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Microsoft Most Valuable Professional Program (MVP) Biggest Challenges / Solutions: from Nestor J. Portillo, Regional Manager, Americas Region MVP Worldwide, Microsoft Corp.

This is the [continuing series](#) of special interviews appearing first here in the Canadian IT Managers (CIM) forum from top-ranking business and technology leaders.

Earlier this week we began our discussion with Nestor J. Portillo, and provided Nestor's rich history in the industry.

Today I put these questions to Nestor:

SI: What are your biggest challenges and their solutions?

NJP: CHALLENGE 1: Enhance the experience

Solution: The MVP Program and its benefits are currently highly appreciated by our MVPs; however the program is looking to enhance the program experience by delivering more value to their members. To address this, we've enabled a profile section where our MVPs provide information about their profile, experience and interests. This allows us to understand their needs in terms of content and knowledge and design enablement mechanisms to fulfill them.

CHALLENGE 2: Global but with a local touch

Solution: Although the MVP program and the overall experience is the same at any region due to the worldwide nature of the program; we are working very hard to understand each region and to include each community's own particularities. The MVP program and the people responsible for managing the relationship, (called MVP Leads), work hard to incorporate these community particularities harmoniously into the WW guidelines.

CHALLENGE 3: Offline communities

Solution: There is a huge level of activity in the offline space that is not necessarily easy to track or even identify. We recognize that these offline communities are vibrant and provide value to customers and community members. We work very closely with key user groups associations such as INETA and Culminis to properly cover this important segment of the community and we are connecting with our field units (Developer & Platform Evangelism and TechNet) to gather information about other independent user groups existing in our region.

SI: What key factors contribute to an involved IT professional receiving the MVP award?

NJP: The Microsoft Most Valuable Professional (MVP) Program recognizes and thanks outstanding members of technical communities for their community participation and willingness to help others. The program celebrates the most active community members from around the world who provide invaluable online and offline expertise that enriches the community experience and makes a difference in technical communities featuring Microsoft products.

Based on this principle: community recognition, credibility and accessibility are the key factors that contribute to an involved IT professional receiving the MVP award. Many of these factors require time and continuous involvement because it is not easy to gain leadership and recognition without cultivating them.

SI: How has the MVP selection process evolved over the years?

NJP: The selection basis continues to be driven mainly by expertise, community participation, recognition, credibility and accessibility. We value those contributions oriented to enrich the community experience and to make a difference in technical communities featuring Microsoft products.

In terms of evolution, 3-4 years ago when we started to embrace the community neighborhood, we enhanced the selection mechanisms to award active people participating in offline activities and other non traditional spaces such as User Groups (Ineta, Culminis, Independent user Groups), Bloggers, Pod Casters, 3rd Party Websites, Active experts (Authors, Speakers, Web Masters, etc).

The selection process is global; the selection criteria are the same WW and are applied consistently along the geographies currently covered by the program to ensure consistency and quality.

Look this week for more of Nestor's insights. Tomorrow, Nestor will describe how MVPs contribute to technical, business, and academic communities. Nestor will also delve into what differentiates the MVP program and the added value it provides.

I also encourage you to share your thoughts here on these interviews or send me an e-mail at sibaraki@cips.ca.

Thank you,
 Stephen Ibaraki, FCIPS, I.S.P.

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