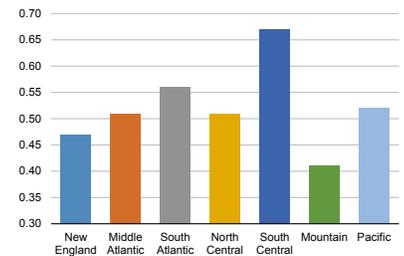


A look at charismatic leaders

Despite what the pundits say, Mark Zweig believes that magnetic leaders aren't such a bad thing.

TRENDLINES

TIC diversity



Zweig Group's 2015 Valuation Survey finds that A/E/P and environmental consulting firms located in various geographic regions tend to yield a diverse range in the ratio of TIC value to revenue. For instance, firms reported the highest median TIC value/revenue ratio in the South Central (0.67), South Atlantic (0.56) and Pacific (0.52) regions. Falling in the middle are the North Central and Middle Atlantic regions, both with a TIC value/revenue ratio of 0.51. Meanwhile, in other regions, such as New England (0.47) and Mountain (0.41), the median TIC value/revenue ratios are significantly lower.

— Margot Suydam, Director, Research

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The charisma critics will claim that in the long term companies run by charismatic leaders have problems. But overall, my belief is the charismatic leaders have done far more good than damage.



Mark Zweig

EDITORIAL

“Charisma” – some people have it and some don't. It has been defined as a special charm or appeal that causes people to feel attracted and excited by someone (such as a politician); a personal magic of leadership arousing special popular loyalty or enthusiasm for a public figure (such as a political leader); a special magnetic charm or appeal.

There's a shortage of charisma in the A/E/P and environmental consulting industry. Many of those who go into professions like these do so because of their interest in the work itself – not because of an interest in business, or leadership, or in building some great enterprise. Yet, when you do run into those rare charismatic leaders in firms in this business you will also often see they're great marketers and sellers, running tremendously successful firms. I see charisma as a positive trait – one we need to cultivate.

“Good to Great” followers (in many cases, zealots – sorry!) don't necessarily see charisma as a good thing. In fact, charisma is not on Jim Collins' list of requirements to be what he termed a “level 5 leader” (the highest level of leadership one can attain, in Collins' view). In any case, Collins believes there are some major differences between

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A/E BUSINESS NEWS

DODGE CLOSES YEAR ON HIGH The Dodge Momentum Index rose in December, increasing 4 percent from a revised 123.8 in November to 128.7 in December, according to Dodge Data & Analytics. The Momentum Index is a monthly measure of the first (or initial) report for nonresidential building projects in planning, which have been shown to lead construction spending for nonresidential buildings by a full year. The Index is currently at its highest reading since February 2009 and is 17 percent higher than one year ago. The increases seen in the Index in 2014 are a signal that the construction recovery will continue into 2015.

The December rise in the Momentum Index was the result of greater planning activity in both the commercial and institutional sectors. The commercial sector rose 4.1 percent, while the institutional sector increased 3.8 percent. There were nine commercial building projects exceeding \$100 million that entered into planning during the month: the \$150 million phase 1 of the Google campus in Boulder, Colo., a \$150 million retail complex in New Brunswick, N.J., the \$135 million Monarch Hotel in Black Hawk, Colo., a \$100 million office tower in Chicago, a \$100 million office tower in Sunnyvale, Calif., and the four phases of the Cannon House office renewal in Washington, D.C. (each phase valued at \$100 million).

FEWER LOSSES IN 2014 The absence of very severe catastrophes and a quiet hurricane season in the North Atlantic meant that losses from natural catastrophes in 2014 were much lower, according to risk management insurer Munich Re.

The year at a glance:

- Overall losses from natural catastrophes totaled \$110 billion (previous year \$140 billion), of

MARK ZWEIG, from page 1

a level 4 leader and a level 5 leader. Collins says a level 5 leader is highly driven for the success of his company. He wants his company to succeed no matter who is leading it as CEO. On the other hand, Collins thinks level 4 leaders don't care so much about what happens to the company once they are gone. They get high performance out of the company during his or her reign, but (supposedly) aren't so concerned about what comes after. The premise is that level 4 leaders care more about their own "greatness" than that of the company. One of my problems with oft-rabid preachers of Collins' gospel is that all his research involved mega-organizations – be they either publicly traded multi-billion dollar companies or other huge organizations – so who is to say this all applies to mostly smaller- and mid-sized or even larger privately held professional service firms?

If you poke around on the Internet on this subject (I find myself doing this sort of thing occasionally), you will find all kinds of articles, blog posts, etc., from people who actually stake out the territory that charisma is a bad thing for firm leaders to have. That's ludicrous. Steve Jobs (Apple) and Elon Musk (Tesla) have been cited as examples by a number of authors and management and leadership "experts" of (bad?) charismatic leaders. Wow. Apple is one of if not the single most valuable technology

company in the world and Tesla is the only successful new car company (much less electric car company) in about 100 years. So now we have people who have done nothing in the way of building companies themselves criticizing some of the greatest company-builders in modern history because they aren't what an academic (Jim Collins) considers a level 5 leader. That's just plain bizarre!

The charisma critics will claim that in the long term companies run by charismatic leaders have problems. There certainly are examples of imploding charismatic leaders such as Paula Dean, Leona Helmsley or Martha Stewart, or companies melting down post-charismatic leader, such as Chrysler after Lee Iacocca. But overall, my belief is the charismatic leaders have done far more good than damage. On top of that, who is to talk about long term? Most companies morph, merge and change so quickly these days it is hard to talk about long term. One thing is for sure, you won't have a long term if you don't survive the short term.

If I were you, I'd be looking for charismatic leaders at all levels in the firm. And I would also be supportive of the ones you already have – with one caveat that you don't let their pay, perks, and egos get too far out of control! ■

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

which roughly \$31 billion (previous year \$39 billion) was insured.

- The loss amounts were well below the inflation-adjusted average values of the past 10 years (overall losses: \$190 billion, insured losses: \$58 billion), and also below the average values of the past 30 years (\$130 billion/\$33 billion).
- At 7,700, the number of fatalities was much lower than in 2013 (21,000) and also well below the average figures of the past 10 and 30 years (97,000 and 56,000 respectively). The most severe natural catastrophe in these terms was the flooding in India and Pakistan in September, which caused 665 deaths.
- The costliest natural catastrophe of the year was Cyclone Hudhud, with an overall loss of \$7 billion. The costliest natural catastrophe for the insurance industry was a winter storm with heavy snowfalls in Japan, which caused insured losses of \$3.1 billion.

"Though tragic in each individual case, the fact that fewer people were killed in natural catastrophes last year is good news. And this development is not a mere coincidence. In many places, early warning systems functioned better, and the authorities consistently brought people to safety in the face of approaching weather catastrophes, for example before Cyclone Hudhud struck India's east coast and Typhoon Hagupit hit the coast of the Philippines," said Torsten Jeworrek, Munich Re board member.

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Create a culture that delivers

Developing a truly collaborative process with clients – constantly over-delivering – is one way to ensure continued success.

By LIISA SULLIVAN
Correspondent



Susan Winslow,
VP, Consulting
Division, Dade
Moeller.

How do firms instill an overall philosophy among staff to deliver – and in some cases, over-deliver – services to ensure they are being the best they can be?

A SHARED VISION. Brian Gallagher, director of marketing, **O’Neal, Inc.** (Greenville, SC), a 283-person industrial engineering and construction company, says that the firm places a significant emphasis on customer satisfaction and strives to exceed clients’ expectations.

“We are fortunate to have many client relationships that span two to three decades,” he says. “That can be directly attributed to our focus on long-term client satisfaction.”

At the start of a project, O’Neal typically facilitates a shared visioning session. This allows them to gain a thorough understanding of the client’s specific project objectives at the outset and is critical to alignment for each project phase.

“Since O’Neal is an integrated design and construction firm, we are able to have a true collaboration of disciplines. We have found that this seamless approach to project delivery helps us to over-deliver and exceed client expectations. We also constantly seek client feedback during projects,” Gallagher says.

And, as an employee-owned company, Gallagher says that team members seem to have a higher level of commitment to the project’s success.

PART OF THE MISSION. At **Dade Moeller** (Richland, WA), a 170-person firm that specializes in occupational and environmental health sciences, the mission statement reflects a commitment to delivering high quality work based on using accurate science, says Susan Winslow, vice president, consulting division.

“Because ‘Dade Moeller’ represents both a person, Dr. Dade W. Moeller, and a company, our employees are acutely aware that their work products affect the reputation of both,” she says. “I don’t believe that Dade Moeller consciously adopted the philosophy of over-delivering as a way to guarantee future work. I believe that it has more to do with communicating our core values with our employees and our mission of providing the best possible

product to our clients.”

Winslow says that since the A/E industry is close knit, if you don’t deliver quality work to one client, word quickly spreads to other potential clients.

“A strong reputation is one of the best sales tools you have at your disposal and is the best way of guaranteeing future work,” she says.

“Our excellence is most often demonstrated through proactive project management and constant communication with our clients. It is based on a ‘no surprises’ philosophy, where project status and issues are discussed early and often.”

John Kraskiewicz, senior vice president, COO, **LEO A DALY** (Omaha, NE), a 750-person planning, architecture, engineering, and interior design firm, says that its tag line: “Excellence Beyond Expectations” sums it up.

“Our excellence is most often demonstrated through proactive project management and constant communication with our clients,” he says. “It is based on a ‘no surprises’ philosophy, where project status and issues are discussed early and often.”

Using proven project management methods allows LEO A DALY to go “above-and-beyond” strategically, placing extra resources in the right places without compromising the efficiency and cost-effectiveness of its operations.

“This would not be possible without a value-engineered approach and a waste-free project management process,” he says. “We train our employees to view the client’s challenges and goals as their own.”

Once needs are established, a multidisciplinary team can be assembled that fits lock-in-key with the client’s stated goals. The team has to be well-oiled. If the project poses specific challenges – whether they be lighting, acoustical, optics, or logistics – LEO A DALY is sure to assign that talent

See DELIVER, page 4



ZG15

ZG15 FIRMS HUNKERING DOWN FOR THE WINTER While most firms' stock value lost ground at the end of 2014, it's nothing to worry about. The AEC stocks almost always lose some stock price value going into the coldest months as construction sites slow and everyone moves indoors.

Exponent, Inc. (Menlo Park, CA) performed the best with an 8 percent increase. Four firms had double-digit losses, with **Willdan Group** (Anaheim, CA) performing the worst with a 26 percent decrease in stock value; **Amec Foster Wheeler**, **CBI** and **ENGlobal** lost 11 percent, 16 percent and 18 percent, respectively.

Despite increased revenue over last year, CBI (The Hague, Netherlands) has seen a significant decrease in net operating cash at roughly 75 percent. Willdan Group took a tumble from Dec. 5 through Dec. 18. The biggest recent news in the AEC industry was the finalization of

AMEC's acquisition of Swiss rival **Foster Wheeler AG** (Baar, Switzerland) to form **Amec Foster Wheeler** (Knutsford, England). Expect to see an uptrend from this company soon as they find their rhythm as one and continue to cut operational costs within the larger organization.

Despite decreases in revenue and net income for the second quarter of 2014, ENGlobal (Houston, TX) saw a 13.7 percent increase in net income in the third quarter from the second. For the last month they have remained almost completely stable in value after leveling off by Dec. 10.

Not a lot of exciting news as we all hunker down for the cold and look forward to that breath of fresh spring air and focus on design over construction in these dark months. – *Ryan Renard, Consultant*

See chart on page 12

DELIVER, from page 3

to the team. And if an outside consultant is needed for a specific part of the project, they will go the extra mile to do whatever it takes to deliver that expertise.

EMPHASIS ON EDUCATION. Kraskiewicz says that another early step that helps deliver phenomenal success is the emphasis on educating the client.

“Many clients come to us having never employed architectural services, and may not know what to expect,” he says. “We make sure to take extra care and delineate a clear process that supports the client’s understanding. These steps, when taken with a client who is new to the process, often lead to a relationship of trust and continued business that can play out over an entire career.”

For instance, in a hospitality project, they know what the client will require in order to obtain brand approval, and they design to that proactively. Also, because they have been in business so long, they know how to stretch a client’s dollar to give them the best look per dollar spent.

There is also an intangible element to design excellence that LEO A DALY leadership strives to cultivate.

IT’S JUST WHAT WE DO. Kraskiewicz says that, together, they create environments and enhanced knowledge that is profoundly inspiring.

“We don’t call it over-delivering, because that’s just what we do every day,” he says. “To clients, it might feel that way... but that’s okay with us.”

He explains that it’s an attitude of service – a cultural attitude that flows from the top down.

“For example, last week, in preparation for a master-planning exercise with a higher education client, one of our design directors surprised the client at the meeting by producing a full set of renderings,” Kraskiewicz says.

The team elected to produce in-house renderings of the

master plan, even though it was not part of the contract. It was above and beyond the call of duty, but they wanted to demonstrate their capabilities and philosophy of excellence.

“Other times we go the extra mile as a gesture of good will, or because they result in a better project,” Kraskiewicz says. “Our project managers can often be found attending community engagement sessions with clients, or doing preliminary floor plans to help push along a bond issue, for example. In order to land future work, we might assist a potential client in fundraising by developing design concepts and helping them pitch it to donors or foundations. With some of our longstanding clients, we assist with their non-project-related fundraising efforts, sending Christmas presents, or collecting food or jackets, for example, for one non-profit client. These are not quantifiable policies, but they point to an overall cultural attitude.”

Andy Platz, president, **Mead & Hunt** (Madison, WI), a 525-person multifaceted firm that provides consulting services in architecture, engineering, planning and environmental sciences, says that more than 90 percent of their work comes from repeat clients, some of whom have been with them for more than 50 years – or longer.

“This philosophy of ‘over-delivering’ is a part of our business practice,” Platz says. “It is ingrained in our culture and starts with never assuming that we are going to be re-selected. We treat every client like they are brand new and continuously adapt our services and delivery systems to keep up with our clients business and technical changing needs.”

It is also part of Mead & Hunt’s business model to provide complimentary consulting services beyond the project scope that may assist the client with business, regulatory or specialized technical matters they can provide in house – one-stop-shopping, in a sense.

“We also use this same philosophy when choosing teaming partners, finding partners that will go the extra mile for our clients even if its sacrifices some degree of profitability,” Platz says. ▀

TZL time machine

10 years ago

HEADLINES Editorial: Going international | Making it easier to cross borders | Market Outlook: South America | North America | Case studies: Getting started in China | Despite the risk, work in Iraq soldiers on | On the Record: Overseas challenges



THE ZWEIG LETTER dedicated its Jan. 17, 2005 issue (#595) to international markets, running a series of articles that explored possibilities in the four corners of the world.

An overview article, titled “Making it easier to cross borders” offers an overview of the efforts to make the task of venturing outside borders less daunting and highlights the efforts of several organizations to make that a reality.

Another article asked several firm leaders about the challenges they encountered when trying to venture abroad. Here are a few thoughts:

“One of the difficulties we have had is going into the many countries around Europe because of the sheer number of languages that are spoken there. There can be a significant barrier to doing business when you don’t know the language. In particular, it can be difficult if you don’t understand the technical terms

used in that language,” said Paul Wood, then president and CEO of **Hanscomb Faithful & Gould**. He suggested partnering with a local company or individual.

Raymond Gomez, then president of 24-person architecture firm **RGA Architects and Planners** cautioned against some of the pitfalls of working abroad, even when involving a local partner, due to the many variables involved.

In his editorial, Mark Zweig wrote that he believed that “going local” was easier than “going global.” That said, Zweig recognized the growing importance of globalization, offering a series of tips to those venturing around the world:

1. Look at markets where you have an existing employee who is from there.
2. Get a local agent.
3. Talk to other U.S. firms that are there now and find out what you can from them.
4. Pick the hottest markets.
5. Security is everything if you want anyone working there.
6. Know the local labor laws.
7. Team up.

20 years ago

HEADLINES Editorial: Do more in less time | Company cars in '95

In early 1995, principals at A/E/P and environmental firms preferred American iron. The favorite company car: Buick Park Avenue.

Such are the curious findings in that year’s Principal’s Survey of A/E/P and Environmental Consulting Firms, which lists only American brands among the top carmakers preferred by this demographic as company cars. The survey also found that Ford, Buick, Oldsmobile, Chevrolet, and Cadillac, respectively, were the top five car makes among principals whose firms used company cars.

Some principals interviewed by THE ZWEIG LETTER said they bought American for patriotic reasons and some for price. For others, the motivation was more practical.

So, what’s the situation 20 years later? Find out in Zweig Group’s 2015 Principals, Partners & Owners Survey at <https://zweiggroup.com/p-2227-principals-partners-owners-survey-2015>.

In his editorial, Mark Zweig wrote about the universal theme of doing more with less. He offered several suggestions for more effective time management:

1. Process the stuff that hits your inbox fast.
2. Don’t be afraid to tell someone who wants to interrupt you that now is not a good time.
3. Remember that procrastination is the enemy.
4. Work at work and do “home” stuff at home.
5. Make a “to do” list and accomplish everything on it.
6. Keep a clean desk.
7. Use your car time wisely.
8. Check in often if you travel or spend a lot of time out of the office during the day.
9. Don’t solve the same problem over and over again.
10. Walk fast, talk fast, and work fast



The path and the network

What those aspiring to leadership must endure and four steps to network better.



Leo MacLeod

**GUEST
SPEAKER**

The uncomfortable path

The first question I ask when I sit down with aspiring leaders is what is their capacity and desire for the long, uncomfortable road ahead to ownership? Every company needs contributors at every level: people doing the work behind the scenes, people to manage teams, people to sell work. And there are spots for leadership all along the way. But maybe the very top is not your place. In the end, it comes down to having an appetite for the challenge.

Editor's note: This month we publish two short articles from Leo MacLeod's blog (www.leomacleod.com) which are of significant relevance to THE ZWEIG LETTER subscribers.

Ernest Shackleton, the British explorer who made the first sea-to-sea trek across Antarctica, posted this ad to recruit his crew: "Men wanted for hazardous journey. Low wages, bitter cold, long hours of complete darkness. Safe return doubtful. Honour and recognition in event of success." 1,500 men applied. Having lost their ship to ice, Shackleton and six of the men spent 16 days crossing 1,300 kilometers of ocean to reach South Georgia and then trekked across the island to a whaling station. The remaining men from the ship found shelter huddled beneath one of the smaller boats. They were rescued in August 1916. Not one member of the expedition died.

When we think of our lives now, it's hard to imagine that kind of hardship and persistence. We grimace if a client pushes us to work at a lower fee. We groan when we need to work overtime. We get a knot in our stomach trying to coax that underperformer to be more careful reviewing their documents for errors.

We're not talking about eating whale blubber for 18 months or walking on frostbitten feet, but the work of being a leader these days is not without our version of hardship. Better to vet future owners by testing their mettle early for what they will eventually need to tackle. Sit down with them and show them the numbers that drive the business. Tell them what you lose sleep over. Give them small challenges they need to manage from beginning to end. Once people get a sense of the real work of ownership, they may decide to stay where they are. There's nothing wrong about that, but it's better to know who has the stomach for the uncomfortable path sooner than later.

Better to vet future owners by testing their mettle early for what they will eventually need to tackle. Sit down with them and show them the numbers that drive the business.

Four steps to build your network

Most networking is a waste of time because it's done with a sense of obligation, rather than intention. If you want to have networking drive your business growth, try this four-step approach to make your network stronger:

1) Start by focusing on other people. The first two questions I ask a stranger at a breakfast meeting are what do they do at their firm and with whom would they like to connect? That approach speaks directly to why they are there and makes it clear I'm not looking out only for myself. If you think there is a mutual benefit in an extended conversation; then ask questions, listen closely, take notes, get their card, and begin the relationship by following up and helping them first. If you sense you're in a dead-end conversation with no mutual gain, exchange cards and thank them for their time. It's great to be altruistic, but you need to be realistic. While you're talking to a loan officer, you're running out of time to connect with the president of a construction firm you've been meaning to talk to. Effective networking is purposeful.

2) Articulate why you're there. Before you register for an event and get up early to go to a hotel ballroom downtown, why are you doing it? You can't make important connections if you don't know who those people are. Define in your mind your ideal client and the key decision-makers within those firms. You should be able to articulate who you serve and

See LEO MACLEOD, page 8

5 steps to a successful candidate relocation

Avoid dropping the ball with that perfect out-of-town candidate.



Randy Wilburn

I recently left a fairly comfortable existence in New England to relocate here to Fayetteville, Ark. the home office of the Zweig Group. I spent a lot of time mulling over the pros and cons of making the move and ultimately did so after taking a trip down to the area with my wife to visit and check out housing, schools (I have three boys under 10), and what kind of cultural life we would have here in the Northwest corner of the state. We were pleasantly surprised by what we found.

SEARCH SAVVY

The homes were bigger and newer, the school system was also very good, with a number of ground-breaking educational programs in place, and there was a lot more to see and do than we ever thought possible. The lower cost of living was a significant factor as well.

These are just a few of the factors that played into my decision to relocate here.

When recruiting the best and brightest people you may have to look outside of your marketplace and that will most certainly mean that you may have to relocate someone to fill that critical MEP or Landscape Architect position you needed filled three months ago. It can be very frustrating to not find people in your own backyard but with a solid relocation plan in place you can be sure that you will always be able to put your best foot forward when entertaining and encouraging out-of-town candidates to come join your firm. As a recruiter, I've dealt with having to relocate candidates frequently and no two relocation efforts are the same – but there are some simple things that can be done to ensure that you have a great shot at landing that “Hot Shot!” recruit.

Here are five steps to a successful candidate relocation:

- 1) Have a good Realtor on speed dial who knows your city well and can make themselves available to show your candidate, and if necessary their spouse or significant other, around town. Not the cheap tour, mind you, but the one that highlights why someone would enjoy living in your area. You are better off working with a Realtor who holds the CRP (Certified Relocation Professional) designation. When you choose the right one they can be worth their weight in gold... They can tell you what the candidate mentioned to them while driving around and you can

When recruiting the best and brightest people you may have to look outside of your marketplace and that will most certainly mean that you may have to relocate someone.

learn even more about what they like and don't like by the hours they spend with them in the car riding around. Invaluable!

- 2) Make sure you prep the candidate about your area by sending them some information from your local Chamber of Commerce. I know a lot of this information is online but you can visit your local COC and pick out some choice items to share with the candidate and send it to them with a note in a nice express package. It's the little touches that matter. I know it sounds like a lot of work but once you go over these steps you will find that automating them is fairly simple.
- 3) Make the travel arrangements for the candidate's visit as easy as possible. Find out their travel schedule and pull everything together for them (air, hotel, car) and send it along in a nice package with an itinerary. Another nice touch if the out-of-town candidate is not renting a car is to have one of the people in the office pick them up or hire a car service to do this. The more you lighten their load from a logistics standpoint the more they can focus on the opportunity before them.
- 4) If a candidate is married make sure you include the spouse in the process and take some time to find out their interests. We do this all of the time for our clients when helping them hire an out of town candidate. We will go so far as to even line up potential interviews and discuss employment opportunities in

See RANDY WILBURN, page 8



CALENDAR

THE PRINCIPALS ACADEMY 2.0 The Principals Academy 2.0 is an updated version of the Zweig Group's crash course in all aspects of managing a professional services firm.

The program is presented by a team of speakers – including Zweig Group founder and CEO Mark Zweig – with extensive experience working with and for A/E firms. They have a clear understanding of what it takes to survive, and even thrive, in any economy.

The Principals Academy 2.0 is updated with the latest approaches to leading a successful firm in this new economy, including an expanded focus on business development, strategic planning, and financial management. The Principals Academy 2.0 is like a two-day MBA for technical professionals and is the most impactful two days you can spend learning to build your career and your firm.

The two-day agenda covers six critical areas of business management from the unique perspectives of architecture, engineering and environmental consulting firms, and is presented in tutorial and case study workshop sessions.

The Principals Academy 2.0 program includes an extended Q&A session with industry leader Mark Zweig and the panel of speakers. This provides the attendees an opportunity to discuss in-depth the issues facing them at their firms with advice offered from industry leading experts.

Upcoming events include March 12 in Houston and June and 14 in Seattle.

For more information or to register, call 800-466-6275 or log on to <https://zweiggroup.com/seminars/tpa/>.

BECOMING A BEST SELLER Could every person in your firm describe your services in a succinct and persuasive way that demonstrates what sets you apart from the competition? It's not enough to have the technical expertise to complete projects, you need seller-doers who can convey excitement and tailor the message for the audience.

That's why Zweig Group developed a one-day program that will help anyone who could possibly be involved in selling and who wants to be more successful and increase their value to their employers – design and technical professionals as well as marketing and business development professionals, principals, managers, architects, engineers, planners, scientists, surveyors, designers; anyone who wants to know more about selling. Becoming a Better Seller was specifically developed to help design and technical professionals become more comfortable dealing with clients and promoting the firm and your services.

Seminars will be led by Mark Zweig, Zweig Group CEO and founder, or Chad Clinehens, executive vice president, Zweig Group.

Seminar dates scheduled for 2014 include Feb. 26 in Scottsdale, Ariz. and April 9 in San Francisco. Group discounts are available for teams of four or more attendees from the same firm.

Please call 800-466-6275 or log on to https://zweiggroup.com/seminars/better_seller/.

RANDY WILBURN, from page 7

their line of work. Again, I know it sounds like a lot of work if you are doing this yourself but you can always find the most resourceful admin in your office to help you with some of this or even a good local recruiter may be of assistance.

- 5) If your candidate has children, especially older ones, don't forget them! Nowadays it's harder to get folks to relocate because maybe a musical or athletic program their child participates in is not available in your area. You may need to get this information beforehand to ensure that you can address these issues before they arise.

Relocating is a family decision. You may be offering a great opportunity, good salary, and benefits package but you will miss the mark every time if that's your only focus when dealing with the perfect out-of-town client.

If you need some help with this issue or ideas to help you overcome a challenging work location feel free to email me and I will do what I can to help you out. ▀

RANDY WILBURN is director of Executive Search with Zweig Group. Contact him at rwilburn@zweiggroup.com or find him on Twitter at @RandyWilburn and @ZGRecruiting.

LEO MACLEOD, from page 1

what you do to anyone who asks. I might start with: I'm a leadership and communication coach for companies that are looking to grow the next level of leaders so owners can retire someday. I usually pause here to see if they are remotely interested or want to meet someone else! I help people grow from just doing the work to managing teams and selling work. I teach people to get to the point, manage their time and delegate. I might share a recent story about an engineer who came out of his shell or why it's difficult to slow down and let others take over projects. I've given them enough information to engage them in a conversation but not one long elevator speech that shoves a wedge between us.

- 3) Seek a personal connection.** My most effective ice-breaker is the pie image on my business card because it's not about business at all. Look, we put on nice clothes and shake hands, but at the end of the day, we just want to sit down with a big piece of pie. I've made pies for years and I've got it down. It's a way to personally and memorably connect with people. It can start with the weather or last night's Duck game or where someone lives. Follow your curiosity to make a lasting, personal connection.

- 4) Keep the vital connections alive and strong.** The number one reason most networking fails is sheer neglect. We don't have time to help everyone in our network, but we do have time to take care of the most important people. Assess the equity in your key relationships. Have you asked for more than you have given? Have you made deposits by helping your champions or merely relied on them for favors, draining your assets? There are a million creative ways to make deposits in our relationships; from helping a parent of a troubled teen find a counselor, taking someone to a Blazer game, or making an introduction to a developer of historic properties. Stay connected and make deposits consistently. Educate your champions on what you're doing and with whom you want to connect. If you've shifted your market or service focus, do your champions know?

Break the ice by first asking people who they want to know. Be prepared to tell them with whom you want to connect. Find the personal connection. And don't forget to maintain your old connections as you grow new ones. ▀

LEO MACLEOD is a leadership and communication coach. He can be reached at leo@leomacleod.com.

TEAM

Specialists versus generalists, which one?

Smaller firms tend to hire the former and larger firms the latter. However, don't paint with wide brushstrokes.

By LIISA SULLIVAN
Correspondent



Merilee Meacock,
Partner,
KSS Architects.

When it comes to hiring new personnel, does your firm tend to focus on staff with a specific skill set or lean toward hiring people with more general prowess? Answers vary and seem to depend mostly on how a firm is structured, where it focuses its strengths and its size.

PEOPLE SKILLS TOP LIST. KSS Architects (Princeton, NJ), a 65-person firm, especially seeks those who have great people skills and can collaborate with various teams, internally as well as with multiple-stakeholder clients externally, says Merilee Meacock, partner.



Irene Gaddis,
HR Director, LJA
Engineering, Inc.

"These folks are supplemented by firm resource experts in technical, design, and sustainability issues, as well as, market issues," she says.

"Our firm is seen in the market as experts in our various disciplines, therefore we require the expertise that a specialist brings to the table. In smaller groups, I can see the argument to hire a generalist who can wear multiple hats and interact with our clients on many levels."

SPECIALISTS FIRST, GENERALISTS FOLLOW. Irene Gaddis, HR director, **LJA Engineering, Inc.** (Houston, TX), a 500-person multi-discipline, consulting engineering firm, says that they hire mostly specialists.



Ami Goudie,
Marketing
Director and
Principal,
Cobb Fendley
& Associates.

"Our firm is seen in the market as experts in our various disciplines, therefore we require the expertise that a specialist brings to the table," she says. "In smaller groups, I can see the argument to hire a generalist who can wear multiple hats and interact with our clients on many levels."

MIX IT UP. Cobb Fendley & Associates (Hous-

THE SEARCH

Prospects, a career advice website, points to research on what employers are looking for in potential employees that lists the skills, abilities and work behaviors they seek. Those include:

- teamwork
- problem solving
- communication
- time management
- IT skills
- numeracy
- customer awareness

These skills and abilities are "generic," which means they are likely to be necessary in most types of employment.



Petrina Gooch,
Associate,
Corporate HR
Leader, Harley
Ellis Deveraux.

ton, TX), a 290-person multidiscipline engineering firm, offers a multitude of services in various geographies. As a result, the diverse firm has been successful in hiring both specialists and generalists.

Ami Goudie, marketing director and principal, says that it is important that individual departments hire specialists in their fields, such as a Licensed State Land Surveyor (or LSL), or a Registered Professional Traffic Operations Engineer (or PTOE), to strengthen their qualifications in specific pursuits or project work.

"In addition, we believe generalists add value by providing a 'well-rounded outlook' of an industry or geography," she says. "Together, these skill sets allow Cobb Fendley to understand a market holistically, while also understanding project specifics."

WHAT'S HAPPENING ON THE FRONT LINES? So, what are firms doing in their HR departments? These are the people who are on the front lines of hiring. Are these people generalists or are they armed with more specific skills?

See SPECIALISTS, page 10



ON THE MOVE

GEI HIRES GEI Consultants, Inc. (Woburn, MA), a geotechnical, environmental, water resources, and ecological science and engineering firms, announced that **Carol Hawk** has joined the firm as a geotechnical engineer. Working out of GEI's I Street office in Washington, D.C., Hawk brings 10 years of experience in geotechnical analysis and design and construction inspection for general building, earthworks, and transportation projects. Her specialties include subsurface investigations, slope stability and piping risk analyses, seismic analyses, foundation engineering, construction supervision, and quality assurance.

Prior to joining GEI, Hawk worked as a senior geotechnical engineer with **Coffey New Zealand Ltd.** in Christchurch, New Zealand, where she managed a geotechnical team that provided post-earthquake geotechnical advice to an insurance company for repair and rebuild of 1,000-plus residential properties. This project also included the delivery of 25 or more geotechnical reports per week, and technical leadership on liquefaction analysis, damage assessment and foundation design. She also worked as a project manager for **URS Australia Ltd.** in Brisbane, Australia, where she oversaw the design and construction of 14 Coal Seam Gas Water Storage Dams and was a site engineer for the Broadmeadow Mine Levee construction. Prior to her international work, she worked as a geotechnical engineer for **URS Corporation** in New York City, where she provided foundation design recommendations for the NYPD Academy and performed site specific seismic analysis for the Whitney Museum Chelsea Site.

"We are thrilled to have Carol join the geotechnical team in D.C.," said Giovanni Bonita, GEI vice president and D.C. office branch manager. "She brings a wealth of knowledge and geotechnical experience to GEI that will benefit our client's needs."

SYSKA HENNESSY HIRES Syska Hennessy Group, Inc. (New York, NY), a global consulting, engineering and commissioning firm, announced that industry expert **Timothy Campbell** has been named site leader for the company's Atlanta location. Campbell boasts over 15 years of hands-on experience and has been with the Syska Hennessy organization for almost five years, focusing on a number of Syska Hennessy's prominent clients.

Campbell, as site leader, will oversee the entire Atlanta office comprised of over 35 professionals focused on high performance engineering, consulting and commissioning work throughout the Southeast. To support his overall vision for the office, he is implementing a new business plan to grow the Syska Hennessy brand throughout the Southeast, including expanding from their well-known mission critical practice into all of the firm's current service

offerings and markets. A key focus of this growth plan will be to attract new top talent to substantially enhance the firm's already robust team.

Throughout his career, Campbell has been recognized for his ability to fully understand a client's requirements in any assignment he manages, as well as a focus on keeping plans on schedule and on budget. He has served as lead engineer for a number of high-profile regional assignments, including the design services Syska Hennessy recently provided for the renowned College Football Hall of Fame, Chick-fil-A Fan Experience as well as the T5 Data Center organization.

Prior to joining Syska Hennessy Group, Campbell served as a senior electrical engineer for Hewlett-Packard.

PCS PROMOTES, HIRES PCS Structural Solutions (Seattle, WA), a 40-person structural engineering firm, has named **Todd Parke** associate in their Tacoma office. Parke began his career with PCS Structural Solutions after graduating from University of Wyoming in 2006. Parke was promoted to the leadership team due to his ability to exceptionally balance strong technical skills with a unique aptitude for business development and marketing. Parke is currently working on Natrona County High School, Green River Community College New Auburn Center and CHI Franciscan Health System Burien Ambulatory Care Center.

Meanwhile, PCS Structural Solutions welcomed four new engineers to its ranks: **Kyle Murdock, Andy Schildmeyer, Brent Olson** and **Steven Williams**.

Murdock returns to PCS Structural Solutions as a project engineer and is currently working on Olympic Towne Center in Gig Harbor, TT Minor School for the Seattle Public Schools and University of Washington Denny Hall.

Olson is a recent graduate from Washington State University. He is currently working on the University of Washington Police Station and the Seattle Academy of Arts, Science Lowery STREAM building.

Schildmeyer has seven years of industry experience and is currently working on the design of a parking garage for the Emerald Queen Casino, the Integrated Education Center building at South Seattle College (formerly South Seattle Community College), and various elements including a 50-foot tall tie-back soldier pile wall for Tacoma Public Utilities in conjunction with the Cowlitz Falls Dam.

Williams is a recent graduate from Washington State University. He is currently working on North Thurston Middle School Annex Building for the North Thurston School District and Olympic Hills Elementary School for Seattle Public Schools.

SPECIALISTS, from page 9

Petrina Gooch, associate, corporate human resources leader, **Harley Ellis Deveraux** (Southfield, MI), a 290-person architecture and engineering firm, says that they tend to look for experienced generalists.

"Experienced generalists are able to cover a broader scope of responsibility with a sufficient degree of expertise, allowing us to apply critical thought and work collaboratively within the organization," she says. "Fortunately, our structure allows us to reach out to specialists as needed and to incorporate tools that also help supplement our scope of experience. We are also lucky that we've had no recent turnover in

the past few years on our HR team."

Carol Williams, HR manager at **Guernsey Architects** (Oklahoma City, OK), an employee-owned, engineering, architecture and consulting firm of 137 employees, says that they also tend to hire generalists. This decision has more to do with size than skills.

"Our company is a smaller one and therefore needs an HR staff that is well versed in various HR topics and enjoys a variety of tasks," she says. "Larger firms tend to hire HR specialists due to the advanced knowledge and volume of work in each particular HR area (i.e., recruiting, new hires/onboarding, disability, payroll, employee relations, etc.)." ▀

OPERATIONS

What's your SWOT look like?

What firms are doing to analyze their operations and what you can do to improve your processes.

By LIISA SULLIVAN
Correspondent



Joe Viscuso,
Senior VP of
Strategic Growth,
Pennoni
Associates.

It's a way of summarizing the current state of a company and helps to devise a plan for the future... it's SWOT and it stands for: strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. You employ existing strengths, redress existing weaknesses, explore opportunities and defend against threats. Do you have a SWOT in place?

ASSEMBLE A GROUP. **Maser Consulting P.A.** (Red Bank, NJ), a 450-person multidiscipline firm, dedicates part of the strategic planning session to assembling a group of senior executives and selecting managers to perform a complete SWOT analysis.

Thomas Hinczynski, CFO, explains that the firm's overall financial health is evaluated as follows:

- Monthly review of key balance sheet metrics
- Adherence to bank-required loan covenant ratios
- Utilization forecasts and projections on a rolling-forward basis in order to manage and maintain financial health

GET TO THE BOTTOM OF THINGS. Joe Viscuso, senior vice president of strategic growth, **Pennoni Associates** (Philadelphia, PA), a 1,000-plus-person engineering and consulting firm, explains that SWOT analyses are crucial to their continued growth.

"Every initiative is required to go through the SWOT process to focus the team on ways to market strengths and tackle weaknesses," he says.

Viscuso says that this process gets to the bottom line. He says that weaknesses highlighted might require added investments in resources and equipment, while strengths will assist the team to focus their message when talking to clients and in developing marketing materials.

"SWOT analyses are the first step to a business development plan and allow us to identify what we do well, and what we can work on," he says.

See SWOT, page 12

MAP OUT SWOT

These firm leaders suggest that when you are working on your SWOT the following questions may help you in planning and overall process:

Strengths:

- What can you do particularly well, relative to rivals?
- What do analysts consider to be your strengths?
- What resources do you have?
- Is your brand or reputation strong?

Weaknesses:

- What do rivals do better than you?
- What do you do poorly?
- What generates the most customer dissatisfaction and complaints?
- What generates the most employee dissatisfaction and complaints?
- What processes and activities can you improve?

Opportunities:

- Where can you apply your strengths?
- How are your customers and their needs changing?
- How is technology changing your business?
- Are there new markets for your strengths? (e.g. foreign)
- Are there new ways of producing your products?
- Are your rivals' customers dissatisfied?

Threats:

- Are customers able to meet their needs with alternative products?
- Are clients' needs changing away from your product?
- What are your competitors developing?
- Are your rivals improving their product offerings or prices?
- Is new technology making your product obsolete?
- Is your cash flow and debt position healthy?
- Are your employees satisfied? Is turnover high?
- Is new competition coming?
- Are sales growing slower than the industry average?



SEE ARTICLE ON PAGE 4.

Ticker	Name	Market	Share Pricing							Valuation					
			Market Cap	Close Nov 28, 2014	Close Dec 31, 2014	Beginning of Month Change	% Month Change	Change from 50-day MA	% Change from 50-day MA	EPS	EV/Revenue	EV/EBITDA	Price/Sales	Price/Book Value	
ACM	AECOM Technology Corp	NYSE	4.46B	32.01	30.37	(1.64)	-5%	(1.88)	-6.10%	2.33	0.60	12.12	56.00	1.34	
AMFW	Amec Foster Wheeler	NYSE	3.71B	14.47	12.94	(1.53)	-11%	(1.69)	-11.97%	0.69	0.80	10.21	0.61	2.29	
CBI	Chicago Bridge and Iron Co.	NYSE	4.33B	50.03	41.98	(8.05)	-16%	(6.06)	-13.16%	5.41	0.50	5.64	0.36	1.69	
EEL	Ecology and Environment	Nasdaq	38.71M	9.00	9.13	0.13	1%	0.08	0.91%	(0.32)	0.24	29.33	0.30	1.02	
EME	EMCOR Group Inc	NYSE	2.75B	43.35	44.49	1.14	3%	(1.38)	-3.14%	2.54	0.42	7.64	0.44	1.90	
ENG	ENGlobal	Nasdaq	49.92M	2.31	1.90	(0.41)	-18%	(0.21)	-10.61%	0.07	0.43	5.37	0.49	1.86	
EXPO	Exponent Inc.	Nasdaq	1.04B	76.06	82.50	6.44	8%	1.06	1.33%	2.89	3.05	13.11	3.62	4.35	
FLR	Fluor Corp	NYSE	9.15B	61.99	60.63	(1.36)	-2%	(3.29)	-5.32%	2.86	0.34	5.54	0.42	2.67	
HIL	Hill International Inc	NYSE	192.93M	3.65	3.84	0.19	5%	0.13	3.65%	(0.21)	0.50	7.04	0.35	1.20	
JEC	Jacobs Engineering Group Inc	NYSE	5.62B	46.45	44.69	(1.76)	-4%	(2.07)	-4.58%	2.48	0.44	7.26	0.46	1.32	
KBR	KBR Inc.	NYSE	2.4B	16.84	16.95	0.11	1%	(0.74)	-4.29%	(0.53)	0.20	(19.61)	0.37	1.06	
STN	Stantec Inc	NYSE	2.53B	29.09	27.42	(1.67)	-6%	(1.11)	-3.95%	1.50	1.47	10.84	1.46	2.84	
TRR	TRC Companies	NYSE	194.02M	6.84	6.34	(0.50)	-7%	(0.23)	-3.52%	0.43	0.48	5.99	0.52	1.53	
TTEK	Tetra Tech Inc.	Nasdaq	1.6B	27.18	26.70	(0.48)	-2%	(1.11)	-4.15%	1.66	0.93	11.34	0.90	1.65	
VSR	Versar Inc.	NYSE MKT	29.92M	3.00	3.16	0.16	5%	0.04	1.40%	(0.11)	0.35	58.28	0.27	0.81	
WLDN	Willdan Group Inc	Nasdaq	109.68M	18.22	13.49	(4.73)	-26%	(0.98)	-6.35%	1.05	1.09	15.72	1.10	3.89	
DJIA	DOW Jones Industrial Avg.	NYSE		17828.24	17823.07	(5.17)	0%								
			*information at close of day Jan. 6, 2015							Average		0.74x	11.71x		
										Median		0.49x	8.93x		

SWOT, from page 11

Pennoni attributes some of its continued growth to focusing their staff on the results of the SWOT analyses. An example of this is the firm's energy initiative.

"Through the SWOT process, we were able to pinpoint the areas where we needed to hire key staff to better service our clients' needs and to grow this initiative," Viscuso says. "We also learned about specific opportunities and we are working hard to target those areas. As a result, we have grown the energy initiative by 70 percent and hope to increase by a significant amount in 2015."

Additionally, SWOT analyses provide a comprehensive look at the overall company. In looking at the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats, Pennoni was able plan for the future proactively.

"We become an informed company, and we can use that knowledge to continue to create opportunities to grow," Viscuso says.

LOOK EXTERNALLY. William Hummer, CFO, **Advantage Engineers** (Mechanicsburg, PA), a 180-person firm, says that they believe it is important to evaluate their SWOT from several perspectives.

"The most critical part of this analysis for our business is to evaluate our reputation externally, with a particular focus

on clients," Hummer says. "As with the case of many businesses, Advantage Engineers included, a disparity can arise between how the world views our business and how we view ourselves. It is not an easy task to put aside what we 'know' our brand represents and look through the eyes of an external source; however, it is an imperative process to ensure we do not miss an opportunity to assess, and if needed, adjust our strategies to have the greatest impact on our continuing success."

Advantage Engineers leadership believes that the key to keeping a firm's financial health in good standing is to minimize debt. To maintain a strong economic outlook, they closely track cash flow and operating margins. One of Advantage Engineer's core values is "responsible growth." What this means for the business: Create conservative and methodical strategies to move the company toward a goal without compromising the accomplishments it has achieved.

"When revenues and margins are strong and growing, debt may be acceptable. However, when there is a downturn or something negative happens, debt can become a burden, which can have a damaging and lasting impact on the company," Hummer says. "Advantage Engineer's philosophy to keep minimal debt has not hindered our growth and in fact, we believe it has facilitated our firm's continuing success, as the Zweig Group has named us on the Hot Firm List for the second year in a row." ▀