

# 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

*A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step.*

It's a well-known saying that reminds us that big tasks are made up of many smaller tasks, and getting started is what matters.



We're building on that idea with PIC's programming lineup for 2018-19. Our bi-monthly professional development events will cover several of the key steps of the lifecycle of running an independent communications business. Whether you're a new communicator, have been at this game for a while, or are just considering making the leap to being a freelancer, we're sure you'll learn new and useful tips on this learning journey.

Here's a sneak peek:

**September:** We're kicking off with a primer on how to get up and running as an indie communicator. Veteran solo communicators [Eric Bergman](#), [ABC](#), [APR](#), [MC](#), [FCPRS](#), Sue Horner of [Get It Write](#) and I, principal of [Higher Ed Communications](#), will discuss the strategies and tactics we have used to get established and grow our businesses.

**November:** If you're a junior to intermediate communicator, you'll benefit from this seminar on how to shift from communication development to communication strategy. Learn how to move up from being a communication "widget maker" and get a seat at the decision-making table so you can help steer the direction of your clients' communication plans and run a more lucrative business.

**January:** If your indie communications business is already up and running, how do you take things to the next level? In this panel discussion, you'll learn from seasoned communicators about best practices for outsourcing and collaborating with other professionals to grow your enterprise.

**March:** We're going digital for this PD event with a webinar on social media best practices. Learn from a pro on what it takes to elevate your social media game to increase your effectiveness as a communicator and better serve your clients.

**May:** None of us can get very far as independent communicators without being competent self-promoters. We're doing a deep dive into how to market our practices, with expert insights on how to use different techniques, tools and platforms to attract more leads.

Our PD events take place during the evening on the first week of the month. More details on speakers, dates, etc. will be shared on the chapter website and in upcoming editions of *The Buzz*.

Remember, on the alternating months we'll be holding our popular social networking events at The Duke of York pub – hope to see you there as well!

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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### Quick Links

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

[Pat de Valence](#)

Membership: [Nkiru Asika](#)

Programming: [Judy Irwin](#),

[Sharon McMillan](#)

Social Media: [Bill Smith](#)



## Sept. 5: IABC Insiders' Panel: Starting an Independent Communications Practice

**September 5, 6:30 p.m. to 9 p.m.**  
**Mattamy Athletic Centre, third floor**  
**Blue and Gold Room (Room 3310)**  
**50 Carlton St., Toronto**

Thinking about starting a freelance communications practice? Or want to learn how to grow your independent business? In this session, three seasoned, successful independents will share their experiences and tips on:

- How they managed the transition from full-time employment to freelancing
- How they chose markets and specialities
- How they overcame common obstacles
- How their marketing strategies have evolved along the way.

**Sharon Aschalek** is Principal, [Higher Ed Communications](#), IABC/Toronto's VP of Special Interest Groups and Chair of PIC. **Eric Bergman**, ABC, APR, MC, FCPRS is Principal of [Bergman and Associates](#), and **Sue Horner** is Principal of [Get It Write](#) as well as PIC's Co-Director, Communications.

For a preview of what the panelists will discuss, [listen to this conversation](#) with PIC's past chair, **Donna Papacosta**.

### Registration fees:

- \$15: IABC/Toronto member rate (\$16.95 with HST)
- \$25: Non-member rate (\$28.25 with HST)

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

[Register now](#)



## July 25: Seen at the social

By **Pat de Valence**

The PIC Social on July 25 was my first one, and I was very glad I went. It was well-attended – so much so that, eventually, we spilled out into the adjacent space. As we went around the room for everyone to introduce themselves and their particular area of practice, I was struck by the wide range of skill and endeavour: everything from graphics to training to strategic consulting. This group is a rich source of information and mentorship. Add to this the lively conversation and convivial atmosphere, and one can't imagine missing the next social!

See more photos [on our Flickr page](#).



*Suzanne Huggins, Pat de Valence and Jacqui d'Eon connect at the July 25 social.*

## Welcome new member

### Pat de Valence

Bridgeway Consulting  
 Stouffville  
 416-723-0366  
[LinkedIn](#)  
[Email](#)

Pat is principal consultant and program manager at Bridgeway Consulting. She has over 25 years' experience leading complex global, large-scale transformation and integration programs, including planning & executing extensive communication and change components.

## PIC PERSONALITY: Meet Melinda Metcalfe

By **Sue Horner**

**Melinda Metcalfe** is president of Mango Communications, which specializes in strategic communication that drives employee engagement, cultural transformation and business success. Learn more on her [website](#) and [LinkedIn profile](#), and reach her [by email](#) or phone at 416-809-4986.

### What's your background?

I hold a Bachelor of Professional Arts, Communication & Media Studies from Athabasca University, and a Business Marketing diploma from Fanshawe College.

Over 20+ years, I've had the opportunity to lead both internal and external communication in a range of industries, from beer and wine to government and oil sands. My early work experiences were on the agency side, and then I moved to the client side.



I led two of Canada's largest retailers through complex, multi-year business initiatives. At Canadian Tire, I developed and executed change communication strategies and tactical plans for a transformational supply chain initiative that affected people, infrastructure, processes and technology. At Loblaw, I built the communication team and then supported a huge supply chain transformation with diverse employee effects. As Loblaw's director, internal communications, I also conducted a communication audit and created a strategy to engage employees using a balance of new and traditional tools and technology.

**When did you launch your independent business and how did it come about? Why 'Mango'?**

I launched Mango in March 2017 after leaving Loblaw and going back to finish my degree. I had thought about going on my own for some time and this seemed a good opportunity. I wanted to provide communication advice to engaged stakeholders, with more emphasis on the internal side. My own business would allow me to make use of my experience and ability to work for different clients, and give me more control over my life. I chose the name because I wanted something creative that brought the idea of freshness and a fresh approach to communications, and was easy to remember with my own name.

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

My primary focus now is as a professor at Conestoga College, where I teach writing, communication and ethics to more than 180 students in the Public Relations and Business programs.

My client work offers services such as communication audits, strategic communication planning, communication infrastructure building, change communication and more. I've also done leadership skills development to ensure leaders at all levels can deliver key messages effectively. I'm always looking to help companies improve how they communicate and build trust.

**What do you enjoy most about being an indie?**

I like the flexibility and the ability to work with a wide range of clients. I like that I can help drive measurable business results through cultural transformation, and create strategy that connects the dots between corporate values, employee behaviour and business outcomes. I like the variety of work and I like to be challenged.

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

Nothing, really. It is hard work but the positives generally outweigh the challenges.

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

- Make sure you follow your passion, and believe in what you bring to the table.
- Turn small wins into big opportunities. Sometimes the smallest tasks, things you may not want to do, end up building the strongest relationships.
- Focus on what drives results for clients.

**How long have you been an IABC and PIC member? What value do you get from your membership?**

I've been a member of IABC for more than 10 years through the organizations I've worked for, and PIC since fall 2017.

I look to IABC for resources first before I go to other sources, and PIC gives me the ability to connect with other professional communicators. That may not be as critical when you work with a team, but when you're an independent, being part of a group like PIC lets you share ideas with others, make sure you're on track, get advice, get other people's insights. And the professional development is always good.

*PIC reaches a community of 180 local independent communicators, 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.*

## Read up on PIC's history



How did PIC start? What are some early stories and stats? What do members say about us? Read all this and more in *PIC Then and Now*. The booklet marked our 20th anniversary in 2018, and was created by **Cathy Ledden**, RGD, and her associate, Susan Mosdell, RGD. Download a PDF of the booklet from our website under [Resources](#).

## 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 covered how to land clients without pitching, turn prospects into clients, finish 2018 strong and more. You are welcome to share interesting or helpful articles or post questions that will help you and other members grow and manage your businesses.

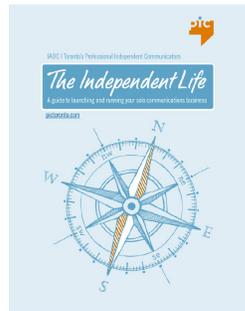
## Changes to the PIC member list due Sept. 28

As a member of PIC, you can promote yourself at no charge on the [PIC member list](#) on the IABC/Toronto website. You can also use the list to look for people you might like to meet, or who have complementary skills to your own. You might find someone you can partner with to get new business, or someone who lives nearby.

We keep a running list of changes (such as new contact information or a link to your LinkedIn profile) and update it with the chapter every quarter. The next deadline to submit a profile or make changes to your existing profile is Friday, Sept. 28.

Send your updates to PIC's director of membership, [Nkiru Asika](#). For new profiles, send your name, company name, location, email address, telephone number, website URL and a brief description of your business (up to 40 words).

## 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](#) and [Pat de Valence](#), Co-Directors, Communications – PIC



8/23/2018

Social fun, meet Melinda & more in PIC's July/Aug newsletter

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