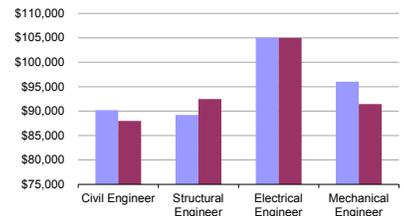


Two types of necessary people

Your job is to instill harmony between those who thrive on change and those who prefer the status quo.

TRENDLINES

PMs in demand



Salaries for project managers at leading engineering firms increased this year for almost all engineering specialties, according to Zweig Group's 2015 Salary Survey of Mountain & Pacific Engineering Firms. For example, the median base salary for civil engineer PMs in that region saw the biggest increase, from \$88,000 last year to \$96,000 this year. Meanwhile, mechanical engineers and electrical engineer PM's median base salaries rose from \$105,000 to \$109,524, and from \$91,458 to \$93,828, respectively. Structural engineers at the project manager level, however, saw a drop in base salary from \$92,468 last year to \$88,000 this year.

— Margot Suydam, Director, Research

FIRM INDEX

Buckhorn Geotech.....	12
CRB.....	9
DOWL HKM.....	12
Hnedak Bobo Group.....	11
Klebasko Environmental Services, LLC.....	12
Littlejohn.....	12
MackKay Sposito.....	9
Raudenbush Engineering, Inc.....	3
S&ME, Inc.....	12
The Davey Tree Expert.....	12
W&M Environmental Group.....	3

There really is something to be said for being in a constant state of dissatisfaction with the way things are at present. No dissatisfaction equates to no motivation to make things better.



Mark Zweig

EDITORIAL

After working with A/E firms for about 35 years, I have come to the conclusion that there are two types of managers/leaders working in most firms. Everyone seems to fall into two camps. It is either the “If it ain’t broke don’t fix it” camp or the “If it ain’t broke, break it” camp. Both types of managers/leaders are necessary but neither of them is right ALL of the time.

Those who think things aren’t broken and should be left alone to operate as-is may very well be correct, but only under certain conditions. First, whatever area of the business you are talking about truly has to be unbroken and you can’t just be rationalizing for your laziness or complacency in not dealing with what actually is a problem. Second, the risk of changing it and screwing up what it does contribute is, in your judgment, greater than the benefits you could accrue by “fixing” it. And third, there are other areas or opportunities for improvement inside the firm that are a better use of your time and other resources. All of these conditions have to be met but there certainly are some good cases for concluding that this area is NOT where your focus needs to be at this time. Having people from this camp can be essential to keeping peace and harmony inside the firm and to keeping

See MARK ZWEIG, page 2

MORE COLUMNS

■ GUEST SPEAKER: A solid study aid. Page 7



The experts share advice

Page 6

FOCUS ISSUE

LEADERSHIP

Master decision-making skills | Insert speed into the recruitment process | Careful decisions help avoid financial fallout

Page 3, 9 & 11

A/E BUSINESS NEWS

NEW AIA PRESIDENT INSTALLED Elizabeth Chu Richter, CEO of **Richter Architects** in Corpus Christi, Texas, was inaugurated as the 91st president of the AIA during ceremonies held on Dec. 12 at the National Portrait Gallery in Washington, D.C., the organization announced. She succeeds Helene Combs Dreiling in representing over 85,500 AIA members.

"As architects, we use our creativity to serve society – to make our communities better places to live. Through our profession and our life's work, each of us has shaped and re-shaped the ever-changing narrative that is America in both humble and spectacular ways," said Richter, in the Portrait Gallery's Kogod Courtyard, under Foster + Partners' tessellated canopy. "We have created harmony where there was none. We have shown we can see what is not yet there. We have shown we have the courage to grow, to change, and to renew ourselves."

In setting a course for the AIA and the profession's future, she identified three issues that merit close attention. The first is the challenges of a global economy that is increasingly urbanizing: "The message is clear: We must be prepared to apply our talents anywhere and everywhere." She went on to speak of the need for an informed public: "Few understand the impact (architecture) has on their lives. Every building has a story. Let's tell them!" She also spoke of the obligation owed to emerging professionals: "As a profession, each of us has an obligation to help all the bright, passionate, and creative young women and men to succeed. They are the profession's future."

Born in Nanjing, China, Richter grew up in Hong Kong and Dallas. She received her Bachelor of Architecture from the University of Texas at Austin in 1974. In 2001, the American Institute of Architects conferred her with a national Young Architects Award in recognition of her community-sensitive designs and her leadership role in heightening the public's awareness of regional and urban issues through her award-winning public radio series, "The Shape of Texas," which ran from 1998 to 2011. In 2005, she was elevated to the College of Fellows of the American Institute of Architects in recognition of her contributions of national significance in making the profession of ever-increasing service to the society. Richter served as president of the Texas Society of Architects in 2007 and, most recently, as a regional director representing Texas on the AIAs National Board of Directors.

In that time, Richter provided leadership to her firm, which received the 2011 Texas Society of Architects Firm Award.

CLIMATE CHANGE IMPACT STUDIES FUNDED The U.S. Department of the Interior's regional Climate Science Centers and the U.S. Geological Survey National Climate Change and Wildlife

Science Center are awarding nearly \$6 million to universities and other partners for 50 new research projects to better prepare communities for impacts of climate change.

The 50 scientific studies will focus on how climate change is affecting natural and cultural resources and tribal communities, as well as inform management actions that can be taken to help offset those impacts. The research can help guide managers of parks, refuges and other cultural and natural resources to plan how to help species, ecosystems, tribes and other communities adapt to climate change. The studies, most of which will occur over multiple years, will be conducted with fiscal year 2014 funding.

Each of the Department of the Interior's eight regional Climate Science Centers (CSCs) worked with states, tribes, federal agencies, Landscape Conservation Cooperatives (LCCs), universities supporting the CSCs, and other regional partners to identify the highest priority management challenges in need of scientific input, and to solicit and select research projects.

The studies will be undertaken by teams of scientists – including researchers from the universities that comprise each region's CSC – from Interior's USGS, and from other partners such as the states, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, USDA Forest Service, tribes, and the LCCs in each region.

MARK ZWEIG, from page 1

you focused on the highest priorities. The harshest critics will accuse these people of settling for less than they should and holding the company back, and in some cases they may very well be right.

It is true that those who think things can always be done better (the "If it's not broke, break it" camp), may be the ones who actually make some real breakthroughs that ultimately make the firm a lot more successful. There really is something to be said for being in a constant state of dissatisfaction with the way things are at present. No dissatisfaction equates to no motivation to make things better. These natural optimizers just "see" opportunities to improve everything. And the truth is, in my experience, everything in most AEC firms CAN be done better. That said, they aren't always fun to be with and can cause quite a bit of stress and discomfort to

top management at times.

Both of these types of managers/leaders are needed in your firm. It's kind of like an orchestra – you need different instruments. Pull any one of them out and the composition doesn't sound so good. Your job as the "orchestra leader" is to decide when "good enough" really is good enough and when changes need to be made to make things better. It takes a balance, a constant reassessment of priorities and available resources, and continuous judgments about who you can make uncomfortable or potentially demotivate with too much or too little change. This is just one more aspect of the "art of leadership," and part of what makes your job a continuous learning experience...

Happy New Year, All! 🚩

MARK ZWEIG is the chairman and CEO of Zweig Group. Contact him with questions or comments at mzweig@zweiggroup.com.

THE ZWEIG LETTER

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Master decision-making skills

Should you act quickly or follow a deliberate process?
What are the pros and cons?

By LIISA SULLIVAN
Correspondent



Jack Raudenbush,
VP, Raudenbush
Engineering, Inc.

From a business perspective, how important is speed to the decision-making process? Is it better to research and analyze or better to act quickly? Does the answer depend on the situation at hand?

BALANCE THE NEED FOR SPEED. Jack Raudenbush, vice president, **Raudenbush Engineering, Inc.** (Middletown, PA), a 41-person, full-service engineering firm, says that in many cases, but not always, the ability to come to a quick decision is important. Of course, each situation will have its own implications relative to the timeliness of a decision.



Gene Murray,
President,
W&M
Environmental
Group.

“Moving too quickly can be detrimental in situations where thorough research of options and detailed analysis is required, and moving too slowly can result in missed opportunities.”

“Moving too quickly can be detrimental in situations where thorough research of options and detailed analysis is required, and moving too slowly can result in missed opportunities,” he says. “Managers and business owners must balance the ‘need for speed’ with an appreciation for thoroughness, and sometimes will achieve the best of both worlds by cultivating subject matter-specific resources to whom they can reach out, get quick answers, and use this knowledge to make an informed decision.”

Raudenbush provides two different examples that require two different approaches:

- **A quick decision** could be necessary when a contractor is performing earthwork and has encountered potentially unacceptable material. When multiple construction crews and expensive construction equipment sit idle, cost impacts quickly add up. Qualified geotechnical specialists would need to make a decision that would allow the contractor to continue with the work, or move to corrective action to mitigate the conditions associated with the unacceptable material.
- **A longer decision-making process** could be associated with the hiring of a new manager or to fill a senior engineering position. Creating an effective job description, determining the most qualified

candidates, performing effective interviews, following up with references, and possibly negotiating compensation are all time-consuming activities that shouldn't be taken lightly. Otherwise, there is greater risk in hiring unsatisfactory staff.

Gene Murray, president, **W&M Environmental Group** (Plano, TX), a 42-person environmental consulting firm, agrees that it all depends on the situation. However, he does believe that speed is essential and inherent in the decision-making process.

See DECISION MAKING, page 4

SHARPEN DECISION-MAKING SKILLS

Based on extensive research and experience, Bain & Company, a major management consulting firm, presents the following five-step process for better decision making:

Score your organization. How good is your organization at making and executing decisions? What are the strengths you can build on to improve your effectiveness? Where are the hang-ups that prevent you from doing better? A rigorous, fact-based assessment will help you understand how your organization supports or inhibits decision effectiveness.

Focus on key decisions. Identify the big, high-value decisions that every organization must make, and ensure that those decisions work well. But also understand that small everyday decisions – the kind that are made over and over again, often by people on or near the frontline – can matter as much as the big ones.

Make decisions work. Set individual critical decisions up for success. A systematic process of analyzing the what, who, how and when of each troubled decision can put people on the path to good, speedy decision making and execution. Companies can “reset” decisions that are sources of trouble.

Build an organization. One that enables great decision making and execution throughout. The most successful companies address both the “hard” issues, such as defining decision roles and processes in the corporate center, regional and divisional centers, and operating units, as well as the “soft” ones, such as talent management, leadership behaviors and organizational culture.

Embed decision capabilities. Lasting impact requires embedding new decision capabilities and behaviors in everyday practice. Companies need to equip people at all levels with the skills and abilities to decide and deliver, day in and day out.

TALK TO US

Do you have an interesting story to tell? Is your company doing things differently and getting results? Let us know. We'd love to contact you and feature you in an upcoming case study. If interested, please email LSullivan@zweigwhite.com.



RESOURCES

MERGER & ACQUISITION SURVEY Is your firm considering a merger, an acquisition, or a sale? Or have you recently completed a merger or acquisition transaction? If so, then you'll want to see the results in Zweig Group's 2015 Merger & Acquisition Survey of Architecture, Engineering, Planning & Environmental Consulting Firms. The 25th edition of this comprehensive report includes all the latest data on the state of merger and acquisition activity in the design and environmental consulting industry. Whether you want to get a projected value for your own firm or one you're looking to buy or you want to find out how the details of the deal you recently made compare to other similar deals, this report has the answers you need.

If you're considering selling your firm, use the Merger & Acquisition Survey to:

- Find out what today's buyers are looking for – who, where, and what
- See what kind of price you can expect for your firm
- Learn what's motivating other sellers like yourself, and what buyers are hoping to achieve through an acquisition

If you're considering buying another firm, use the Merger & Acquisition Survey to:

- Learn how long it takes to buy or sell a firm, from start to finish
- Find out how many firms are satisfied with the acquisitions they've made

If you've recently completed a merger or acquisition deal, use the Merger & Acquisition Survey to:

- Learn how the price you paid or the amount you received compares with other similar deals
- Find out if your peers or competitors also recently completed any transactions
- Compare the success of your firm's transactions with other firms' successful (or not successful) transactions

For more information or to pre-order, call 800-466-6275 or log on to https://zweiggroup.com/p-2220-Merger_Acquisition_Survey_2015.

VALUATION SURVEY Do you know how much your A/E/P or environmental consulting firm is worth? If you're an owner of an A/E/P or environmental consulting firm, you can't risk not knowing the value of your business. Whether it's for

external purposes, such as a firm sale or merger, or internal purposes, such as ownership transition or ESOP purposes, all firm owners should know what their investments are worth.

The 2015 Valuation Survey of Architecture, Engineering, Planning & Environmental Consulting Firms is the definitive resource for helping you find out! With the survey data included in this report and Zweig Group's exclusive Z-Formulas, you'll be able to quickly and easily learn what your firm is worth.

The 2015 Valuation Survey of Architecture, Engineering, Planning & Environmental Consulting Firms will help you:

- Use Zweig Group's exclusive Z-Formulas to quickly find out how much your firm is worth
- Use over 225 case studies to make reliable comparisons of value between your firm and others in the industry
- Find out what makes one firm more valuable than another
- See how growth rate, staff size, firm age, and other factors affect firm value
- Settle internal ownership transition disputes armed with the latest data about firm values

The information in this report is based on over 225 actual valuations of A/E/P and environmental consulting firms! Each year, Zweig Group conducts a nationwide survey to identify design and environmental firms that use an internal formula for valuation, that have been merged or acquired, or that have been appraised by an independent valuation consultant. These firms supply us with information on their type of business, revenues, profits, growth, assets, and so on. Then, for each firm we calculate six different value ratios (e.g., TIC value per employee, TIC value/net revenue, etc.) and compare these by firm size, type, region, reason for valuation, and more. The result is rock-solid comparative data relied upon by thousands of firms.

A case study for every valuation is included so you can compare your firm's statistics to other firms just like your own. You'll also find a chapter on valuation practices and ways to enhance value for design and environmental consulting firms!

For more information or to pre-order, call 800-466-6275 or log on to <https://zweiggroup.com/p-2218-valuation-survey-2015>.

DECISION MAKING, from page 3

"If you postpone a decision, often that is, in essence, a 'no,'" he says. "The longer you wait to decide, the faster the window of opportunity shuts. On the other hand, if you don't have enough information to make an informed decision you have the very real probability of making a costly mistake."

Murray is of the general opinion that it is better to have all the facts and to have analyzed them before making a decision.

"I think those who operate on 'gut feeling' are just being lazy (and I throw myself under that bus)," he says.

For example, Murray says that they used to hire employees on "gut feelings" with a "thumbs up" or "thumbs down" if

their résumé was right and "we got a good vibe." They would feel confident and make the hire.

"While this did work out more times than not, when it didn't work out it was bad for both parties," he says. "Now we do a lot more analysis prior to making those decisions and it's worked out for the better."

Murray also provides an example of where a quicker decision may be necessary. For instance, if they are presented with project opportunities that are fast-paced and the client needs action fast, what happens? Murray explains that if the client is pressed for time and there is a small window for them to research and analyze the situation until their comfort level is reached, they act fast and decisively and own the decision. ■

SURVEY

It's time to pick your team for 2015

When thinking about marketing, it's important to get the right team together.

By CHRISTINA ZWEIG
Contributing editor

GOOD TO KNOW

The median base salary for marketing directors is \$89,000, with A/E (primarily architecture firms) paying out more than firms that only practice architecture. Among engineering firms, the lowest median annual base salary for marketing directors is \$94,000/year and the highest \$96,500, depending on the region of the country.

Source:

Zweig Group 2015 salary surveys, <https://zweiggroup.com/p-2211-salary-survey-of-architecture-interior-design-landscape-architecture-firms-2015>

The holidays always seem a popular time for AEC firms to ramp up their marketing activities, but now that the buzz is over and the New Year is upon us, many firms are left wondering “what’s next.”

Having a good marketing plan is a great place to start, but having the right people on board to assemble this plan and also carry it out, can be a huge challenge but an absolute necessity.

If your firm has grown or wants to, it might be time to think about making some investments in your marketing department. What does this look like at the typical A/E Firm? We took a look at some of the most common marketing positions and looked at responsibilities, salary levels, and tenure.

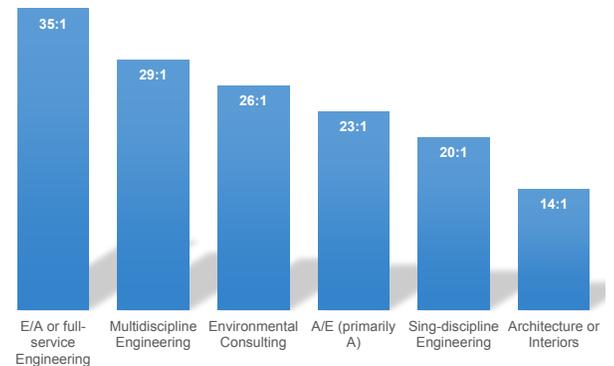
WHAT THE STATS TELL. Zweig Group’s 2014 Marketing Survey found that the average percentage total staff assigned to the marketing department was around 3 percent, and the median ratio of total staff to marketing staff as 26 to 1. Among firm types, stable, single discipline engineering, and firms with 1-24 people had more staff assigned to their marketing departments. Full-service engineering or E/A firms had a median ratio of 35 staff members for every marketing staff member, and architecture or interiors firms had a median ratio of 14 to 1.

Firms with a marketing department usually have a marketing director, while marketing managers are more common in large firms. Firms typically add a marketing director at 25 employees, and a business development representative at 50 employees. As would be expected, the larger a firm becomes, the larger the marketing presence.

Marketing directors (26 percent) and marketing managers (20 percent) are more likely to have earned a master’s degree than marketing coordinators (9 percent) and business development representatives (14 percent). Roughly 20 percent of marketing directors, managers and coordinators have worked for a competing firm at some point, while over one third of BD reps have worked for a competitor.

Typically, the role of marketing director is a senior management position. This person is usually responsible for establishing marketing programs,

MARKETING TO TOTAL STAFF RATIOS



Source: 2014 Marketing Survey, Zweig Group.

policies, and procedures, directing the preparation of a marketing plan, and has major influence on the substance of the plan. Marketing directors often supervise other marketing staff members and direct technical staff in marketing duties. Typically, this person can also represent their firm to clients, peer organizations, and business associates.

Zweig Group’s 2015 Salary Survey of Architecture, Interior Design & Landscape Architecture Firms lists the median base salary for marketing directors at \$89,000, with A/E (primarily architecture firms) paying out more than firms that only practice architecture. Marketing directors have a median of 17 years of experience, the survey found. Zweig Group’s 2015 Salary Survey of Northeast and South Atlantic Engineering Firms reported the lowest median annual base salary (\$94,000/year) for marketing directors, while the Engineering Salary survey in the Central region reported the highest median annual base salary (\$96,500).

WHO DOES WHAT, FOR HOW MUCH? Marketing managers/coordinators are typically responsible for maintaining marketing information systems, editing, coordinating, and helping write proposals, brochures, and other marketing materials. This person may also assist the marketing director develop the marketing plan, facilitate/coordinate marketing staff meetings, and/oversee proposal preparation, client contact database maintenance,

See TEAM, page 8





The consultants and experts at Zweig Group dish almost daily advice on Twitter. It's hard to capture everything, so every so often we'll do a recap of some of the most relevant posts in this space. Enjoy!

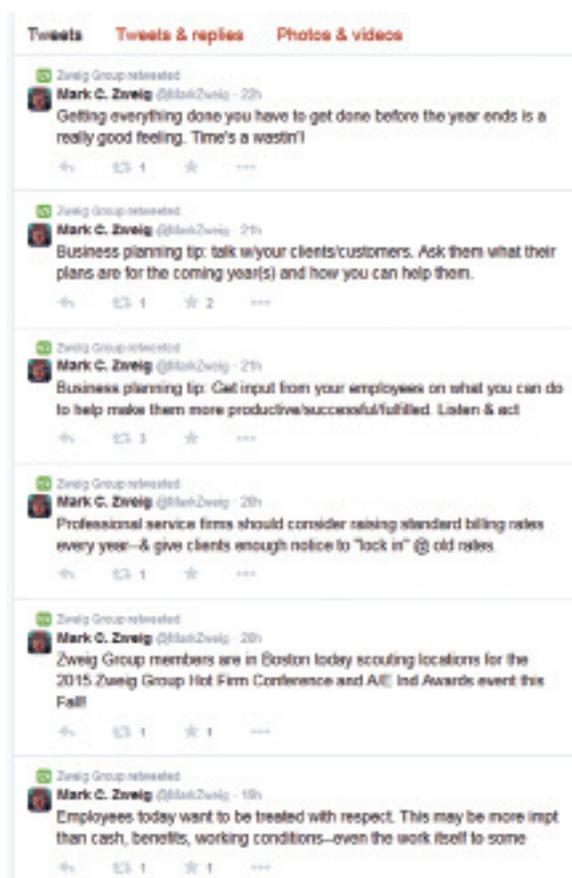


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A solid study aid

10 reasons why flashcards can help you in PMP Exam preparation.



Cornelius Fichtner

GUEST SPEAKER

Studying for the Project Management Professional (or PMP) Exam can be a long undertaking that at times may seem overwhelming. One known effective method for studying for the PMP Exam is using flashcards. Flashcards are compact, quick and easy to use study aids that typically cover one question, formula, or tidbit of information per card. Flashcards can be used just about anywhere – waiting in line, on the bus or train, or even when you just have a few moments between meetings. In this article, we are going to discuss 10 reasons flashcards should be part of your PMP Exam preparation toolkit.

You should consider using flashcards because as a study method, it does the following:

1) Allows you to study almost any time and anywhere

- Flashcards are portable and flexible. They can go anywhere with you and can be used when you have some free time, such as waiting for a doctor's appointment, or the cable repair technician.
- You can print flashcards and take them with you, or if you prefer flashcards are also available to be viewed on mobile devices.

2) Provides an active method for learning PMP concepts

- When you use flashcards as part of learning a concept, you are not just passively reading information; you are asking yourself questions and actively answering them.
- When you pick up a flashcard that reads, "What does WBS stand for?" you have to think about what the question is asking and recall details related to the question. Apart from asking what WBS stands for, you might then ask yourself, "What does it mean? What was the context in which I learned about WBS? What is the significance of a WBS?"
- You are more fully engaged in learning, which helps make the information "stick".

3) Allows you to think about how much you do or do not understand a concept

- Flashcards can be used to reflect on what you are learning, which is also known as metacognition, i.e. "Thinking about thinking".
- If you pick up a flashcard that reads, "How do you calculate SPI?" you may remember what SPI stands for and that it involves earned value and planned value, but cannot recall the formula.

Flashcards are an excellent study aid that can provide a huge boost to your PMP Exam preparation toolkit. They are broken down into a single concept at one per card, can be used just about anywhere when you have free time, can be sorted in any order you wish, and can be used alone or as part of a group study session.

- If you don't have clear understanding of a flashcard question, then you know you may have to read more about it or review what you have learned about the concept. So this may mean looking up the SPI formula, study and work through an example to ensure that you know that you calculate SPI by dividing earned value by planned value.

4) Breaks studying down into small chunks

- One flashcard covers a single topic so flashcards overall break studying down into small single concept chunks.
- For each chunk, you can determine which ones you understand and those that you know you need to review more.
- In other words, flashcards allow for you to focus on one question at a time. When you pick up a flashcard that asks, "What does WBS stand for?" and you think to yourself, "I have no idea" then you know you need to set that card aside, so you can spend more time on the topic of the WBS.

See CORNELIUS FICHTNER, page 8



CORNELIUS FICHTNER, from page 7

5) Provides repetition

- Flashcards ask questions about concepts in a variety of different ways and are intended to be used over and over.
- Knowing how to answer questions about a concept that is presented in a variety of ways ensures you learn, not simply memorize, the concept. In this way, you will find it easier to recall the information.
- If you answer a flashcard question correctly, don't just set it aside. It is useful to not only see the cards you have not mastered more than once, but it is also good to review cards you got right the first time. Answering correctly a few times ensures you have learned the concept.

6) Allows for distributed learning

- Distributed learning is the practice of spreading out your studying over time and quizzing yourself on the concepts over time; in another words – not cramming.
- Take a break between study sessions to learn other concepts or do other non-study related activities to allow for the information time to “sink in”.
- Spreading out studying for the PMP Exam is a much better method than cramming all of the information “en masse”.

7) Provides immediate feedback on progress

- With flashcards you know immediately if you are on the right track with a specific PMP concept; either you can answer the question correctly or not.
- There is a growing sense of accomplishment with a growing pile of mastered flashcards.
- There is no waiting time. You can immediately reprioritize your studies to learn more about topics on flashcard questions that you got wrong.

8) Allows you to control your learning

- You can order the flashcards randomly, by subject areas, by how much you have mastered a topic, or in any order you would like.
- You can learn at your own pace; set your own personal goals such as to review 5, 40 or 100 flashcards a day.
- You can easily sort the cards into groups of what you do know and what you need to spend more time studying.

9) Uses both visual and auditory senses

- Memory improves when you use more than one sense to learn information, which can be done using flashcards.
- It is useful to have cards where you can draw an image or graph on (visual) that you associate with the concept on the flashcard. For example, if the concept is Maslow's hierarchy, don't just rely on the text to learn the concept – draw it out.
- It can also be good to have someone else read the questions to you (auditory).

10) Works well in a group format

- You can make a game out of using flashcards and create a contest or casual competition within the study group, so you can introduce some fun while learning, discussing, and debating questions and answers.
- Hearing and discussing the questions in a group format can

help you to reinforce PMP Exam concepts.

Flashcards are an excellent study aid that can provide a huge boost to your PMP Exam preparation toolkit. They are broken down into a single concept per card, can be used just about anywhere when you have free time, can be sorted in any order you wish, and can be used alone or as part of a group study session. Of course you can create your own flashcards as you study, but there are excellent inexpensive flashcards available such as the PMP eFlashcards that can give you a head start. ▀

CORNELIUS FICHTNER, PMP, CSM is a noted PMP exam prep expert. He has helped over 26,000 students prepare for the PMP exam with The Project Management PrepCast and offers a PMP Exam Simulator.

TEAM, from page 5

and help manage marketing support staff. The 2015 Salary Survey of Architecture, Interior Design & Landscape Architecture Firms lists the overall the annual base salary at median of \$59,515/year for this job role and people generally had 10 years of experience. Zweig Group's 2015 Salary Surveys of Mountain and Pacific Engineering firms shows a median annual base salary of \$64,400/year for this position. The same survey in the Central Region reports a median of \$58,934, and in the Northeast and South Atlantic at a median of \$62,000.

Marketing assistants are typically responsible for providing administrative support for marketing activities. The Salary Survey of Architecture, Interior Design & Landscape Architecture Firms reported a median annual base salary of \$45,240 and a median of five years' experience. The most recent Engineering Salary Surveys reported a median salary of roughly \$43,000/year for this position.

Business development representatives are usually responsible for seeking business opportunities for the firm. This individual is responsible for developing client relationships and soliciting project opportunities. BD representatives report on planned and executed sales activities to the appropriate level of management. They typically have about 16 years of experience in the industry. The Salary Survey of Architecture and Landscape Architecture Firms shows that the base salary for this role is median of \$85,000/year, with significantly higher salary levels reported at architecture firms (\$95,000/year) in comparison to architecture/interior design firms (\$73,200/year). Engineering firms saw a huge disparity in salary amounts based on location, according to Zweig Group's most recent Salary Surveys of Engineering Firms, with BD reps in the Mountain and Pacific regions reporting a median annual base salary of \$124,987/year, the Central region \$96,000/year, and the Northeast and South Atlantic region \$99,840/year.

How does your firm compare to these benchmarks? Is it time for you to consider expanding your marketing department in 2015? ▀

LEADERSHIP

Insert speed into the recruitment process

Stop wrangling with résumés and set up a quick turnaround system, for your sanity.

By LIISA SULLIVAN
Correspondent

Hiring managers often get inundated with résumés and getting back to people in a timely manner can sometimes get swept under the rug. And, dropping the ball may wind up costing you a great candidate in the long run. So, try to get up to speed to ensure a successful recruitment machine.

GOOD TO KNOW

Thirty-two percent of firms have a recruiting/HR budget. In general, large firms are more likely than small firms to have a recruiting/HR budget.

Source: 2014-2015 Operating Expenses Survey, Zweig Group, <https://zweiggroup.com/p-2217-operating-expenses-survey-2014-2015>

“We typically will send out a letter to apprise people who have submitted a résumé of our final hiring decision or update them on where we are in the process.”

THE RULE OF THE THREE. Patti St. Vincent, corporate coordinator, **CRB** (Kansas City, MO), a 750-person architecture, engineering, construction and consulting firm, says that they strive to contact potential hires no later than three weeks of receiving a résumé, and sooner if they have an opening that meets the person’s qualifications.

“We typically will send out a letter to apprise people who have submitted a résumé of our final hiring decision or update them on where we are in the process,” she says.

PUT IT ON AUTO PILOT; ADD A PERSONAL TOUCH. Laura Piltz, director of employee services, **MacKay Sposito** (Vancouver, WA), a 168-person consulting firm specializing in energy, public works and land development, says that they have an automatic response mechanism set up for when they receive a résumé or an application.

“This process thanks the applicant for their interest in the position and in working for the company,” she says. “It also informs the applicant that their résumé has been received, has been processed and is being reviewed. Our automatic response includes a self-identification form which aids in ful-

See SPEED, page 10

4 TIPS FOR CREATING A POSITIVE CANDIDATE EXPERIENCE

The Vesume Group, a staffing agency specializing in the placement of IT and engineering professionals, provides four tips that will help you to create a positive experience for candidates. After all, if a candidate’s experience is not good during the pre-employment process, it’s unlikely that they are going to pursue working for you in the future. The tips are:

- 1. Timely acknowledgement.** Acknowledge all applications received. Also, provide timely and honest feedback after an interview (within one week). Don’t make candidates sit around waiting for interviewers. If your hiring process is taking longer than expected, periodically check in with your active candidates and keep them informed. Close the loop with candidates that are not a match for your position.
- 2. Build a database.** Enter all candidates’ relevant data in your automated system, including contact information, skills, desired pay rates, location, and availability. Do not exclude any candidates. A candidate may not be a great match for the position you have open today, but may be for a position you have open in the future. Also, a candidate that may not be a great match for your open position may know someone who is a great match.
- 3. Define your hiring process.** You don’t want to develop a process as you go as your candidate will perceive you as being disorganized and won’t have that great experience. Define where you will post your open positions and for how long, which staffing agencies to use for which positions, how many candidates you want to identify, how many stages of interviews will be required and what form will they take (video, phone, in-person), who will be interviewing candidates, how will you aggregate and analyze feedback and what factors will be used to make a decision, and who will manage this process and the candidate relationship. These are all process considerations not specific to any one open position.
- 4. Train your employees who will be involved in the hiring process.** Make sure your interviewers understand the importance of this role. They should not be late to interviews. They are to conduct themselves professionally. You want to be sure they are asking only legal questions and staying away from illegal or questionable conduct. You want to be sure all interviewers are sending a consistent message to all candidates and that message is consistent with your organization’s defined brand. All interviewers should understand your hiring process and the role and can clearly present both to each candidate.



ON THE MOVE

NBBJ APPOINTS COO NBBJ (Seattle, WA), a 750-person global architecture and design firm, announced the appointment of **Juli Cook** as COO. She will oversee the firm's global operations across ten offices and manage the firm's administrative, financial, legal, information technology, and human resources functions. She is based in NBBJ's Seattle office.

A dynamic leader, Cook is widely credited with introducing innovative new business models across a range of professional services and creative industries. Prior to joining NBBJ, she served as executive vice president of Corbis Images and as its senior vice president of Media Products & Global Operations. Founded in 1989 by Bill Gates, Corbis Corporation is a digital content, entertainment, and licensing company. Cook most recently led Corbis Images' diversification efforts, successfully acquiring multiple new business lines, including Splash and Demotix. Prior to her role at Corbis, she was vice president of product management at Washington Mutual, where she was responsible for developing new products and services for retail bank customers. She also held management roles at Deloitte Consulting and Sotheby's.

"Juli brings an ideal combination of skills. She has an intimate understanding of how creative cultures thrive, and she has successfully delivered business growth at scale for global companies," said Steve McConnell, NBBJ's managing partner. "Adding a leader of this caliber is a major step toward our goal: building the leading next-generation architecture and design firm. Over the last two years, we have had top talent join the strong team already here at NBBJ to ensure we continue to bring great value to clients. Our industry is adapting constantly to a fast-changing economic and real-estate climate. Juli has worked across all corporate functions from marketing to leadership development and has a holistic understanding of operational excellence."

"There is a dynamic mix of innovation paired with service excellence at NBBJ," Cook said. "I am drawn to the way NBBJ addresses major issues in its client work and its own business, such as the need for sustainable solutions, population density in emerging cities, and the proliferation of digital services and devices. I am thrilled to join a highly creative enterprise that is harnessing data and science for intelligent building design."

LJA PROMOTES TWO LJA (Houston, TX), a 425-person an employee-owned, full-service consulting engineering firm, announced that **Mark Swanson** has been promoted to senior project manager in the firm's Houston Land Development Division.

Swanson has over 15 years of experience in the design

of single-family residential, industrial, municipal and commercial site development. His experience includes the design of public and private water distribution, sanitary sewer, storm sewer, detention, and paving facilities. He has also performed traffic control, signage and pavement marking, and storm water pollution prevention/storm water quality management projects, and been involved with bid preparation and construction cost estimates.

In his new role as a senior project manager, Swanson will play a major role in managing and providing oversight and mentorship to his group's team while continuing to expand upon marketing and business development activities within the company.

LJA has also promoted **Micheal Wang** senior project manager in the firm's Houston Land Division.

Wang has over 17 years of experience in managing single-family and multi-family residential, municipal and commercial site developments. His experience includes the design of public and private water, sanitary sewer, storm sewer, stormwater quality, detention, floodplain mitigation, traffic control plans, and paving facilities. He has also been involved with preparing bid documents, construction cost estimates, bond sales, surplus funds, and feasibility investigations. Wang also interacts with clients and manages the approval process with various governmental agencies.

In his new role, Wang will play a major role in managing projects and providing oversight and mentoring the group's engineers-in-training, while continuing to expand upon marketing and business development activities.

PSI PROMOTES Professional Service Industries, Inc.

(Oakbrook Terrace, IL), a 2,300-person environmental, engineering and testing services firm, has announced several promotions.

Mark McCagg was appointed as principal consultant for the Phase I Environmental Site Assessment Service Line. Based in PSI's Charlotte office, McCagg has served a dual role as project manager and has been with PSI since 2007.

Eric Fraske was promoted to branch manager of its Cypress office. Fraske has also been recently appointed as principal consultant of the Phase I Environmental Site Assessment Service Line. He previously served as environmental and geotechnical department manager.

David Sawicki, a certified professional geologist, was promoted to principal consultant for the Phase I Environmental Site Assessment Service line. Sawicki has over 25 years of diverse environmental experience. Based in PSI's Hillside office, he serves a dual role as environmental department manager.

SPEED, from page 9

filling our requirement of providing applicants numerous self-identification opportunities in compliance with federal contract requirements.

"We work hard to build relationships in the communities where we work and live and we often see that the same people apply for multiple openings or apply for similar positions multiple times. We recognize that there is real desire to work at MacKay Sposito and we truly appreciate that we are viewed as the type of company that people want to work

for," Piltz says.

To that end, Mackay Sposito makes every effort to inform people that they are not going to be considered at this time, but that their résumé will be kept on file and will be reviewed for future openings.

"We can't hire everyone, but we can acknowledge those people who have applied," she says. "Applicants who are interviewed, but not hired, will receive a personal phone call or a letter from the HR department or from the hiring manager. That personal touch is important to us." ▀

LEADERSHIP

Careful decisions help avoid financial fallout

Measure the need to act quickly with enough research. Also, explore the types of decision-making skills.

By LIISA SULLIVAN
Correspondent



Jeff Bailey, CFO,
Hnedak Bobo
Group.

Consero, a conference planning organization, recently surveyed 1,000 CFOs about their company roles. Results revealed that the vast majority (81 percent) felt they worked at companies that viewed their finance operation as a “strategic business partner,” involving the CFO in top-level decision-making as never before. So, how are CFOs handling their evolving roles? When is it important to make a quick financial decision? When is it better to take more time to mull over and analyze? After all, the cost of not acting quickly enough or acting too quick can make or break a deal.

“We strive to tie every decision to our core vision, that way even the immediate steps we may take in a given situation, essentially connect to our long-term plan.”

TALK TO US

Do you have an interesting story to tell? Is your company doing things differently and getting results? Let us know. We'd love to contact you and feature you in an upcoming case study. If interested, please email LSullivan@zweigwhite.com.

TIE DECISION TO CORE VISION. Jeff Bailey, CFO, **Hnedak Bobo Group** (Memphis, TN), a 110-person architecture, interiors, and development management firm with a main focus in hospitality, says that whatever kind of decision you are making, the main goals are not to make a “knee-jerk” decision or one based purely on emotion. Even when a quick decision is warranted, you need to conduct enough investigation and due diligence to make smart, long-reaching choices.

While circumstances often dictate the timeframe in which a decision is made, be sure to take the time necessary to weigh the facts. Sometimes you have the benefit and luxury of time; but more often than not you have to react quickly to events or

See CAREFUL, page 12

5 TYPES OF DECISION-MAKING SKILLS

According to Tutor2u, the leading publisher of e-learning resources for economics, business, politics, enterprise, law, sociology, history, religious studies and related subjects, the five main types of business decisions are:

1. Programmed: These are routine decisions, have a specified method that anyone can follow.
2. Non-programmed: These are different from any previous or standard decision.
3. Strategic: Decisions that affect the long-term strategy and goals of the business.
4. Tactical: Focus on medium-term goal that push toward long-term strategic goals.
5. Operational: Also known as administrative, these decisions are shorter-term decisions that build toward the long-term goals.

Now, you can take these types of decisions and further categorize them into types of analyses. They include:

- **Intuitive analysis.** Reference for Business, a small business resource, reports that “Entrepreneurs are famous for making ‘seat-of-the-pants’ decisions, which means they make quick decisions based on a gut feeling or intuition.” Many times, you make decisions without all the data needed; you have to trust your instincts. Intuitive decision-making can be dangerous, so be careful and try to get as much information as possible.
- **Systematic analysis.** You do not have to sacrifice analysis and information to make quick decisions. Systematic analysis involves collecting as much information as possible and analyzing it in an ordered and logical way to find the best option. “Managers can prepare themselves for making quick decisions by practicing pre-decision making,” according to the Reference for Business website. Your analysis and intuition may not match. If the analysis seems wrong, keep searching until all the results make sense.
- **Principle-based decision making.** Principled-based decision making, while not widely used, relies on personal beliefs and principles, such as ethics. Unlike ethical or moral decision-making, the principles used may be unethical or may lead to unethical outcomes. The two-step process begins with selection and communication of principles to use and ends with the application of those principles to the situation at hand. Company mission statements and goals often provide principles that guide decision making. Again, according to Reference for Business, such principles, when used in decision making, can help the organization better cope with changes over time: shifts in leaders, fluctuating leadership styles and changing market conditions.



TRANSACTIONS

THE DAVEY TREE EXPERT COMPANY BUYS **The Davey Tree Expert Company** (Kent, OH), an 8,000-person grounds maintenance and environmental consulting services firm, announced the acquisition of operating assets of **Klebasko Environmental Services, LLC**, located in Maryland, by Davey's subsidiary, **Wetland Studies and Solutions, Inc.**, based in Virginia.

"With this addition, we continue to expand our natural resource consulting service operations by growing our presence in the mid-Atlantic region and offering additional services to our clients," said Mike Rolband, vice president of operations for WSSI.

The addition of Klebasko increases Davey and WSSI's strength in environmental consulting by bringing more than 30 years of experience in wetland studies, forest conservation, endangered species surveys and other environmental services. The Klebasko team also brings a keen understanding of the Chesapeake Bay Critical Area permitting processes and effects. The addition of professionals Mike Klebasko and Ken Wallis to the WSSI team represents a solid commitment to the expansion into the Maryland market by WSSI and DRG.

The experts at Klebasko are qualified to speak at various state and local hearings throughout Maryland regarding environmental studies and assessments of potential environmental impacts. The firm also brings extensive knowledge of federal and state wetlands permitting procedures in the mid-Atlantic.

S&ME BUYS LITTLEJOHN **S&ME, Inc.** (Raleigh, NC), an engineering, environmental and construction services company, announced its intent to purchase **Littlejohn** (Nashville, TN), a planning, engineering and environmental design firm.

The two privately owned firms have complementary services, geographic markets and work cultures. By joining forces, they will create a leading engineering firm with over 1,100 employees in more than 30 locations across the U.S.

As part of the acquisition, which was expected to be completed on Dec. 31, Littlejohn becomes a wholly owned subsidiary of S&ME. It will maintain its name, services, employees and a presence in each of its current markets. Financial details were not disclosed.

"Joining these two companies works on many different levels and creates a firm with a broad footprint that can be a single resource to clients facing complex building and development challenges," said Randy Neuhaus, S&ME president and CEO. "Today's architecture,

engineering and construction industry demands that engineering and design firms provide a complete spectrum of professional, sophisticated and cutting-edge services. By acquiring Littlejohn, S&ME is creating that firm."

S&ME is organized into five business units. Three focus on service lines: geotechnical, environmental, and construction services. Two focus on market sectors: transportation and energy. Littlejohn will fill an important need within S&ME by becoming its sixth business unit that focuses on design and planning. The combined firm will be equipped to offer more comprehensive engineering and design services for clients' projects – from beginning to end.

"This acquisition is a great fit for Littlejohn, our employees and our clients from business, geographic and cultural perspectives," said Jim Littlejohn, president of Littlejohn. "Our firms share a commitment to creating positive work environments that value collaboration, creativity and innovation, and we invest in our employees."

Founded in 1973, employee-owned S&ME has approximately 950 employees in 26 locations throughout the U.S.

Littlejohn employs more than 130 engineers, landscape architects, planners, surveyors, environmental scientists, industrial hygienists and support personnel. During the firm's 25 years, it has completed more than 6,000 projects in 43 states and established nine offices, including a Tampa office opened in October of 2014.

DOWL HKM BUYS DOWL HKM (Anchorage, AK), a 425-person full-service planning and engineering firm, announced the addition of **Buckhorn Geotech** (Montrose, CO), a 25 person civil, structural, and geotechnical engineering firm to its portfolio.

Buckhorn has a strong presence on Colorado's Western Slope that will help solidify DOWL HKM's position in the state. DOWL HKM will merge its Montrose office with Buckhorn's office. This will result in three DOWL HKM offices in Colorado.

DOWL HKM President Stewart Osgood said the acquisition makes strategic sense, but more importantly benefits both DOWL HKM and Buckhorn's clients.

"Buckhorn brings additional, local experience to our Colorado clients," Osgood said. "At the same time, DOWL HKM offers Buckhorn's clients a full-service firm. We are going to do our best to delight them with our expanded services so they'll choose us for all of their project needs."

CAREFUL, from page 11

conditions that press for an immediate answer.

"In our case, we strive to tie every decision to our core vision, that way even the immediate steps we may take in a given situation, essentially connect to our long-term plan," Bailey says.

BE MINDFUL OF SHORT TERM VERSUS LONG TERM.

Bailey says that if one of your largest projects goes on hold, you have to be ready to react quickly to balance excess labor and overhead costs.

"As the recession reinforced to us all – you need to be constantly prepared with solid data and reliable forecasting to analyze in a moment's notice, so that you always know your options and are ready to make weighty decisions in a short period of time," he says. "The same is true as the economy continues to recover. Many of us are now in a position to add staff quickly in order to produce more projects. Again,

the goal is to have all of the necessary information and forecasting at your fingertips, along with a clear, long-term vision of where you want to take your business. Aligning both is critical in making key decisions of any speed."

There are other types of scenarios that may offer a greater window for evaluation and allow you to take ample times to weigh the facts influencing decisions. Bailey says, for example, if you are opening an office in a new location, adding a new service to meet client needs, or evaluating new technology, these are scenarios where you can likely take more time.

"The best thing to remember is to be mindful of the long-term effects of short-term decisions," Bailey says. "Don't let emotion or the adrenaline inherent in a specific deadline drive the decision. Every decision you make should tie to the bigger picture of firm growth and sustainability and align with your firm's core vision and values. That is the best litmus test of any decision – fast or slow." ▀