

October 2018

A new path for PIC

By Sharon Aschaiek

Photo: Bill Smith



Oct. 4: Seen at the fall social

GARY SCHLEE, ABC, MC (centre) chats with guests at the PIC fall social on Oct. 4. We had a great turnout, including long-time and new members, students and friends. PIC socials are a terrific way to catch up with other indies, share ideas and expand your network.

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[Flickr page](#)



IABC/Toronto's Professional Independent Communicators is evolving in 2018-19 with a new approach to programming and communications.

First, to provide more programming value to the broader chapter membership, and to help independents better connect with in-house and agency communicators, **we will be running more joint or combined events with the chapter.**

By better integrating with the chapter, other members will have more opportunities to learn about the communication trends, strategies and tactics pertaining to indies. This will help them gain a broader view of the profession and improve how they work with communication contractors. As well, staff communicators looking to make the leap to starting a business will gain useful ideas and tips.

For communicators who already run their own business, this approach will help indies better understand the communication challenges staff communicators face. It will also increase opportunities to network with potential clients.

Second, the emphasis on greater integration with the chapter carries over to **the look, format and distribution of our newsletter.**

The Buzz has long published during the last week of each month (except for our combined July/August edition). We've emailed the issue exclusively to communicators who have joined our mailing list, most of whom are independents. However, many other communicators would benefit from this content.

Starting with this issue, *The Buzz* will be delivered with IABC/Toronto's bi-weekly e-Lert, which reaches many more members of our profession. Publishing *The Buzz* as part of every end-of-month edition of e-Lert allows for sharing insights about the business of communicating, which could also be useful to in-house or agency communicators.

There are other advantages to incorporating *The Buzz* into

the e-Lert. Information about PIC events and participants will receive a higher profile, which could create more business opportunities for chapter members who run their own practice.

As well, delivering *The Buzz* through the e-Lert means you'll receive one less email per month from the chapter. I think we can all applaud the idea of fewer messages in our inbox!

The new look and size of *The Buzz*, meanwhile, is meant to share our most pertinent information at a more concise length that is easier to digest. Thank you to the talented graphic designer [Deana De Ciccio](#), also a chapter member, for refreshing *The Buzz's* look and for volunteering to design each issue through the 2018-19 chapter year.

What's not going to change with PIC, and *The Buzz*, is the PIC team's goal of bringing you relevant, meaningful events and content that can help you excel in your communications practice.

Sharon Aschaiek is Chair of PIC and VP, Special Interest Groups, IABC/Toronto.

Get your copy of *The Independent Life*

PIC has a wonderful resource in our e-book, *The Independent Life*. It shares the wisdom of PIC members with online resources to guide you through the steps in starting your own business, setting up your office, managing your finances, setting fees, marketing and more. Our thanks to graphic designer **Cathy Ledden, RGD**, for turning the content provided by many PIC members into a handy guide. [Grab your copy](#) as a PDF download or as an e-publication for Kobo or iReader.



PIC PERSONALITY:

Meet Judy Irwin

By Sue Horner



JUDY IRWIN is a creative communications professional with 20+ years' experience in employee, corporate and marketing communications. She writes for organizations in the areas of technology and health care IT. Judy's specialties are B2B customer reference programs and B2B marcom copywriting, including blog posts/social media programs, website copy, brochures and ads. Learn more about her on [LinkedIn](#) or contact her by [email](#).

When did you launch your independent business and how did it come about?

About 15 years ago. After completing the corporate communications program at Seneca College, I got a job as a communications specialist, then a manager. It was a fantastic experience, but in the back of my mind, I had always wanted to be a writer and was a little envious of the freelancers I worked with.

After about 10 years, I was travelling a lot and had two

young kids. It seemed the perfect time to make the switch and set up on my own. I was fortunate that when I left the job, I was able to take a chunk of it with me as freelance work. So I was lucky to have a smooth transition.

What do you enjoy most about being an independent?

The flexibility. I also really enjoy the variety of work. I'm always learning about new things — for

example, I've written about solar energy, wearable technology like T-shirts that monitor health, and blood transfusion technology. Today I'm researching 3D mammography. I enjoy the research and talking to the subject matter experts and medical engineering professionals as well as the writing. I also enjoy talking to and learning from people in faraway places. I've been lucky enough to have clients in Europe, the Middle East and the U.S. as well as Canada.

What don't you like about being an indie?

I'm somewhere in between an introvert and an extrovert, and I sometimes feel isolated in my home office.

How long have you been a PIC member and what value do you get from your membership?

I've been an IABC member for more than 20 years, so one of the first things I did when I went on my own was

join PIC's predecessor, then called AIP. I had business cards printed and went to my first AIP meeting. Everyone was so professional and it was exciting to find a community of people doing the same kind of work I wanted to do.

Being involved with IABC and more specifically now with PIC as co-director of programming is a great way to be part of this community. It also helps me keep plugged in, learn from other members, keep developing professionally and counter that isolation.

What advice would you give someone new to independent life?

Join an organization like PIC. The inspiration and validation you get from being part of a community like this is so important.



PIC members offer a range of talent, from coaching and media relations to video production and writing. Our PIC Personality feature introduces new members and randomly profiles existing members. Let [Sue Horner](#) know if you'd like to be profiled and she'll be in touch to set it up.

See you on social media

Build and strengthen your connections with other PIC members, advance your communications business, discuss business issues and network with PIC on social media:

- Follow us on Twitter at [@pictoronto](#).
- Take part in our LinkedIn group, [IABC Toronto Professional Independent Communicators](#) (login required).
- Take part in our [Facebook group](#), Professional Independent Communicators (PIC), part of IABC/Toronto (chapter members only).

Recent posts include how to raise your fees with existing clients; online goldmines for paid writing jobs; how to attract better-paying clients through specialization; and prospecting strategies that beat cold calling. You are welcome to share interesting or helpful articles or post questions that will help you and other members grow and manage your businesses.



Nov. 7: Shifting from tactician to strategist

Are you delivering strategic value and expertise for your clients?

About Daniel Tisch

Widely known as an international public relations professional, writer, speaker and leader, Dan is president and CEO of Argyle Relationships, and a former chair of the Global Alliance for PR and Communication Management.

He appears regularly in broadcast, print and online media, including recent comments in the New York Times, the Globe and Mail, Reuters, CBC Television, Global News, PR Week and Strategy. He is a longtime member of IABC, CPRS and the Arthur W. Page Society.

Join us for insight into:

- The trends driving change in professional communication today and tomorrow
- How to broaden your perspective from to-do lists to shaping organizations' communication plans
- How to define and deliver strategic value and expertise for your clients — and take on a wider scope of work.

Whether you're an independent communicator or work with an agency or corporate communication team, you'll take away valuable tips about how to broaden the scope of work you provide.

CMPs and SCMPs: earn up to five professional development points toward your recertification.

**Wednesday,
November 7,
6:30 p.m. to 9 p.m.**
First Canadian Place,
[FCP Gallery](#)
100 King St. W.
(entrance near
Cactus Club)
Toronto

Registration fees:

\$25
IABC/Toronto
member rate
(\$28.25 with HST)

\$40
Non-member rate
(\$45.20 with HST)

[Professional Independent Communicators](#) (PIC) is a special interest group of [IABC/Toronto](#). PIC's mission is to support independent IABC/Toronto communicators through professional development, networking and marketing. [IABC](#) helps people and organizations achieve excellence in corporate communication, PR, employee communication, marketing communication, public affairs and other forms of communication.

THE BUZZ *The Buzz* informs members about upcoming events, shares professional development tips from past meetings and keeps us connected.

Quick links

- [PIC on the web](#)
- [PIC on LinkedIn](#)
- [@PICToronto](#) on Twitter
- Email us: toronto-sig@iabc.to
- [Join our mailing list!](#)
- Get a copy of [The Independent Life](#)
- [IABC/Toronto](#)

PIC executive

Contact any of us with questions, comments and ideas for speakers or topics:

Chair: [Sharon Aschaiek](#)

Past Chair: [Donna Papacosta](#)

Communications: [Sue Horner](#), [Pat de Valence](#)

Membership: [Nkiru Asika](#)

Programming: [Judy Irwin](#), [Sharon McMillan](#)

Social Media: [Bill Smith](#)



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