

The real purpose of marketing

Four suggestions from Mark Zweig that will result in more work than you can handle.

Marketing is probably one of the most important ways to drive your firm's success, because you can use your marketing to drive demand for your firm's services beyond your ability to supply it.



Mark Zweig

EDITORIAL

It's interesting to me to see how many architects, engineers, planners and environmental consultants really don't understand marketing. Many either see it as something that you have to do "just to keep up" with other firms or something that's pretty much a waste of time – a cost to be minimized.

Truth is, marketing is probably one of the most important ways to drive your firm's success, because you can use your marketing to drive demand for your firm's services beyond your ability to supply it. And when that happens, a lot of other good things happen. You grow. You can say "no" to clients who don't pay their bills or those whose project will hurt your reputation. You can hire better people. Your value goes up. You can increase your prices. These things will transform your firm – and maybe even your outlook on life!

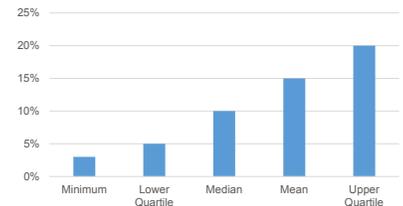
So how can you – as someone in the A/E/P or environmental business – use marketing to drive demand for what you do beyond your ability to supply what you do? Here are some thoughts:

1) Fix your website. Lately it seems like I have run into a whole bunch of firm websites that are the modern-day equivalent of a bad '80s brochure. They aren't dynamic, the information is static, and

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TRENDLINES

Marketability discount



Zweig Group's 2015 Valuation Survey finds that almost half of firms appraised had a marketability discount applied by the appraiser. Forty-four percent of appraised firms said they had a marketability discount applied. The median marketability discount was 10 percent, with a quarter of firms reporting at least a 20 percent discount. – Leah Santos, Research Analyst Assistant



Being Social

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A/E BUSINESS NEWS

BIPARTISAN LEED SUPPORT The U.S. Green Building Council's LEED green building rating system has strong bipartisan support across the U.S., according to a new poll, which found that 79 percent of Republicans and 89 percent of Democrats support the use of LEED in buildings.

The USGBC poll also found that a majority supports the criteria LEED uses to determine a building's sustainability, including saving money through energy and water efficiency, and creating jobs.

"Americans on both sides of the aisle strongly support the increased efficiency and cost savings that result from implementing LEED," said Taryn Holowka, the senior vice president of marketing communications and advocacy for USGBC. "This poll highlights the great public demand for the continued use of green building standards to cut costs, improve human health and reduce impacts on the environment."

CONSTRUCTION CLIMBED IN JANUARY The value of new construction starts climbed 9 percent in January to a seasonally adjusted annual rate of \$621 billion, according to Dodge Data & Analytics. The increase for total construction was the result of a strong performance by the non-building construction sector, which benefitted from the start of a massive liquefied natural gas terminal facility in Texas. Nonresidential building lost momentum for the second month in a row, and residential building pulled back because of a slower pace for multifamily housing. On an unadjusted basis, total construction starts in January were reported at \$43.2 billion, up 18 percent from the same month a year ago.

The January statistics raised the Dodge Index to 131 (2000=100), compared with 120 for

December, though still short of the most recent high of 143 in November. For overall 2014, the Dodge Index averaged 122.

"During 2014 and now early 2015, the month-to-month pattern for construction starts has often reflected the presence or absence of exceptionally large projects," stated Robert Murray, chief economist for Dodge Data & Analytics. "For much of 2014, a substantial share of this work was petrochemical-related, such as a \$3 billion Exxon petrochemical plant expansion in Texas. Towards the end of last year, a pickup in liquefied natural gas-related facilities emerged, led by the start of the \$3.6 billion Dominion Cove Point Liquefaction Project in Maryland, and January included \$6 billion estimated for the start of two segments of a huge liquefied natural gas export facility in Texas.

"The month-to-month variation for overall construction starts is taking place around what is still a rising trend. For nonresidential building, the continued improvement by its commercial and now its institutional project types should enable this sector to register more growth in 2015, notwithstanding a sluggish January. For residential building, the strengthening job market and some easing of lending standards for home mortgages are expected to help single family housing see moderate improvement relative to a flat 2014."

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the graphics are horrible. With most clients finding new service providers through Google searches and then checking out their websites, and with the cost of websites being as low as it is today, why any company would have a bad website is beyond comprehension!

2) Build your list. You cannot do anything promotion-wise without having a list of who you are trying to sell your services to. Yet so many companies – more than I can count – don't even have a customer relationship management system. They cannot even send out a Christmas card to all of their clients and potential clients because they cannot print out a list. That's ludicrous. No other business can get away with that.

3) Promote ONE brand. I see many A/E firms that clearly don't get this idea. They may be called "ABC Associates" but then have a company newsletter targeted at development clients, and this thing has a name of "Developer Insight" (catchy, huh?) with a completely different graphic image from the rest of the firm. This kind of stuff only dilutes your brand and I don't understand why people in this business do it every day.

4) Contact your targets frequently and use lots of different methods.

That means you need to call them, go see them, email them, mail to them, see them at events, see them at

You cannot do anything promotion-wise without having a list of who you are trying to sell your services to.

tradeshows, give talks to them, have them view your videos, have them hear your podcasts, have them see articles on you in the media, and much more. It is all about getting your name in front of these clients and potential clients frequently – much more frequently than architects and engineers think is "normal" (probably 10 to 20 times more often than most firms do it now). We are generally scared to do this and worried that if someone complains, it proves it is a bad practice. No matter if you got 20 new clients from the efforts!

There's a lot you can do marketing-wise to drive demand. One thing I know: It all costs time and money. Stop looking at it as an expense and instead think of it as an investment. CH2M-Hill, HOK, Walter P. Moore, EDSA – none of them became the brands they are by minimizing their marketing investments! ▀

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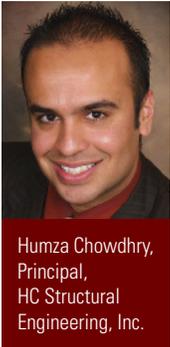
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ATTITUDE

Turn bitter into sweet

Several examples of firms that have planned for failure and have turned potential negative circumstances around.

By LIISA ANDREASSEN
Correspondent



Humza Chowdhry,
Principal,
HC Structural
Engineering, Inc.

TTrue leaders are said to be relentless in their pursuit of success. How are leaders in A/E firms successfully navigating obstacles and difficulties, instead of allowing failure to detract from these goals? Five leaders share their tips for success.

MAINTAIN INTEGRITY... NO MATTER WHAT. Humza Chowdhry, principal, **HC Structural Engineering, Inc.** (Daly City, CA), a six-person firm, says that becoming a structural engineer is a “Catch 22.”

“People who are likable are ideally trustworthy, and maintaining those qualities as well as integrity in what you say and do will open up countless doors.”



Dan Clevenger,
Principal,
Process Plus.

“On one hand, it’s a respected profession, and we provide a much-needed service around the world. On the other hand, it’s also one of the riskiest professions to be involved in because of liability,” he says.

For example, Chowdhry says that, in some cases, engineers may lose their license or have legal action taken against them. He says that these types of issues arise when one is negligent, not focused on the goal at hand, or simply being lazy.

“Lately, we have been hired by many building owners simply because their current engineer refuses to answer their questions or phone calls. This lack of communication sets precedence for a lawsuit. People do not sue people they like,” he says.

So, in Chowdhry’s opinion, the first step is to be likable.

“People who are likable are ideally trustworthy, and maintaining those qualities as well as integrity in what you say and do will open up countless doors,” he says.

HC recently got approval for a historic restaurant project in downtown San Jose, Calif. The firm began the project almost two years ago – the first of its kind. Their lack of experience with this type of

project surfaced during the project cycle, which demanded superior knowledge of the historic building code for architectural components. However, instead of throwing in the towel, quitting on the client, and not answering her phone calls, HC rose to the challenge and got other consultants involved.

“The client was out more and more money since she had to hire all of these additional people, but since we were there every step of the way, supported and assisted her, she never once brought up the fact or made us feel that she had any regrets working with us,” Chowdhry says. “In fact, she gave us another project.”

So, by going above and beyond the norms of a client-professional relationship and establishing a trust system, this client knew that they could rely on HC. By staying on board and seeing the project to completion, HC maintained its integrity.

FACE TIME. At **Process Plus** (Cincinnati, OH), a 112-person architecture and engineering firm, Dan Clevenger, principal, project management, says that it’s about doing the right thing, not just about being right.

“You can be right, but the client may not agree,” he says. “By focusing on the client’s needs and distilling these needs down into manageable pieces, we are able to achieve a successful partnership with our clients.”

Clevenger recalls a recent project where he thought the client needed one type of service, but after sitting down with the client face-to-face – rather than communicating by email – they found a better path they could pursue together.

FAILURE IS A NECESSARY EVIL. Kevin Token, chairman, **BSA LifeStructures** (Indianapolis, IN), a 230-person architectural and engineering firm, says that they try to create a culture of empowerment.

“We want our staff to believe that their ideas are worthy of communication and implementation,” he says. “It’s okay to fail. Thomas Edison, when told he hadn’t made any progress on a particular project, is credited for joyfully stating that he had found several thousand ways that did not work. Failure is not a negative thing – it’s a necessary thing.”

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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, June 14 in Seattle, and Oct. 22 in Parsippany, N.J.

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

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Recently, BSA entered into a new client relationship in a relatively new market segment. On their first project with this client, their profitability was negative 146 percent.

“That could definitely be identified as a failure,” Token says. “However, we revisited our process and changed our approach for the second project. When that project was completed, we had earned a 10 percent profit on a small fee. That’s a tremendous success, but it required that we failed the first time so we could learn what did not work. Additionally, the changes that we implemented came from the team, not from top-down management.”

Token advises that firms do the following:

- Measure what you believe is important
- Empower your people
- Hold your team accountable for the results you want
- Encourage trial and error
- Stimulate innovation



Kevin Hickey,
Principal
Consultant, All4.

GROWTH OPPORTUNITY. Kevin Hickey, principal consultant, **All4** (Kimberton, PA), a 44-person environmental services firm, says that when they embrace obstacles/failures, there’s an opportunity for growth.

“We have adopted the philosophy, attributed to our executive coach, Mike Aquilino of Innovational Services, that, ‘Every breakdown leads to a breakthrough.’ People need to know, from the actions of the leaders of the organization, that we all make mistakes and that the value is in learning from those

mistakes,” Hickey says.

Hickey illustrates this philosophy by sharing a scenario that happened in 2009.

“Like many other firms during the recession, we were faced with growth obstacles due to a significant number of project cancellations,” he says. “This challenge gave our organization the opportunity to spend downtime focusing on initiatives. We spent time honing new technical skills, investi-

gating different services, finding new industries, and developing new marketing techniques to increase national and local visibility.”

Hickey says that this approach positioned All4 to grow market share during the downturn (adding 18 new clients) and it jumpstarted growth as the economy improved and existing clients ramped up their activities.



Nate Beil,
President, KCI
Technologies, Inc.

PREP AHEAD. At **KCI Technologies, Inc.** (Sparks, MD), the largest employee-owned, multi-disciplined engineering firm in Maryland, employing more than 1,100 people, Nate Beil, president, says that prudent business planning prepares for a potential negative event.

“In a professional services company such as KCI, one possible negative event is the realization of a market sector’s predominant reliance on a single or few clients,” Beil says.

“Disruption of this reliance can have severe impacts on the long-term sustainability of the individual practice or business line. Recognizing our Power Practice worked predominantly under a single, large account, we actively searched for a similar client within the market vertical.”

KCI’s strategy was to diversify their client base in advance of a downturn or loss of a significant client. To this end, their search identified two opportunities – one local to the mid-Atlantic region and one spanning not only the mid-Atlantic region, but south, encompassing the Eastern Seaboard down into the state of Florida. They were successful in growing market share with the mid-Atlantic regional client and procuring a large master services agreement with the new opportunity.

“Through this diversification, we were able to transfer our internal expertise and staff to these new accounts when our existing contract was lost in an open competition. While the loss of a contract is never optimal, our Power Practice was able to not only survive, but support our company’s strategic plan of geographical diversity. An additional benefit of this proactive business planning is more rapid growth of the firm should the anticipated negative event never occur,” Beil says. ■

TZL machine

10
years
ago

HEADLINES Editorial: Getting paid when we should | The perils of e-mail marketing | Losing employees to your clients | Project Management Perspectives: A day in the video-gaming life | Jones & Stokes uses job fair to hire over 100 people in four days | What's Working: Marketing ideas at work

Oh, the hazards around the corner. Two articles in the March 7, 2005, issue of THE ZWEIG LETTER (#602) touch on two topics that certainly strike fear in the heart of any AEC firm leader: losing an employee to a client and having an email campaign backfire.

In the first case, fear not; it can be a nice way to strengthen a relationship with a client. That's what Pamela Bain, then-president of 45-person consulting, engineering, and surveying firm **Bain Medina Bain, Inc.** (San Antonio, TX), told THE ZWEIG LETTER.

"I lost one employee to a client, but it was the chance of a lifetime for him," Bain says. "He always wanted to work for the client—a government entity. So the client called me, to make sure I didn't think they were trying to steal my people, and I offered to write a letter of recommendation for him."

But not everyone may be so understanding. Losing a valuable employee can be tough and can seriously damage your relationship with your client. It all depends on how you handle it, the article said.

Despite the many benefits of email marketing, in 2005 most A/E firms still relied in good old hard-copy marketing, according to 2004 Marketing Survey of A/E/P & Environmental Consulting Firms. Firms sent an average of 85 percent of their marketing pieces through the mail, compared with only 13 percent by email and 2 percent by fax.

The reason? The biggest concern was spam (probably still the biggest concern today). Other firms stated a lack of pay-off from email marketing. However, other firms reported that their electronic efforts "paid off in spades" by following a strategy that focused on building relationships, using the appropriate platform, and not giving up on the effort too quickly.

In his editorial, Mark Zweig offered 12 steps for improving cash flow and getting accounts receivable on track. Here they are:

1. Admit you have a problem.
2. Get mad!
3. Acknowledge the fact that YOU are a big part of the problem!
4. Draw strength from your higher power.
5. Get motivated to do something about it.
6. Make sure no job number is opened without complete billing information.
7. Turn around draft invoices in less than 24 hours.
8. Bill continuously throughout the month.
9. Send all bills electronically as PDFs.
10. Follow up on every bill a week after it's sent.
11. Always follow your established collection procedures.
12. Realize you are not alone.

20
years
ago

HEADLINES Editorial: What is risky? | Home offices | Editors' publicity tips

In 2015, at least one A/E firm operates virtually – no physical offices. Zweig Group's Policies, Procedures & Benefits Survey, 2014 edition, reported that 58 of A/E firms have employees who work regularly from home.

Not in 1994.

The 1995 version of the Policies & Procedures Survey found that nearly three-quarters of the 283 firms that answered the questionnaire said they did not allow employees to regularly work out of their home. Principals interviewed for an article published in the March 13, 1995 issue of THE ZWEIG LETTER (#101) justified suspicions about what employees would be doing at home during working hours as the main reason for not allowing "virtual office" arrangements.

In the meantime, such fears have been assuaged and the

virtual office is a reality and is likely to become even more so for more people.

In his editorial, Mark Zweig wrote about principals who extract as much as they can from their companies to invest in something else (real estate, another business, etc.), rather than focusing on growing the business they know best.

Keep the following points in mind when you're deciding whether to invest in your company or somewhere else:

1. There is value in the firm.
2. What you can get out of the firm is directly related to what you leave in.
3. The return on equity for the typical firm is good.





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

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An imperfect process

AIA Large Firm Roundtable & McGraw Hill new claims study found many drivers for project uncertainty.



William Quatman

GENERAL COUNSEL

In 2012, the AIA Large Firm Roundtable (LFRT) commissioned a study to find the source of claims in the design and construction industry and, in particular, what percent of errors and omissions should be expected by a project owner. The study, released in late September 2014, is entitled “Managing Uncertainty and Expectations in Building Design and Construction” and was conducted by McGraw Hill Construction, with funding from the AIA, Autodesk, DBIA, AGC, and others. The report begins with this statement, “Perfection is a baseline expectation when you purchase a product.

But as experienced owners of building projects know, design and construction is an imperfect process with a variety of inherent uncertainties. Given that reality, what can project teams do to identify, anticipate and mitigate the conditions and factors that drive uncertainty, and how can owners adjust their expectations of project team performance to align with reasonable, achievable metrics that truly benefit the project? These are the core questions behind this [report].”

The report found the leading drivers of uncertainty on building projects were owner-related issues, such as accelerated schedule, unclear project requirements, lack of direction and involvement, and program or design changes. Though only 7 percent of owners surveyed believe perfect construction documents are possible, design errors and omissions are still considered highly impactful sources of uncertainty. On average, owners said they expect to pay somewhere between 3 and 5 percent added cost on a building project due to these issues and consider anything up to 6 percent to still be acceptable as “good performance.”

One of the most interesting, but not surprising, findings of the report is the perception by owners and contractors on one hand, and architects on the other, about the overall causes of project uncertainty. Owners and contractors each ranked Unforeseen Site Conditions and Design Omissions as the top two factors, respectively. Architects, by contrast, but no surprise, ranked Design Omissions dead last, while ranking Owner-Driven Changes and Accelerated Schedule as the top two factors, respectively. Individual Trade Contractor Performance was the top-named reason for construction coordination issues by all parties,

One of the most interesting, but not surprising, findings of the report is the perception by owners and contractors on one hand, and architects on the other, about the overall causes of project uncertainty. Owners and contractors each ranked Unforeseen Site Conditions and Design Omissions as the top two factors, respectively.

the study found, led by general contractors (67 percent). Despite their direct responsibility for these issues, higher percentages of contractors cited “scope gaps” among prime and subcontracts (41 percent) and lack of thoroughness of pre-construction planning, estimating and scheduling (33 percent) as leading causes of uncertainty. Although almost one-third (32 percent) of general contractors appear to believe that trade subs benefit the most from uncertainty, roughly half of architects (47 percent) and owners (50 percent) believe that general contractors do, the report found.

So, how do we improve the system? The LFRT report found that owners can best help reduce claims and disputes through “Clearer direction from owners” (79 percent), and “More active

See WILLIAM QUATMAN, page 8



IN BRIEF

REDUCED BACKLOGS According to Associated Builders and Contractors, the Construction Backlog Indicator for the fourth quarter of 2014 declined 0.1 months, or 1 percent. Despite the quarter-over-quarter decline, backlog ended the year at 8.7 months, which is still 4.4 percent higher than one year ago.

“Inconsistent growth in the volume of public work continues to suppress the pace of nonresidential construction; however, private construction momentum continues to build,” said ABC Chief Economist Anirban Basu. “With hotel occupancy rising, office vacancy falling and demand for data climbing exponentially, a number of key private segments are positioned for rapid growth in construction spending this year.

“There are a number of factors that are likely to be beneficial to nonresidential contractors in 2015,” Basu said. “First, although interest rates were expected to rise after the Federal Reserve ended its third round of quantitative easing, they have actually been trending lower – due to factors such as falling interest rates abroad and a strengthening U.S. dollar – which helps contractors with construction volume and borrowing costs. Second, materials prices have continued to fall – particularly inputs related to the price of oil, iron ore and copper. This also makes it more likely that construction projects will move

forward and helps boost profit margins.”

Regional highlights

- Average backlog in the South is back above nine months for the first time since the first quarter of 2014.
- Though backlog in the West fell sharply during 2014’s final quarter, average backlog remains comparable to where it was a year ago.
- Both the Northeast and the Middle States registered levels of average backlog unseen during the history of the CBI survey.

Industry highlights

- Average backlog in the commercial and institutional category is virtually unchanged over the past year, suggesting the pace of recovery will remain moderate overall.
- Infrastructure-related spending is likely to be brisk going forward primarily due to improved state and local government fiscal conditions.
- Heavy industrial average backlog remains in the vicinity of multi-year highs, but these readings do not fully reflect the impact of a stronger U.S. dollar, which may result in a slowdown in export growth and an associated softening in industrial investment.

WILLIAM QUATMAN, from page 7

leadership by owners” (68 percent). Nearly two-thirds of those polled identified “best value” or other team selection criteria (not based primarily on cost) as very important, a method prominent in public design-build. Reinforcing the value of tighter designer and builder collaboration, the report found that more integration between design and build parties during design and construction (77 percent), more time for design firms to participate in coordination (66 percent), and clearer definition of deliverables between parties during the design process (67 percent) were important to reduce claims. In addition, technological advances, such as Building Information Modeling use by entire project team (50 percent) out-ranked the use of BIM by single firm (32 percent), another nod to the value of early collaborative efforts during design.

How about use of contingencies for errors and omissions or for unexpected costs? Most owners surveyed (eight out of 10) said they always have a project contingency, but just one in four owners said they have a standard risk assessment process to determine the right amount of contingency. Only about half (51 percent) of the owners “always” tell architects about their contingency, while around a third (37 percent) “always” tell their contractors. A quarter “never” tell their architect, and even more (37 percent) “never” tell their contractor the owner’s contingency.

“Imperfection Is Inevitable,” is a subheading of the report, which found that, “expecting flawless execution of error-free drawings on building projects is not realistic.” Only 1 percent of owners surveyed said they’d even seen “a perfect set” of drawings. Another subheading, “Design Team Impact on Owner Causes of Uncertainty,” reported that

on “programmatically intense” buildings, it is unrealistic to expect all owner stakeholders to understand design and construction well enough to provide perfect guidance. Therefore, “design professionals should make the effort to understand more about what end users will really be doing in the building (e.g., technical, workflow, operating requirements)” before, as one owner said, “they start getting people excited about where spaces are going to be.” Better-informed design is less likely to generate disruptive stakeholder changes and more likely to increase owner satisfaction, the report found. One owner surveyed said, “Before you draw one thing, finalize the value propositions so you know what you’re answering, instead of what you think we want.”

Architects are all too familiar with design errors and omissions as creating claims and litigation, but the practitioners surveyed downplayed E&O as a major source of problems. Only 15 percent of architects said that design omissions were a major problem, with 21 percent citing to design errors. Owners took the most heat, with architects citing to “owner-driven changes” (63 percent) and “accelerated schedules” (55 percent) as the main problems. Owners, by sharp contrast, cited design errors as the main factor, especially those doing mostly office projects. While no consensus was reached on what percent of design errors is within the standard of care, the report cited to a 2012 study of 359 projects showing that the direct costs of rework from design errors and omissions ranged from 0.5 percent to 2.6 percent of total construction cost. The LFRT report concludes that “more research is needed.” ▀

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HIRING

Relocation hospitality club

Firms have formal and informal programs in place, but pretty much assist with most new employee requests.

By LIISA ANDREASSEN
Correspondent



Meghan O'Connell,
HR Area Leader,
Olsson
Associates.

What do you offer people who are relocating to work with your firm? Does it depend on job type? What about distance? For most firms, varying needs and circumstances will dictate.

EMPLOYEE CHOICE. Heather Collins, professional services marketer, **Pond & Company** (Norcross, GA), a 262-person architecture, engineering and planning firm, says that relocation stipends are negotiated and agreed upon. How the employee then chooses to use the budget they've been allocated is their choice and varies based on what their personal needs are for the move.

"My role is to help them maximize the benefit with tax-free use of the funds compliant with IRS code. They can still access the other funds for their use so long as they do not exceed the limit and understanding that taxable benefits will be paid out through their pay, rather than expense reimbursement," she says.

Generally, Pond sees their relocation expenses used as follows (listed in order of most frequent or largest expenses to least frequent or nominal expenses):

- Movement of goods – whether a moving company (they secure) or a U-Haul, employees always set aside some, if not most, of the budget for this expense.
- Temporary housing – whether hunting with a few trips in or rentals until they find something more long term.
- Flights – house hunting trips for themselves and/or partners. "We see expenses here rather frequently, but we also try and couple trips with continued interviewing, important meetings, orientation, etc. where the employee would be able to call it business travel and avoid additional expenses; the employee would be responsible for dependent travel," Collins says.
- Incidentals – gas, meals, packing supplies, etc. are next on the list, but Collins adds that on occasion they have used some of the money to sever a lease (as an example).

"We do not get into finding work for spouses or child care-type planning," she says, "but we do provide a 'kit' of materials that offers local or online resources to help them research the area."

This kit not only serves to welcome new employees to the area, but also provides predicted resources for a move that also includes information about the city and surrounding area. HR offers their support to any partners or spouses at the request of the employees. More often, however, they communicate with partners of benefit-related planning and decision making.

"We really do as much or as little as the employee prefers. We've assisted with everything from finding housing, helping spouses with job searches and assisted with locating child care facilities."

FILL THE NEED. Larry Atchley, vice president, HR, **Crafton Tull** (Rogers, AR), a 275-person architecture and engineering firm, says that it depends on the situation, the individual involved, and the level of effort to move; each case is somewhat different.

For example, for an experienced key employee or strategic hire, they would provide assistance up to a full household move. It could also include a moving stipend paid directly to the employee to move as they desire.

"As a point of interest, this scenario is pretty rare for our firm," Atchley says. "In the case of newly graduated professionals, we always provide a sign-on bonus and a moving stipend to assist in the move. In all cases, we will provide Chamber of Commerce-type information on our communities, provide a company sponsor to assist with questions, reservations, directions and recommendations."

See RELOCATION, page 10

GOOD TO KNOW

The majority of firms (52 percent) will pay to relocate both new and existing employees; another 14 percent will pay only for new employees.

Source: 2014 Policies, Procedures & Benefits Survey, Zweig Group, <https://zweiggroup.com/p-2191-policies-procedures-benefits-survey-2014>



ON THE MOVE

LJA PROMOTES LJA Engineering Inc. (Houston, TX), a 425-person full-service consulting engineering firm, announced that **Gene Bowles** has been promoted to project manager in the firm's Rail Division.

In his new role as PM, Bowles will continue to manage and lead Union Pacific Railroad projects as well as focusing on the development and expansion of LJA's business relationship with UPRR. Bowles will also provide mentorship and guidance to new staff within the rail group. His experience includes engineering and project management of freight and rail design projects for UPRR, BNSF, and PTRR railroads in the Gulf and Midwest regions. Bowles has also worked on civil and track improvement projects to service both freight and passenger rail operations in Central and Southeast Queensland, Australia.

PSI PROMOTES NEW PRESIDENT Professional Service Industries, Inc. (Chicago, IL), a consulting, engineering, and testing firm with 2,300 employees nationwide, announced the promotion of **Doug Dayton** to president of the company. Dayton has a 15-year history with PSI and has served the company in a variety of management roles, most recently as chief operating officer.

Dayton will consolidate the roles of president and chief operating officer in his new role and will be responsible for the performance, growth, sales, profitability, technical quality, and safety of all of PSI's operational branches and companies.

ENGEO NAMES 10 NEW PRINCIPALS, ASSOCIATES ENGEO Incorporated (San Ramon, CA), a firm of more than 200 engineers, geologists, environmental scientists, hydrologists and field representatives, announces the promotion of 10 leaders to higher levels of service.

ENGEO's new principals include **Bob Boeche**, who leads ENGEO's South Bay office in San Jose; **Jeff Fippin**, who leads a multi-disciplined group at ENGEO's San Ramon office; **Steve Harris**, who leads ENGEO's Central Valley office in Ripon; **Greg Martin**, who leads ENGEO's Christchurch office in New Zealand; and **Guy Cassidy**, who leads ENGEO's Wellington office in New Zealand.

ENGEO's new associates include **Zac Crawford**, who specializes in engineering, environmental geology and geomorphology and serves ENGEO's Ripon office; **Pedro Espinosa**, who specializes in shoreline seismic design,

earthquake engineering, bridge foundation design, soil improvement, and soil structure interaction; **Joe Gray**, one of six ENGEO engineers to first travel to Christchurch, New Zealand, in response to the disasters following the 2011 earthquakes, where he has been an integral part of the ENGEO's reconstruction efforts by performing geotechnical evaluation on thousands of residential units; **Matt Swanson**, who specializes in managing grading and improvement testing and observation services, foundation design, levee systems analysis and design, geotechnical explorations, and pavement recommendations and recently relocated from ENGEO's Ripon office to lead its Southern California operations in Irvine; and **Craig Wright**, who provides geotechnical consultation, project management, field mapping, fault and landslide investigations, geotechnical hazard analysis, stormwater monitoring, and geotechnical instrumentation installation and monitoring services for the company's San Ramon office.

FIRE PROTECTION EXPERT JOINS WJE Wiss, Janney, Elstner Associates, Inc. (Northbrook, IL), an interdisciplinary firm of architects, structural engineers, and materials scientists, has hired **Donald Goosman** as a senior associate in its Chicago office.

Goosman has more than 13 years of experience in fire protection engineering, project management, and technical leadership and has participated in several design and consulting projects. His expertise includes conducting building surveys, assessments, and due-diligence surveys; reviewing fire alarm, fire suppression, and clean-agent system drawings and calculations; performing building code compliance reviews; preparing performance-based code equivalency reports; and performing technical peer reviews.

WAGGONER ENGINEERING HIRES Waggoner Engineering (Jackson, MS), a full-service economic development, project management and engineering firm, has announced the addition of **Michael Slack** as a new project manager in the firm's Planning and Special Programs Division. He will focus on environmental engineering and resource management projects.

Slack most recently served as Environmental Engineer IV in the Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality's Office of Pollution Control, Groundwater Assessment and Remediation Division.

RELOCATION, from page 9

HR staff are also available to assist in areas such as medical provider information, schools, utilities, shopping, etc.

Crafton Tull will also help with flights, but that need occurs infrequently. If the employee wants assistance with housing or spouse job searches, they will help there, too.

"We have found that most people prefer us to recommend good realtors and then do their own search," Atchley says. "We have provided a realtor to assist in the effort in addition to pointing them in the direction of local job banks and employer information."

And, given their culture, while they have never been asked to assist with locating child care, it's likely something they would do.

NO SPECIFIC POLICY. Meghan O'Connell, HR area leader, **Olsson Associates** (Lincoln, NE), an 887-person engineering and design firm, and Polina Kouzmina, HR director, **COWI, NA** (Vancouver, BC), a 311-person bridge engineering design firm, both agree it all depends on the situation and circumstance. Neither company has a specific policy in place that addresses relocation assistance. It mostly depends on what each candidate needs.

"We really do as much or as little as the employee prefers," O'Connell says. "We've assisted with everything from finding housing, helping spouses with job searches and assisted with locating child care facilities."

Kouzmina says that COWI has relocation assistance available for certain senior and difficult-to-fill roles. They cover things like flights, temporary housing, moving costs and childcare. Again, it all depends on specific needs. ▀

PROFILE

Marc Fiore – It’s a balancing act

He provides direction, oversight and support for the accounting practices for engineering firm’s operations in the U.S. and abroad.

By LIISA ANDREASSEN
Correspondent



Marc Fiore,
CFO, Vertex
Companies.

TALK TO US

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

Whether he’s working to maintain balance, helping to adhere to the company’s strategic plan, or enjoying a little golf in Charleston, S.C., one thing rings true – Marc Fiore, CFO, **Vertex Companies** (Weymouth, MA), comes to work with a smile on his face and a spring in his step. Why? Because Vertex aspires to continually be a best place to work.

“Our business is predicated on responsiveness to clients, and I try to instill the same work ethic to the entire accounting team to be responsive to clients and to our fellow employees.”

This 300-person firm provides construction, environmental, energy, air quality and engineering solutions. It has offices (17 in the U.S., two in Mexico, and one in Canada), and Fiore works to ensure that they fulfill their mission of helping clients achieve vital engineering and project management goals and assisting with developing performance measures that support the company’s strategic direction.

He graduated from Bentley College (now University) with a B.S. in finance. Post-college, he worked in the accounting departments for a couple of engineering/environmental consulting firms in the late ’80s and early ’90s. He then went on to become the controller for a steel erector in the Boston area and shortly thereafter started his own firm, MRF Financial, Inc., which provided small companies with outsourced accounting and tax services.

In 2005, he started working with Vertex. Today, he provides direction, oversight and support for accounting practices both in the U.S. and internationally. He is also responsible for directing the company’s financial strategy, planning and forecasting, and assisting with support for tactical initiatives.

A CONVERSATION WITH MARC FIORE

THE ZWEIG LETTER: What are your key strengths? What do you feel the key strengths are for an effective CFO?

Marc Fiore: The ability to put the company’s needs first and foremost while also anticipating where the company will be in the future. At Vertex, we have developed the culture of a family company that encourages and rewards an entrepreneurial approach. As we continue to grow as a company, policies and procedures continue to evolve and the realities of a larger company and how it must operate sometimes conflict with our entrepreneurial attitude. I feel the need to continually evaluate this balance.

TZL: How would you describe your work style?

MF: Very straightforward. I try to lead by example and pride myself on working as hard as anyone else in the company. Our business is predicated on responsiveness to clients and I try to instill the same work ethic to the entire accounting team to be responsive to clients and to our fellow employees.

TZL: What are your top priorities for 2015?

MF: I have a few. First, I would like to grow strategic offices organically and position the company for M&As in the next couple of years. Second, I plan to continue to provide management with additional financial measurements to assist in evaluating areas for potential growth.

TZL: To date, what has been your greatest challenge on the job? How did you deal with it?

MF: Assisting Vertex through their conversion to an ESOP while also undergoing a consolidation of its many entities. This was a major shift in how the company operated and continues to provide challenges on a daily basis. Although this was a significant undertaking, the change has been very positive for the company and provides the company and its employees with a bright future.

TZL: What do you like most about your job?

MF: There are many things at Vertex that make my position an enjoyable one. For starters, the great team that Vertex has assembled – many of whom I interact with on a regular basis – tops the list. Over the years, it has been great to see individuals grow and prosper

See MARC FIORE, page 12



TRANSACTIONS

CTLGROUP BUYS CTLGroup (Skokie, IL), a 100-person professional consulting and testing firm, announced that the company has completed its acquisition of **Williams Building Diagnostics** (Bradenton, FL), an architectural consulting firm with more than 25 years of specialized expertise in building enclosure services. With operations in Bradenton and Philadelphia, WBD's capabilities include the evaluation of building performance issues and innovative moisture management solutions that enhance the durability of commercial, institutional, and residential buildings.

"We're excited to welcome Williams Building Diagnostics to the CTLGroup family," said Brent Nixon, president and CEO of CTLGroup. "Their extensive portfolio of building enclosure solutions combined with CTLGroup's 99-year legacy in engineering, architecture, and materials science will enhance the combined firms' ability to meet our clients' diverse needs."

FDH VELOCITEL BUYS FDH Velocitel (Northbrook, IL), a 750-person infrastructure engineering and construction services company, has acquired the assets of **Stainless, LLC** (Lansdale, PA), one of the nation's oldest and most respected broadcast tower structural engineering firms. The acquisition includes an engineering team, CAD craftsmen, broadcast tower construction crews, and a library of more than 7,500 structural drawings representing work that Stainless, LLC has constructed for the radio, television, microwave, and general communications industry since 1947. As many as half of the broadcast towers standing in the United States were fabricated by Stainless, LLC.

"The acquisition of Stainless is a critical part of our growth strategy. As demands increase on our wireless infrastructure we'll need to add capacity. This capacity can be found in communications and broadcast towers. Most owners of these towers will rely on the original manufacturer for modifications to existing structures, and now that is FDH Velocitel. It is a perfect complement to our existing suite of wireless infrastructure services," said Kevin Hostetler, CEO of FDH Velocitel.

In 2016, the FCC is expected to auction off additional broadcast spectrum for use by wireless companies. This requires the repacking of existing broadcast and communications towers and FDH Velocitel is uniquely positioned for this endeavor. FDH Velocitel will be able to work with the original tower drawings and (in some instances) with the original engineering, design and field crews.

"There are very few companies in the world with the breadth and scope of experience in the broadcast tower business as Stainless, LLC. We pioneered many techniques now in common practice and developed and erected some of the critical towers that provide the communications and broadcast backbone in the U.S. and over 100 countries abroad. We know the product and how to make it work for wireless. This is a win-win for all involved, especially the wireless industry as a whole," said former owner Don Doty.

Doty and his partner Pat Moore were the founders of **Doty Moore Tower Services**, which was previously acquired by FDH Velocitel in 2013. Doty and Moore are also founding members of the National Association of Tower Erectors (NATE). Doty Moore Tower Services and NATE together helped establish many of the safety protocols and standards in use today.

Send us your firm news, whether it is an M&A or a new office opening, and we'll include your announcement in this space. Email your press releases to editor Andrea Bennett at abennett@zweiggroup.com.

FIRMS ON THE MOVE

GGA EXPANDS SERVICES Calvin, Giordano & Associates, Inc. (Fort Lauderdale, FL), a 300-person multi-disciplinary consulting firm providing a comprehensive approach to engineering, land planning, government regulatory compliance, public sector contracts, data technologies and development services, has expanded its diverse portfolio of professional services to include "Facilities Management Services" and "Park & Athletic Fields Management Services," for both the public and private sectors.

"With the current budgetary demands facing cities and towns, we feel the time is right to deploy these services to the community," says Dennis Giordano, president of Calvin, Giordano & Associates. "We are confident that we can deliver significant results in the area of operational expenditures and reduced labor by an estimated 25- to 30 percent by employing strategies and best practices proven to increase efficiency and reduce costs."

HMM OPENS OFFICE Hatch Mott MacDonald (Iselin, NJ), and with other New Jersey-based offices in Cape May Court House and Freehold Township, will soon open a new office in Morris Township.

"On behalf of the Township Committee, I am delighted to welcome HMM," said Morris Township Mayor Dan Caffrey. "HMM has provided engineering services for the Morris County water supply system since 1957. They have been our Sanitary Sewer Consultant since 1966, and they've supported the Morris County Park Commission since 1968. We are pleased to have HMM join us right here."

HMM's new office suite is located at 412 Mt. Kemble Avenue, Suite G22, in the south building of Kemble Plaza II. HMM planned to begin working from its new offices as of March 2. The new office, which will be managed locally by Vice President John Ruschke, is part of the Municipal & County Services Division, which is managed by Vice President Eric Betz.

Nick DeNichilo, president and CEO of Hatch Mott MacDonald, said, "Our new offices in Morris Township will enhance our ability to serve clients across northern New Jersey."

MARC FIORE, from page 11

with the company and take on more of a team approach. Since I have been at Vertex, as a whole, the company has never stood still. We are constantly challenging ourselves, trying new things, and consistently trying to make Vertex the best place to work for all employees.

TZL: What do you enjoy doing in your spare time?

MF: I enjoy spending time with my family, in particular traveling to our house in Charleston, S.C., for some golf and great restaurants. My wife and I spend a good amount of our time supporting/following our son, who is 15 and pursuing a career as a singer and actor. I am also a big follower of the local sports teams, specifically the Bruins and Patriots.

"Since I have been at Vertex, as a whole, the company has never stood still. We are constantly challenging ourselves, trying new things, and consistently trying to make Vertex the best place to work for all employees."