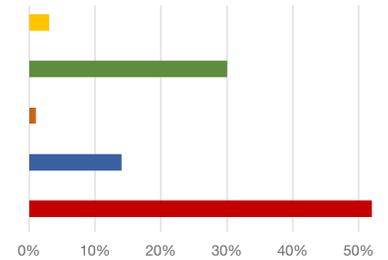


## TRENDLINES

### Relocation expenses



More than half of respondents (52 percent) to Zweig Group's 2015 *Policies, Procedures & Benefits Survey* said their firms pay relocation expenses for both **new and existing employees**. Another 14 percent said they pay these expenses for **new employees only**, 1 percent said they pay for **existing employees only**, 30 percent said they **don't pay relocation expenses** at all, and the remaining 3 percent **didn't specify an answer**. — Vivian Cummings, research analyst assistant

## Characteristics in BD people

If you're hiring people without these traits you're doing a disservice to your firm.

“Business development people. In A/E firms, there's a love/hate relationship with them. Many don't make it, and if they do, they demand their pound of flesh. But either way, one thing is for certain – they aren't going away.”



Mark Zweig

### EDITORIAL

**B**usiness development people. In A/E firms, there's a love/hate relationship with them. Many don't make it (they have the life expectancy of a tire on Kyle Petty's car running the Daytona 500 race), and if they do, they demand their pound of flesh. But either way, one thing is for certain – they aren't going away.

Hiring BD people is not easy. Sometimes we pull them from the technical ranks. Sometimes we get them from government or regulatory agencies – or from a client. And other times we hire them away from a competitor's firm. But no matter where they come from, or what their background is, there are certain qualities I look for:

- **Intelligence.** There's just no substitute for intelligence. Intelligent people are more resourceful. They are easier to get along with. They're even more emotionally stable. It's a mandate for success as a business development person.
- **Work ethic.** You'll get a lot more done – build more relationships – find more leads – and sell more if you have a good work ethic. There's little worse than lazy business development people.
- **Self-discipline.** Since we don't typically have real sales management functions in A/E and environmental consulting firms with managers who ride herd on their sales people, we need business development professionals with a lot of self-discipline who will make the calls they

See MARK ZWEIG, page 2

## FIRM INDEX

Alcoa.....	8
Balfour Beatty Construction.....	10
CallisonRTKL.....	3
Coaches Training Institute.....	4
Cobb, Fendley & Associates.....	3
D. E. Shaw Renewable Investments LLC.....	10
GeoConcepts Engineering Inc. ....	4
HKS Architects.....	10
Kadleck & Associates.....	7
Office of James Burnett.....	10
Oregon Windfarms LLC.....	10
Peloton Land Solutions Inc. ....	8
Pogue Engineering and Development Company Inc. ....	7
TowerPinkster.....	11
Westwood Professional Services Inc.....	6

### MORE COLUMNS

■ FINANCIAL FITNESS: New year, old ways? You decide [Page 5](#)

■ RECRUITING NOTES: Handling employed job candidates [Page 9](#)



Ramp up communication strategies [Page 3](#)

Solar powered [Pages 6, 7](#)

## BUSINESS NEWS

### ZAHA HADID CLAIMS GOLD FROM ROYAL INSTITUTE OF BRITISH ARCHITECTS

Famed architect Zaha Hadid recently did what no woman had ever done before – she earned the gold medal from the Royal Institute of British Architects, and did it in her own right.

Receiving the award for a body of work that spans continents, Hadid was honored at a black-tie gala earlier this month in London.

On receiving the medal, Hadid had this to say: “I am very proud to be awarded the Royal Gold Medal, in particular, to be the first woman to receive the honor in her own right. We now see more established female architects all the time. That doesn’t mean it’s easy. Sometimes the challenges are immense.”

While Hadid has her share of supporters, she remains a divisive figure in the architectural universe. To some she’s a genius, but to others she’s a tyrant, according to a lengthy 2013 profile that appeared in *The Guardian*. Hadid has more than 30 projects worldwide either under construction or in the planning phase.

Hadid’s finished designs include the Heydar Aliyev Centre in Baku, the Aquatics Centre constructed for the 2012 London Olympics, and the MAXXI Museum in Rome.

Hadid, born in Baghdad, Iraq, resides in the United Kingdom.



Courtesy: Brigitte Lacombe

MARK ZWEIG, from page 1

need to make, and do everything else they have to do, without being reminded.

- **Self-confidence.** Sales and business development people have to have confidence so they can meet and interact with people who may be older or higher status or more successful than they are themselves. A lack of confidence can be interpreted by a client as a lack of confidence in the firm and its abilities.
- **Excellent verbal and written communication skills.** It’s hard to teach these skills to a BD person who doesn’t come into the job with them. You just cannot go around saying things like “we had went to the store” or “me and John had really liked the way you did that” to a client without it reflecting really poorly on the firm.
- **Looks/dress.** This is another area that is touchy but has to be addressed. If you don’t know what a decent fitting sport coat looks like or think everyone should be cool with the third eye tattoo on your forehead you may not have the social awareness skills necessary to function in a BD role.
- **Manners.** We used to have a guy who worked for us who would grab his fork with his entire hand and shovel in whatever he was eating like some kind of animal. It was embarrassing and really held him back from being allowed to interface with clients.
- **Ability to be a bit of a chameleon.** I’m talking about being able to see both sides of any issue and being able to adapt to the culture or environment one finds themselves in. This can be a useful skill when working in business development!
- **Not pushing a particular religious or political ideology.** The problem is no matter how “right” your position is you could alienate someone you don’t want to alienate.
- **Good listener and observer.** If you are going to succeed in BD, you have to be both a good listener and good observer. It’s how you pick up on the signals that allows you to adapt your pitch if needed.
- **Wide ranging general knowledge base.** This enables the BD person to talk about anything – staying up on current events and many other areas of interest – so as to facilitate relationship building. Without a relationship you will not make the sale.
- **Likeable.** Business development people need to be likeable. If they aren’t, they won’t be considered trustworthy. No trust, no buy.
- **Honest/trustworthy.** If you aren’t trustworthy, no client will buy services from you. So this has to be a requirement for all business development people.

I’m sure this list could be longer – but these are “**MUST HAVES**” in my book for all BD people. Time for me to go sell another job! ▀

MARK ZWEIG is Zweig Group’s founder and CEO. Contact him at [mzweig@zweiggroup.com](mailto:mzweig@zweiggroup.com).

## Take your advice from Mark Zweig to-go.

Listen to this and past editorials from *The Zweig Letter* via the **free TZL Podcast** on Stitcher, iTunes and Soundcloud.

[zweiggroup.com/podcast](http://zweiggroup.com/podcast)



## THE ZWEIG LETTER

1200 North College Ave.  
Fayetteville, AR 72703

Mark Zweig | Publisher  
[mzweig@zweiggroup.com](mailto:mzweig@zweiggroup.com)

Richard Massey | Managing Editor  
[rmassey@zweiggroup.com](mailto:rmassey@zweiggroup.com)

Christina Zweig | Contributing Editor  
[christinaz@zweiggroup.com](mailto:christinaz@zweiggroup.com)

Sara Parkman | Editor and Designer  
[sparkman@zweiggroup.com](mailto:sparkman@zweiggroup.com)

Megan Halbert | Design Assistant  
[mhalbert@zweiggroup.com](mailto:mhalbert@zweiggroup.com)

Liisa Andreassen | Correspondent  
[landreassen@zweiggroup.com](mailto:landreassen@zweiggroup.com)

Tel: 800-466-6275  
Fax: 800-842-1560  
Email: [info@zweiggroup.com](mailto:info@zweiggroup.com)  
Online: [www.thezweigletter.com](http://www.thezweigletter.com)  
Twitter: [twitter.com/zweigletter](https://twitter.com/zweigletter)  
Blog: [blog.zweiggroup.com](http://blog.zweiggroup.com)

Published continuously since 1992 by Zweig Group, Fayetteville, Arkansas, USA. ISSN 1068-1310.

Issued weekly (48 issues/yr.). \$475 for one-year subscription, \$775 for two-year subscription.

Article reprints: For high-quality reprints, including Eprints and NXTprints, please contact The YGS Group at 717-399-1900, ext. 139, or email [TheZweigLetter@TheYGSGroup.com](mailto:TheZweigLetter@TheYGSGroup.com).

© Copyright 2016, Zweig Group. All rights reserved.

## PROFILE



# Ramp up communication strategies

Whether they use technology or face-to-face discussion, here's how leaders in the A/E industry encourage collaboration and communication among employees and clients.

By LIISA ANDREASSEN  
Correspondent



Scott Maynor,  
Senior Project  
Manager,  
Cobb, Fendley  
& Associates

**C**ollaboration and communication. These are among the most important aspects of running a successful business. Whether it's internal or external, formal or casual, you should never lose sight of how they can impact your profitability.

**TRACKING AND STREAMING.** Ken Gilbert, associate vice president in the Los Angeles office of **CallisonRTKL** (Seattle, WA), a more than 1,000-person global architecture and design firm, says that while the company is fortunate to have project teams with great rapport, the open lines of communication did not come around by happenstance.

Gilbert says using a traceable method beyond voice and email such as NewForma, a web-based collaboration and file sharing software, allows its project managers to easily communicate, track, and share time-sensitive and approval-required documents.

"We have great relationships on our project teams and accuracy is a vital, implicit aspect of our communication process," Gilbert says. "Outside our company, a good rule of thumb to ensure accuracy

is to ask: 'Am I communicating with the person who has the authority to provide the correct answers?'"

Additionally, CallisonRTKL is a global company, meaning that language barriers are not uncommon.

"Speaking face-to-face is best for avoiding misunderstandings, but that's not always possible on every international project," Gilbert says. "In those cases, we try to stream meetings live and use video capabilities whenever possible. These video meetings involve the key team members to help streamline the process. Afterwards, meeting participants disseminate their information and take appropriate action. Live streaming can be extremely useful in assuring clear communication, especially on complex projects."

**CLIENT COMMUNICATION.** Scott Maynor, a senior project manager with **Cobb, Fendley & Associates** (Houston, TX), a 300-person multidiscipline engineering firm, says it's important to build both formal and informal relationships with partners.

"The formal relationship is cultivated by running a

See COMMUNICATION, page 4





## GOOD TO KNOW

**NOW THROUGH MARCH 1, 2016!** Participate in any three of our open surveys and be entered in a drawing to win a free registration to Zweig Group's **Hot Firm and A/E Industry Awards** conference (a \$1,295 value) or a \$1,000 Amazon Gift Card (winner's choice). This year, the Hot Firm and A/E Awards conference will be held at the Arizona Biltmore in Phoenix on September 22-23. Participants must leave their email address on each survey to qualify.

These surveys are closing soon:

- **Work Travel & Reimbursement Mini-Survey:** open until February 24
- **Cell Phone & Mobile Device Survey:** open until March 2
- **Company Car Survey:** open until March 13
- **Social Media Survey:** open until March 20

Plus, survey participants receive a coupon code for 65 percent off the survey of their choosing or 50 percent off a mini-survey (that's a savings of \$321.75 and \$125, respectively).

The more you participate, the more opportunities you have to win! Visit [info.zweiggroup.com/survey-participation](http://info.zweiggroup.com/survey-participation) today or email [research@zweiggroup.com](mailto:research@zweiggroup.com) for more information.



COMMUNICATION, from page 3

tight ship during kickoff meetings and formal status meetings, but you can never underestimate the importance of the informal relationship to developing solutions and becoming a trusted advisor," Maynor says.

He suggests that open-ended questions are best, such as, "What does success look like for you?" or "What do you expect to be the most challenging part of this project?"

"I find that questions like these help me to learn things I might not think to ask," he says. "They can also provide the responder with the latitude to share his or her personal expectations or possibly reveal wants or needs that would not appear on an RFP."

"Our strategy for maintaining harmony is to demonstrate that everyone's opinion is valued and make sure we hear from both pro-change and change-reluctant colleagues."

**DEALING WITH CHANGE.** Ted Lewis, a principal with **GeoConcepts Engineering Inc.** (Ashburn, VA), a 62-person geotechnical firm, talks about the importance of communication during periods of transition.

"Change is stressful to everyone, but especially to individuals set in their ways," he says. "Our strategy for maintaining harmony is to demonstrate that everyone's opinion is valued and make sure we hear from both pro-change and change-reluctant colleagues. We celebrate the changes that result in success as well as the decisions to not change which ended up benefiting the company. In any business, there are many opportunities to celebrate both."

Lewis explains that all changes should be justified by some type of metric – profitability, efficiency, or goodwill – that demonstrates its value.

**COLLABORATION THROUGH DISAGREEMENT.** Karen Kimsey-House, president and co-founder of the **Coaches Training Institute**

(San Rafael, CA), a global coaching and leadership development organization, says the ability to disagree effectively is critical in creating alignment and shaping direction. It's also an important aspect of generating creative solutions.

"When we can hold a staunch commitment to our own opinion and blend that with openness to another person's divergent point of view, disagreement becomes a dynamic opportunity to expand our thinking," she says.

Here are a few of Kimsey-House's key strategies to foster collaboration through disagreement:

- **Be curious.** Being curious doesn't mean you have to give up your point of view. Instead, curiosity demonstrates that you find the other person's point of view valid even if it is different from yours.
- **Listen deeply.** Generally, we are so focused on results that we become preoccupied with the task rather than the person. This interferes with our ability to really listen deeply. It takes practice and discipline to shift our attention beyond our internal dialogue and focus it firmly on another person. It's helpful to imagine our listening as a spotlight. When we are listening to our own internal dialogue, that's what gets illuminated. When we discipline ourselves to point the spotlight of our listening toward another person, the impact can be tremendous.
- **Seek to understand.** True understanding reaches far beyond a cognitive understanding of someone's opinion. Asking open-ended questions helps. What is important to them about an issue? What elements inform their perspective?
- **Go for alignment rather than agreement.** While people might argue forever on the particulars of an issue, there is usually a deeper place of alignment that lies underneath each person's point of view. For example, they might discover that they both care deeply about innovation in the marketplace. Once they have found this alignment they can work together to generate a new solution, a third way, which is even better than the original vision of either person. Far beyond a mere compromise, this "third way" solution is born from the creative tension of the original disagreement and uncovers otherwise hidden possibilities.

"When we can disagree effectively, we can move forward in a partnership, generating new solutions and working together for the highest good of all," she says. ▀



## New year, old ways? You decide

Here are some tips to help you make positive changes for your A/E/P or environmental consulting firm in the new year.



Ted  
Maziejka

FINANCIAL

FITNESS

**T**he year has dawned and as many of our clients report, it has started with a bang. Lots of work that has carried over from 2015, along with more opportunities for the firm with new proposals and new projects.

As financial managers and project managers embark on planning and executing the work, will you fall back on the old ways of approaching your business, or will you integrate new ways of thinking? Will you create energy, fresh ideas, and opportunities for new efficiencies that will translate into higher profit for the firm? Or will you remain stale?

**HOW CAN WE CREATE MORE PROFIT WITH THE SAME FEE?** As project managers, there is often a set way of doing the work – firm-wide standards of care, of approaching tasks, of delivery in projects, and execution of effort. Are you open to transforming the work process in favor of potentially higher profit?

“Will you create energy, fresh ideas, and opportunities for new efficiencies that will translate into higher profit for the firm? Or will you remain stale?”

A case in point might help illuminate this. A client did drawing tasks with an extraordinary level of documentation and detail, which chewed up the fee. The financial manager asked a simple question to the project manager and team: “Do you have to commit that level of detail on the documents or can the documentation be streamlined, and can the firm save time, money, and increase profit?”

“As project managers, there is often a set way of doing the work – firm-wide standards of care, of approaching tasks, of delivery in projects, and execution of effort.”

The question stimulated a pause in the action, and the PM was able to reflect on the possibility of streamlined documentation while still maintaining rigorous standards. The PM met with the contractor. They created a more efficient set of documents, reduced the schedule, and the PM was able to go back to the client with a shorter schedule. On a fixed-fee project, that was of great value to the client. When there’s a strong degree of trust in a design-build relationship, there’s plenty of opportunities to review the process and achieve the client’s goals.

**CAN WE APPROACH THE PROJECT DIFFERENTLY AND CREATE GREATER OPPORTUNITIES FOR PROFIT?** As a managing principal of an architectural firm, our office provided a line of business that supported real estate professionals, and we were doing “test fits” for potential tenants. The fees were highly competitive, and the project manager who had the client relationship often complained that it was very difficult to make a

See TED MAZIEJKA, page 8



# SP@TLIGHT ON: Wes



Voted Ground-Mount Project of the Year in 2015 by *Solar Builder Magazine*, this 5 MW PV solar plant is perched high on a ridge in St. Thomas, U.S. Virgin Islands, and will provide reliable electricity for over 500 homes.

## Solar powered

With new acquisitions, a booming line of business, and an aggressive growth model, Westwood Professional Services Inc. is having its day in the sun.

By RICHARD MASSEY  
Managing Editor



Paul  
Greenhagen,  
CEO and  
President,  
Westwood

**T**he firm is on a hot streak, and that's not hyperbole. **Westwood Professional Services Inc.** (Minneapolis, MN) just acquired another firm in its fastest growing region, north Texas. And thanks to a jumbo federal tax credit for renewable energy, the firm is poised to lift off into the stratosphere of its fastest growing market – solar energy.

With a spurt of hiring, former employees returning to the fold, a brand makeover, and an aggressive business model that includes acquisition and expansion, Westwood is on the march and looking to swell its ranks.

“We really want the best people in the industry to join our team. We believe with better people, we get better results.”

“We really want the best people in the industry to join our team,” says Paul Greenhagen, Westwood’s CEO and president. “We believe with better people, we get better results.”

“Our solar group has doubled its revenue since 2014 and we are planning for another 50 percent increase in 2016.”

True enough. But it also helps that the U.S. government is backing a national push to establish renewable energy as a viable form of scalable power, and is asking the private sector to do the heavy lifting.

In December, Congress approved an extension of the 30-percent Solar Investment Tax Credit, or ITC, through 2019. The credit cycles down beginning in 2020 and eventually sunsets at 10 percent. Still, national consensus is that the five-year incentive is groundbreaking for solar, as it will benefit vendors, installers, developers, and engineers, and will open up new commercial, utility, and residential markets nationwide.

The Solar Energy Industries Association, the leading advocate for solar power, predicts the tax credit will trigger explosive growth in the industry, and that by 2020, solar will support around 420,000 jobs, account for an estimated \$132 billion in investments, and produce as much as 100 GW of energy, enough to power up to 20 million homes.



“The solar industry is growing and Westwood has been involved in renewable energy project development for a long time. Westwood was fortunate to identify solar as an opportunity and enter the market early on. We anticipate continued and steady growth in our solar energy business.”

While industry observers see plenty of good years in the future, Greenhagen and his firm are already enjoying the sheer verticality of the upturn.

“Our solar group has doubled its revenue since 2014 and we are planning for another 50 percent increase in 2016,” Greenhagen says. “The solar industry is growing and Westwood has been involved in renewable energy project development for a long time. Westwood was fortunate to identify solar as an opportunity and enter the market early on. ... We anticipate continued and steady growth in our solar energy business.”

The industry will surely attract its share of new arrivals in the next few years, and there’s a good chance that when they do, they’ll be looking up at Westwood. The firm has worked in renewable energy dating back to 1997, when it conducted a survey for a wind installation. Since that time, the firm has expanded into solar, a sister industry to wind, and in general, is considered an across-the-board expert in power – wind, solar, delivery, and oil and gas pipeline – and all associated forms of technology.

With plenty of expertise, Greenhagen sees plenty of opportunities for business development.

“We’ve done hundreds of projects, and our clients haven’t done that,” he says. “Your experience is what your clients are after.”

“We’ve done hundreds of projects, and our clients haven’t done that. Your experience is what your clients are after.”

In the last eight months, the firm has hired over a dozen staffers for its wind and solar units. In a time when A/E/P firms compete, and compete vigorously, for talent, that’s no small feat. Though Greenhagen knows that recruiting is an ongoing issue, some positions – and for that matter, some firms – just seem to sell themselves.

“We’re so involved in the industry that we meet a lot of people,” Greenhagen says. “We’re seen as the guys who have

been in this for a while and people are attracted to us.”

In December, Westwood acquired **Pogue Engineering and Development Company Inc.** (McKinney, TX). With Pogue, a respected name in engineering and land surveying, Westwood expanded its footprint in the Dallas-Fort Worth market, one of the largest in the United States.

“The Pogue Engineering acquisition, with Randy Pogue and his team, was a perfect fit,” Greenhagen says. “Our companies and people share the same values: quality work, client satisfaction, and high integrity. We anticipate continued growth in Texas and will continue to focus on expanding our reach throughout the state.”

In January, Westwood followed up on the Pogue acquisition with that of **Kadleck & Associates** (Plano, TX), an engineering and surveying firm founded in 1987.

With all six of its engineering segments – land, power, water resources, pipeline, transportation, and construction management – represented in Texas, the firm went from 0 to 90 employees since 2010, making Texas the firm’s most dynamic region.

“We’re so involved in the industry that we meet a lot of people. We’re seen as the guys who have been in this for a while and people are attracted to us.”

Westwood started looking for an acquisition around the end of 2014, and several potential firms were identified, but it wasn’t until Pogue that things worked out. Since solar energy is on a huge growth curve, acquisitions aren’t so easy.

Greenhagen explains.

“A lot of people are doing well and a lot of people aren’t looking to sell,” he says.

But if they are, Greenhagen plans on finding them

“I see more M&A happening soon,” he says. “We’re being picky, but our goal is to grow organically and through acquisition – and definitely in new markets.”

Though expertise, technology and connections are key to business development, another element, a website, is also in the Westwood mix. In 2014, the firm did a brand refresh, and a bright and shiny website was among the results.

“It’s too early to measure, but it’s been helpful for recruiting people, acquisitions, and for getting short-listed for projects,” Greenhagen says. “What does it add to profitability and revenue? That’s hard to see, but site visits are up dramatically.” ■

## ON THE MOVE

**PELTON LAND SOLUTIONS INC. ELECTS SHAREHOLDERS AND ASSOCIATES** Peloton Land Solutions Inc., one of the fastest growing consulting firms in Texas, has elected two new associate principals as shareholders and named five employees as associates to its ever-growing roster. With Peloton since 2011, Frisco operations manager **Marc Paquette** and Fort Worth-based program manager **Jonathan Ragsdale**, who started with Peloton in 2010, are now shareholders of the company.

"We continue to retain amazing talent and want to make sure they are recognized. Jonathan and Marc both set a high bar as team leaders who strive for excellence in client service, and continually look for ways to offer creative solutions to their respective lines of business," said Peloton President and CEO Aric Head.

Newly-elected Fort Worth associates are **Tim Whitefield** and **Brad Sicard**. Both with Peloton since 2012, Whitefield leads Peloton's hydrology and hydraulics group, while Sicard is a project manager in Peloton's rapidly growing site civil practice. Austin-based associates are project manager **Jonathan Fleming**,

with Peloton since 2013, and project manager **Paulo Misi** who joined Peloton in 2014. Also newly elected as associate is Frisco-based project manager **Erik Hinklin**, with Peloton for two years.

"Every one of these individuals brings a heightened level of professionalism, energy, and enthusiasm to Peloton and our clients every day they walk through the door. I am extremely proud of what we are accomplishing together," Head stated.

**ALCOA NAMES KARL TRAGL PRESIDENT OF TRANSPORTATION AND CONSTRUCTION SOLUTIONS GROUP** Lightweight metals leader **Alcoa** announced that **Karl Tragl** will become president of the company's Transportation and Construction Solutions Group. He succeeds José Drummond, who resigned from Alcoa to become CEO of a Brazilian company.

Tragl joins Alcoa from Bosch Rexroth AG, Bosch's \$6 billion automation solutions company, where he has held the role of chief executive officer since 2010. While there, he grew revenues significantly across a customer

base that spans most of Alcoa's major markets, including construction and commercial transportation. Highly respected by customers for his expertise in the application of industrial Internet solutions, his insights are expected to help shape the expansion of Alcoa's digitization, 3-D printing, and other additive manufacturing innovations.

"Karl Tragl is the ideal executive to lead our Transportation and Construction Solutions businesses as they pursue a wide variety of growth opportunities worldwide," said Klaus Kleinfeld, Alcoa chairman and CEO. "Having led a highly successful global automation technology business that served the construction and commercial transportation industries, Tragl will build on Alcoa's strong innovation edge to drive profitable growth into new international markets. He also brings knowledge and experience that will be invaluable to Alcoa's current initiatives to tap the tremendous potential of additive manufacturing and digitization for our businesses and our customers."

TED MAJIEJKA, from page 5

suitable profit for this kind of work.

From a financial perspective, we wanted to drive most project types to 20 percent profit, including this line of business. I challenged the PM to come up with a way to approach these projects. He, along with two architects-in-training, were given eight hours to devise a way to transform this line of business. Sceptically, the PM went off to brainstorm this process. Eight hours later, the two trainees had created a way to transform the older approach through technology and process to provide the "test fits" at a 20 percent profit. New ways of thinking might not always be popular because they challenge old thought processes. But by creating a new approach, we re-energized a line of business.

"New thoughts, new approaches, and a new perspective might be as simple as altering your view, turning your seat around, looking at the work effort from a different vantage point, and creating in a different method."

**CREATE A NEW PERSPECTIVE AND ENERGY!** New thoughts, new approaches, and a new perspective might be as simple as altering your view, turning your seat around, looking at the work effort from a different vantage point, and creating in a different method. Routines sometimes afford us a comfort level, but they also inhibit creativity and the flow of creative energy. So examine what you do each day, when you come

into your office, how you engage with staff, how you run your meetings, and what your day-to-day routines might be doing to stifle or stagnate your thinking.

"Routines sometimes afford us a comfort level, but they also inhibit creativity and the flow of creative energy."

Integrating the financial management staff into the way you approach your project plans might create a new approach to the work. Just because they play with numbers all day does not mean they aren't able to offer a bit of "non-constrained, creative thinking" that could be transformative.

Implement "Creative Tension" into your operation by asking each staff member to prepare a 10-minute presentation on a project, and to deliver the presentation in front of the entire office. After their presentation, colleagues can comment on the presentation, the work, the design, the approach, and in this safe environment, all comments are OK. During these weekly sessions, colleagues offer solutions to the problems that were found.

What do you gain in this process? The presentations can shed light on areas where someone might need help. This exercise also shows how staff responds to criticism, and how they respond to hearing solutions. In the process, your staff improves, and that's good for the client.

So it's a new year. What are you doing to energize your firm and increase its profitability? ▀

TED MAJIEJKA is a Zweig Group financial and management consultant. Contact him at [tmaziejka.com](mailto:tmaziejka.com).



## Handling employed job candidates

Understanding the nuances of a happily employed job candidate can boost your ability to hire the best people.



**Randy  
Wilburn**

### RECRUITING NOTES

I recently received an email from a client who was in the middle of arranging an interview with a candidate that we presented to them about two weeks prior. The client sent us the conference call instructions and then asked for the candidate to fill out an employment application.

My colleague, who had recently started working on the search with me, asked if the client was joking.

“A ‘not actively looking for a new job’ candidate shouldn’t go through the same hoops that an employed job applicant or unemployed candidate does.”

I told her I wish they were, but they were all too serious about getting that application filled out before speaking with our candidate. They had done it for each of the previous candidates we sent to them.

Never mind the fact that we had sent a resume

and our profile, which gave an in-depth review of the candidate, their background, and skill set. They wanted to see a filled out employee application.

Now I’m going to say this one-time: Candidates who are not actively looking for a new job should not have to fill out these applications at any time before determining that a firm wants to hire them!

They are happily employed candidates for a reason. In most cases, they are taking a meeting with you – whether on the phone, via videoconference, or in person – based on our ability as recruiters to get them to hear about another opportunity even though they may be in a great job situation.

That’s the challenge of a recruiter today. A lot of the good candidates are currently employed,

See RANDY WILBURN, page 10



## BUSINESS NEWS

**D. E. SHAW RENEWABLE INVESTMENTS ANNOUNCES THE START OF CONSTRUCTION OF HUNTINGTON WIND PROJECTS** D. E. Shaw Renewable Investments LLC and Oregon Windfarms LLC announced the start of construction of five wind farms known as the Huntington Wind projects. The projects are located 30 miles northwest of Ontario in Baker County, Oregon, and consist of five independent 10.0 MW wind facilities developed by OWF. All five projects have signed 20-year qualifying facility power purchase agreements with Idaho Power Company and will use five 2.0 MW wind turbines supplied by GE.

Upon commencement of operations, the Huntington Wind projects are projected to generate enough clean, renewable energy to power more than 9,000 households each year.

“We are proud to reach this important milestone for the Huntington Wind projects,” noted Bryan Martin, managing director and head of U.S. Private Equity at the D. E. Shaw group. “We appreciate the hard work of Idaho Power,

OWF, the other equity investors, and our many other partners to bring these projects to financial close.”

**BALFOUR BEATTY CONSTRUCTION SELECTED TO BUILD MARQUEE PARK DISTRICT PROJECT AT DOORSTEP OF KLYDE WARREN PARK IN DALLAS**

The evolution of uptown Dallas continues with Park District, a one-of-a-kind project that will further connect the Arts District, downtown, and uptown, providing residents and the public with a unique way to experience Klyde Warren Park and the city. **Balfour Beatty Construction** was chosen by joint venture partners Trammell Crow Company and Met Life, Inc., to provide preconstruction and construction services. Designed by Dallas-based **HKS Architects**, the 916,000-square-foot, mixed-used development will sit on the 3-acre parcel between Pearl Street, Olive Street, and Klyde Warren Park. The landscape architecture firm responsible for Klyde Warren Park’s award-winning design, the **Office of James Burnett**, will handle the design of Park District’s plaza.

The overall scale of the two towers, largest in the central city area, will provide additional walkable live/work space in a rapidly growing area of Dallas. The 20-story office tower is comprised of approximately 500,000 square feet of Class A office space and 7,000 square feet of ground floor retail. It will feature an executive lounge, first-class fitness facility, collaborative workspaces, on-site restaurants, outdoor amenity spaces, on-site banking and valet. The 34-story residence tower will feature approximately 253 residential units and 22,000 square feet of retail space on the lower floors of the complex, and will front the park and a landscaped plaza area. Residents will have access to an amenity deck with a pool overlooking Klyde Warren Park and the downtown Dallas skyline.

The development team will seek LEED Gold and Silver certification for the office and residential buildings respectively. Balfour Beatty has deep expertise in green building and environmental sensitivity.

RANDY WILBURN, from page 9

and we have to cajole, convince, and sometimes coerce (only half joking) an individual to speak with our client. Unfortunately, a majority of our clients don’t understand this concept, acting as if the candidate came in off the street to apply for a job. This situation couldn’t be further from the truth. A “not actively looking for a new job” candidate shouldn’t go through the same hoops that an employed job applicant or unemployed candidate does.

While you need to treat all candidates with dignity and respect, you need to understand the motivation of a “not actively looking for a new job” candidate before you raise the hiring bar. A good recruiter can convince even the most engaged employee to consider other options if you frame the opportunity and the client firm. As recruiters, we get cut off at the knees when we have to go back to these job candidates and ask them for a completed employee application. For some, it can be a humiliating request.

Here are some thoughts for firms that find themselves in this position. First, go into the interview with as much anecdotal evidence as you can find out about the candidate. This may or may not include a resume, and maybe some social media and online research. Remember, happily employed candidates may not have an up-to-date resume or CV. Not everyone in our industry needs to have a current resume unless they are selling work and need to keep an updated CV to attach to job proposals.

Don’t get bent out of shape when a candidate tells you that they have to “dust off” and update their old resume. We hear that all the time, which is why we present a complete profile to our clients which includes work history, accomplishments, education, professional licenses, if any, salary and benefits information, future expectations, and some observations based on our conversations with them.

How much more information do you need to determine whether the candidate is worth a call or a meeting?

The design industry has a tight labor pool and you sometimes only get one bite at the apple. This is why you need to act as if the candidate is doing you a favor by talking to your firm, even if you don’t feel that way.

Think about when you go to buy a car. Do you expect the car salesmen to treat you with contempt and act as if they are nice by showing you a car and taking you out for a test drive? No one asks you to fill out a credit application the minute you walk into the showroom. They do everything they can to make you feel like you made the right decision by coming to visit them.

The recruitment process isn’t much different than that. Don’t worry about all the paperwork, just get the candidate on the hook by selling the features and benefits of working with your company. The other stuff will work itself out. I know some of you are probably saying: “Randy, we hire people for federal projects, and there is always a certain amount of paperwork involved.” I understand, but when dealing with “not actively looking for a new job” candidates, that paperwork can wait until you’ve got them on the hook and they are totally interested in seeing where this opportunity may end up.

Lack of a cohesive recruitment process is one of the biggest hurdles we see to hiring “not actively looking for a new job” candidates. With a little practice and understanding, you can go a long way to having success hiring the right people in a challenging employment market like the design industry. ■

RANDY WILBURN is Zweig Group’s director of executive search. Contact him at [rwilburn@zweiggroup.com](mailto:rwilburn@zweiggroup.com)

## PROFILE

# Succession is grand, not rapid

Bjorn A. Green, president and CEO of TowerPinkster in western Michigan, undergoes structured, two-year transition before mentor hands him baton.

By RICHARD MASSEY  
Managing Editor



Bjorn A.  
Green,  
President and  
CEO,  
TowerPinkster

**I**t took two years, but the succession planning at TowerPinkster in western Michigan is complete. Bjorn A. Green, a planner and designer who cut his teeth in Chicago, in January replaced Arnie Mikon as president and CEO of the 82-person firm that specializes in the design of educational and health-care facilities.

“His qualities and experiences for the position of president are multiple. But mostly it’s about his ability to always see the big picture affecting an opportunity or challenge, his ability to make a decision when one is needed, and the respect he has garnered from the staff.”

While the actual succession, which began in early 2014, centered on Green and his tutelage under Mikon, the big picture was about each and every person in the firm, in addition to all the clients it serves.

“We all need to work in the same direction,” Green says. “I give a lot of the credit to Arnie for having the thought process to begin planning a couple of years ago.”

Mikon will remain with the firm throughout 2016, more as a mentor for the younger associates, and for the stability of the firm’s ongoing projects. Or, as Green says, to avoid the “cold stop and start for clients. Relationships are not easy to build.”

Before moving into his current position, Green was put through his paces at TowerPinkster – leadership over healthcare, then commercial, then marketing, and finally, a seat on the board of directors.

“There appears to be a shift in focus by many firms, which started in 2008, from an honest wage for a valued service to a low fee, high-volume model and philosophy.”

To cement his ascension, both symbolically and in practice, Mikon moved to the Grand Rapids office while Green remained at the flagship Kalamazoo headquarters.

For Mikon, who was CEO for a decade before handing the baton to Green, the decision to promote his protégé was not too difficult to make.

“He succeeded with every opportunity we gave him,” Mikon said. “His qualities and experiences for the position of president are multiple. But mostly it’s about his ability to always see the big picture affecting an opportunity or challenge, his ability to make a decision when one is needed, and the respect he has garnered from the staff.”

TowerPinkster is an old firm, established in 1953 with a staff of six. Entrenched in the western Michigan metro markets of Grand Rapids and Kalamazoo – only 50 miles apart and home to a combined 1.6 million people – the firm has plenty of local, premium clients to bolster its portfolio, including Western Michigan University, Grand Valley State University, and Spectrum Health.

Both locally and nationally, the mood is positive for the A/E/P industry, something that’s not lost on Green.

“The market is good and busy,” he says. “Succession planning while things are good is always easier.”

“The market is good and busy. Succession planning while things are good is always easier.”

As the CEO in training for two years, Green took a good manager’s look at the industry and the challenges it faces. Like many other CEOs, he sees a lot of work and not enough people to do it. That the Great Recession gutted the architecture industry is well documented, both in the media and by the American Institute of Architects, which, in its 2012 *Firm Survey*, reported a 40-percent decline in gross architecture revenues from 2008 to 2011. On top of that, many of the architects who lost their jobs during the recession have struggled to re-enter the workforce, even though construction, and the A/E/P that enables it, is now booming.

See SUCCESSION, page 12

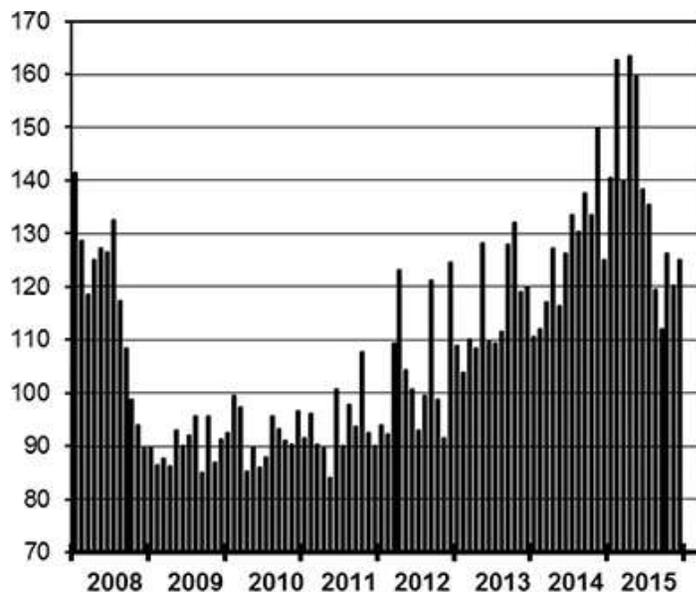


## BUSINESS NEWS

**ANNUAL TOTAL FOR 2015 CLIMBS 8 PERCENT TO \$645.5 BILLION** New construction starts in December advanced 4 percent to a seasonally adjusted annual rate of \$591.6 billion, according to Dodge Data & Analytics. The December gain follows a 5 percent decline in November, and brings total construction activity back close to the amount that was reported in October. December showed moderate increases for each of the three main construction sectors – nonresidential building, residential building, and nonbuilding construction (public works and electric utilities). For 2015 as a whole, total construction starts climbed 8 percent to \$645.5 billion. This continues the pattern of moderate expansion for total construction starts registered during the previous three years – 2012, up 12 percent; 2013, up 11 percent; and 2014, up 9 percent.

The December statistics produced a reading of 125 for the Dodge Index, compared to a revised 120 for November. For all of 2015, the Dodge Index averaged 137. “The construction start statistics reveal continued expansion for construction activity during 2015, although the path over the course of the year was not smooth,” stated Robert A. Murray, chief economist for Dodge Data & Analytics. “A strong first half of 2015 was followed by a 20 percent loss of momentum in the third quarter and then a slight 1 percent rebound in the fourth quarter, as the expansion began to show that it was getting back on track. Several factors contributed to the early 2015 strength – more growth for the commercial and institutional segments of nonresidential building, gradual improvement for single family housing alongside the continued rise by multifamily housing, and a surge of electric utility and gas plant projects that featured the start of several massive liquefied natural gas terminals in the Gulf Coast region.”

“The third quarter of 2015 witnessed a steep 30 percent drop for nonresidential building, as the manufacturing building category and in particular energy-related projects fell sharply,” Murray continued. “In addition, the commercial and institutional building segments of nonresidential building settled back, as earlier gains may have overshot their underlying growth trend while uncertainty in the economic and political environment



dampened investment in general. Residential building slipped 3 percent in the third quarter, due to flattening activity for single family housing, while nonbuilding construction plunged 32 percent as the result of a sharp reduction by the electric utility and gas plant category. On the plus side, the fourth quarter of 2015 showed the commercial and institutional segments of nonresidential building beginning to pick up the pace once again, and supportive market fundamentals (occupancies and rents) should help renewed growth for these segments going into 2016. The public works portion of nonbuilding construction also began to pick up the pace towards the end of 2015, and should be aided by the December passage of fiscal 2016 federal appropriations as well as the new \$305 billion five-year federal transportation act (the Fixing America’s Surface Transportation Act).”

SUCCESSION, from page 11

Green has a two-pronged approach to the problem. He has a focus on internal growth – company culture, community involvement, and a creative work environment – and the never-ending search for new talent to provide “bench depth.”

Perhaps mindful of the recession and the devastation it brought to the real estate market and anything attached to it, Green concedes that the economy, something no architect or engineer can control, is the great universal worry of CEOs throughout the design world.

“We seem to be the first ones in and the last ones out due to how closely tied our industry is to the availability of capital, whether public or private,” Green says.

“This approach continues to commoditize our professional services and devalues our worth as a critical asset to the design and construction process. That’s unfortunate.”

Knowing that at some point there will be leaner times than 2016, he had this to say: “That will be a challenge, no matter what. How do we maintain a balanced team?”

During the recession, there was heavy downward pressure on design fees as developers and builders tried to control costs in a tight market. To a large extent that still exists today, and as a CEO of an established firm, Green is fighting against it.

“There appears to be a shift in focus by many firms, which started in 2008, from an honest wage for a valued service to a low fee, high-volume model and philosophy,” Green says. “This approach continues to commoditize our professional services and devalues our worth as a critical asset to the design and construction process. That’s unfortunate.” ▀

