



A Look Back - AICCNC's First Year

The AICCNC has been able to accomplish many things during its first year. The AICCNC would not be what it is today without the assistance of the individuals that stepped forward to help and our founding members.

Here are some of our recent accomplishments:

- Approved by the IRS as a 501 (c)(3) organization
- Bylaws created and finalized
- Obtained highly skilled volunteers for the Intra-Member Counseling service
- Founding Board of Directors selected
- Acquired membership in all six regions
- Helped start a new business— GaLS, PC
- Helped Business Cabling, Inc. with 8(a) vs. SDB eligibility
- Setup a working relationship with Good Work— an organization that helps with personal finances and starting a business.
- Helped Cherokee Data Fusions with 8(a) minority certification
- Helped Blue Steel Company with their promotional material
- Assisted Bird Brothers Drywall decide on a legal structure for their business
- Helped Integrators find funding for their business
- Helping PROECO, Inc. with the DBE certification process

The AICCNC looks forward to helping its members in the new year to come.

Report of Annual Meeting

The first statewide Annual Members' Meeting for the AICCNC was a success. It was held on October 23, 2003 in Raleigh, North Carolina.



Members from across the state were in attendance. We had two guest

speakers present during the meeting.

Jennifer Anderson a professor at the Business School at NCSU, discussed techniques to be more effective when you are trying to sell yourself or your products/services.

John Avant from Avant Communications, covered various low-cost techniques to market/advertise small businesses. Avant discussed options that are not main stream but are still

very effective.

Members that attended appreciate the information that was portrayed at the Annual Meeting.

Teresa Ozment was voted in as the Northeastern Chief Regional Board of Advisor. We look forward to working with Teresa and the other Board of Advisors in the coming year.

Contact our office for more information on becoming a Regional Board Advisor.

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Special points of interest:

- *Report of AICCNC Annual Meeting*
- *Empowered Employees = Better Customer Service*
- *American Indian Conference in Las Vegas*
- *Message from the NC Secretary of State*

Best Practices: Employee Empowerment and Customer Service

(The Cookie and the Orange)
by Peter Grazier

One year ago I wrote an article called "Empowerment in a Cookie." I don't like to repeat myself in these pages, but I can't help revisiting this subject again in light of a recent experience.

The Cookie

In the spring of 1997 I visited a grocery store called Fresh Fields in Devon, Pennsylvania. It's about 30 minutes from my home, but I had heard that the company focused on healthy foods, and that interested me.

During my visit there, I sauntered by the bakery counter when my eyes were drawn toward the cookies. As a recovering cookie-holic, I really was not interested in buying any. However, as I yielded to temptation, I focused on the healthy ones—you know, the ones with fiber and such. So I asked if they had any crumbs or samples I could taste.

The young man serving me was kind and unusually patient as he mused over my obvious buy-don't buy dilemma. Instead of crumbs, he simply gave me an oatmeal cookie to taste. He then suggested the luscious (and expensive) chocolate chip cookies beside them—he said they were really good. Proudly, I refused.

But somehow he seemed to notice a twinge of doubt in my refusal, so he asked again. Again, I refused. Do you know how much I wanted to try that chocolate chip cookie? I'll bet you can guess. And so did he, because when I returned home and opened the package of oatmeal cookies I bought, I found two chocolate chip cookies that he had secretly slipped into the package! Today I am a regular shopper at Fresh Fields. OK, not just be-

cause of this cookie incident, but it helped.

What I sensed immediately was that this company must foster a culture of empowerment that allowed this bakery employee (or team member as they are called at Fresh Fields) to make an independent decision to satisfy, no, delight this customer.

The Orange

Closer to my home is another very good grocery store where I shop when I don't have time to visit Fresh Fields. This store's products are more traditional, but their service is generally good.

For the last few months, however, I have been having difficulty buying oranges. More times than not, when I get to the checkout counter, the price for oranges will be wrong—usually higher. Correcting this is inconvenient and sometimes embarrassing when there is a line of customers behind me.

I have mentioned this to the produce people, but the problem still exists. A couple of nights ago I confronted one of the produce people again about the pricing problem, and pointed out another obvious error. To their credit, they handled me well, and worked with me to correct the problem. It finally took a manager to make a phone call and straighten out the pricing.

While the manager was phoning the other store, I talked with the young man in produce. He said that these juice oranges weren't selling because the price was just too high (because of the pricing error). I asked him if he could change it and he said no. He also knew that they would be throwing out the oranges soon if they didn't sell. His frustration in not being able to correct such an obvious problem in his own

department was evident.

The Lesson

I tell these two contrasting stories because they relate directly to customer satisfaction and profitability as a function of employee empowerment. Two good grocery chains with two very different approaches to management.

At Fresh Fields, every employee is aware of his or her impact on profit and is empowered to take independent action to maximize it.

The decision to give two expensive cookies to a customer is not an insignificant decision. It is a business decision that may influence the relationship between a store and its customer.

Unfortunately, it is a decision that most employees in traditionally managed organizations have no authority to make.

My hope is that these two examples will clearly show how customers and profits can be won or lost when employees are enabled to take ownership of day-to-day problems. Once again, it just makes sense.

(This article, and many others like it, can be found at Teambuildinginc.com)

American Indian Chamber of Commerce of North Carolina -Mission Statement-

To promote the growth and success of existing and new American Indian-owned businesses in North Carolina to improve the economic well being of all American Indians employed by them.

RES 2004

18th Annual National Reservation Economic Summit & American Indian Business Trade Fair

February 9-12, 2004

The Riviera Hotel & Casino in Las Vegas, Nevada

Promote your business to the over 1,500 RES attendees from Indian organizations, entrepreneurs, corporate and government officials.

Activities: workshops - over 200 trade fair exhibitors - awards luncheons - networking receptions - cutting edge information on Indian business opportunities

To register, please visit: <http://www.ncaied.org/res2004/>

Resources for New & Existing Businesses

The North Carolina Department of the Secretary of State is making it easier for business corporations to file their annual reports online. In June, the General Assembly passed Senate Bill 622, making it possible for business corporations to file their annual reports electronically. The reports can be filed on the Secretary of State's Website at www.sosnc.com.

The new streamlined process is designed to make the forms as user-friendly as possible, and assure a minimum of mistakes and omissions in filling out the forms.

Customers who have questions on this topic should contact the Corporations Division at 919-807-2225 or corpinfo@sosnc.com.

Meet Our Members

James Bird
Bird Brothers Drywall
(910) 521-8019
Pembroke, NC

Tell us about your company.

"James & Kenneth Bird, owners of Bird Brothers Drywall are Sisseton-Wapeton Sioux Indian residing in Pembroke, NC. Our brother Samuel is also employed as a foreman. Most of our work is in the Triangle, although we have projects from Asheville to Wilmington."

What is your role within the company?

"Kenneth is the estimator. I'm the

manager. My wife and I try to do the record keeping, payroll, fiscal planning, and management. My brother and I are equal in the business. He does what he is good at; I do what I am skilled at. We work together.

Discussions are agreed upon by both of us. A lot of time is spent on the Nextel mobile phone."

What do you enjoy most about your work?

"I enjoy seeing the finished product. It is satisfying to look at a building that is complete and see how my work looks in the completion. We aim for perfection. Every part makes the whole. I enjoy being self-employed."

What is the biggest obstacle for companies in your industry?

"Competition. (Being a member now will help.) Also, Business management."

How is your organization dealing with this problem?

"We talk with other managers to get information about how to do some of the paperwork; Risky, learning-as-we-go basically. The construction business is unique."

We are taking submissions from members to be in the next "Meet Our Members" section of *The Red Wolf*. Please contact Scott at (919) 510-9696 to be in an upcoming issue.

On This Date in History

January 1st:

1852: Today, one in a series of treaties with California Indians will be signed in Santa Isabel. The treaty is meant to reserve lands for the Indians and to protect them from Europeans.

1965: The NISQUALLY Nation in

Washington State, issue a proclamation today denouncing their treatment by the United States. The document states that the United States has not lived up to its treaty agreements. The NISQUALLY Nation therefore declared that in regards to non-NISQUALLY people "they no longer

have the right to reside, tax or hunt or fish upon said lands or waters, within the ceded areas of the treaties made with the Indian peoples." They also compare the treatment of the Indian peoples by the United States Government, as similar to that of Hitler and the Jews.



**AMERICAN INDIAN CHAMBER OF
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Your business card can be featured in our next newsletter. Send your card to the AICCNC.

American Indian Member Companies



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A 1st AMERICAN COMPANY

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Parkersburg WV New Johnsonville TN

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Becoming an AICCNC Member

If you know of an American Indian that wants to start a new business, contact the AICCNC.

There are three ways to obtain a membership application.

1. Go to the website-
www.aiccnc.org, click on 'Membership Information'
2. Email the Chamber at info@aiccnc.org
3. Call Scott Roberts at the AICCNC office,
(919) 510-9696

We can accept completed membership applications three ways.

1. Email the application to:
info@aiccnc.org.
2. Send via US mail to:
9201 Leesville Road, Suite 220
Raleigh, NC 27613-7540 or
3. Fax the application to (919) 510-9668