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Expertise Is Becoming Sexy . . . Find Your Passion and Do It Passionately!

I just completed a week of training at the Consultants' Training Institute, 40-plus hours of the Forensic Accounting Academy capped by a half day of *Working through the Business Valuation Standards Maze*. I came home "fired up" despite finding my desk covered in paper and a backlog in my e-mail inbox. The title to this article came to me within a day of returning; it summarizes the essence of my experience this past week and this past year. Our members and instructors are a passionate and giving group of professionals with a variety of talents. Thankfully, we are in a growth industry at a time of huge opportunity: be ready.

A word about the Forensic Accounting Academy; I expected an intense five days of learning; it quickly became obvious the techniques we learned are useful to the BV practitioners and auditors among us. I took away several tools that I will use in the next 90 days in my practice, and I have expanded my list of resources to call on when I am not quite sure what to do next. Kudos to the team of developers who put this together.

Also, if you haven't looked lately, check out the Certified Forensic Financial Analyst program; it is robust, diverse, and cutting edge. With six tracks, I suggest that there is something in it for all of us.

I hear a lot about "information overload," and there are no signs of this slowing down. Thanks to technology, it's easier than ever to get information out there; it's also getting harder to distinguish the good from the questionable. Meanwhile the business of valuation and consulting is evolving and there is more to absorb. In my mind this is a key reason for continued involvement with NACVA and its chapters. We're here to help you succeed and most of us, myself included, aren't aware of many of the resources that can support us. (NACVA's executive director, Pam Bailey, is always a good person to turn to with questions.) For example, *Case Analysis* (CAP) is a program that's been with us for a long time. It, too, is evolving. This year we have offered more CAP sessions at our chapter meetings than ever before, and it remains a popular offering with our members. It's a great deal. You get to sit around the table and critique someone's work. If you have the courage to submit a report, you get confidential, anonymous, feedback from your peers (in addition to a royalty check). NACVA is taking steps to improve and increase the reports you see, but to keep this program vital and relevant we also need your help because it is a demanding program to administer. We have updated and enhanced the CAR form and you'll find it useful in reviewing reports you issue. We are making it easier to submit a report to be reviewed. Like so much in our organization, your participation is vital. Resolve this coming year to enroll your staff and submit their work. The more members who participate, the better we become as an organization. Don't take my word for it; here's a quote I recently read by the Honorable Judge David Laro, as he offers "top ten tips to experts." They include:

- *Be thorough. BV reports are getting more complex, "and that's good," Laro says. He wants to see less boilerplate and more "strength of analysis of the data."*

- *Be thick-skinned. Recent critiques of appraisers by federal tax and circuit courts may have gone too far—for example, it shouldn't really matter what state the appraiser comes from (vis-à-vis the subject interest) or how long he/she remains on a site visit. "What matters is what you do there."*
- *Be peer-reviewed. Don't depend on the courts to do this for you. "Frankly, the court is not your peer. This organization is," he said, "your colleagues are. The court should not be put in the position of sanctioning or approving one method or another. That's for you to do."*

I add my own reasons: it's the capstone to our training and it's the best place to make your mistakes.

In case you haven't heard, State Chapters are expanding. Our chapter leaders are also passionate, creative and they are "stepping out." They are reaching out to academia, the legal profession, and the Internal Revenue Service to discuss the current issues that are before them, and there are plenty. Around the country members are stepping forward to help lead our chapters, making it possible to expand their reach. To do more our chapters will need more people who are willing to contribute. It is a good investment; you will gain more than you give. To all who volunteered this year, thank you for your service and helping to move this organization forward. Just in the last quarter, new officers are assuming roles in Alaska, Michigan, New Mexico, New York, South Carolina, Texas, and more. Look for news of meetings in the coming season. To be sure they succeed, pitch in and give a few hours. Call your president or e-mail me and offer to call some of your state's new members, or help with organizing a meeting, or host a speaker.

This year and in 2008, many of our chapters are co-sponsoring the class, "Working through the Business Valuation Standards Maze" with their CPA society. Thank you to all of you who make these partnerships work. What can't be forgotten is the tremendous amount of effort that was put forth to make this class available, on such a timely basis, to all of us in the profession. Besides the resources invested by NACVA, there were tight deadlines and long hours to get this ready for delivery. The development team not only put the course together, they have been teaching it around the country. After seeing this in action, it's obvious: this is not about the money, it's about the passion. I hope you take the opportunity to catch this four-hour course at a location near you in 2008, or participate in the live two-hour webinar. When you do, remember to thank the instructor for his/her dedication to this program.

We continue to survey the membership and gather intelligence so we can give you the best chapter experience possible. For those who took the time to respond, thank you. When the survey comes to your e-mail inbox, please share your thoughts. NACVA remains a member-driven organization in all areas; we value and respect all your comments.

It's the end of another year and a time to reflect, renew, and celebrate. This week we begin the planning cycle for the 2008 Tri Annual Agendas for our state chapter meetings. Is there something you'd like to learn more about? Suggest it as a topic for 2008; better yet, offer to help prepare the presentation. Remember to take stock of what you have accomplished this year, not just what you did not do. Plan for the future, to make 2008 the best year yet and most of all celebrate the many blessings you have enjoyed. Though it has not been without its challenges, I end 2007 with an attitude of gratitude. On my list of blessings is the opportunity to interact with so many passionate professionals in our organization. This has been the spirit of NACVA for all my years of involvement; I hope you share that. If not, reach out to one of our chapter leaders and spend some time helping him or her put an event together. You'll quickly

see the “difference” that makes NACVA successful throughout the country. Hoping to see you in Las Vegas next year . . .

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Local state chapter events provide members valuable opportunities to: (1) promote CVAs, AVAs, CFFAs, and NACVA within the community, (2) create a platform to network and develop mentoring relationships with other members, (3) deliver relevant industry-related information and educate members on the range of support services available as benefits of membership, (4) and, receive economical CPE on timely and relevant topics pertinent to valuation and litigation forensic services.

I encourage NACVA members to take advantage of these opportunities by sharing ideas and educating one another on current issues facing the business valuation, litigation, and financial forensics/fraud consulting communities. To help facilitate and address such issues, NACVA provides presentation materials for three half-day state chapter meetings each year on topics of current interest.

Contact your local state chapter president to let him/her know of your interest in attending a meeting, being a presenter, or assisting in preparing the materials for a future meeting.