

# NCEA 2011 Finance & Accounting Workshop ~ Event Survey

September 19 & 20, 2011 ~ Hilton Hotel, Bloomington, MN

Response Status: 45 Completes out of 85 Attendees

## 1. Overall, rate your NCEA workshop experience?

Excellent	22	50%
Good	20	45%
Average	2	5%
Below Average	0	0%

## 2. Provide all of your workshop comments below:

21 Responses: I thought it was well worth the time and money. I especially value the networking opportunities and breakout sessions.... In the future, I would suggest to not have 2 HR related topics back to back at the conference. I think it would be better to have 2 shorter breaks in the AM and PM instead of 1 longer break. However, stayed on our timeline very well which was nice. Conference was well organized and enjoyed the networking. I always like this conference and this year was no exception. Great job to all involved with the conference!... Loved everything about it!!!! Great people from all companies, it was educational, and fun too.... Thank you for providing copies of the speakers' slides. The hard copies work great for taking notes during the presentations. If possible, consider printing the slides in color. Some of the presentations lose their punch in B&W and some of the graphics slides become meaningless in B&W.... Could breakfast begin earlier on the morning of day 1?... Printed slides are hard to read, impossible in some cases.... Thanks again for all of your work putting together the conference.... It delivers great value. The cost is so reasonable and the material covered is excellent.... The speakers did a very good job but the slides were often too busy or difficult to read. Even the print copy was not clear as the colors used on the slides hid the words.... Round table discussion is very valuable.... Nice conference, well done. Nice conference, well done. Nice conference, well done... I felt like we were short on time for the breakout sessions. Overall I really enjoyed the conference and the topics.... There were a lot of technical sessions scheduled on Monday morning and early afternoon, and some more interactive sessions on Tuesday. I think it may have been easier for participants to break up the more technical sessions a bit by putting the break out sessions and more interactive sessions between some of the more technical session.... I feel like internal "reporting" isn't really covered in any of the breakout sessions. The internal session tends to focus on G/L related topics and the external session tends to focus on 10K filings. I'd like discussion on FERC Form 1 and other internal reporting and analysis.... With so many areas of accounting/finance being represented, it is hard to find topics that pertain to everyone for all sessions. The mix of topics this year was good, but seemed to be weighted towards IFRS. I am not sure how to avoid this, without setting up concurring sessions, which would get quite costly.... The metro location seemed to spark higher interest and attendance. It was nice to see a tax break out session after an absence of several years. After seeing the Tuesday morning session focus on Human Resource issues the last several years, how about doing an Electricity 101 seminar next year? Or perhaps a general overview of how power trading works? A general industry operational topic may be interesting to some of the newer members of the industry.... Group topics were good and applicable to most, always hard to find a balance between too general and too specific.... Great opportunity to network and keep up-to-date on industry issues... There was very little new information provided this year. Much seemed like a repeat of last year's discussion and topics.... Would like a motivational speaker (not related to utility) to wrap up conf.... Enjoyed it all...good meals...comfortable lodging...good speakers...comfortable room...good conference.... Excellent. Topics were timely and pertinent, and the information garnered from the workshop will be immediately applicable in my job.

## 3. Rate the "Technical Accounting & SEC Reporting" session:

Excellent	10	23%
Good	31	70%
Average	3	7%
Below Average	0	0%

8 Responses: Light green on the slides and handouts is hard to read.... This pertains to my job but if I was not in external reporting it would be of limited value.... Not all attendees are familiar with the topics so the brief overview may have left many wondering what the issue really was.... Too technical for my position.... Hard to keep it exciting unless directly involved with and issue. Good to know though.... It may have been better to talk about a couple topics in depth (i.e. goodwill impairment testing) than to try to race through as much as possible at such a high level.... good but above what I do in my job.... Very thorough and informative.

**4. Rate the "IFRS ~ Convergence Update" session:**

Excellent	10	23%
Good	30	68%
Average	4	9%
Below Average	0	0%

4 Responses: IFRS will directly impact me but for many other participants it would be of limited interest.... Timeframe and insights are appreciated..... Geood session..... Good Info.

**5. Rate the "IFRS ~ Role of a PMO & Assessment" session:**

Excellent	14	33%
Good	23	53%
Average	6	14%
Below Average	0	0%

7 Responses: Xcel gave a nice blue print on how to approach this. We do not have the same amount of resources to throw at it.... excellent presenter & material was beneficial and informative..... It was a good introduction on how another industry member is approaching the subject..... It could have been better to talk about some of the real benefits that were realized by having this position. What specific things did you find that may be helpful for others to look at. One person asked what surprises Xcel found - I don't think that was ever really answered..... Good info..... Will be helpful in strategy for implementation of IFRS.

**6. Rate the "Member Profile ~ Xcel Energy" session:**

Excellent	16	37%
Good	26	60%
Average	2	5%
Below Average	0	0%

5 Responses: It is always nice to hear what other utility companies are doing..... I know Xcel is big but not aware of their footprint other than Mn, ND and Wisconsin..... The speaker had a great delivery and power point presentation. Easy message for investors to follow. Xcel strategy was well explained..... Mr. Nielsen did a great job - very engaging speaker.

**7. Rate the "Rate Making & Regulatory Challenges Panel" session:**

Excellent	18	43%
Good	17	40%
Average	7	17%
Below Average	0	0%

9 Responses: Good results for first time addition to the program..... Hearing from the rate departments was a great addition to the conference..... Would like more courses on how rates are derived and the various aspects that could affect them..... a lot of speculative talk - nothing real solid..... I thought this session was at times a little repetitive, maybe we could have told attendee's who would be on the panel ahead of time and let attendees send in questions they would like to hear the panel discuss..... Perhaps another approach would be to introduce federal regulation at the EPA level. There will be a lot of changes in that area in the near future..... good general discussion..... I liked it. Good insight into what the ratemaking people are dealing with currently..... Could have touched on the cost of renewable energy vs. traditional generation (coal & nuclear) and consumers thoughts about the cost of energy. Consumers think they want renewables - do they know how much it costs?

**8. Rate the "Anti-Fraud Awareness" session:**

Excellent	14	32%
Good	23	52%
Average	5	11%
Below Average	2	5%

6 Responses: There needs to be a direct correlation between the topic and the utility side of the business. I found this inapplicable..... Mostly a book approach. It is a difficult to make this exciting..... Nice & light..... This was a very basic general discussion that was a repeat of almost every fraud training I've ever been to. It would have been nice if there were more utility-specific discussion of what our biggest risks are and what are some specific examples of fraud that has occurred in a utility company..... Good reminders..... Very practical approach but also exposure to some surprising behavioral patterns and profiles not apparent or previously considered.

**9. Rate the "Roundtable Discussion" breakout sessions:**

Excellent	22	50%
Good	15	34%
Average	6	14%
Below Average	1	2%

20 Responses: More questions than ever - we didn't finish..... Income Tax: it is always nice to discuss current issues with your peers from other utility companies..... Not enough participants to effectively discuss questions..... Internal reporting..... Lots of great discussion- did not get through all of the questions but all companies were represented and all participated..... Did not have time to complete all questions..... From my perspective this is the most valuable piece - discussions with other company reps is very valuable. More time allowed for this might be beneficial..... I would like to see more time for the breakout sessions..... Too large of a group, but good discussion. too many questions. Can this group be broken down any smaller?..... Would love to see more time for breakout sessions..... Attended the Int Rprtn & Gn Acctng. Had great discussion and participation from attendees..... The session focused primarily on XBRL which is done by our corporate office..... External Reporting - worked best in our group to have an assigned moderator. We started out strong with random questions, but it was helpful to have someone assigned to keep the discussion moving by selecting specific questions that were submitted to discuss. I would recommend making it more clear who will be moderator for each session so there is more clear direction in the breakout rooms..... The breakout session was the highlight for me. Great discussion!..... There was a good turn out for the internal reporting group and robust conversation..... Tax group had a lot of discussion and could have used more time..... not enough time to get through questions or bring up more..... Good but too short..... Information shared was practical, applicable to my duties and responsibilities and will be useful and helpful..... Tax - good discussion and sharing.

**10. Rate the social & reception instead of a group dinner:**

Excellent	17	40%
Good	18	42%
Average	6	14%
Below Average	0	0%

12 Responses: It still leaves time to make plans for the evening.... I like the idea of not having a group dinner. However, the brochure stated heavy on the Hors d'oeuvres that might have been the case but to me the quality was not good.... In Minneapolis the social worked well, allowed everyone a chance to go do their own thing. If the conf is held at a smaller location, a dinner would be beneficial to spend more time networking.... Nice social aspect, however reception food was too light. I think people were counting on this being more of a supper filler..... N/A - I did not attend.... Food was very good and the casual conversation atmosphere is a good way to rap up the day.... The social reception was nice - i did not feel there was a need for a group dinner..... Did not attend..... The appy's seemed to suffer a bit. Why were the peppers served hot and the shrimp cold? Hosting a appetizer buffet along with the cocktail hours is always appreciated, but the appetizer choices were unusual to say the least..... more high tables in the hallway for mixing and setting down plates may have resulted in more mixing..... Like the idea of not having a group dinner. Not impressed with appetizers..... Social reception provided a good opportunity to visit. Turnout was excellent. Round tables would have been better than the rectangular tables. Perhaps more small standing round table in the area near the food at the back of the room. Bar could have been set up in the back of the room also.

**11. Rate the "Managing Generations Through the Employee Life Cycle" session:**

Excellent	14	33%
Good	22	51%
Average	7	16%
Below Average	0	0%

11 Responses: I think the lack of participation was because more than 1/2 of the attendees do not manage other employees..... I have seen this before many times..... excellent speaker for 2 hrs however more geared toward managers/supervisors..... This topic is still relevant but we have all seen the same spin on it at events for years now. It would be good to see less discussion on the fact that it is an issue and there are differences and more related to specific creative ways the industry is evolving as a result of the generational shift..... Presenter didn't seem to connect well with the attendees..... The speaker was very engaging, but I did not feel she really achieved the objectives. She spent a lot of time talking about the different generations and a lot of time talking about the employee life cycle, but did not necessarily link them very effectively..... Heard before but good to review..... The speaker was good however the topic was a repeat of last year so didn't get much out of it..... Interesting - good speaker..... we've heard a lot on this topic lately. Not many new revelations but the speakers approach or strategy for responding to issues was refreshing and a little different from what I've heard in other presentations on the topic..... This is always an interesting topic.

**12. Rate the "Measuring the 'How' and 'Why' of Performance" session:**

Excellent	19	43%
Good	23	52%
Average	1	2%
Below Average	0	0%

8 Responses: It is always nice to see how companies rate their employees performances.... Also gained toward managers/supervisors but good.... Unable to attend..... The speaker did an excellent job - even liked the sports analogies..... Geared toward Mgrs with employees reporting to them..... I thought the speaker did a great job. Good command of his subject matter. Provided insight into a direction our organization is headed in with regard to employee talent and competencies..... Very interesting session.... I left with a lot to think about - both measuring employee performance and my own!

**13. Did you like the workshop location and meeting facility?**

Yes	43	98%
No	1	2%

8 Responses: Would be nice if the hotel provided free wifi.... It was a bit noisy from other conferences..... The hotel staff was excellent from check-in to providing assistance at the buffet to providing trips to the mall. They were very friendly and helpful- they represented the hotel very well. The music was distracting to some people. However, if you sat up front where the empty seats are that was not a problem..... Great facility and location.... A downtown hotel with restaurants in walking distance would be nicer..... Work shop location was nice, but facilities were moderate - the food, temperature, and outside noise were not ideal..... Excellent hotel (rooms, mtg room, food and location)..... Yes but, as stated earlier, the reception area, food and bar configuration an tables could have been set up in such a way as to be more conducive to conversation while at the same time being more comfortable for the consumption of appetizers.

**14. Would you be willing to chair and host an NCEA Finance & Accounting Workshop in the future?**

Yes	5	17%
No	24	83%

8 Responses: Like the way we rotate through the companies.... Not applicable to me..... Unable to comment..... Not at this time, but maybe would consider further out..... Assuming ALLETE is on the list, would work with Steve Morris..... NA..... We would not be willing to chair and host the Finance and Accounting Workshop at this time, but possibly in the future..... Probably don't have the time or the contacts as a result of where I sit in our consolidated corporate and organizational structure.

**15. List specific topics/speakers for the 2012 NCEA Finance/Accounting Workshop:**

11 Responses: More on the leadership program that utilities are implementing. Found Xcel's presentation very informative..... Travel & Entertainment legislated reporting in MN..... I would like to see more on Rate Cases..... Have the rate departments each send a representative so a panel discussion can be held again..... A presentaion of Information Technologies in the immediate horizon that will benefit accounting and financial reporting..... At least one HR or another general type topic is always good for a mixed group of accountants. Maybe an M&A (mergers & acquisitions) session, such as calculating the book basis and tax basis of a company..... How about bringing in Mark Sellner from the U of MN MBT program to do a tax legislation overview next year? There should be some movement in that area as 2012 progresses. It would be nice to see a national tax review from a non- big 4 source..... Continue IFRS updates How transmission cost recovery riders work..... It would be interesting to hear from a PSC commission or staff member to hear their perspective on rate cases, the direction they see the regulatory arena going, what their thoughts are on environmental regulation, IFRS, etc..... IFRS again..... Accounting standards and IFRS convergence update as always.

**16. Suggest ways we can increase the value of this workshop?**

17 Responses: Deloitte did a good job with their presentations, but it's also helpful to have participation from other CPA firms..... Can't think of any..... Have the round table session longer. Seemed like groups were running late and only getting through a little over half of the questions..... More leadership, rate making and other specific utility topics - maybe 30-45 minute sessions on topics such as regulatory assets - what can be, how to get approval, AFUDC, new disclosures for external reporting that have significance.... Can we have maybe one general opening session and then perhaps split sessions into technical and non-technical. It is also tough to judge how much time should be allocated to breakout sessions. This year we could have used more time and previous years less time..... As suggested above - more round table discussion time. Learning from counterparties is very beneficial..... More round table discussion..... Less concentration on speakers that speak on supervisor/manager needs..... I would like something "lighter" part way through the conference. Perhaps something motivational..... Possibly extending the time allowed for the breakout sessions. The Tax session went 20 minutes over, and easily could have gone another 45 minutes..... The regulatory panel was good but for future panels please provide each participant with their own microphone..... consider the breakout groups meeting twice? hard to get to know your counterparts with one short meeting..... Limit all presentations to 1 hour, except round table could be 1.5 to 2 hours at the end of the day..... MOre time for breakouts..... Had a little trouble hearing a couple of the speakers..... Trends in technology. Outsourcing. Cloud computing. Updates on accounting system or subsystem conversions from anyone who has recently completed one or is in the process of going through a conversion. Real life success stories, experiences and challenges overcome, accommodated or marginally dealt with.

**17. Provide any other comments for the NCEA staff and leadership:**

14 Responses: Great folks!.... Great handout! Everything ran very smoothly. Excellent food and facility..... Great preparatory work by Dale and his staff. All of our group's needs were attended to..... Great Conference..... At noon Tuesday, I would prefer a buffet lunch instead of a box lunch. I know some people want to get going, but maybe a buffet line would work to still get people out quickly.... For internal breakout session we only got through question number 20. When you include questions from other years - can you make note of the fact that questions 21 through 34 were not discussed the previous year..... Great value. I would like more roundtable time however..... I thought all the speakers for the conference were good..... The format provides an opportunity to meet with peers in a relaxed environment at a reasonable cost..... Keep up the good work Dale! Another excellent session..... Nice job being done. Keep up the good work..... Good conference..... Good Job!(As usual!)..... I think everyone involved in putting this conference together did an excellent job, from the organizers to the speakers. The conference was well attended which is a plus becuase the attendees get exposure to more of their peers. The host utility and the workshop chair, Darcy Diederich, did an exceptional job in organizing the event, lining up speakers and providing speakers from within the Xcel organization.

**18. Will you attend the next NCEA Finance & Accounting Workshop on September 17 & 18, 2012 at the Hilton Hotel Mall of America in Bloomington, MN?**

Yes	37	90%
No	4	10%

15 Responses: I believe it is in Fargo. I'm not sure that my schedule will allow for the additional travel time..... I know that some from our group will attend to represent our company..... My staff will continue to attend. I participated this year because I was on the Utility Accounting Panel..... probably, dependent on topics and other work obligations..... I sure hope so..... I can't say positively that I'll be there, but it's on my calendar already..... Most likely!..... It is an excellent value..... It may not be me, but there will certainly be representatives from my company there and I will encourage our Financial Reporting Dept to participate as well..... I hope so!..... Looking forward to it!..... yes - good value..... Plan to attend..... I am going to try to attend next year's event..... If timing permits.