this just a new buzzword, or is analytics going to be a new force for business?

Gartner, Accenture, and other respected organizations are predicting that due to current computing horsepower and data availability now is the time for analytics. They predict that organizations will need analytics in order to optimize their business and keep a competitive edge. I certainly know that this is true for my company and those skilled professionals are in demand.

What does this mean for INFORMS? There are some important questions to answer:

- Is analytics truly a growing market for practice professionals?
- How does analytics differ from operations research and the management sciences?
- What different market segments exist?
- What products and services do these professionals need?
- Who else is serving these needs?
- Does INFORMS want to be the premiere organization that serves analytics professionals?
- What is the ROI?

In order to answer these questions and make an important strategic decision, the INFORMS Board of Directors recently funded a study to provide information on the analytics marketplace. An RFP was sent to many organizations with the expectation that the results could be provided to the Board at the end of July.

This is an aggressive schedule, but this is an important issue that cannot wait. INFORMS membership has been basically flat for ten years and only 1/3 of our members are practitioners. We know that there are many more times our number doing this kind of work in business, but they choose not to join INFORMS.

It's time to take the profession back. When a CIO or other C-Level executive asks where to go to learn about analytics or find the best and brightest, the answer should be INFORMS.

We expect to pick an organization to conduct the study by the
end of March. The chosen organization will attend the practice conference in Orlando to begin learning about current practitioners and their needs. They will be working with an ad hoc committee whose members were chosen to guide this effort.

This will be a busy summer. Stay tuned for more information, and don't hesitate to contact me with questions at JLevis@ups.com.

2010 Edelman Gala Celebrates the Best of OR/MS Practice

By Russ Labe, Chair, Edelman Gala Committee and Vice Chair, CPMS russ.labe@bankofamerica.com

A highlight of the 2010 INFORMS Practice Conference will be the Edelman Gala, which takes place on Monday evening, April 19, 2010. This event, the culmination of the 2010 Edelman Competition, celebrates the best of OR/MS practice. The gala begins with a delicious dinner, but that is really only the appetizer. The gala is a high-quality production that includes videos, awards, lights, and music. Previous star-struck participants have declared it to be the "Oscar" event of OR/MS practice.

This year Tom Cook, the previous head of Sabre Decision Technologies, and himself an Edelman winner, will serve as our Master of Ceremonies. Tom was one of the architects of the Practice Conference, so it is fitting that he will be center-stage at the gala. Following dinner, the winners of the 2010 INFORMS Prize and the 2009 Wagner Prize will be recognized. Each of the 6 finalist teams from the 2010 Edelman Competition will briefly describe their work. At the end of the evening, with tension mounting, Srinivas Bollapragada, chair of the 2010 Edelman Award Committee, will deliver to the podium a sealed envelope with the judges’ decision. Susan Albin, president of INFORMS, will open the envelope and reveal this year's first-place Edelman winner.

This is your chance to see live the nominations and winner announcements, as we recognize outstanding accomplishment in combinations of our own Oscar categories: best leading modelers, best supporting cast, strongest executive support, most innovative technology, and best overall practice! As chair of the 2010 Edelman Gala Committee, I enthusiastically encourage you to be there!

The 2010 Franz Edelman Award Competition To Be Held In Orlando,
Florida

By Srinivas Bollapragada, Chair, 2010 Edelman Competition
bollapragada@research.ge.com

The 39th annual international competition for the Franz Edelman Award for Achievement in Operations Research will be held at the INFORMS Conference On O.R. Practice in Orlando, Florida on April 19th, 2010. Six finalists will make presentations showcasing their projects that had major impacts on their client organizations. The competition will conclude that evening with the gala awards ceremony and banquet, where the first-place winner and other finalists are honored.

The Franz Edelman Award competition is jointly sponsored by INFORMS and CPMS. The purpose of the competition is to bring forward and recognize outstanding examples of OR/MS practice. The award is named in honor of Franz Edelman, who established one of the earliest industrial OR/MS groups in North America.

This year's Edelman award process began with a call for abstracts in early September of 2009. Organizations were asked to provide a three-page summary of a completed practical operations research application and describe results that had significant, verifiable, and, preferably quantifiable impact on the performance of the client organization. A committee of roughly three dozen experienced O.R. practitioners and academics reviewed the applications and selected around 15 semifinalists in early November. A list of the committee members is available online. Each semifinalist entry was assigned a verification team whose role was to understand the application in sufficient depth to validate its claims. The verification teams communicated their work to the rest of the committee in a written report approximately ten days before the finalist selection meeting on Dec. 15, 2009 where six finalists were chosen.

The finalists this year cover a wide range of industries, functions, and countries around the globe. One entry describes the O.R. analyses and the politics that led to the implementation of optimization-based water release policies by the Delaware River Basin Commission. The second entry from Germany shows how O.R. models were used to increase the brand value of DHL by over a billion dollars in five years. The third entry, demonstrates the use of O.R. by INDEVAL, Mexico's Securities Depository and Settlement System, to decrease daily liquidity requirements by $130 billion. The fourth reflects the development and deployment of O.R.-based tools at New Brunswick Department of Transportation to save over $70 million per year in maintaining 18,000 kilometers of roads. The fifth entry discusses the use of single stage and multi-echelon inventory optimization techniques to reduce the investment in inventory at Proctor & Gamble by $1.5 billion. The sixth entry demonstrates the use of simulation
models to save around $230 million over a ten-year period at Sasol Synfuels coal-to-liquids conversion facilities in South Africa.

Each finalist team was assigned a coaching team that is led by an O.R. professional with multiple years of experience on the Edelman committee. The coaching teams work closely with their respective entries to advise them throughout the process so that their papers and presentations convey the work in a manner that can be well understood by a general O.R. audience. A team of 11 judges from industry and academia study the papers, attend the final presentation on April 19, 2009 and select the winner in time for the announcement during the Edelman gala that evening.

Schneider National - Princeton University Team Captures the 2009 Daniel H. Wagner Prize

By C. Allen Butler, Chair, 2009 and 2010 Wagner Prize
allen.butler@va.wagner.com

The Daniel H. Wagner Prize for Excellence in Operations Research Practice is sponsored by CPMS, the Practice Section of INFORMS. The first place award of $1,000.00 is made possible by endowments from Metron Inc., Daniel H. Wagner Associates, Inc., and Applied Mathematics, Inc.

The prize is in memory of the late Dr. Daniel H. Wagner. While president of his own practice-oriented consulting firm, Dr. Wagner brought many high-quality mathematicians into the operations research community, leading to significant applications for U.S. Navy, U.S. Coast Guard, and many other organizations. The prize honors Dr. Wagner by emphasizing qualities he respected in his colleagues: the ability to innovate and to communicate clearly and effectively.

The 2009 competition was the ninth prize competition since the inaugural event in 1998. For this year, the first place winners were Abraham George, Warren Powell, Hugo Simao, Princeton University, and Jeff Day, Ted Gifford, John Nienow, Schneider National, Inc. Their paper, Approximate Dynamic Programming Captures Fleet Operations for Schneider National, describes the development and implementation of a practical model that replicates the behavior of Schneider National's team of dispatchers.

The Schneider Tactical Planning Simulator (TPS) is a model that captures, at a very high level of detail, the operations of
Schneider National, one of the largest truckload motor carriers in the U.S. TPS was used to model the operations of over 6,500 drivers, moving approximately 13,000 loads per week over a four week planning horizon. While the sheer number of drivers and loads contributed to the complexity of the problem, the real challenge lay in the high level of detail required to model drivers and loads. Drivers were described by a 15-dimensional attribute vector which captured dimensions such as their location (or expected future location), estimated time of arrival (measured in minutes), home location, equipment type, "capacity type," country of origin (U.S. or Canada), driving and duty time on a particular day, and an eight-dimensional vector giving the number of hours the driver worked on each of the last eight days (used to model the infamous "70 hours in eight days" restrictions). Loads were characterized by origin and destination, pickup and delivery windows, the equipment type needed, and the revenue.

If the problem of optimizing driver movements were deterministic, it could be formulated as a multiperiod linear program. However, although there are "only" 6,500 drivers, the need to consider the potential assignment of drivers in the future produces what is effectively an infinite-dimensional linear program. Furthermore, the uncertainty in future demands, as well as randomness in transit times results in an infinite-dimensional stochastic linear program. The authors have been working on practical solution techniques for this problem class literally since the early 1980's and have finally devised a solution strategy using approximate dynamic programming.

The winning authors will reprise their presentation at the upcoming **INFORMS Conference on O.R. Practice** in April 2010, in Orlando, Florida and will presented with their $1,000 award at the Edelman Gala at that same meeting. Video of the finalist presentations can be seen by following the Video on Demand link at the **Wagner Prize website**: a brief login is required. A special issue of **Interfaces** will publish the winning paper, along with those of the other five finalists:

**Horst Zisgen, Ingo Meents**, IBM Deutschland Research and Development, **Steven M. Brown**, IBM Systems and Technology Group, **Thomas Hanschke**, Clausthal University of Technology, and **Benjamin R. Wheeler**, MIT Sloan School of Management: *A Queuing Model-Based System for Semiconductor Production Planning at IBM*

**Karl Kempf**, **Asima Mishra**, **Shamin A. Shirodkar** Intel Corporation, **Mehmet O. Atan**, **Berrin Aytac**, and **David S. Wu**, Lehigh University: *Extending Bass for Improved New Product Forecasting*

**Hernán Abeledo**, The George Washington University, **Marcus Poggi de Aragão**, **Lorenza Moreno**, Pontificia Universidade Católica do Rio de Janeiro **Fernanda Menezes**, **Oscar Porto**, **Marcelo Reis**, Gapso, **Nelci Nascimento**, Petrobas, and **Eduardo Uchoa**, Universidade Federal Fluminense:
Optimizing Helicopter Transport of Oil Rig Crews at Petrobras

Srinivas Bollapragada and Bex George Thomas, General Electric Global Research:
*Integrated Framework for Product Costing, Demand Forecasting and Capacity Planning of New Photovoltaic Technology*

Michael Gorman, University of Dayton:
*Hub Group Implements a Suite of O.R. Tools to Improve its Operations*

2010 Wagner Prize - Call for Abstracts

The 2010 Daniel H. Wagner Prize for Excellence in Operations Research Practice has issued a Call for Abstracts closing on May 1, 2010. The competition will be held at the 2010 INFORMS Annual Meeting in Austin, Texas. The prize is awarded for a previously unpublished paper describing a real-world application of operations research. The criteria for selection include mathematical innovation and clarity of exposition, in contrast to the Franz Edelman Award, which emphasizes financial and organizational impact.

For details on the application process, please visit [http://www.informs.org/wagnerprize](http://www.informs.org/wagnerprize), and follow the Application Process link on the right side of the page. You can also contact the prize chair and president of Daniel H. Wagner Associates, Dr. C. Allen Butler, at Allen.Butler@va.wagner.com.

INFORMS Prize Winner to be Announced at the INFORMS Practice Conference in Orlando

By Jeffrey Camm, Chair, 2010 INFORMS Prize Committee
cammjd@ucmail.uc.edu

The winner of the 2010 INFORMS Prize will be announced during the Edelman Gala at the INFORMS Conference on O.R. Practice to be held in Orlando, Florida, April 18-20, 2010. The Edelman Gala will be held Monday evening, April 19.

The INFORMS Prize is given annually for effective and sustained integration of operations research (O.R.) into organizational decision making. The award is given to an organization which has repeatedly applied the principles of O.R. in pioneering, varied, novel, and lasting ways. Recent winners include Intel,

If you have never been to the Practice Conference or the Edelman Gala, I encourage you to attend this year. I hope to see you at the Edelman Gala where we will congratulate this year's winner!

**Optimizing Your Job Application**

**By R. John Milne, Past INFORMS Vice President, Practice Activities**

jmilne@us.ibm.com

In the previous CPMS newsletter, I wrote about challenges operations research professionals face in finding employment opportunities in the tough job market. One frustration is that even after finding a seemingly ideal job on an employer's website, submitting an online application often bears no fruit. Employers are inundated with online applications and resumes with the result that screening occurs for petty reasons through automatic searching for keywords and through the judgment of human resource professionals who know little about O.R. and only glance at many resumes.

Within the past year, three friends of mine submitted online job applications for O.R. jobs for which they were well suited. One of them applied through a corporation's website and obtained the position without any special assistance, demonstrating that the official process can work. A second person applied and did not hear anything back for months. Eventually, he sent his resume to a friend at that corporation. The friend sent the resume to the hiring manager who thought the resume was great and eventually hired him. A third person applied and was automatically rejected. Afterwards, an acquaintance of his forwarded the resume to others at the company resulting in a phone interview and later an on-site interview which went well. Before the on-site interview, he had been told to apply online for the same position for which the filtering software had rejected him prior to the phone interview.

The screening of resumes from the thousands to the dozens shouldn't be more rigorous than the screening from the dozens to the few. Yet for well qualified candidates this seems to be the case. For optimal processing of your job application, utilize your human network.

When searching online for job opportunities, recognize that many O.R. jobs are not referred to as "O.R." For instance, a recent worldwide search of the IBM jobs site ([www.ibm.com/career](http://www.ibm.com/career)) revealed zero hits for "operations research," 321 hits for "analytics," and 259 hits for "optimization." Most of these are not O.R. jobs, but some of them are.
The Art of Selling O.R.

By G. Jack Theurer, Member, CPMS Council
Theurer@aol.com

One day a technical services salesman at my company returned to the office and announced that he had just signed up a new name customer. This was a big deal. We asked: "How did you do it?" He said that when walking down the street in Midtown Manhattan he passed an office building that drew his attention so he decided to go in and look at the building directory to see what companies were there. A particular name caught his eye. He took the elevator to their floor, entered, and told the receptionist that he would like to speak with a senior executive. He was asked to wait while she checked. A vice president agreed to see him. By the end of that meeting a contract was signed to use my company's services.

Impossible? A fantasy? Not at all. From another age? Yes, it was. This took place in the late 1970s. My company was United Computing Systems, Inc. (UCS), a leader in the now extinct industry of remote-computing timesharing services - there were no desktop PCs in those days, only million-dollar-plus mainframe computers.

In essence the basics for selling any kind of service never change, whether it be technology services in general or operations research in particular. But times have changed and the rules of the game have changed with them.

In Midtown Manhattan for sure, it is no longer feasible to randomly walk into an office building, take the elevator up to the 32nd floor, walk into a company's office unannounced, and say that you want to speak with the VP of IT. Office buildings are fortresses these days. You need an appointment with someone (and a photo id) just to get past the turnstiles and security guards.

On the other hand the basics for selling don't really change. So what are they? In my 34 years of consulting, first as a company's external consultant (5 years), then an internal consultant (7 years), and now an independent consultant (22 years), I see these to be the true basics of selling:

- **Having a product/service that is in demand** (remote-computing timesharing service doesn't sell anymore). It helps to remember that while you are looking for the project it is looking for you. So you have to let it find you. Your service should be of high quality. In the case of O.R. you need to be highly skilled and experienced in your subject.

- **Knowing your (prospective) customers**. Some research in advance of a cold call is essential. The salesman in the story above obviously did no advance research on the
company, but he was a very experienced salesman and sometimes Lady Luck deals you a hand.

- **Networking.** You can never do enough of it.
- **Confidence.** You need to have confidence in yourself, your technical expertise, and your ability to get a contract. When I took sales training at UCS, we were told that a major reason for not getting a contract is the failure to ask for it. A brilliant presentation will flop if you don't ask for the business.
- **Trust.** There needs to be mutual trust between seller and buyer. In the case of O.R. consulting especially, without trust there is no relationship. Establish that trust early.

Straight out of graduate school - MS in mathematics from NYU Courant Institute - I was an analyst at UCS specializing in math/stat applications for its customers. They later created a special job title for me called "operations research specialist" (I requested it). The company believed in sending its analysts to the same one-week offsite sales training seminars to which it sent its salesmen (we called them "salesmen" in those days). That was because the analysts had so much face-to-face contact with the customers - for example, we regularly took customers out to lunch.

That sales training plus the experience of working side-by-side with the sales force at UCS proved to be enormously beneficial to me in my own consulting practice over the past 22 years. It supplied the confidence that I have for getting consulting work - 22 years stands as some measure of success, although admittedly there were times during the current Great Recession when I was starting to have doubts. But formal sales training is not essential to successfully selling O.R. services or products, if you can muster the confidence otherwise. I actually put very little of what I learned about selling to practical use today. The longer you're in business the better you are known and the greater the likelihood that a stranger will CALL YOU. It's happened to me several times.

Without a doubt selling O.R. or other IT services is more challenging today than it was 30 years ago. Terrorism along with the fallout from 9/11 erected all sorts of barriers to the human interaction that seems essential to conducting business well. Yet, supply and demand keep discovering new ways to find each other. But that's about the logistics of selling. The basics remain the same.

Having a product/service that is in demand is a moving target in O.R., whether it's software or consulting services. The independent practitioner of O.R. faces special challenges. The service is ever changing. Unlike remote-computing timesharing service which is extinct today, the type of work that I did ten years ago is still being done, however I can't offer it anymore. Today such work is being outsourced to offshore countries with lower wages - e.g., India and China. Some of the very vendors at INFORMS conferences ship O.R. work off to India for cost

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News from CPMS

https://ui.constantcontact.com/visualeditor/visual_editor_preview.jsp?age...
savings. For them the face-to-face work - proposals and deliverables - are handled locally with the client while the actual analytics work is carried out offshore. Consequently, an independent O.R. practitioner who does the entire project from proposal to deliverables and everything in between must keep his skill set up-to-date, staying "ahead of the curve," so as to offer a new, unique service because he no longer can compete effectively on price by merely serving up the "old stuff." What I am selling today I probably won't be able to offer five years from now.

Our O.R. services are needed today more than ever. And yet finding O.R. work can often seem elusive. From what I can tell, the recession that we've lived through for the past two years hasn't been as harmful to O.R. practice as one might think. It's just that tight budgets have driven the tried-and-true staples of O.R. to offshore locations. Although I did run up against a wall with companies which undertake marketing optimization. All of them told me that due to the economy they cut back their number of marketing promotions in a year to the point where an O.R. optimization tool no longer made sense for them.

In order to know what cutting-edge O.R. analytics are wanted in the marketplace right now, you have to be there. Consultants who are internal within a company are well placed for this as they understand the changes affecting their company's business. I don't know of any research journals that can tell you what the marketplace needs today, or better yet, tomorrow. Things are moving fast. Interfaces and the Edelman and Wagner competitions provide a good start though. But it takes a broad view and a deep understanding of the marketplace to understand where things are going next. You simply have to be there and not get lost in the details to see which way the wind is blowing.

Virtually all of the work that I've landed since I left my last day job at American Express 22 years ago came to me through networking, referrals, and callback business. I can't emphasize networking enough. It is my primary selling tool. And it's not hard work either. As Woody Allen said, 80% of success is just showing up. Networking has become as natural as breathing to me. Here are some pointers:

- **Business cards.** Never leave home without them!
- **Show up.** Professional meetings, INFORMS chapter meetings, conferences, cocktail parties, airplanes. Someone is looking for you!
- **Stay in touch** with people. For independent consultants it often is a case of out-of-sight, out-of-mind. Keep your name in front of business contacts. Send someone an article or link that will interest them. Every year in December I send out 200 holiday cards. When someone changes jobs find out where they went and establish contact again.
- **LinkedIn** is an excellent professional networking site. I found my current consulting assignment through someone...
with whom I'm connected on LinkedIn.
• I don't have a website, but do recommend it. When I'm not so busy consulting maybe I'll set one up.

Trust speaks for itself. There's not much to say about it. We all know what it is.

G. Jack Theurer is president of his consulting firm G. Theurer Associates Inc. which has specialized in OR/MS applications in industry and has focused mainly on the financial sector. He has been an independent practitioner for 22 years.

Continuing Education and the CPMS Group on LinkedIn

By Clinton Brownley, Member, CPMS Council
cbrownley@gmail.com

Welcome back to another installment of articles regarding the CPMS Group on LinkedIn. When last reported (July), our group had 164 members. Today, we have over 240 members. With the growth in the size of our membership has come an increased use of our LinkedIn group to share information about conferences, webinars, and professional opportunities. Here, however, the topic is continuing education.

Responding to expressions of interest in the latest membership survey, INFORMS is looking into the possibility of offering continuing education for its members. As part of this effort, the INFORMS Continuing Education Committee is working to accomplish two short-term goals: (1) reaching out to continuing-education providers to populate the INFORMS Continuing Education Providers and Courses Database, and (2) determining the content and structure of potential continuing-education short courses.

Continuing-education providers are asked to upload information about their courses to: http://ce.informs.org/inputCourses.php. A discussion about this topic has been posted in the Discussion Section of our LinkedIn group under the title, "Are You a Continuing Education Provider?" If you, the reader of this article, know of any schools, institutions, or individuals that provide relevant continuing-education courses, please encourage them to submit their information to our database so their courses will become more visible to our members.

The Continuing Education Committee will be working on its tasks over the next of couple months. If you have any questions, comments, or suggestions about the effort to develop a
continuing education program for INFORMS members, please post your remarks to our CPMS Group on LinkedIn so other members can be informed and respond. Remember, with your continuing contributions, our LinkedIn group will become an even more vibrant environment.

Marketing Strives to Serve Practice Members Better

By Gary Bennett, INFORMS Director of Marketing
gary.bennet@informs.org

As the Director of Marketing at INFORMS, I am keenly aware of the importance of the practice community. It is certainly where the future growth for INFORMS lies. In Marketing, we are always looking for new and better ways to serve our practice members.

Are you aware that INFORMS produces an Edelman DVD annually, and it is a benefit of your membership in INFORMS? At INFORMS headquarters, we have DVDs going back to 1983. They are yours for the asking. Simply contact me at gary.bennett@informs.org.

Operations researchers often tell me of the inspiration and ideas they receive from viewing the Edelman presentations. Beginning with the 2010 presentations, INFORMS will make the leap to providing them via streaming video. This will allow us to have the presentations ready for viewing almost immediately, instead of waiting during the time it takes to edit and produce the DVDs.

To get our feet wet with streaming video, we recorded the Wagner Prize presentations at the 2009 INFORMS Annual Meeting and made them available via the web roughly one month after the live presentations. To view the 2009 Wagner Prize presentations for excellence in operations research practice, go to http://livewebcast.net/INFORMS_AM_Wagner_Prize_2009.

Nothing we do at INFORMS matches the Edelman Gala for sheer excitement and representing the profession in a bright, positive light. This year, as we did last year, we will record the entire Gala from introductory remarks to announcement of the winner and post it on YouTube and the INFORMS website in near real-time. Students especially enjoy viewing portions of the Gala on YouTube.

Analytics magazine is not a brand new initiative but one that is certainly worth your time to get to know better. See the latest issue and all archival issues at www.analyticsmagazine.com. Analytics was launched in 2008 to be INFORMS’ outward-facing publication to the entire community interested in the use of
advanced analytics to help make better decisions in business and elsewhere. To date, *Analytics* is receiving about 30,000 visits per issue. I invite you to post a link to *Analytics* on your personal, departmental, or organizational website. I’d also like to invite you to submit a non-technical story idea to the editor. We are always on the look out for great story ideas. Contact horner@lionhrtpub.com.

Finally, I would like to mention the launch of our newly designed website - INFORMS OnLine (IOL). See it at [www.informs.org](http://www.informs.org).

IOL has been completely redesigned to become INFORMS' primary marketing portal where members and visitors come to engage and learn more about the profession. Take a quick look at IOL and you'll notice not only the strikingly designed pages but also many new features that will serve us well now and into the future including clearer, more user-friendly navigation throughout and sections with resources and content targeted specifically to our key audiences - academics, students, international professionals, and of course, practitioners.

### INFORMS Podcasts Let You Listen to Expert Practitioners

*By Bary List, Director of Communications, INFORMS*

[barry.list@informs.org](mailto:barry.list@informs.org)

Last year INFORMS inaugurated the podcast series at *Science of Better* with the distinct voices of O.R. practitioners explaining to clients and decision makers what analytics can do for them. Fascinated by their work and eager to share it with those who can take advantage of it, these operations researchers give you, their colleague, the chance to hear what makes analytics exciting. You can pass along these links to your executives and those on your O.R. team.

Intel's Karl Kempf was one of the first INFORMS members to share his accomplishments and opinions with the Science of Better series. Here you can listen to him discuss how his team sold its services throughout Intel, and through partnerships improved a range of Intel functions: product design, demand forecasting, factory development, pricing structures, equipment and material acquisition, and production-inventory-logistics planning.

Among those who share their work and advice are:

- Tom Davenport on his breakthrough book, “Competing on Analytics”
- *ORMS Today* columnist Mohan Sodhi on the supply chain implications of the turbulent economy
- SAS's Mary Crissey and Vanguard Software's Brian Lewis
on working with O.R. clients

- Stanford’s Ron Howard on his work in the public and private sectors

Make sure to point your colleagues and executives to www.scienceofbetter.org to hear these first-hand explanations of ways that operations researchers improve processes and profits. And if you’re working on an exciting project that you’d like to share with the world, drop me a note at barry.list@informs.org. You may find yourself reaching a new and attentive online audience.

Continuing Education: A Move into Short Courses and Tutorials

By Rocky Gay, Chair, Continuing Education Committee
rockygay@decisionstrategies.com

The INFORMS Continuing Education (CE) Committee has been working to increase the number of courses on the continuing education website, available through INFORMS Online.

In the 2009 INFORMS member survey, we asked: “In line with the objective of helping our practitioner members keep up with recent advances, INFORMS is considering developing short term courses/tutorials, delivered face to face in a convenient location, that would enhance or refresh practitioner skills with the latest methodologies and substantive findings in their areas of interests. How interested would you be in this?”

29% of respondents were extremely interested and 31% were moderately interested. This response suggests there is a demand from at least half of our INFORMS professional body to offer short courses and tutorials.

We subsequently asked our INFORMS members, “As an extension of the short course idea, INFORMS is considering a similar type of educational experience to be delivered online. How interested would you be in this?”

Over 40% of the respondents stated they would be extremely interested in the online short course idea, while another 31% stated they would be moderately interested. Thus, roughly 7 out of 10 of the INFORMS members who responded to this question showed interest.

The INFORMS professional staff - represented by Mark Doherty, Gary Bennett and Terry Cryan - along with the Continuing Education Committee are researching topics and means to deliver the right course content in the right frequency. Our goal is
to have the first short course/tutorial available for you this fall.

Currently you can investigate which courses are available to you on our CE website. In addition, if you teach courses and would like to promulgate your offering, please submit a request via the link: http://ce.informs.org/inputCourses.php. Moreover, via this same link we are asking course providers to solicit their nominations of courses to add. Please forward this link to potential course providers.

Once courses are submitted, INFORMS will approve them before they appear in the INFORMS database. The CE website will be screened to avoid inappropriate courses; they should be of value to the ORMS community. There will be no charge for listing a course.

The committee intends to interpret appropriateness broadly, so as to include anything helpful to ORMS professionals. Individual courses, educational programs, and conferences that have an educational component are all acceptable. We have established the policy that only courses with announced dates and venues will be listed. Courses must be taught in English and be generally available to the public. If there is any question, we will try to err on the side of being inclusive.

As more providers add courses, our CE website should continue to get better. So please make a point to return to the site. And please pass your course suggestions along to me.

The new CE website has developed from the terrific work of Dr. Bill Klimack, the previous INFORMS Continuing Education Committee chair. Work continues with a great collaborative effort by members of the Continuing Education Committee and INFORMS professional staff. The committee members are Daniel Nevin, Clinton W. Brownley, Christine V. Bullen, Steve Sashihara, Mike McCoy, (Credentialing Committee), and I. The professional staff members involved with the website are Rafael McFadden and David Wirth.

Feel free to contact me with comments and suggestions at rockygay@decisionstrategies.com.

Note From the Newsletter Editor

By Randy Robinson, Chair, CPMS Newsletter Committee
randy.robinson@mac.com

As always, we ask for your article ideas, announcements, or comments to be considered for future issues (send to randy.robinson@mac.com).

And, as always, the newsletter is brought to you by the authors and...
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