

NCCMG 05/07/13 Meeting Minutes

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Our first meeting on 2013 was held in Pleasanton at our wonderful conference site. With no host, we were on our own for breakfast and lunch, but this place offers great food options so we could continue to network throughout the day.

Our first speaker, Tim Exendine, BMC Software, spoke on “**Career Challenges and Opportunities in Today’s World of Technology.**” Tim has had a variety of IT roles and jobs and shared this experience and his best practices with us. His 10 rules are as follows:

1. Start where you are – begin with what you are doing and what you know
2. Know what the company does, not just IT – what business are you in?
3. Accept challenges outside your norm
4. Practice listening – this one was in bold print. It may be the most important issue of them all
5. Take advantage of education of all kinds
6. Be willing to do special projects
7. Develop a positive attitude
8. Be a team player
9. Provide extra value to customers
10. Maintain your health

We all found these tips very helpful

Jozo Dujmovic, SF State University, returned to our group to provide us more of his insights and research findings with “**Quantitative Evaluation of SPEC Component-Level Benchmarks.**” He began by talking about the history – benchmarks started in 1989 with just a few; but that number has grown and there is no sign the trend will change. He defined the components of a benchmark suite, how to measure the cost and listed SPEC suites and types. The major types are ‘white box’ where you use internal resource measurements to build the benchmark and ‘black box’ where you only have the run time information.

His research questions were: Do we need all these measurements and what is the cost? He suggested that we use computers to analyze the various benchmarks. Dujmovic also shared details on how you should design a benchmark. His analysis based on numerous tests was that there are too many redundant benchmarks and the cost can be reduced by reducing the set.

Lunch included a lively discussion of what we can do to grow our regional group. At this time, too few people are attending to cover the cost of holding the meeting. We began

to collect ideas on how to increase attendance. If anyone reading this has a suggestion, please forward it to us. You can view the Group's website on cmg.org.

After lunch, Don Murray, retired, shared with us his insights into an area of IT that few of us knew or understood, “**Mainframe Software Asset Management – What’s the Big Deal?**” After moving on from performance management, Murray had the chance to try out this area and discovered that it was a natural fit for him. Basically, the goal is to keep track of installed software and work with other departments to ensure that only needed software is installed and paid for. The benefit is the opportunity to eliminate duplicate and unused licenses and thus reduce costs. The team may also be involved when software is moved around; poor choices can end up increasing licensing costs.

When he started, there weren't a lot of tools and they had to develop a lot of these themselves. His old coding experience came in handy. He worked with some tools like SMF, his contacts and internal information to develop a list of installed software, then used this to verify the charges when maintenance invoices came in. Murray had to learn a bit about CAPEX and OPEX, so he could work with financial people and understand the TCO of software. A big challenge is keeping your software inventory up to date. He closed by helping us understand the kind of people who are best suited to this job. They need to be interested in both financial and technical matters and want to help their company reduce costs. They must like to work with people and be able to readily team across the organization. Finally, in some cases, there is a need for customer software and coding expertise is valuable.

The final speaker of the day was....me. I spoke on '**10 Completely Obvious Tuning Tips.**' The talk was based on my experience that when you get stuck or the results are coming out wrong, in general, you have forgotten something very basic. So to help remind people of these 10 items, I created this to help people get 'out of the weeds.' Too often we get buried in the details of an OS or an application. But the basics never change whether you run mainframes or distributed systems.

Our next meeting will be August 6 in San Francisco; actual location TBD. We will also be moving our last meeting of the year to a new date in November as it currently conflicts with the national conference.