

## COMSOC MARKETING: INCREASING THE ONLINE PRESENCE

The IEEE Communications Society (ComSoc) offers superior technical publications, conferences, educational tutorials and courses, and online options. The ComSoc marketing challenge is to package, position, price, and promote these products so that the global audience of communications engineering professionals become aware of the career benefits and advantages of ComSoc products and services. This must be done within the context of IEEE support, financial integrity of society programs, and a competitive, ever-changing global environment.

ComSoc marketing staff wears several hats and supports multiple programs. Marketing supplies creative and production services to the other departments of the Society, such as Advertising Sales, Executive, Meetings and Conferences, as well as support to the Board of Governors (BoG) and volunteer initiatives. Marketing directly supports membership development and publications sales; represents the Society at conferences and trade shows; and maintains liaison with IEEE staff to assure quality service to our membership and customers. Marketing supports IEEE branding without diminishing its legacy.

I am pleased to share this month's column with Stan Moyer, ComSoc Director of Marketing and Industry Relations, and John Pape, (staff) Director of Marketing and Creative Services.

Stan Moyer has been an active member of ComSoc for over 20 years. He has served in various roles, such as Treasurer and Member-at-Large, for the Board of Governors for the last 10 years. Stan has also served on many committees and boards of ComSoc, such as the ComSoc standards board, awards committee, conference board, and several technical committees. Stan currently is a Vice President and Executive Director for Inventures ([www.inventures.com](http://www.inventures.com)), a company specializing in managing industry technology alliances. Prior to coming to Inventures in 2011, Stan worked for over 20 years in the Applied Research area of Bellcore and Telcordia.

John Pape has served as the (staff) Director of Marketing and Creative Services since 1997. His responsibilities include planning and implementing the society's marketing activities for membership, publications, continuing education, and conferences. During his tenure, products have migrated from print to electronic media, and marketing tactics have evolved from direct mail and manual process-



VIJAY BHARGAVA

ing to complicated e-mail campaigns and social media outreach. Recently, he has led the Communications Society efforts to expand Social Media activities, to execute the plan to offer virtual courses in wireless communications engineering, and to deliver Society information via smartphones. From 1989 to 1997 he managed the Publications Marketing Department of the American Society of Civil Engineers. He held the title of Director in 1997. He has managed marketing activities for more than 30 years with international publishers including S. Karger Publishers, Methuen, and Springer-Verlag.

The February 2011 President's Column provided details about how ComSoc Marketing goes about its job. However, there has been a lot of change in the past couple of years, so we'd like to share what's new with ComSoc marketing?

During the past two years, marketing has been especially active with enhancing our online presence and offering delivery of information via smartphone applications. When one conference

web site displays videos of committee members discussing conference highlights, there are many more to follow. Max Luskitnikov, Digital Content Specialist, has created many videos to enhance conferences and attraction for potential presenters, registrants, and visitors. Due to our aggressive social media position, Ting Qian, Senior Project Manager, has increased blog content creation and posting on many sites and locations (e.g., see the ComSoc Blog at <http://www.comsoc.org/blog>). In the past two years, ComSoc's Facebook global network has grown to more than 50 independent sites linking to programs, conferences, and chapters. Social media has proved to be a fertile arena for expansion and engagement with the global community. By the end of August 2013, the ComSoc Facebook page (<http://www.facebook.com/IEEEComSoc>) had over 415,000 "likes" and over 80,000 engaged users.

While it is not possible to directly relate social media activity to membership growth, ComSoc is enjoying an exceptional year of membership growth with an increase of more than 12% compared with 2012. By the end of the year the number of members may be close to the record membership results of the "dot com" years.

Heather Sweeney, Meetings and Conferences Product Manager, and Kerriane Sullivan, Project Manager, market 14 annual ComSoc conferences. That includes multiple

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years for each event. Kerrienne also manages the production of *e-News* and *e-News Extra*.

The IEEE Online Conference on Green Communications (OnlineGreenComm), the virtual forum dedicated to the advancement of energy-efficient communications and green networking technologies held 29–31 October 2013, was rebranded from IEEE GreenCom to reflect the fully online agenda of the entire three-day program devoted to the development of next-wave green communications and energy saving technologies. The conference enhanced its delivery mechanism from voice over PowerPoint to a platform that includes video broadcast of all presentations and a virtual exhibit hall that will facilitate demonstrations and a lounge for attendees to network.

As marketing is as much about gathering information and intelligence as it is about promotion, we have conducted surveys and focus groups to learn more about the members' conference needs and wants in an effort to better engage with our members. Promotional email blasts, social media, and printed and online campaigns have been expanded to include contacting members the old fashion way — by telephone. A telephone campaign was developed for IEEE GLOBECOM to be held in Atlanta, Georgia from 9–13 December 2013. A selected group of members will receive live calls and/or phone messages about the conference.

The ComSoc Marketing department is the home of ComSoc Wireless Communication Engineering Technologies certification and online courses. Marilyn Catis, our

Manager of Certification and Continuing Education, has considerably grown the online course schedule, catalog, and attendance. In 2010 there was one online course. By the end of 2013, the schedule will have expanded to a catalog of seven distinct courses, nine instructors, almost 40 courses offerings, and 700 registrants.

On the volunteer side, the Marketing and Industry Relations Board, led by Stan Moyer, which, in close cooperation with John Pape and the marketing staff, identifies needs and opportunities, helps define the scope of marketing, and the priorities in assignment of limited marketing resources, and proposes new initiatives. Stan provides the liaison between the ComSoc Marketing department and the ComSoc BoG and the many ComSoc volunteers that govern and manage the Society and its products and services. This liaison arrangement helps to ensure that new products and services and other new marketing needs are brought to the attention of the ComSoc Marketing department.

Marketing is situated in a unique position at ComSoc. There are always new challenges, new techniques, and new lessons to learn. Volunteers rely on our expertise and insight. We are intimately involved in most aspects of society activities: magazines, journals, proceedings, advertising sales, exhibit representation, conferences, Board meetings, chapters, IEEE relations, sister societies, www development, applications, videos, presentations, awards, and very much more. The marketing staff is experienced, enthusiastic, energetic, and excited to work with the best of the best communications professionals — the members and volunteers of ComSoc.

### AMENDMENT TO THE CONSTITUTION

The following proposed amendment has been approved by the Communications Society and IEEE to be added to the Society's Constitution, Article 7- Member Services:

7.4 Standards - The Society sponsors standards development in accordance with the process defined and approved by IEEE Standards Associations. It also organizes standards-related activities that comply with applicable IEEE/ComSoc and/or IEEE-SA policies.

Please see url <http://www.comsoc.org/about/documents/constitution/7> to view what is included in our Constitution under Member Services. This amendment will become effective in 60 days unless one percent of the membership objects in writing to Jack Howell, Executive Director, IEEE Communications Society, 14 Penn Plaza, 9th Floor, NY, NY 10122.