

From: Hu`ng Nguyẽ~n

1) Membership fee: Should we institute a membership fee for VACETS? why or why not?

The health of an organization depends greatly on its leadership and the amount of funding it has to fulfill prescribed mission and goals, VACETS is no different. At this time, VACETS, as an organization, is in the re-initiation phase. Currently attracting new member is one of VACETS's primary goals. Membership fee should only be instituted when VACETS provides value added services to its members.

2) How to encourage others to participate in VACETS activities? Most members of VACETS (may be except student members) are accomplished professional with busy work and family life's, what can VACETS do to attract and keep them involved and interested? And how do we start?

The formation of VACETS initially will be amongst a circle of friends, associates and acquaintances whose values, beliefs and common goals for the organization are similar. The challenges of attracting new member and encourage the participation in VACETS activities reside with every member. Through the core group of committed and seasoned professionals, objectives and activities which could provide opportunity for personal growth and at the same time provide non-political driven community services (e.g. directly or indirectly assist victims of Katrina).

Similar to any start up business, I would recommend for us to start with small but achievable goals and objectives while solicit private donations and other means to raise capitals to operate. It is true to the fact that we all are very busy with our personal life outside of our professional life. I believe if each one of us is willing to share a fraction of our time, we could achieve marketable results to attract new members. Let me borrow the phrase from a Vietnamese folk saying “Mỏ.t cấ.y l`am chấ(?ng ne^n non, hai cấ.y chu.m la.i la`m h`on n`ui cao” to illustrate the fact that team work does works.

3) VACETS is mostly an Internet organization, and for that to work, we need a better presence on the Internet. In the past we have our website and the many forums (fora ?). Most of the time the website is out of date (and the look is kind of boring) because we don't have dedicate resource to maintain and support it. Most of the forums are also dormant because of lack of interest or lack of resource to keep it interesting. How would you propose we correct this?

The disadvantage of being an on-line organization also serves as an advantage for VACETS's leadership and its members. For this effort, I would propose for VACETS to look at the vastly untapped the next generation of professionals currently being educated in universities and colleges across the globes. I believe these talented and creative professionals could contribute effectively to VACETS's Internet presence and at the same personally benefit from designing, implementing and maintaining a technology oriented e-Commerce website. The seeds are also planted for the next generation of VACETS's leadership through these professionals.

4) No funding source: without a membership fee or any other source of funding we have been struggling to organize any activity (e.g. VTIC & Technical Journal) and have been depending on volunteers and hit/miss corporate sponsorships. What are your plans for future activities and how do we pay for them?

Funding source is always a challenge for any organization. VACETS will have to compete with other organizations for funding to operate. Private companies and contributors would like to see their contributed funds money goes into causes which have great impacts to the community under their sponsorship. The initial funding request will be probably the most difficult and challenging part for elected VACETS's leadership. To be successful, VACETS need a solid plan with achievable objectives and measurable metrics to ensure continuous funding besides funding net benefits from technical journal and conferences.

5) Marketing: Most of Vietnamese professionals do not know VACETS. We have been recruiting them mostly by words of mouth. It is a chicken and egg problem: without a good membership we will not be known but if we are not known then it's difficult to attract the membership. How do you propose we break this cycle?

I believe initially the VACETS core will be formed through a circle of friends, associates and acquaintances. At universities and colleges across the nation, there almost always exist a Vietnamese Student Association (VSA) which we could form alliances into helping VACETS. In return, VACETS needs to identify projects or activities which could help local VSA members beginning the journey of their professional life.

1. What do you think should be short-term (6-mo or so) objectives for Vacets? What steps should be taken for us to get there? Please be specific.

The short-term objectives for VACETS should be concentrated on the following:

1. Form the formal organization
2. Identify its mission
3. Identify its strategic goals
4. Identify its near term objectives
5. Identify a strategy for recruiting new members
6. Identify requires budget for operations base on defined near term objectives.

2. How would you go about recruiting new members considering Vacets' limited resource? Some brought it up and rightfully so that we need to attract college students etc. In your view, what do we have to offer them?

Like my answers above, college professionals should be an integral, if not a major, part of VACETS. Many of the established professionals are moving on with the next stage of life. We would like to encourage for those professionals to serve in the pioneering or mentor role for the next generation. VACETS should serves as a mind or combined experience bank for college professionals. VACETS should present itself as a learning organization where provoking thoughts and ideas are constantly challenged.

3. Vacets has noble cause but good cause alone can't move an organization. We need means for participation. Besides tech conferences, what other programs or activities on or off line do you think can attract interest of, if not galvanize, geographically diverse (and busy) members?

I believe in scheduled a monthly panel discussion series with variety of topics regarding technologies or other topics which could help VACETS current and future members in the personally or professionally (politics should not be one of them). Since all VACETS members are geographically disperse, I would encourage the use of net meeting or streaming media to deliver on-line or pre-recorded sessions. To keep VACETS interesting to members, VACETS leadership should also explore on-line training for members similar to that of IEEE's.

Again thanks for your time and spirit of volunteerism.

Chanh