

# Panning for gold in California is rewarding

By Aaron Rouch, Ed Stewart, and George J. Bartolomei, CVS-Life

If you've been following the news, you know that the increased price of gold and a lack of jobs in CA is resulting in a return of gold miners to the stream beds in the Sacramento area. What you don't know about are the San Diego County Water Authority's efforts to "pan for gold" in their value engineering workshops.

Most firms and agencies focus their implementation phase activities solely on those proposals that are developed and presented by the VE team. The Water Authority has expanded on that perspective by developing a procedure that mandates a thorough review of *all* the "brainstorming" ideas developed by their VE teams, with some very rewarding results! By formalizing a full evaluation of all the VE proposals and the brainstorming ideas, a significant number of additional value improvements are being incorporated into their projects. Further, new ideas are generated through discussions and evaluation of the brainstorming

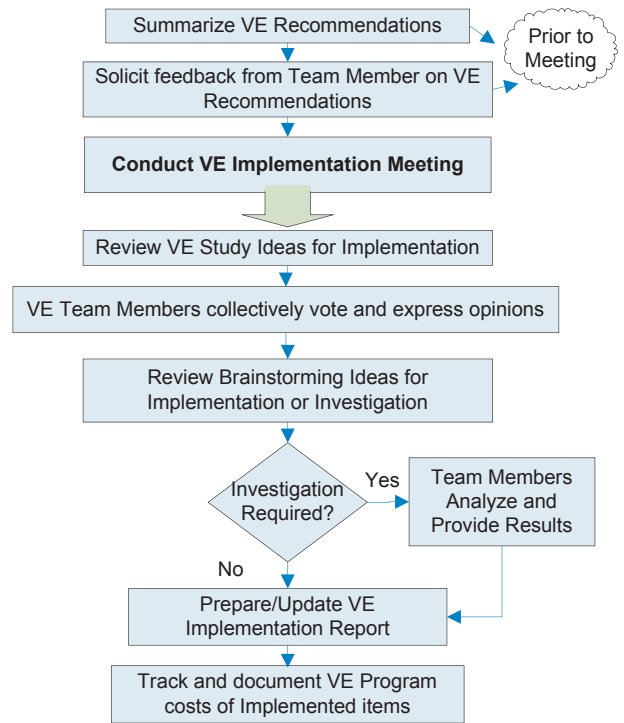
ideas. (See Implementation Meeting Flowchart.)

A necessary key to this approach is the manner in which their VE team results are documented in the final report. By adding a column to the brainstorming ideas list, a disposition is assigned to each idea in the brainstorming list. These dispositions range from *implement*, *investigate*, and *rejected*. Those ideas with a disposition of *investigate* are candidates for the Water Authority "panning" operation. (See Brainstorming List sample page.)

While not every VE workshop will discover a "mother lode" (major

change in project direction), we often refer to the many "nuggets" (simple but significant changes) uncovered by our efforts. The Water Authority has also unveiled the hidden potential in those "gold dust particles" that have been panned in the VE process.

Water Authority Value Engineering Implementation Meeting



## Sample

San Diego County Water Authority  
 San Vicente Dam Raise  
 30% Design  
 VALUE ENGINEERING WORKSHOP

BRAINSTORMING RESULTS

Project	A/C/T DEV.	Disposition
1. Steepen rock cut slopes on Access Roads	4/4/8 SQF - 2.0	<b>Implement.</b> <b>Rejected.</b> There is time in both packages to procure long lead items. <b>Implement.</b> Designer is to develop cost savings, June 2008. <b>Investigate.</b> Designer to provide savings if implemented, June 2008.
2. Procure long lead items in separate package	DNE	
3. Optimize drainage system between new and existing dams	DNE	
4. Use 18' circular shaft (instead of oval)	2/3/5	

RATING KEY

*A/C/T* column is Acceptability/Cost/Total numbers assigned using SIRRS (Simplified Rating/ Ranking System) evaluation of ideas. DNE is a "Do Not Evaluate" rating due to the fact this is being done, has been considered previously, or is not worth developing.

*DEV.* Column indicates the specific developed write-up incorporating each idea. Some write-ups include more than one idea. Some ideas were not developed due to time constraints and/or low preliminary ratings. These should be reviewed for possible future use.