The NUI Leadership Summit

Chip DiComo

On March 25 and 26, 2000, NetWare Users International (NUI) held its annual leadership summit. More than 150 presidents of NetWare user groups around the world gathered in Salt Lake City the weekend before the BrainShare 2000 conference. During the leadership summit, these user group presidents shared ideas and participated in events designed to strengthen individual user groups. “It’s amazing. Each year you come away with a sense of just how big NUI is around the world,” says Esther Fleming of NUI’s South Florida Chapter.

The summit began with regional meetings. At these meetings, leaders of groups from various geographical regions met together to discuss the challenges their groups are facing and to share ideas about creating successful groups. For many leaders, this meeting is the only time they have the opportunity to meet other group leaders. “The time we spend in regional meetings is incredibly valuable,” said Steven Walker of the Chattanooga NetWare Users Group. “We share ideas and make sure all our groups remain on target.”

After these regional meetings, Novell executives— including Steve Adams, senior vice president of Worldwide Marketing; Dave Shirk, senior vice president of Product Management; and Ben Anderson, vice president of Engineering—addressed the group presidents. These executives discussed the future of Novell and reaffirmed the importance of NUI to Novell.

At the leadership summit, NUI also announced an exciting new benefit for NUI members: Epic Learning demonstrated a new technical training curriculum that will soon be available to NUI members. This technical training will be available through the NUI web site (http://www.nuinet.com).

NUI presidents also received leadership training at the summit. Group presidents attended classes designed to keep user groups successful. Classes were held on subjects such as group marketing, vendor relations, and database management. “User group challenges are universal—we all face the same mountains to climb,” said Geir Mork, president of the Novell Forum Users Group in Oslo, Norway.

This year also marked NUI’s greatest visibility at a BrainShare conference. NUI sponsored a series of hands-on labs at BrainShare 2000 and a private lounge for NUI members during the conference. (For more information about the hands-on labs at BrainShare, see “Hands-On Training [HOT] Opportunities.”)

The most visible sign of NUI’s presence at BrainShare was through the technical resource binders that were given to every BrainShare participant. These binders included a technical resource CD from NUI, technical reference material, evaluation software, and product information.

To find an NUI user group in your area or for more information about the benefits of NUI membership, visit the NUI web site (http://www.nuinet.com).

Chip DiComo is a board member of NUI, North America.

Hands-On Training (HOT) Opportunities
by Curtis Dye

For the first time in several years, BrainShare expanded the opportunity for attendees to experience hands-on training as part of the regular BrainShare curriculum. Through the NetWare Users International (NUI) Hands-On Technology Labs, more than 2,400 BrainShare 2000 attendees experienced the process of migrating from NetWare 4.11 to NetWare 5.1 and a pure IP environment.

Mike Morgan, BrainShare program manager, says, “Working with NUI to deliver hands-on training has been a great win-win experience for both the BrainShare team and BrainShare attendees. This training demonstrates our commitment to continually enhance the BrainShare experience.”

In recent years, BrainShare attendees could evaluate Novell’s and Novell partners’ technology and solutions in the popular Technology Lab. However, attendees did not have the benefit of participating in a hands-on, instructor-led technical session. Working with BrainShare, Compaq, Cybex, and the Institute for Network Professionals, NUI resolved the logistical and process issues that had made large-scale hands-on training difficult. As a result, students were able to experience the migration process firsthand. They also were able to use many of the new features in NetWare 5.1, including Web Console, Web Services, Domain Naming Service/Dynamic Host Configuration Protocol (DNS/DHCP) Services, and Novell Storage Services (NSS). Participants in the hands-on sessions agreed that actually working with the technology and experiencing its new features was more valuable than simply reading about the product specifications and features.

One of the major objectives of the hands-on training was to acquaint students with the near quantum leap that the NetWare 5.1 technology represents. Keith Parsons, managing director of the Institute for Network Professionals and technical director of the NUI Hands-On Technology Labs, says, “It takes a strong motive to convince an IT manager to move from a tried and proven platform such as NetWare 3.12 or 4.11. We feel that the hands-on training and its strong ‘Wow, that’s cool!’ quotient will help convince a lot of people to embrace 5.1 as their next platform.”

NUI is now working with BrainShare Europe to once again deliver hands-on technology training to the BrainShare attendees throughout Europe. BrainShare Europe will be held in Nice, France, on May 14 –18.

Curtis Dye is director of Business Development at NUI.