



IABC SoCal's Happy Hour Offers Job Hunting Hacks

by IABCLAAAdmin | Sep 25, 2020 | Corporate Communications, Events, Jobs, News, Professional Development

Social



By Eli Natinsky

IABCLA Vice President/President-Elect

Thank you to everyone who attended “IABC SoCal’s Happy Hour: Build Your Network and Share Tips and Tricks for Succeeding in the Coronavirus Job Market” on September 10 via Zoom.

[Karen Trachtenberg](#), an IABCLA board member, led the conversation. Karen’s worked across several industries, so she’s gone through a job search or two. Here are her thoughts:

1. Expectations: it's best to know exactly the type of role you want before you begin your search, as a blanket approach probably isn't going to land you your dream job. If, for example, you'd like to do social media for Formula 1, then *drive* in that direction.

2. Online Presence: make sure your social media looks and sounds professional. This is especially true of LinkedIn, as it's a place for business communication and not personal politics. Also, leave the photos of you at a raging kegger back at college!

3. Associations: look for any and all networking opportunities — it's worth your time if you make just one genuine connection with another person. (Karen: "Make friend. Get job.") In addition to IABCLA, comms folks in the Southland can get involved in Social Media Club LA, PRSA Los Angeles, and a host of similar groups. Given the pandemic, many of these organizations have virtual networking sessions so a long drive to and from a venue doesn't need to be a consideration — at least until COVID is over.

4. Recruiters: it could be worth the money to pay a headhunter who's had demonstrated success to help you in your search. He/she may have the contacts, know-how, and industry insights to land you a position.

5. Introductions: be proactive! When you meet someone new, ask them for an introduction to another person in your career area. Most people genuinely want to assist others, so they'll probably be happy to put you in touch with their colleagues.

6. Cover Letters:

A. Short: keep your cover letters brief at less than a page. In fact, Karen typically keeps hers to two or three paragraphs.

B. Unique: mention something in the document that's not on your resume — you don't want your cover letter to be a repeat of your CV.

C. Tailor: adapt your resume and cover letter to each position.

D. Writing: be sure to show off your writing skills if you're a communicator.

7. LinkedIn:

A. Premium: paying for the platform's premium service is a good investment as it can provide information and analysis to assist you in your search.

B. Groups: join LinkedIn groups aligned with your interests and participate in discussions, as it could help you stand out and draw the attention of employers.

C. Video: a personal video is another way to draw attention to yourself. Some folks now have short recordings in their profile summarizing who they are and what they do — a cover letter or an "elevator pitch" of another sort.

D. Messaging: do cold email others. Sometimes it can be difficult to reach out to folks you don't know, but just be genuine, honest, and to the point. ("I noticed this opening at your company, and I'd love to contribute! Here's how I can help...")

We appreciate the advice, Karen!

Please stay up to date on IABCLA by returning to our website and by following our group on social media: [Facebook](#), [LinkedIn](#), [Twitter](#), and [Instagram](#). We'll have several online gatherings this fall, including a second [DEI \(diversity, equity, and inclusion\) webinar](#) on October 21 at 12 p.m. via Zoom.

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As part of the 14,000-member International Association of Business Communicators (IABC), IABC Los Angeles serves the entire Los Angeles Metropolitan Area including



IABCLA's Freelancer Roundtable offers tips on being an independent communicator

Social



by IABCLAAdmin | Jul 24, 2020 | [Events](#), [Events - online](#), [Freelancing](#), [Networking](#), [News](#)



By Eli Natinsky
IABCLA Vice President/President-Elect

Thank you to [Jake White](#), principal consultant of Zaptin Communications, who hosted IABCLA's Roundtable for Freelancers on June 26 via Zoom. He shared stories from his time as an independent communicator and offered advice to help others get started as freelancers. Jake also

passed along resources that have been helpful during his journey.

A former chapter board member, Jake successfully went out on his own seven years ago. Before this, he worked both for agencies and companies in Los Angeles during a 25 year period. His career has been primarily in technology.

“As an independent consultant, you need to think like an entrepreneur — you are your own business,” he said. “Focus on your expertise and maximize your talents. Also, identify your target market.”

1) Considerations:

A. “Are you an indoor cat or an outdoor cat?”

Jake recalled an IABCLA event he attended where Victoria Dew, founder and CEO of Dewpoint Communications and the immediate past chair of the IABC International Executive Board of Trustees, posed this question to the group. She defined “indoor cats” as those who crave stability, like to receive daily meals, and look at the world from the comfort of their safe place. Someone who has a full-time job with an employer might fall in this group. Conversely, “outdoor cats” tend to be more independent in that they’re not sure where their next bite is going to come from, they live on the go, and each day is a new challenge. This feline is more along the lines of an independent consultant.

We all have different motivations, including income, health, relationships, environment, and the desire to work at home. Jake’s advice: before one becomes an independent consultant, they should first consider what type of “cat” they are.

B. Advantages / Disadvantages:

Pros:

- **Flexibility:** Jake's primary motivation for transitioning to full-time freelancer was the desire for a more fluid schedule, one that allowed him to head up assignments at the times that were best for him. Venturing out on his own also permitted him to work from home, so he no longer had to contend with long commute times.

- **Choice:** the aspect Jake liked most about being independent was the opportunity to work on projects that were most of interest to him. In the past, he took on a host of sales projects — trade shows, email campaigns, lead generation — but his real passion was dealing with that which supported branding and communication, such as public relations and content development.

Cons:

- **Isolation:** there are times when Jake found he lacked the human contact that comes from being in the workplace. However, he makes a point to counter isolation by scheduling a networking lunch or coffee with a colleague at least once a week, as this allows him to build his network and leave his home office.

- **Earnings:** another challenge of freelancing is income instability and the fact that there's little way of knowing the amount of income ones stands to generate year-to-year. This, of course, has tax implications and that's why Jake offers this tip: one should place half of their professional income in a business account and use these funds to pay taxes. This money can also be used for IRA investments each year.

2) Getting started

A. Differentiation: Jake suggested new freelancers narrow in on their talents, as well as the type of projects they'd like to handle. Having headed up marketing departments at various software companies, Jake had a variety of expertise to draw on — lead

generation, trade shows, PR, content creation, social media — and he let perspective clients know he could perform all of these tasks. However, this worked to his disadvantage as would-be customers were often searching for certain expertise. It wasn't until he focused on the IoT ("Internet of Things") that his business took off – in fact, people began to seek him out once he established himself as an expert in this technology area.

B. Networking: Jake noted 75 percent of his work as an independent consultant has come from just five individuals, and he referred to this as his "Power 5." He's found when others make referrals it takes the pressure off of him having to be his own salesman. Folks need to let others know what kind of work they're looking to do and that they're available for hire, he suggested.

C. Clients: there are several employment agencies that specialize in hiring independent consultants, including M-Squared Consulting, Patina Solutions, Business Talent Group, and Resources Global Professionals. There are also many online platforms that list a variety of jobs, like Upwork, Catlantal, TalMix, Expert360, and Toptal. In fact, Jake has a client who will only hire him through Upwork, as they find it makes for a more convenient arrangement.

D. LinkedIn: people can increase their visibility on their LinkedIn profile by 40 times if they complete three tasks: populate the top section entirely (name, photo, headline), list at least two job experiences, and add five recommendations. If these three components are in place, it triggers an algorithm and provides higher search visibility. Also, people should indicate on their profile they're an independent consultant and list their professional strengths.

E. LLC: Jake set up a limited liability company (LLC) to ensure he was protected should he encounter legal issues in the course of his work. Also, being a LLC adds a level of legitimacy. He found arranging an LLC through the State of California to be seamless and quick, as he went through Legal Zoom. The annual fee is \$800, and the designation must be renewed every year.

F. Taxes: Jake advises freelancers in California to be paid as an independent contractor on a 1099 tax basis, rather than on a W-2 as one would if they were a company employee. The AB-5 or “gig worker bill” was recently signed into law, and it reclassified many independent contractors as employees. As an independent contractor, one must pay their own state, federal and business taxes. A positive to this 1099 arrangement is certain tax deductions can be made, including Internet, cell phone, laptop, and business software. In addition, they are eligible for the following retirement plans: 25 percent of income can be put in a SEP-IRA or a 401-K can be maxed out.

G. Rate: Jake recommended independent communicators price themselves accordingly and quote their rate with confidence. There is a need to get out of the mindset of how much one made per hour when they were a direct hire with an organization, as their employer was paying for their healthcare, 401K, disability insurance, and other such expenses. It should be explained to a client they’re saving money given they don’t have to pay such costs. Also, there are times when a higher rate is a purchase of not only one’s talent, but experience — a client may find someone with less knowledge or skill with a lower rate, but it may take them twice as long to complete a project.

He used the following formula to figure out compensation:

- Divide annual income goal by 2,000 (roughly the # of working hours/year)
- Multiply that by 2, 2.5, and 3
- That is your low to high range of billing rates
- e.g. \$150K = \$150, \$187.50 and \$225 per hour

3) Resources

Jake recommended the following services:

A. Business tax registration certificate & annual business tax for City of Los Angeles

www.finance.lacity.org

B. 99Designs – logo package from \$299 – \$899

www.99designs.com

C. Jenny LaNicca – logo, website, letterhead

www.jennylanicca.com / jenny@jennylanicca.com

D. Jared Gold, Website by Tonight – \$899 – \$1299 flat rate

www.websitebytonight.com / hello@websitebytonight.com

E. Agencies: M-Squared Consulting, Patina Solutions, Business Talent Group, Resources Global Professionals

F. Online Platforms: Upwork, Catalant, TalMix, Expert360, Toptal

G. PICA – Professional Independent Consultants of America

www.picanetwork.org

All Access Annual Pass is \$395

Virtual sessions on topics such as “Getting Started as an Independent Consultant” and “Branding to Build Your Business”

Explore [PICA's online knowledge library](#) for tips on marketing, business development, legal and contracting, etc. Some articles and templates are only for members, but many are open to the public.

Thank you again, Jake, for sharing your expertise and facilitating an outstanding discussion!

And thank you to those who are reading this for supporting IABCLA! The chapter is committed to helping communications professionals stay connected and build their careers during these challenging times. Please stay up-to-date on events and activities by visiting IABCLA.com, subscribing to the chapter's [newsletter](#), and by following the group on [LinkedIn](#).



Trust and Structure Are Keys to Effective Team Building

by IABCLAAAdmin | May 4, 2020 | Corporate Communications, Employee Communication, News, Professional Development

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By Eli Natinsky

IABCLA Vice President / President-Elect

What are your experiences working on a team? What makes a team work well? What might get in the way of a team working well? Those are some of the questions IABCLA board member [Ephraim Freed](#) asks when he facilitates team development workshops at [Magic Leap](#) where he serves as the Senior Manager of Digital Community.

“The purpose of a seminar is to take time to step back, to reflect,

to get to know each other, to identify problems, priorities, goals, and plans," he said. "For most of my career, it's been my job to bring people together, to communicate, to help others collaborate more effectively and help folks reach their potential."

Ephraim shares his philosophy on the two intertwined components of teamwork:

- **Trust:** great teams have a foundation of trust. Building trust needs to be an intentional effort and it takes time. It also requires people to be vulnerable with one another, to learn about each other, and come to appreciate one another.

- **Structure:** good teamwork and collaboration relies on the right process and arrangement. In order to have people work together, you need to have the right system in place in order to produce the best results.

He noted trust is fundamentally about safety. What he's seen during his career are leaders who miss out on critical information employees possess — on the market, customers, systems the company uses — because workers don't feel they can share their thoughts openly.

"Trust kills bad ideas, trust drives innovation," he said. "When it's a good idea, people will recognize it, and when it's a bad idea, people will tell you it's a bad idea — but individuals have to feel safe in order to do that. They need to trust their leaders are good people, their leaders care about them, their opinion matters and it will be respected and heard and thought out."

Ephraim explained trust can create a positive ripple both inside and outside the workplace. When people feel it, there will be higher employee engagement, more productivity, and more passion. When somebody is executing their idea rather than their boss's idea, they feel more accountable, and they're going to work extra hard to make sure they're delivering an exceptional product or service. In addition, if folks are in a positive, trusting and caring environment, they'll leave the office as better partners, better parents, better people.

How do you build trust? Ephraim explained the key is to first

create vulnerability. He makes a point to incorporate into his sessions moments where people reveal who they are. When people do this, they create vulnerability and that vulnerability breeds trust. If, for example, a group was working on a marketing initiative, he might pose the question to each person: “What’s your favorite marketing campaign — and why?” This allows for personal disclosure that ties into larger goals.

“You have to build the right levels of vulnerability into a team building workshop,” he said. “When people let their guard down, they start to see the human in there, they start to be more forgiving of each other, they start to be more inquisitive about each other, they start to make connections at a personal level — all of that helps to build trust and helps others work together better.”

As far as structure, a classic teamwork exercise Ephraim facilitates during conferences is brainstorming. He noted the most common way to brainstorm — everyone randomly throws out an idea — is not the best way to execute the process. Given power dynamics and different personalities, extroverts and leaders are more likely to speak up than introverts. Also, there’s going to be a certain “herd mentality” where somebody will suggest an idea and others will go along with it. You, therefore, might lose brilliant insights from those who have less hierarchical power.

A better way of brainstorming, he suggests, is to provide Post-it Notes all in the same color, as well as pens with the same shade of ink. Each person adds their ideas to Post-it Notes, and then the team organizes the messages silently and collaboratively. In short order, folks will have collectively built a prioritized list. This approach will yield a rich collection of ideas, and the group will leave with better alignment and a sense of shared ownership because they contributed equally in generating the outcome.

He offers this final thought on team building: “There’s a great saying, ‘If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together.’ I think about that a lot — when you’re trying to build a team or get people to work together you have to slow down so folks can build trust, so you can then prepare to do big things

and great things over a period of time.”

Thank you, Ephraim, for sharing your insights — and we ask you to do the same. Please email us at blogs@iabcla.com if you are a chapter member and would like to share your expertise with our community. We also encourage you to utilize our LinkedIn group — [IABC Los Angeles Chapter](#) — as a means of support and connection.

ABOUT US

As part of the 14,000-member International Association of Business Communicators (IABC), IABC Los Angeles serves the entire Los Angeles Metropolitan Area including Downtown, South Bay, San Fernando Valley, Westside and points in between. We are about as diverse a chapter as you can find. Our members work in the public and private sectors as consultants, independent business owners, and corporate staff in such diverse fields as marketing, advertising, corporate communications, government relations, human resource communications and shareholder relations.



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