

# Fred Nickols

## Profile

Skilled, perceptive senior consultant and manager...persistent and resourceful...insightful and creative...articulate and helpful...well versed in several organizational areas and functions...capable strategic thinker and planner as well as a competent tactician and implementer...especially adept at coming quickly to the heart of a matter...able to exert influence with superiors, subordinates and peers as well as being open to influence by them...solid leadership ability, especially with respect to building and leading teams charged with effecting change in organizations...keenly analytical coupled with a pronounced bias toward action.

## Managing Partner, Distance Consulting, LLC (2002 - )

My consulting practice focuses on helping clients systematically and measurably improve the performance and productivity of their people, processes, systems and organizations. Strategies and tactics employed entail a wide range of methods and techniques (e.g., advice, counsel and assistance in the areas of change management, training, management of incentives and rewards, organization development and restructuring, knowledge management, communities of practice, team building, feedback systems, process redesign, and work and work control systems design). Services are provided in a mode I refer to as "Assistance at A Distance" (i.e., with a minimum of on-site time).

## Executive Director, Educational Testing Service (1990 - 2001)

**Information Systems & Technology (2000-2001).** Originally brought into IS&T to establish a competitive technology intelligence function. This assignment subsequently changed to one of heading up the Office of Project Management. Planned interventions included launching a project manager certification program, building a community of practice among project managers, assessing and responding to training and development needs, formalizing the project management process and improving upon project control and reporting mechanisms. Final assignment was as a member of the governance team, responsible for negotiating and managing a \$300 million IT outsourcing arrangement of almost all IT functions. These included all legacy applications as well as PeopleSoft (HR/HCM & Financial) systems, CRM applications, internet, intranet, and the data center. The outsourcing agreement included a shift to a managed services arrangement. My primary responsibilities included security and service level agreements (SLAs).

**New Business Development Unit (1999-2000).** Played a key role in obtaining Board of Trustee approval to establish a new, for-profit subsidiary focused on taking ETS technologies to market. Also played a central role in preparing a business plan, commissioning market research and obtaining senior officer approval to establish a new line of business focusing on literacy services.

**Strategic Planning & Management Services Unit (1996-1998).** Major accomplishments included using an outside consulting firm to focus senior management on the deteriorating financial condition of the company. The report triggered a successful financial turnaround plan. Earlier, led teams that redesigned the corporation's business planning and management processes; devised a process for establishing the company's strategic research agenda and its portfolio of research projects; conducted an activity-based costing (ABC) prototype project; maintained an ongoing analysis of all major contractual arrangements; and developed a capital resource allocation process for use at the corporate level.

Earlier positions held at ETS (1990-1995) include executive director of a multi-million dollar custom operations division, Chief of Staff for Operations, and a member of the ETS President's Organizational Renewal Team, with direct responsibility for ensuring the continued financial viability of the company. Major accomplishments during this time include:

- Generating \$800,000 in ongoing annual savings from the development of a method for optimizing test center staffing (\$6M+ accumulated to date).
- Realizing \$360,000 in cost-avoidance savings from the creation and initial application of a PC-based method for cleaning up large databases.

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- Reducing the rework rate in a document processing operation from 65-70% to less than 10%, saving \$275,000 per year in unnecessary resolution costs.
- Introducing an innovative filing system that collapsed 20,000 square feet of space into 16,000, improving the productivity of the space by 25% and realizing an annual savings of \$160,000 for a one-time investment of \$16,000.
- Reengineering the front-end processes in a \$40,000,000 division, enabling it to accommodate without mishap a sudden tripling of processing volumes within the cost envelope specified by the contract.
- Strengthening and sharpening managerial control by developing a PC-based system that accurately models the financial behavior of operating divisions.
- Effecting a 10% downsizing in a large regional office, and a 20% downsizing in an operating division.
- Completing various internal studies and analyses.

## Senior Vice President, Systems & Operations, Monarch Financial Services, Inc. (1987- 1989)

- Reduced the costs and time to develop new product support systems by an estimated \$1.5 million and 12 months.
- Led the development of two PC-based variable life insurance policy issuance and administration systems (one of which was rolled out in 89 days).
- Reengineered the new product development and roll out processes, removing systems development from the critical path; laid the foundation for what is now known as “agile development.”
- Redirected the corporation's systems strategy from mainframes to PCs/LANs.
- Acted as chief troubleshooter for the CEO.

## Employment History

- 2002- Managing Partner, Distance Consulting, LLC
- 1990-2001 Executive Director, Educational Testing Service
- 1987-1989 Senior Vice President, Monarch Financial Services, Inc.
- 1984-1987 Independent Management Consultant
- 1979-1984 President, Organization Performance Systems, Inc. (Consulting)
- 1976-1979 President, Systems Corporation of America (Consulting)
- 1975-1976 Vice President, Consulting Operations, The Athena Corporation
- 1974-1975 Director of Training & Development, Manpower Development Services
- 1955-1974 United States Navy, Organization Development Specialist, Instructional Systems Developer, Programmed Instruction Writer, Classroom Instructor, and Gunnery & Missile Fire Control Technician. Retired with the rank of Chief Petty Officer.

## Education, Training & Professional Development

- High School Diploma, Fort Madison, Iowa (1955)
- Extensive Technical Training - USN (1955-1964)
- Extensive Training as a Classroom Instructor, a Programmed Instruction Writer & an Instructional Systems Developer – USN (1968-1970)
- Undergraduate Studies (Psychology & Statistics), USIU, San Diego (1970)
- Extensive Training as an Internal Organization Development (OD) Consultant – USN (1972)
- Continuing Professional Development (1974 - present)

## Professional Affiliations

- Association for Talent Development (ATD)
- Control Systems Group (CSG)
- Capital City Organization Development Network (CCODN)
- International Society for Performance & Improvement (ISPI)
- Organization Development Network (Awarded the OD Network’s 2016 “Sharing the Wealth Award”)