

IEEE ComSoc
35th North America Regional Chapter Chairs Congress 2018
(NA RCCC 2018)

Kansas City, MO, USA
May 19-20, 2018, in conjunction with ICC 2018

- A. Identification and Prioritization of Hot Topics, Challenges and Suggestions**
- B. HOT TOPIC Suggestions to ComSoc BoG**

Present:**Day 1**

Wahab Almuhtadi – NAB Director
Fawzi Behmann – NAB Vice Chair
Scott Atkinson – Past NAB Director
Raed Abdullah – Secretary & Moderator

Song Guo, Director Member Services
Newman Wilson – R1 Representative
Irfan Lateef – New Jersey Coast (ComSoc)
Julia Upton -- Maine
Sundar M. Sundaramurthy – Worcester County
Paul Cotae – R2 Representative
Doug Holly – Washington DC
Kafi Hassan – Northern Virginia
Anna Romaniuk – Baltimore
Devon Gayle – R3 Representative
Titus Lo -- Seattle
David Lips – Atlanta
Larry Horner – R5 Representative
Tim Weil – Denver
Mehdi Roopaei - San Anotnio
Zhensheng Zhang – R6 Representative
Eman Hammad – Toronto
Francois Chan -- Kingston
Qiang Ye – Canadian Atlantic

Susan Brooks - Executive Director
Carol Cronin - Executive and Volunteer Services
Administrator
Adam Greenberg - Technical Activities and Industry
Outreach Director
Kerriane Sullivan, MD Manager
Mike Fallenstein - vTools Committee Chair

Day 2

Wahab Almuhtadi – NAB Director
Fawzi Behmann – NAB Vice Chair
Scott Atkinson – NAB Director
Raed Abdullah – Secretary & Moderator
Khaled B. Letaief -- President
Nei Kato - Vice President, Member and Global Activities
Song Guo, Director Member Services
Newman Wilson – R1 Representative
Irfan Lateef – New Jersey Coast (ComSoc)
Julia Upton -- Maine
Sundar M. Sundaramurthy – Worcester County
Paul Cotae – R2 Representative
Doug Holly – Washington DC
Kafi Hassan – Northern Virginia
Anna Romaniuk – Baltimore
Devon Gayle – R3 Representative
Titus Lo -- Seattle
David Lips – Atlanta
Larry Horner – R5 Representative
Tim Weil – Denver
Mehdi Roopaei - San Anotnio
Zhensheng Zhang – R6 Representative
Eman Hammad – Toronto
Francois Chan -- Kingston
Qiang Ye – Canadian Atlantic
Cheng Li – Newfoundland & Labrador

Susan Brooks - Executive Director
Carol Cronin - Executive and Volunteer Services
Administrator
Adam Greenberg - Technical Activities and Industry Outreach
Director
Kerriane Sullivan, MD Manager
Mike Fallenstein - vTools Committee Chair

A. Identification and Prioritization of Hot Topics, Challenges and Suggestions:

Facilitated by Panel Discussion; ALL ATTENDEES

Many in attendance belonged to more than three societies. Stats show that to be the general case: CompSoc, Signal Processing and Vehicular Technology were top three. Question: how many volunteer for more than ComSoc? Why ComSoc?

Issues Identified were:

1. Members change their interest areas, or companies and hard to retain.
2. Can't market activities outside chapter member base.
3. There are tens of thousands of engineers and only thousands are members, why? IEEE was known for research, academic and networking strength, how do we stay relevant when there are competing providers: open source, free, available faster, networking available, addressing present and near present issues and solutions not those far out in time. How do we appeal to millennials?
4. Need IEEE Roadshow type material train on how to deliver pitch in a systematic way on what IEEE can provide prospective members and volunteers.
5. Asking someone to volunteer is taken as adding more workload.
6. Members vote in what's relevant by showing up or not. Especially millennials will turn to what and who provides them with best value and IEEE competes internally and externally for their attention.
7. ComSoc doesn't have any humanitarian or public society development activities.
8. Greying members are leaving: interested, but not enough to remain members when dollars compete for life or health insurance.
9. IEEE membership is the first barrier to then becoming or remaining society members.
10. Geographic dispersion, traffic congestion, venue availability and affordability are becoming worse.
11. Access to IEEE Xplore is free to members of employers or academia that get a package access.

12. Employers are not reimbursing for membership, and many may see IEEE volunteering competing for employee time and attention.
13. Distinguished Lecturers may only be too rigid in sticking to certain talks that are not as relevant.
14. People are interested in open source tools that they can access for free and or can contribute to for improving employment opportunity or fame. If they are members and can get that, there may be benefit.
15. ComSoc not on Collabratec.

Suggested Considerations were:

1. Work with other society chapters in section – are in same membership and prospective geographic footprint -- and non-profit providers on joint activities.
2. Get to know your members - focus on relationship building - and start them in attending some events and then help with small volunteer tasks. Pitch to the specific interest they have: networking, publishing, meeting key people, etc.
3. Do broader non-member activities, and non/low-technical popular activities that attract those with some interest to those involved in STEM areas; may get lawyers, patent folks, government, high school, accountants, in-career transition folks, etc. to attend and may become members or at least increase IEEE and ComSoc visibility.
4. Sell networking with like-minded folks.
5. Demographic issue not unique to IEEE; however, ASME has increased membership by adapting organisation to the new realities. Need to transform IEEE.
6. Tailor pitch to demographic, in a specific applicable strategic way.
7. Need to understand volunteering / membership “camel hump”: 1st hump is the student and YP when time is available, career building is important; 1st trough is where career maturing and family building takes most time; 2nd hump is when career and family is mature so more time is available. So, latch prospects on 1st hump cycle, keep relationships in trough, and bring back at 2nd hump.
8. Encourage student branch participation in section and chapter activity – should have advisory role.
9. Create activities to provide leadership, cultivate volunteers (non-members, and members).

10. Take initiative to ask people to get involved, they may not ask to be involved, but will accept being asked.
11. Pitch volunteering roles as leadership roles, and leadership development opportunities. In some cases, framing “volunteering” as a “way to give back” may be received better.
12. Universities are seed beds for members and activities. Outreach to students is very important. Professors are great recruiters.
13. Industry needs IEEE.
14. Create student summits that students lead.
15. Reach out to high school kids in final year.
16. Document Best Known Practices (BKP) – build pipeline on how to strengthen bonds.
17. Ask hiring managers to include in job postings the need to describe how applicants stay current, what activities they participate in outside work, what memberships do they have?
18. Coach volunteers, don’t alienate them or leave them helpless.
19. Stream events or record them for future view at person’s own time.
20. Use social media to appeal to genre / demographic intended – millennials don’t email.
21. Focus on relevant topics and publicity method to appeal to broad audience.
22. If employer doesn’t pay membership fee, note that they don’t pay for your driving license either.
23. Offer courses for “retooling.”
24. Learn from other organisations that program for younger kids so they hear the brand and understand its value early.

B. HOT TOPIC Suggestions to ComSoc BoG

(in order brainstormed, though clusters into similar topic).

1. Marketing

- a. Need a pitch for i.e., IEEE Members, Students, and Professionals. A “30sec-3min.-30min.” (what it is, why, what value and how to take advantage) pitch with slide aide would help.
2. Region and Chapter Matters
 - a. Focus on getting member feedback continuously and act.
 - b. Fund suggestions provided on feedback forms completed by chapters who provide the issues and solutions.
 - c. Make membership Organisational Unit data available to North America Regional, Region and Chapter chairs automatically when position assumed without need for ComSoc President approval. If they don't know what's happening with membership in their area, then they can't manage it.
 - d. Provide a forum for chapter chairs to collaborate: post questions, issues, solutions. ComSoc doesn't have a Collabrotec Community.
 - e. Need support for dealing with non-responsive / under-performing chapter chairs.
 - f. Structure Chapter to balance representation from industry, students, government and academia.
3. Open Source Activity:
 - a. IEEE developing an Open Source Community in low profile trial now.
 - b. Provide Students and Young Professionals training on Open Source platforms and initiatives, and provide them the tools.
 - c. Make most cited papers automatically open source as it contributes to the body of knowledge. (Publications belong to IEEE and not ComSoc once in IEEE Xplore)
 - d. Consider how Google leverages their AI platform for their business, IEEE can do same.
 - e. IEEE Xplore provides access to Code Ocean where access to algorithms and code cited in papers can be accessed.
4. Recognition
 - a. Establish Student scholarships like Power and Energy Society. May be expensive, so can consider a limited number of IEEE ComSoc memberships per chapter (need to consider IEEE membership entry fee).
 - b. Label “volunteering” as “leadership” roles
 - c. Recognize most active/ successful volunteers
 - d. Create a “Friend of ComSoc Chapter” award to recognise supporters. Empower local chapters to issue.
5. Outreach to Potential Members
 - a. Develop strategy for catching engineers in 1st/2nd year, before they specialize. This has a current impact; section and student branches need to be involved.

- b. Develop strategy for catching high school kids to get into STEM. This is a five to six year lead time pipeline; section and student branch need to be involved; TISP needs to be involved.
 - c. Connect the community with famous IEEE ComSoc people (i.e., when DLs visiting chapter, can visit these folks).
 - d. Establish a ComSoc humanitarian / developmental activities. This appeals to many regardless of genre.
 - e. Collaborate with other affiliate organisations (i.e., chamber of commerce) to get access to industry and pitch the IEEE value. Distinguished Lecturers brought to a chapter can also be asked to do present to these organisations.
6. Membership Fees and Types
- a. Work with local professional engineering associations to provide CEU/PDU credited activities that if taken, can be used to reduce membership fees.
 - b. Create a “peekaboo” for non-members, and provide members only access, benefits, privileges.
 - c. Consider offering tiered membership fees, packages, or pick & choose menu, and focus some to specifically industry, academia, government, students, affiliates, etc.
 - d. Consider “Loyalty” points program to aid retention and alleviating future member costs.

Draft minutes and the photos will be available for all to view in the next few weeks, and hopefully in a Collabrotec ComSoc Community.