

# THE BUZZ

YOUR SOURCE FOR EVERYTHING INDIE.



Hello <<First Name>>,

Hope you enjoy the latest edition of *The Buzz*!

## A message from PIC chair Sharon Aschaiek

As satisfied as we may be with the quality of the communications work we do, none of us work in a bubble. Approval by our clients is, of course, critical, but what also makes a difference is recognition from our peers. It's hard to beat the feeling of being celebrated for our achievements by fellow communicators.



Independent Communicators (the former PIC) director of communications, Lee Whelan, Cyndi Mackenzie and Veronica FOP accept a 2017 OVATION Award of Merit for Employee-Member Communications. (Photo credit: Canadian Press Images)

IABC/Toronto acknowledges the professional accomplishments of local communicators each year through its OVATION Awards. The awards are open to members and non-members based in the GTA, who can submit examples of communications work they have completed within the last three years. Work can be submitted for award consideration in several different categories within the two main areas of communications management and communications skills.

I think participating in the OVATION Awards can be especially rewarding for independent communicators. Since we don't get recognized for our work in a workplace, it's all the more meaningful to share our achievements with our peers. Plus, when we produce communications materials at the same or better calibre as those produced by companies or communications agencies, it's worth letting the profession and the world know. Winning an OVATION Award validates our expertise and hard work, enhances our professional reputation and impresses our clients.

Another highlight of the OVATION Awards is that the gala is a fun and posh affair. This year's awards will take place at Arcadian Court, one of Toronto's ritziest event spaces. The evening features music, cocktails and a three-course dinner. Plus, participants get to network with more than 250 seasoned communicators.

If there's a communications project about which you're proud, and would like it to be considered for an OVATION Award, the early-bird deadline to submit your application is January 31; two subsequent submission deadlines ending by Feb. 28 have increasingly higher fees. Check out the [website](#) for full details on eligibility criteria, how to upload work samples, the evaluation process and more.

Whether or not you submit a project for consideration, the awards are great evening to enjoy with fellow communicators. I hope to see you there on May 23.

Continued success,



**Sharon Aschaiek**  
Chair, Professional Independent Communicators (PIC)  
Vice President, Special Interest Groups, IABC/Toronto  
[toronto-sig@iabc.to](mailto:toronto-sig@iabc.to)

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- [PIC on the web](#)
- [PIC on LinkedIn](#)
- [@PICToronto](#) on Twitter
- Get a copy of [The Independent Life](#)
- [IABC/Toronto](#)
- PIC email: [toronto-pic@iabc.to](mailto:toronto-pic@iabc.to)

### Newsletter archives

- Find back issues of *The Buzz* from Jan. 2010 to Aug. 2016 [here](#).
- [Join Our Mailing List!](#)

### We want your talents!

Interested in writing, editing or contributing ideas for PIC's *The Buzz* or IABC/Toronto's *Communicator*? We'd love your help. [Let us know!](#)

### PIC Executive

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

Chair: [Sharon Aschaiek](#)  
Past Chair: [Donna Papacosta](#)  
Communications: [Sue Homer](#)  
Membership: [Melika Ramkissoon](#)  
Programming: [John Bromley](#), [ABC](#)  
Social Media: [Bill Smith](#)

## Jan. 9: Seen at the social



*Two Sues – Sue Bowness and Sue Horner – catch up at the PIC social at the Duke of York pub in January. PIC's socials are a terrific way to connect with fellow members and friends in a casual atmosphere. See you next time!*

## Jan. 29: Advanced interviewing skills (PWAC)

**Monday, Jan. 29, 7 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.**  
**Miles Nadal Jewish Community Centre, 750 Spadina Ave., Toronto**

Whether you're a journalist, a corporate writer or a ghostwriter, you need to know how to ask tough questions and get good answers—preferably without alienating your interview subject. At this panel presentation, you'll get practical tips from professionals who are experts at getting people to share information. PIC members are considered PWAC Partners and pay \$10 plus tax.

[Learn more and register now](#)

*Note: If you hear of a communication-related course, workshop or other event we should share with PIC members, please let [Sue Horner](#) know. Thanks!*

## Jan. 30: Award-winning author Terry Fallis on his path from PR to publishing (IABC/Toronto)

**Tuesday, Jan. 30, 6 p.m. to 8 p.m.**  
**Mariott Eaton Centre, 525 Bay St., Toronto**

The weather is cold and spring is a few months away. This January, join your IABC/Toronto colleagues for an inspirational talk by award-winning novelist Terry Fallis. He'll discuss his journey from PR to publishing and the similarities between a PR professional and a writer. This event features the presentation, Q&A and a wine and cheese reception.

[Learn more and register now](#)

## Feb. 15: Don't miss it! Building your business in an ever-changing PR world

**Thursday, Feb. 15, noon to 1 p.m. (from the comfort of your home)**

Have you struggled to...

- Build your business in a changing environment?
- Persist through the highs and lows of your business?
- Lead your business with confidence?

Building a successful independent business involves surpassing many hurdles. In this webinar, we're honoured to feature one of North America's pre-eminent marketing and public relations strategists. As a business and corporate leader, **Gini Dietrich** will provide her perspective on the important aspects of building your business in today's competitive communications and PR space. Gini's insights will be useful to new and experienced communications and PR independents navigating digital transformation and organizational change.



### About our speaker:

Gini Dietrich is chief executive officer at Arment Dietrich, Inc., and chief blogger at Spin Sucks. She is an industry thought leader who serves on the national advisory council for Women in PR USA, and is the co-author of *Marketing in the Round*. Gini also co-hosts Inside PR, a weekly podcast about communications and social media.

### Registration fees:

\$10: IABC/Toronto members (\$11.30 with HST)  
 \$15: non-members (\$16.95 with HST)

[Register now](#) and watch for registration details soon.

For a sneak peek of Gini's webinar presentation, [check out this conversation](#) with her by PIC past-president Donna Papacosta.

## Welcome new member

### Melinda Metcalfe

Mango Communications  
Cambridge  
416-809-4986

[Email](#)

Specializing in strategic communication solutions that drive employee engagement, cultural transformation and business success.

## PIC Personality: Meet Carol Caulfield Dougans

By Sue Horner and Janice Sutton

**Carol Caulfield Dougans** is an independent marketing communications professional with a background in the consumer packaged goods industry and extensive experience in the post-secondary education sector. Her services include communication strategy and planning, project management, writing, editing and focus group facilitation. [Email Carol](#) or connect with her on [LinkedIn](#).



### What's your background?

After graduating from university, I began my career with Kraft General Foods in Toronto. We moved to Vancouver in the mid-80's. While taking time off to be with my young children, I was approached by Purdy's Chocolates to undertake what turned out to be several major freelance product development projects.

The work was intense, but I appreciated the flexibility of independent work and the opportunity to do projects from home. That really got me thinking about freelancing.

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

It kind of evolved. When the kids were a little older, I took a part-time contract job as an account director with a small ad agency. After managing hospitality industry accounts, I was subcontracted to the business school at UBC to work as marketing manager in executive education. Eventually, I developed my own clientele there. More contract work from Purdy's came my way around the same time, so the fates seemed to be pushing me towards freelancing.

### What type of work are you doing now?

Drawing on the discipline learned in the packaged goods industry, I work primarily in marketing communications. Depending on the scope of the project, this may entail one or more aspects of consumer research, strategy development, communications planning and project management across a wide range of channels. Like all communications professionals, I do a lot of writing and editing, and I facilitate focus groups when the opportunity presents itself.

### What do you like about being an independent?

My work is constantly changing and generally revolves around helping clients communicate more clearly and persuasively, both of which I find very satisfying. I also appreciate the flexibility of being able to work when and where I want to and not having to waste time commuting.

### What *don't* you like about being an indie?

Managing a variable workload can be a challenge, and freelancing can be isolating at times. Ironically, for someone who works in marketing communications, I don't particularly enjoy self-promotion. Fortunately, I've had a lot of long-term contracts, and the vast majority of my work comes from referrals. Thanks to technology, I've been able to continue to serve my B.C. clients from Toronto.

### What advice would you give someone new to independent life?

If you want to freelance, I think it's a real advantage to spend a period of time working for a larger organization. Understanding the context in which your clients work helps you navigate organizational structure and politics and generally serve them better.

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

My career has spanned 20+ years, and I've been a member of IABC on and off most of that time. I've also been part of PIC since the beginning. Part of the value of IABC is getting access to resources, and being kept up-to-date on developments in the profession. Clients may ask you to do something unfamiliar, and IABC is great for the latest thinking or confirming your instincts are right. Being a member also gives you credibility.

*We count more than 100 members in PIC, offering a range of talent from coaching and media relations to video production and writing. Do you know everyone? Our PIC Personalities 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.*

## What's new on PIC's LinkedIn group?

You'll find useful information about building and managing a small communications business when you visit PIC's LinkedIn group: [IABC/Toronto Professional Independent Communicators](#) (login required).

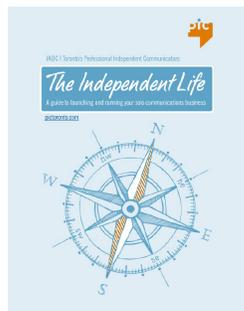
Recent posts have discussed social media management platforms, why clients aren't lined up at your door, best websites for writers and more. You are welcome to post articles or ask questions that will help you and other members grow and manage your businesses.

## Join the PIC conversation on Facebook (chapter members only)

Build and strengthen your connections with other PIC members and advance your communications business by joining PIC's Facebook group. This is a great opportunity to network, discuss business issues and ideas and access exclusive professional development resources.

To access this IABC/Toronto chapter members-only perk, search for our private Facebook group by our name, [Professional Independent Communicators \(PIC\), part of 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 is a special interest group of [IABC/Toronto](#). PIC's mission is to support independent IABC/Toronto communicators through professional development, networking and marketing. *The Buzz* is PIC's e-newsletter, intended to inform independent communicators about our activities, share professional development tips from past meetings and keep us aware of what's going on. Connect with us on the web at [pictoronto.com](#) and [LinkedIn](#).

As the largest chapter of the International Association of Business Communicators, IABC/Toronto provides access to products, services, activities and networking opportunities in Toronto and around the world. IABC helps people and organizations achieve excellence in corporate communication, public relations, employee communication, marketing communication, public affairs and other forms of communication. For more information, visit the [IABC website](#).

[Sue Horner](#)

Editor and Director, Communications — PIC



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