

## Staying Connected

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### Business update

An exciting first year includes work with *The LA Times*, The National Institute for Health and a privileged trip to South Africa.

### CoNexus® success

The Times Mirror Company uses CoNexus® to poll its top 125 executives on strategic issues throughout a three-day off-site.

### Product news

PRISM is beta testing the next generation of CoNexus® due in the second quarter.

### Strategic “pre-search”

United Health Services  
Chenango Memorial Hospital surveys stakeholders to determine its strategic opportunities.

### Optimal thinking

Do you get in thinking ruts? The battery's dead ... but you continue to turn the key. Check out these tips for recharging, starting the engine and moving down the idea highway—pedal to the metal.

## Business update

PRISM Decision Systems works for you by accelerating and improving organizational decision-making. We provide CoNexus® facilitation services for successful strategic planning, project management, alliance building, customer needs assessments, and business planning.

### Clients and partnerships

A growing regional client base among educational institutions and health care providers has been augmented by partnerships with Innovation Systems Group, Litton-Tasc, and Leadership 2000.

These partnerships have generated exciting, very challenging work with senior managers at

*The Los Angeles Times*, the Times Mirror family of companies, Bellcore, SAIC, and the National Institute for Health.

### South Africa

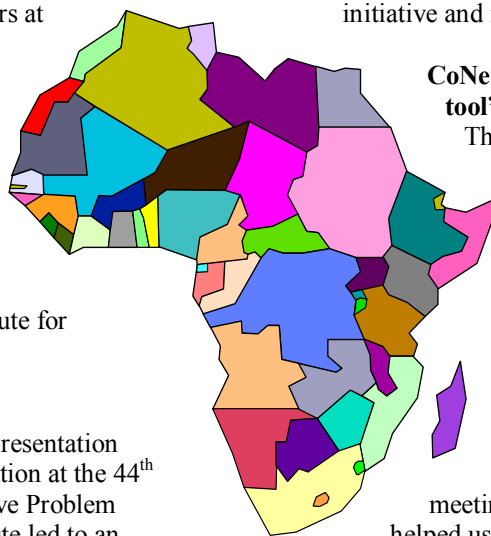
A CoNexus® presentation and demonstration at the 44<sup>th</sup> Annual Creative Problem Solving Institute led to an invitation to present at the 4<sup>th</sup> Annual International Creativity Conference in Pretoria, South Africa.

There I had the extraordinary privilege to meet and observe native Africans collaborating with white Afrikaans. They are learning new creativity and problem solving techniques to help meet the enormous challenge of building a new nation together.

## CoNexus® success

When Kathryn Downing and Mary Junck, presidents of *The Los Angeles Times* and *Times Mirror Eastern Papers*, called to ask if CoNexus® could be used to poll 125 senior managers for the Times-Mirror Company at a three-day off-site, I said, “Absolutely.” But I asked whether simple polling would provide much value. Kathryn and Mary assured me that it would.

At the meeting, Times Mirror executives presented a series of strategic initiatives. The entire audience then responded to polling questions related to their confidence in the market and revenue assumptions underlying each initiative and its strategic fit.



### CoNexus®, “a very effective tool”

The meeting became very interactive as polling results sparked rich, lively discussions of each initiative and overall Times-Mirror strategic direction. “The CoNexus® polling improved the quality of discussion at our meeting and helped us surface issues that we might have missed,” said Ms. Junck. According to the LA Times’ Downing, “CoNexus® polling contributed to the effectiveness of our off-site. We were able to know within minutes where a large and diverse group was in their thinking and receptivity to each topic. We could then address the issues raised by the polling. I am a great fan of CoNexus®, a very effective tool.”

## Product news

Not a week goes by without new decision support products appearing in the marketplace.

### Holographic strategic planning

Many of these new tools are Internet capable for web-based surveys and for collaboration in “virtual decision rooms”.

Such capability allows teams to solve problems or develop strategic plans at the same time from different places around the country—even from around the world! Innovators in this field envision holographic strategic planning sessions within a few years.

### Next generation CoNexus®

In the second quarter of 1999, Leadership 2000, Inc. will introduce the next generation of CoNexus®, a more flexible tool that will also be Internet capable.

PRISM—a beta tester of this new product—is also actively evaluating acquisition of other decision support products, among them Team Expert Choice and Logical Decisions®.

## Strategic “pre-search”

Chenango Memorial Hospital has had strong growth in the last five years. And CEO Frank Mirabito wants to stay on the same trajectory. So this past summer, Chenango Memorial began an intensive strategic planning effort that included conducting CoNexus® market “pre-search” with its major stakeholders.

### The ideal health care provider

Customers, board members, business and community leaders, hospital

## Optimal thinking tips

### Stimulate your mind

When in a thinking rut, get a jump-start. Immerse yourself with information related and unrelated to the challenge at hand. Explore reference books and journals, watch a movie or listen to music, walk in the woods, surf the Web, prepare a culinary delight.

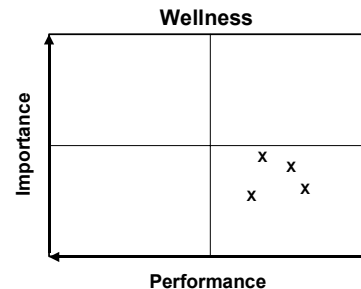
### Allow time for incubation

Put it in neutral for a while. Let the information work. Remain idle. Even sleep on it, but keep a notepad by the bed.

### Idea stream

Turn the key and step on it. Focus. Reconsider the challenge at hand. Then let the ideas stream into a list, sketch, conversation, mindmap, memo—whatever’s most comfortable.

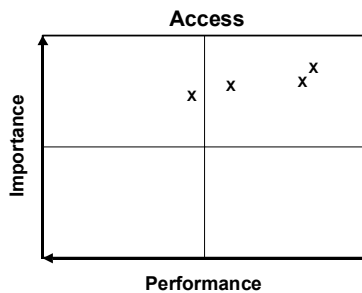
employees, and health and human service providers were asked to describe the attributes of the ideal health care provider. They then (a) ranked those attributes in terms of their relative importance to the ideal and (b) assessed Chenango Memorial’s current performance on each attribute.



The results were enlightening. Of the 11 attributes identified by the five focus groups, seven were repeated in at least three groups. And among those seven, there was tremendous consistency as focus groups used CoNexus® to rank and assess each.

### Real opportunities

For example, the scatter below demonstrates that for four focus groups, access to health care is very important with room for improved Chenango Memorial performance—a clear strategic opportunity to meet stakeholder needs.



On the other hand, the scatter above right suggests relatively lower importance for wellness programs.

This stakeholder information provided strategic insight to the

Chenango Memorial executive team. According to Vice President Joanne Borfritz, “The insights we gained

from the focus groups, which forced us to rethink some basic beliefs about our customers’ needs and our performance as a health care provider, strongly

influenced our five-year plan.”

## Clients

Educational Institutions:

Binghamton City Schools  
Broome-Tioga BOCES  
Chenango Forks Schools  
Deposit Schools  
Herkimer BOCES  
Newark Valley Schools  
SUNY Cortland  
Susquehanna Valley Schools  
Union-Endicott Schools

NYSEG

Times Mirror Company  
United Health Services  
Chenango Memorial Hospital  
The Clinical Campus

## Partners

**Innovation Systems Group** for work with *The Los Angeles Times*  
**Litton-Tasc** for work with The National Institute for Health  
**Leadership 2000** for work with Bellcore and SAIC