

# A stellar anniversary

## Local consultants gather to celebrate 10 years of independence and professional support

By George Frey  
Staff Writer

The Princeton chapter of the Institute of Management Consultants (IMC) celebrated its 10th anniversary on Nov. 20 at the Doral Forrestal with a dinner meeting and National Chairman Jerry Savin, a noted author, who spoke about the successes of the organization and the future of the consulting profession.

The institute has about 30 chapters in the United States and about 30 additional chapters in more than 20 countries worldwide. As an international organization, the Institute sets the standards for management consulting by accrediting members as Certified Management Consultants, promoting professionalism in the field, and welcomes all specializations, from engineering and computers to financial services.

"Consulting offers opportunities today that didn't exist even as little as three years ago," said Mr. Savin. "We are seeing a fast-changing corporate business scene and, at the same time, the consulting profession is experiencing the dynamics of mergers, acquisitions and spin-offs from large consulting firms. Electronic work and commerce also has impacted both the demand for and nature of consulting."

Mr. Savin also discussed what lies ahead for the consulting profession and provided insight based on his 20 years of experience in the field. He predicted that if the economy stays robust, then the profession will continue to flourish. He said with the further unfolding of the tech sector, more specialization will evolve, despite the current malaise.

"With the general environment of industry right now, there may be some cyber firms through which consultancies will flourish," Mr. Savin stated. "A rash of new positions will probably become available because of the Internet and technology."

The sheer volume of the positions available is the best indicator that consulting is a major part of business life, Mr. Savin continued. "The volume of consultants in business is astronomical, which may be an indicator of growth in industry," he said.

Mr. Savin did say that there is currently some turmoil in the industry because of multinational firms selling off their consulting branches, especially in the accounting sector, and also the shake up in some areas of the technology sector. But overall, he said the consulting field is still stronger than ever and is predicted to show continued growth. What's most interesting about the Princeton chapter of the IMC, Mr. Savin said, is that the group has been around for 10 years, something that isn't common among most associations.

"Having met them for the first time, my hat goes off to them," Mr. Savin said of the Princeton IMC. "They are continually growing and expanding. There is 10 years of experience there, which has always grown. Princeton is perhaps unique in that regard. They have shown constant and steadfast growth."

In 1990, members of the Princeton chapter were weary



Staff photo by George Frey

IMC National Chairman Jerry Savin addresses the Princeton chapter on its 10th anniversary.

of driving 50 to 70 miles to a monthly meeting in northern New Jersey, New York or Philadelphia, so they decided to found their own chapter.

The main advantage of IMC membership is the code of ethics and certification available, which the Princeton chapter members say adds a level of professionalism. The opportunity to do local networking and the chance to sit down and talk about mutual problems is another lure of the monthly meetings.

"These are really the experts in the field and the truth of the matter is that you really don't get to talk to them unless you come to meetings like this," said John McCrea, the managing director of the Renaissance Resource Group in New Brunswick. Mr. McCrea also help organize the IMC speakers bureau.

"The certification that you get from this sets me apart from the rest of the consultants because it gives me more credibility and legitimacy," Mr. McCrea continued. "If I weren't certified, the chances are better that I could be presenting you with a myth."

To attain certification, an independent consultant must

have at least three years of experience in outside consulting, an expert peer review, a review of educational experience and an ethics exam, all of which is sent to Washington, D.C. for review by the national organization. However, the IMC doesn't require that consultants be certified in order to attend the group's meetings or to become a member. There is a \$150 application fee to become certified and the group charges a \$300 annual membership fee for all members, regardless of whether they are certified or not. At the present time, members who wish to be recertified pay \$100 every three years, according to Bill Dorman of Lambertville-based Dorman Associates, who is a member of the board of past IMC Princeton chapter presidents.

Mr. Dorman spoke about the reasons why he thinks the chapter has thrived for the past 10 years. "I'd been thinking why it has lasted so long and I think it's because of the model that works," he said. "We saw that it was important to keep the business of the matter simple, and to work on things in a way that would keep people coming out to the meetings."

Joe Kowalski, who also is a member of the board of past presidents and the president of Capital Management Consultants in Hopewell, said the Princeton chapter is very popular with its members and that there are always people clamoring to become members.

"It's important that we didn't go out to get new members, and that we were more focused on the model of the organization, and on professional consistency," Mr. Kowalski said. "We did a lot of experimenting with what meetings would work, we looked at what meetings would not compete with other meetings' times and markets. We tried a lot of things and always stuck with what worked for us."

Mr. Kowalski pointed out that there are other consulting groups out there, but that none offer the certification. "I only recommend IMC-certified people," he concluded.

Established in 1968, The Institute of Management Consultants is a professional association that ensures that its members possess the ethical standards and professional competence and independence required to work in the profession.

The IMC's Central New Jersey/Princeton chapter includes over 70 professional management consultants who serve clients globally. Information on the group may be found on the Internet at [www.imcprinceton.org](http://www.imcprinceton.org), or by calling (732) 972-0549. Information on the national and the international organizations can be found at [www.imcusa.org](http://www.imcusa.org) and [www.icmci.org](http://www.icmci.org), respectively.