

Critical People

Though most everyone on your team is important, there are 4 major positions that no successful firm can do without.

“One thing I’ve learned over the years is that if you want to win the battle of business, you need to have the right people around you.”



Mark Zweig

EDITORIAL

Managing your business effectively means the business grows, makes a profit, and has good employees at all levels. It really is as much an art as it is a science.

If you’re the leader of an enterprise, you have a responsibility to manage it. The buck stops with you: If the business isn’t successful it’s your fault, period.

One thing I’ve learned over the years is that, if you want to win the battle of business, you need to have the right people around you. Here are a few of the critical roles that have to be filled with strong people in order for you to succeed. Please don’t get hung up on the titles – each is followed by a description of what this person actually does:

■ **CFO/Business Manager.** This is one of the most critical people to your business. A strong CFO is much more than an accountant or controller – not just a historian – this person should positively impact all areas of the business. They’ll find ways for your business to make more from less. They’ll help keep you out of trouble by looking ahead. They’ll do all the things that no one else wants to do, has time to do, or is willing to do. They are a source of general business knowledge and can help tackle any problem the firm is facing. Finance, accounting, policy, board meetings, contract review, projections, ownership transition, and much more fall into this person’s domain. He or she should be one of your right-hand men – or women.

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TRENDLINES

Firms charging for project websites



According to responses to Zweig Group’s 2015 Information Technology Survey, most firms (39 percent) either **do not charge for managing project websites** or **include the cost in the overall project fee** (37 percent). Only 8 percent of firms **mark up a project website charge**, while 16 percent **create the site for cost**.

— Vivian Cummings, research analyst assistant.

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BUSINESS NEWS

AECOM AWARDED \$43 MILLION NAVY CONTRACT **AECOM** (Los Angeles, CA) – a fully integrated professional and technical services firm – announced that it has been awarded a task-order by the United States Navy to provide electromagnetic compatibility and engineering support services to Seaport-e, the Navy's electronic platform for acquiring support services across a variety of technical areas. The five-year, \$43-million task-order supports the Naval Surface Warfare Center, Dahlgren Division, and offers four one-year option periods. Under the new task-order, AECOM will continue to support the NSWCDD Electromagnetic Effects Division Electromagnetic Assurance Center by providing a full range of EMC and engineering services. Environments services provided by AECOM include spectrum supportability; electromagnetic pulse research, development, test and evaluation; pulsed current injection testing; dynamic cognitive networking; integrated topside design; platform EMC certification; fleet interoperability support; and E3 knowledge management systems.

"We look forward to strengthening our partnership with the Navy by continuing to provide expert EMC engineering support services under the Seaport-e contract vehicle," said Randy Wotring, president of AECOM's management services group. "We are proud of our established relationship with the Navy and are thrilled to have been selected as a prime contractor on this effort."

'BUILDING DESIGN + CONSTRUCTION' MAGAZINE RANKS BALFOUR BEATTY CONSTRUCTION U.S. NO. 6 IN 2015 GIANTS 300 REPORT *Building Design + Construction* magazine has ranked **Balfour Beatty Construction** (Dallas, TX) the No. 6 general contractor, based on 2014 U.S. revenue, in its annual Giants 300 Report, which ranks the leading firms in the AEC industry for building-type revenue, green building work, BIM revenue, and more. Based on a year in which the company completed 549 projects in North America, totaling more than 27 million square-feet, the report reinforces Balfour Beatty's commitment to client advocacy and continuous innovation that has resulted in an 82 percent repeat-customer rate over the past five years.

Building Design + Construction also ranked Balfour Beatty high in multiple market sectors, including top 10 rankings in eight sector-specific categories. Throughout 2014, the company continued building momentum with high-profile new project wins across multiple sectors, including \$1 billion in new healthcare projects.

MARK ZWEIG, from page 1

- **COO/Director of Operations.** I see this person as your successor in-waiting. They run the line organization. That's where all the money is made – it's what the firm does for a living. This is one of, if not the, most important people in the firm. They should serve as a role model for all the other "doers" and managers of doers. An effective COO makes sure the business is doing the right things for the right clients and is making a profit in the process. He or she is also a great developer of people and an outstanding communicator who can jump in and solve any project- or client-related problem. If the CFO is your right-hand person, your COO is your left hand.
- **CMO/Director of Marketing.** Yet another extremely critical individual to have on your top management team! Your CMO should be working to make your firm a top brand in whatever markets you serve. If they are doing their job, there should be more and better opportunities coming to the firm every single day. They set the stage, keep you in the limelight, and make every single thing you do look good to the clients you want to serve and the public at-large. Proposals, documents, brochures, direct mail, tradeshow, e-marketing campaigns, PR, original research, marketing database, photography, website, and much, much more are all managed and lead by your CMO/director of marketing. A really creative person here, who will also roll their sleeves up and do real work, is invaluable to you.
- **CIO/CTO.** This person is so important, but not every CEO realizes just how important. He or she will keep you technologically in tune with the times – critical for your marketing, attracting and retaining top talent, and ability to work efficiently. The truth is, a really good CIO/CTO will give you a real competitive advantage over your competitors. On top of that, IT spending is a significant chunk of your potential profits, and it has to be managed or can easily get out of control. Your systems allow your people to communicate, facilitate working across a multi-office company, help reduce lost work, and increase institutional knowledge. All critical for your success!

There are plenty of other people who are crucial to your success. But these four are among your most critical. Choose them wisely. Nurture them. Counsel them. Seek their counsel. Reward them. They will reward you with a successful company. ▀

MARK ZWEIG is founder and CEO Zweig Group. Contact him at mzweig@zweiggroup.com.

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THE ZWEIG LETTER

38 West Trenton Blvd., Suite 101
Fayetteville, AR 72701

Mark Zweig | Publisher
mzweig@zweiggroup.com

Andrea Bennett | Managing Editor
abennett@zweiggroup.com

Christina Zweig | Contributing Editor
christinaz@zweiggroup.com

Sara Parkman | Editor
sparkman@zweiggroup.com

Megan Halbert | Design Assistant
mhalbert@zweiggroup.com

Liisa Andreassen | Correspondent
lsullivan@zweiggroup.com

Richard Massey | Correspondent
rmassey@zweiggroup.com

Tel: 800-466-6275
Fax: 800-842-1560
E-mail: info@zweiggroup.com
Online: www.thezweigletter.com
Twitter: twitter.com/zweigletter
Blog: blog.zweiggroup.com

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It's time to start preparing for 2016

Take the last 4 months of 2015 to assess where your firm is, in terms of clients and marketing, and get things in place to build on projected trends in the new year.



Christina
Zweig

MARKETING MATTERS

Although 2015 won't be over until December, September always feels like the start of something new. With the temperatures starting to cool, kids going back to school, and the culmination of a year's hard work at the annual Hot Firm and A/E Industry Awards Conference, September is a great month for reflecting on the work of the previous year and planning for things to come.

Here are four points to ponder in order to revive your marketing in 2016:

- **Take a hard look at the work you are doing and who you are doing it for.** Is your revenue stream heavily dependent on a few big clients? Is your market or geographical area one that has shrinking possibilities or that won't be around forever? If so, now is the time to think about diversification or expansion. If you're already heavily diversified, now is the time to focus on your strongest capabilities and the things that are the most profitable.

"Marketing in 2016 will require you to touch prospective clients in multiple ways and at multiple times in order to win new work."

- **If you aren't on social media, there's no reason to wait any longer.** It's easy, it's free, and it works. No, you probably won't sell a job on Facebook, but marketing in 2016 will require you to touch prospective clients in multiple ways and at multiple times in order to win new work. You will need a strong online presence to attract the attention of the next generation of decision makers.
- **Marketing lists.** Your marketing is only as good as the people you reach. Are you reminding past clients of your existence and current capabilities? Have you

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added new capabilities that they might not know about? If you aren't carefully keeping track of this, now is the time to start. There are a variety of client relationship management programs on the market that can help with this. Getting new clients and new names to market to will be more important than ever in 2016 (see point No. 1). Events, trade shows, contests, social media, surveys, and even purchasing lists are all good ways to get new names.

- **Segment.** This goes along with having good marketing lists. A key feature of marketing in 2016 will be the ability to target your audience in a personal way. Not everything you do needs to reach everyone, and not everyone wants to be reached in the same way.

With the heat of the summer cooling down, now is the perfect time to take a few simple steps forward to revive your marketing. This next year will be filled with new possibilities! ▀

CHRISTINA ZWEIG is a management and marketing consultant at Zweig Group. Contact her at christinaz@zweiggroup.com.



RESOURCES

6 CONTENT MARKETING TRENDS TO HELP PLAN YOUR 2016 BUDGET

AMPLIFICATION

Content marketers have only just begun to understand distribution as an invaluable component of content strategy.

The biggest difference predicted for 2016 is that companies such as Google will become the middlemen and deliver sponsored content as a scaled channel for brands. This new network model will likely be the biggest innovation disruptor for content marketers to date, according to Chad Pollitt, vice president of audience at Relevance.com.

INTERACTIVE STORIES

In both media and brand marketing, visual and interactive stories that combine original photography, video, data visualizations, and editorial will play even bigger roles in how publishers engage and develop unique experiences for global audiences. Over the past few years there has been a siloed focus on the creation of video or the production of long-form editorial. In 2016 we will see the combination of many pieces and watch brand storytelling take on new shapes and sizes.

EPISODIC CONTENT

As brands begin to build a surplus of content and analyze the data coming in, clear patterns emerge and there are opportunities to expand upon ideas and themes. Sophisticated content marketers see these themes as trends to be explored in ongoing series, and in 2016 we'll see more businesses partnering with great storytellers to focus on episodic content. That is, content broken out into chapters that progress along a plotline with a beginning, middle, and end.

INCLUSIVE SOCIAL MEDIA

While many brands still lack the skills and tools to be successful, the more forward-thinking marketers are looking to fringe social hubs as the solution for reaching niche audiences.

It's actually unfair to call networks such as Instagram and Snapchat "fringe," as they're clear leaders in their respective camps and have dominated news circuits in 2015.

INFLUENCE

In a May 2015 study by Schlesinger Associates for Augure, 84 percent of marketing and communications professionals worldwide said they planned to launch at least one program involving influencers in the next 12 months.

Until now, marketers have looked outside the business walls to collaborate with industry influencers on campaigns or content programs. In 2016, influencer marketing will encompass external and internal influencers, putting greater focus on employee advocacy and how staff members use social media to build personal brands.

TECHNOLOGY

A recent report from Pan Communications found that 38 percent of marketers envision the convergence of marketing and technology as the biggest trend to watch this year.

In 2016, the trend will continue to make waves in digital marketing, as rounds of consolidation, growth, and innovation will disrupt an already dysfunctional industry.

Source: Skyword

MAKING DATA WORK



For every piece of data you cite in your story, ask yourself: "What purpose does this statistic serve?"

If you can't answer that question, it doesn't belong in your story – no matter how remarkable the figure. Your data should work hard for you.

To be able to put it to work most effectively, you need to understand why it's there.

Great data bolsters assumptions, encourages action, and creates dialogue

DATA USES ...

Begin your story with a revealing statistic • Include strong data in your meta description – the first thing people read about your blog post • If you have the resources, try creating infographics

30 MINUTES A DAY TO BETTER CONTENT MANAGEMENT



WRITE A BLOG POST

Ten minutes might not be enough time to finish an entire blog post, but dedicating small investments of time can yield consistent, powerful content-marketing results.

Pro tip!

Develop a process

Disconnect from social media and turn your phone to silent • Set a timer to help keep you focused
Create an outline with each section's heading and subtopics • Don't stop to edit; you can do that later.



UPDATE SOCIAL MEDIA

If you want to make an impact with content marketing, you must have a strong social media presence.

Ideas!

Respond to your followers
If people have commented or shared your posts, take a few moments to engage with them.

Write an engaging post
Experts suggest updating Facebook at least once and Twitter at least five times each day.



DIVE INTO RESEARCH

To write powerful content, you must have a deep knowledge of your subject and strong supporting research for your topics.

Pro tip!

Get organized

Build an RSS hub for content • Sign up for relevant newsletters • Use apps to save your research



CONDUCT OUTREACH

You must get the word out about your content. Part of this is accomplished through a strong social media presence, but you should also reach out to others to build one-on-one relationships.

Source: HubSpot Blogs

CRM adoption: Slow but sure

Though some leaders and business developers are still hesitant, many firms have seen results from incorporating customer relationship management systems.

By LIISA ANDREASSEN
Correspondent

Historically, the AEC industry has not been an ardent adopter of customer relationship management software, but more and more firms are thinking it's time for a change.

RELATIONSHIP AND COMMUNICATION BUILDING. Jessica Kacmar, marketing manager at **RTM Engineering Consultants LLC** (South Barrington, IL), a 100-person firm, says that the company uses SharpSpring as its CRM and marketing automation platform.

"As our company grows into a national full-service MEP and civil engineering firm, it's important to employ software that can create marketing and business-development efficiencies across all offices and job functions," she says.

SharpSpring allows RTM team members to easily document and organize client relationships by using custom fields that fit specifically to their needs. In addition, through its marketing automation function, the platform enables RTM to track visitors, analyze behavior, and nurture prospective and current clients.

"Since we deploy our marketing campaigns from the same platform as our CRM, we're able to capture, categorize, and store what is important to each contact and develop useful and interesting content to send to target segments," Kacmar says.

"This fusion of business-development and marketing creates better qualified leads and keeps us top-of-mind with current clients, ultimately generating increased revenue for the firm."

RTM also sets reminders, follow-up processes, and generates reports in SharpSpring to continue to cultivate relationships.

"This fusion of business-development and marketing creates better qualified leads and keeps us top-of-mind with current clients, ultimately generating increased revenue for the firm," she says.

Using a CRM and marketing automation platform also has its internal advantages. The increased organization and collaboration that stems from the proper use and upkeep of SharpSpring produces a more efficient and scalable model as RTM continues to grow and develop.

"We all know the old adage, 'time is money,' so saving time wherever we can in our internal processes is a major benefit," Kacmar says. "In the AEC world, with the focus on technology typically revolving around the cost- and time-saving benefits of Revit and

KEY BENEFITS OF CRM

Jim Steger, a partner at **Sonoma Partners**, which provides technology and business process consulting services to enterprise and mid-sized companies, says that, because firms have traditionally relied on separate databases to collect data on projects, manage financial information, and handle customer accounts, sharing information is a challenge. A well-implemented CRM system can organize and maintain information from multiple sources.

Here are a few ways that a CRM system can help grow your firm:

- **Proposal generation:** Proposals often take a long time to compile because information comes from many different sources. With a CRM system, the process becomes more simplified. All the information can be consolidated into one central database. Many CRM systems even allow you to create templates for proposals, streamlining the process even further.
- **Pipeline tracking:** Successful firms know that the key to success is focusing your limited resources on the projects that you have the highest chance of winning. A CRM system helps standardize the sales process and tracks key data on all opportunities in the sales pipeline.
- **Marketing campaign management:** A CRM system can help firms target their marketing efforts to the most promising opportunities. In particular, CRM makes it easy to segment your audience by profiling clients and key industry sectors and sending them timely emails that are tailored to their specific needs. Marketers can even measure the effectiveness of each campaign in the same place. CRM systems provide a way for you to more efficiently manage business development and track client relationships. The centralization of information provides firms with insight into all aspects of the sales process and can even help identify areas for improvement.

See CRM, page 8



SP@TLIGHT ON: Content



Content marketing 101

Though there is a learning curve for those used to the billable-hour business model, moving away from traditional marketing provides great opportunities for A/E/P firms.



Brian
Fraley

GUEST
SPEAKER

The pendulum is swinging from traditional interruption-based marketing toward content marketing, and many architectural and engineering firms are losing ground and business. The good news is content marketing offers incredible opportunities for A/E firms; the challenge is that it presents a learning curve in the billable-hour business model.

WHAT IS CONTENT MARKETING? Trying to explain marketing concepts to A/E professionals is like trying to talk macroeconomics with your uncle after Thanksgiving dinner. I often try to explain concepts like content marketing to design and construction clients in general terms to curtail the tryptophan rush.

The Content Marketing Institute – arguably the authority on the subject – offers this definition: “Content marketing is a strategic marketing approach focused on creating and distributing valuable, relevant, and consistent content to attract and retain a clearly defined audience and, ultimately, to drive profitable customer action.”

Though not included in this definition, *usefulness* is the mortar holding the content marketing structure together. Good A/E firms have always strived to be useful, but now the option is a requirement.

FREE INFORMATION VERSUS BILLABLE HOURS. When I discuss the importance of creating and sharing useful content, the knee-jerk reaction is: “Why would we give away free information?” It’s a fair question that results from decades of working in a billable-hours environment, where marketing is a necessary evil.

There was a time when internalizing useful information was standard at A/E firms. Sharing your expertise was justification for sending out an invoice or billing to a project. Your clients paid willingly, because they had no other choice.

Then the Internet came along. Clients had access within seconds to volumes of information, even on complex fields such as architecture and engineering.

Your clients are not quite as dependent as they once were. Those that have the time and inclination can now answer some of their questions without



Content

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contacting you. The search engine has begun to trump the phone call. Obviously, your client will not be serving as an expert witness or signing off on plans any time soon, but a quick Google search can uncover answers to some of the more trivial issues that once plagued them.

“Good A/E firms have always strived to be useful, but now the option has become a requirement.”

OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES. There is an elephant in the room that must be addressed: Architecture and engineering are technical professions, and their content can be a bit dry for outsiders. This presents both an opportunity and a challenge.

The *opportunity* is that much of your audience does not understand your profession, so their minds are open to being educated. An uninformed audience is ideal, because it gives you a lot of flexibility when creating relevant content and endless possibilities for topics.

The *challenge*, as we have already established, is that the content can be dry. This forces A/E firms to bring life to their content and make it enticing to their audience. This is not a new challenge. A/E firms get practice in this area when creating proposals and statements of qualifications for selection committees largely comprised of laypeople.

“The avenues for your content marketing efforts must be based on where your audience’s eyeballs are gazing and how they consume information.”

START WITH STRATEGY, FINISH WITH TACTICS. Like traditional marketing, you must start with a strategy: What do you hope to accomplish by sharing content with your audience? You might specify dates, revenue, or leads, for example. Otherwise, you will be shooting clay pigeons while blindfolded. It is also wise to go in with a content strategy designed to achieve your objectives. Your content strategy will determine what types of information you will share and when.

For example, a firm that offers aerial survey can share related content in the spring before trees leaf out. Engaging your audience with the right content at the right time allows you to hit the sweet spot when demand is peaking.

The avenues for your content marketing efforts must

See BRIAN FRALEY, page 8

ENHANCE YOUR ONLINE PRESENCE

Joe Palko, an e-commerce marketing expert, says that online marketing opens up businesses’ doors to customers they wouldn’t otherwise be able to reach.

“Implementing a strong, multifaceted online marketing plan can help your business stand out,” he says.

He offers the following tips:

- **Become a blogger.** Having a blog on your website is a great way to generate more traffic. Make sure you post often on relevant topics to show that you’re an expert in your field.
- **Get keyword savvy.** Research top keywords and phrases that people are using in your market to search for services. Websites such as Wordtracker.com allow you to see the amount of times a keyword has been searched in the past 24 hours. Incorporate the most searched words into your posts.
- **Mix it up.** Your blogs and contributions to social media don’t always have to be project-oriented. Post photos from a recent social or volunteer event. Include multimedia such as videos or podcast interviews of attendees sharing their top takeaways from the event. Multimedia ranks higher in search, giving your content a better chance to be seen. Make sure you let your subjects and sources know that you’ve mentioned them in a multimedia post on your blog or website — then they can share the post with their networks and expand your audience.
- **Spread the word.** Use social media platforms to share the content you’ve written. All you have to do is write a brief description about the post and include a link to it.
- **Play on pop culture.** Look at popular cultural topics and see whether you can weigh in on them or at least draw on them in a relevant way. Is there a new movie that highlights beautiful architecture? Is there a bestseller that boasts an engineer as the main character? Also, look at data and figure out what is relevant to you. Choose topics wisely and try not to tread on controversy, but have fun publishing varied content that will entertain, enlighten, and grow your audience.

A few more ideas to consider:

- **Post podcasts.** Smartphones mean that anyone can host or download a podcast. In 2014, Apple reported that podcast subscriptions through iTunes reached 1 billion, and hosting a podcast means you have a reason to call or email interesting people and ask for their time.
- **Make it mobile friendly.** This is a must. With the widespread (and quickly growing) use of smartphones and tablets, it’s necessary for companies to create content that’s accessible to mobile users. According to *Forbes*, “87 percent of connected device sales by 2017 will be tablets and smartphones.” So, whether it’s creating an alternate mobile version of a website or using responsive web design, it’s important to provide a positive experience to users that are browsing via a mobile device.
- **Timelapse trends.** Have you thought about creating time-lapse videos for your website? For example, Ripple Vision, a web and Internet company in Perth, Australia, has created a time-lapse system designed for construction projects, science, research, and marketing promotions. Some of their current work involves documenting multi-year construction projects in Perth, assisting their clients from start to finish in project management and marketing. Through this technology a month’s activities can be condensed down to minutes.
- **Remember that people are deluged with information on a daily basis.** Keep your message short and sweet.

— Liisa Andreassen, correspondent

CRM, from page 5

BIM software, it is essential to not lose focus on software that can help drive sales and new business to the firm, while also streamlining communications among internal teams.”

Mike Wiercinski, president of **A. Morton Thomas & Associates Inc.** (Rockville, MD) – a 500-person civil engineering, landscape architecture, surveying, planning, construction inspection, and subsurface utility engineering firm – says that the firm uses Deltek Vision for its CRM.

“We use it to maintain our clients and contacts for our principals and associates, but also to manage opportunities and campaigns,” he says. “When we have meetings with colleagues, the software allows us to save notes about each meeting for future use. This is important, as it makes it easy to touch base with decision makers in our industry and with potential teaming partners and to track and manage those conversations.”

Wiercinski adds that the AEC industry is built around relationships, and companies often work together to provide clients the largest breadth of services to cover their project needs.

“Having a system to help keep those relationships fresh is invaluable,” he says.

Tracy Mumford, principal and director of marketing and business development at **Schemmer Associates Inc.** (Omaha, NE), a 100-person architecture and engineering firm, says his firm also uses Deltek Vision.

In addition to using it as a business development activities log, the business also uses it for accounting functions, time and expense reporting, opportunity management, project historical data, and as an employee resume database.

BRIAN FRALEY, from page 7

be based on where your audience’s eyeballs are gazing and how they consume information. Some possibilities include blogging, social media, email marketing, digital or print newsletters, public speaking, and contributing to industry publications. Make sure to address this part of your strategy before investing time in content creation.

WHO CARES ABOUT STORMWATER BASINS? Identifying relevant content is a stumbling block for A/E firms considering content marketing. Who cares about how a stormwater basin is designed, right? The possibilities, in reality, are endless.

Start by defining your audience. Though it is true that there are people serving on selection committees that have never heard of a bridge parapet, much of your audience has a general understanding of your profession. Most A/E firms work for facility managers, contractors, and various government agencies.

Content marketing is often rightfully compared to traditional journalism. Proponents of content marketing, in fact, advocate for hiring editors and writers. While your firm doesn’t necessarily need to hire an editor, you should have a good writer producing content and even leading your content marketing efforts.

“It’s important for us to have a CRM database, so we have one central location where all accounting and marketing information is stored and shared across multiple A/E disciplines, markets, and geographic offices,” he says.

IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES. Stephen Moore, a senior partner at **BSB Design** (West Des Moines, IA), an architectural and planning firm, says that the organization is a bit late to the game in using a CRM system.

“We’re having a difficult time getting our business developers to invest their time to learn the system,” he says.

Currently, BSB also uses Deltek Vision for its accounting and job tracking, but leadership has found the system too cumbersome for their CRM needs. They shopped around for a new one that they thought would be more user-friendly and selected Prophet.

“We were hoping that since Prophet functions through Outlook, we will have more luck getting buy-in,” Moore says. “We ordered 10 seats to start, and everyone went through the initial rounds of training. Everyone was impressed with the program’s capabilities, but, unfortunately, their initial enthusiasm faded and they kept using Outlook without going through the Prophet portal.”

He says that they still have 10 seats, but only three people are actively using the CRM system.

“I think the greatest hurdle for us is taking the time to learn the software and continually train for maximum performance and benefit,” he says. “And, honestly, we just don’t see it as being that important right now. There are times I wonder how much better we would be, or at least how much more efficient our business developer leaders could be, if they adopted a CRM system, but we have had trouble pushing the concept from the bottom up.” ▀

KNOW THY AUDIENCE. Knowing your audience is critical. This is one of the reasons editors and writers are so coveted. The content you crank out will never get traction if you don’t understand and properly address the audience’s needs. Start developing your plan by answering these questions:

- What are the most common questions our clients ask?
- What issues continue to surface on our projects?
- What are the most important factors our clients should consider before hiring a firm like ours?
- Where are our customers’ knowledge gaps before, during, and after the project?
- What type of support do our customers request once the project is completed?

A/E firms must adopt content marketing to stay relevant. Carve out your niche, build a following, share your expertise, and become the trusted source for your audience, and you will remain not only relevant, but indispensable. Do this, and the free information you provide now will produce countless billable hours later. ▀

BRIAN FRALEY is the founder, manager, and chief strategist for Fraley AEC Solutions LLC and the author of the e-book *Designing an A/E Brand that Drives Selections*. Contact him at bmfraley@fraleysolutions.com.

What's in your marketing toolbox?

Advertising, research, public relations, and branding are all items in your marketing Leatherman, and each has a specific purpose that professionals should know about.



Kelly
Thompson

GUEST SPEAKER

As a mom of three boys who have more battery-operated remote-controlled cars than our neighborhood toy store and who recently built a raft to test the rapids of a nearby creek, I've become overly fond of multi-tool devices. Instead of a mad hunt to locate a screwdriver, wire cutters, saw, or pliers, it's much more convenient to reach for one handy tool (think Leatherman) with a multitude of hidden contraptions that almost magically appear whether I'm changing batteries for a remote control or cutting rope for a raft. What's important to remember, however, is that collectively this makes a great set of tools but each individual contraption has a specific purpose.

Much like that of a Leatherman device, marketing has a number of tools that extend from its core. Tools such as advertising, public relations, branding, and research are all unique and produce different results. But, because they are nicely bundled within the marketing Leatherman, the meaning of each often times get muddled in the minds of design professionals.

“Marketing has a number of tools that extend from its core.”

Recently, a partner confidently said to me: “I want to reallocate some of my budget so that I can put some money toward PR.” I politely responded, “Great news ... with our internal team, PR doesn't have to cost you dime.”

Turns out the partner was really referring to advertising, not public relations. While different people have varying views on what the true definition is of each tool within the marketing mix (thus, the reason there's so much confusion), there are some general things we should remember about each:

“If you happen to find yourself with an advertising budget, use it with purpose and rigor.”

- **Advertising.** Advertising pervades every part of our lives – from radio, Internet, and television to print media, city buses, and billboards. It's also like the tool at a local hardware store behind the glass case - it is by far the most expensive and often times out of reach for many firms. If you happen to find yourself with an advertising budget, use it with purpose and rigor. Your message should be well-crafted and your creativity memorable. Advertising is not worth

“Knowing your market ... keeps you focused on understanding your clients while allowing you to test messaging and assess your competition.”

the cost if you can only do it a few times a year in a handful of publications. I'm a believer that consistent, ongoing placement is how you'll get the most bang for your buck.

- **Research.** Simply knowing your market is sometimes the best marketing strategy. It keeps you focused on understanding your clients while allowing you to test messaging and assess your competition. Much like the dreaded, 10-page users' booklet of a newly released tool, research can seem daunting and, therefore, gets overlooked. Instead of ignoring it altogether, determine what form of marketing research works best for your firm. Is it primary research that your firm needs to conduct (i.e., client surveys, post-occupancy measurement evaluations)? Or is it secondary research that is already published/acquired by trade or industry journals that just needs to be gathered and put to good use? Regardless, make your decision based on the value you will receive in return.

“Public relations builds third-party credibility and shapes perceptions.”

- **Public Relations.** In my opinion, public relations is your power tool. Not only does it promote your brand, your work, your people, and your thought leadership, it does it all without the need for a large budget (assuming you have an in-house PR professional on your marketing team). Public relations builds third-party credibility and shapes perceptions

See KELLY THOMPSON, page 10



ON THE MOVE

RETTEW ANNOUNCES 8 NEW SHAREHOLDERS RETTEW (Lancaster, PA) has announced the addition of eight new shareholders to its ownership ranks.

“As our business continues to grow, we need the right people to help us make decisions for the future,” said Mark Lauriello, RETTEW’s president. “Each of these individuals exemplifies the strong work ethic, leadership qualities and team building attitude to help bring our firm to the next level.”

RETTEW selects shareholders on the basis of contributions to the firm’s growth and profitability, embracing entrepreneurialism and living out the firm’s brand and core values. Many of these shareholders were mentored through RETTEW’s associate’s program.

- **Jeffrey Case:** RETTEW’s director of transportation engineering working mainly from the firm’s Lancaster, Pennsylvania, office. Case has nearly 30 years of engineering and project management experience and is a licensed professional engineer as well as a member of the American Society of Highway Engineers and the American Society of Civil Engineers.
- **John Doughty:** Director of RETTEW’s survey group, Doughty has more than 35 years of experience in the surveying field. He is a licensed land surveyor in five states and has been regularly involved in professional surveying associations.
- **Matthew King:** King’s responsibilities as a client account manager at RETTEW follow his more than 20 years of experience in environmental investigations and commercial drilling.

- **Luke Lazar:** Lazar leads RETTEW’s safety consulting group in a director role, with more than 20 years of experience in providing safety education and consulting, in addition to industrial hygiene services. He holds numerous safety certifications, including designation as a board certified safety professional and as an authorized construction industry outreach trainer.
- **Scott MacNair:** MacNair is RETTEW’s chief financial officer. He brings 20 years of experience leading accounting operations to the role, which he filled beginning in 2013.
- **Anthony Mazzatesta:** A senior program manager on RETTEW’s client account management team, Mazzatesta began his career at RETTEW in 2010 with 12 years of prior experience in engineering and management.
- **Jason Wert:** Wert joined the firm in 2012 as a senior technical engineer in RETTEW’s Energy and Environmental Engineering.
- **Craig West:** West began his career at RETTEW in 2003. He is a group manager in RETTEW’s survey division, and has more than 20 years of experience in the field.

These eight new shareholders join RETTEW’s current 18 shareholders. RETTEW is led by a board of directors, and ownership is divided between shareholders and employees as part of an employee stock ownership plan.

RETTEW, ranked on *Engineering News-Record*’s 2015 list of top design firms, began providing civil engineering and surveying services in 1969. RETTEW has more than 350 employees and 10 offices.

KELLY THOMPSON, from page 9

through outlets such as traditional media relations, community organization involvement, and social media engagement. With persistence, strong relationship building and dedicated attention, it will build your brand in a way that no other marketing tool can.

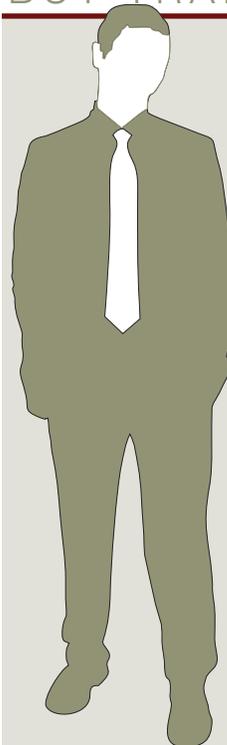
“While a strong public relations and advertising campaign can spread your message, your brand emerges from everything your firm does.”

- **Branding.** Your brand is who you are. Brand is the reason why Leatherman is top-of-mind when you think of a multi-tool. While a strong public relations and advertising campaign can spread your message, your brand emerges from everything your firm does. And, while many firms think they own their brand, it’s in fact owned by [potential] clients. Sure, you can influence your brand. That’s where your advertising, research and public relations research can help. The strongest of brands use research to determine their clients’ needs and let their values, mission and vision define the brand’s position.

As part of your marketing strategy, you will no doubt benefit from using all of these tools. But if/when it comes time to prioritize, make sure you know which tool is best suited for what you are trying to accomplish. You wouldn’t whip out a screwdriver when you need a saw, and you surely wouldn’t spend money on advertising when PR will do just fine. ▀

KELLY THOMPSON is marketing communications manager at Little (Charlotte, NC). Contact her at kthompson@littleonline.com.

PUBLIC RELATIONS MEANS BUSINESS BUT TRAINING IS LACKING



93 PERCENT

of business leaders indicate that PR is just as important to their firms as other forms of communication.

59 PERCENT

of business leaders say that their companies have hired recent MBA graduates. Only **four in 10** find these graduates to be extremely strong in building and protecting the company’s reputation and credibility.

98 PERCENT

of business leaders agree that existing MBA programs lack necessary instruction on corporate communication and reputation management strategy.

Source: PRSA.org

Lessons learned

Marketing leaders offer advice for handling various faux pas; say that professionals should be open with their peers so that everyone doesn't have to learn the hard way.

By LIISA ANDREASSEN
Correspondent

Everyone makes mistakes, even marketers. It's important to learn from them and move on. Here, two firms share some of their marketing faux pas and explain how they managed to recover with aplomb.

SILENCE PLEASE. Having been around for 68 years, **HuntonBrady Architects** (Orlando, FL), an 86-person design-oriented architecture firm, has the benefit of drawing from past experience to avoid marketing blunders. But, there is always room for some level of error.

Karen Moorefield, an associate and director of corporate development, says that, though the firm has had its share of "how did that happen" or "I can't believe they said that!" moments, one of her favorites is when a former president was in a presentation, and his wife called him on his cell phone, which was in his pocket.

"Unfortunately, he didn't turn it off – then he answered the call to tell her he was in a meeting and couldn't talk! Fortunately, he turned it into a light-hearted moment that the client sympathized with him about," she says. "Of course, we now have a silence your phone rule that is part of our presentation checklist!"

"I've witnessed some embarrassing moments by others. Don't let it happen to you."

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, email landreassen@zweiggroup.com.



CAT-LIKE REFLEXES HELP. Interviews and presentations are often places for occurrences that make you wish you had a mulligan to use. Being quick on your feet and not losing your cool or concentration is critical.

"I was present at a shortlisted interview, and one of the team members kept referring to the name of another organization that this client was not affiliated with on this pursuit," Moorefield says. "A selection committee member stopped the presenter to correct them rather sternly. The team member thanked them for the clarification and smoothly moved on with the presentation. Not everyone could've recovered that easy, especially with a timed presentation."

"Pass on the lessons learned to others in marketing and your firm staff as needed. Some more important advice: Have a sense of humor ... we need it in this business."

MAINTAIN CONTROL. Moorefield says that, as much as the marketing team proofreads outgoing materials, including proposal responses, there may be a few slip-ups, especially when relying on outside consultant teams to provide information. Always check for typos.

"We can't always rely on spell check; it will even accept words in the wrong tense," she says. "In one case, we had the reverse happen to us, in which our provided information for a joint pursuit was totally revised to put the entire team in the best light. We were so taken aback by the other team's creative writing, we almost didn't recognize our firm except for the logo! Losing creative control or ownership of outgoing materials can be challenging."

BE READY FOR RISK. HuntonBrady's marketing group is a creative bunch, and they realize that often there are risks that accompany creative ideas, even with well-known clients.

"For example, we customized T-shirts with our client's logo, which happens to start with an S and resembles the Superman emblem," Moorefield says. "Each presenter wore the shirt underneath their white dress shirts (even the women) and in closing remarks the team stated, 'this project will be close to our hearts,' and proceeded to whip their shirts open. Fortunately, there were no wardrobe malfunctions. But, there was a very long, pregnant pause from the selection committee which was followed by roar of laughter. And we won the job. Whew!"

KEEP TECH IN CHECK. Technology is everywhere, but Moorefield cautions that there is some technological etiquette to consider.

For example, when using a laptop or iPad in front of a client, consider removing the family or

See LESSONS, page 12

BUSINESS NEWS

ARCHITECT APPLICATIONS FOR OBAMA PRESIDENTIAL CENTER DUE WEDNESDAY The international competition for an architect to design the Obama Presidential Center kicked off last month when the Barack Obama Foundation issued a request for qualifications to a select group of architects, though others may also apply. The foundation requested that the architects submit credentials, references, a portfolio, and examples of diversity efforts by September 16. Submissions that include design concepts or sketches of the library will be disqualified.

According to the *Chicago Tribune*, foundation chairman Martin Nesbitt would not reveal the names or even the number of selected firms. But officials confirmed that 90 percent of the invited firms are American, and Chicago architects are well-represented in that group.

A foreign architect winning the competition would mark the first time a non-American has designed an American presidential library. And that wouldn't be the only "first" for this project: The OPC will be the first presidential library located in the heart of a low-income, predominantly African-American community. Though the specific site has not yet been selected, the center will be located in Chicago's South Side, in either Jackson or Washington Park.

The center will consist of a library to hold presidential archives, an interactive museum focusing on Obama's time in office, expansive green space with community gardens, indoor and outdoor performance spaces, offices for the foundation, and innovation labs.

President Barack Obama and First Lady Michelle Obama are expected to select the finalists and issue a request for proposals later this year, with a winner and a Chicago site to be announced early next year. Construction, expected to cost at least \$500 million, is not scheduled to begin until after Obama leaves office in Jan. 2017 and will be completed in 2020 or 2021.

NEW EDITION OF AWS D1.1 STRUCTURAL WELDING CODE – STEEL NOW AVAILABLE A revised edition of the American Welding Society's Structural Welding Code – Steel, AWS D1.1/D1.1M:2015 has been published and supersedes the 2010 edition. The new edition spells out the requirements for design, procedure and performance qualification, fabrication, inspection and repair of steel structures made of tubes, plate and structural shapes that are subject to either static or cyclic loading. In addition to editorial changes in the text and commentary, this edition includes the reorganization of tubular clauses, tables, and figures previously located throughout the code into a new "Tubular Structures" clause. A corresponding new section of commentary is included in the revised edition.

The 646-page publication is the joint effort of the D1 Committee on Structural Welding and its D1Q Subcommittee on Steel. AWS D1.1/D1.1M:2015, Structural Welding Code – Steel, is available at go.aws.org/2015D1 for \$548 for non AWS members and \$411 for members.

ON THE MOVE

JAN TUCHMAN BECOMES FIRST SMPS HONORARY FELLOW The **Society for Marketing Professional Services** (Alexandria, VA), an A/E/C marketing and business development association, has announced that Jan Tuchman, editor in chief of *Engineering News-Record*, has been bestowed the first SMPS Honorary Fellows award. She was honored at SMPS's annual conference, Build Business, during the gala on Thursday August 20.

The Honorary Fellows program is a designation for extraordinary service. It is bestowed to an individual of esteemed character and achievements who supports the practice of marketing and business development within the A/E/C community. An SMPS Fellow may nominate a qualified individual for Honorary Fellowship. Nominations may also be accepted by a member of the SMPS Board of Directors or the CEO. An Honorary Fellow is not a current SMPS member or has not been a member of SMPS within the past 10 years.

Tuchman began her career at *Engineering News-Record* as assistant editor, later becoming the managing editor, and taking the helm as editor-in-chief in 2001. Tuchman has led many landmark projects at *ENR*: She helped manage its conversion to desktop publishing, guided the launch of its website, led its two redesigns, and launched 10 regional editions.

Tuchman has also contributed to the Society. She served on the SMPS Foundation's Board of Trustees and in 2012 participated in the Foundation's Think Tank. In the same year, she dedicated her time and experience on the Society's conference committee.

With a career spanning close to 40 years, Tuchman has helped raise the credibility of the profession, the SMPS Foundation, and the Society.

LESSONS, from page 11

favorite pet screen saver. Also, don't receive emails while making a presentation.

"I've witnessed some embarrassing moments by others," Moorefield says. "Don't let it happen to you."

TAKE A WALK ON THE WILD SIDE? MAYBE NOT. Mark Forster, marketing director at **DUDEK** (Encinitas, CA), a 300-person environmental consulting firm, says that he joined the organization after 15 years in the high-technology and Internet industry.

"I knew marketing, but I was a greenhorn to the environmental consulting industry," he says. "In my first year, I decided to step up the design and content of the firm's calendar to make it more interesting, with the hope that more people would hang it to keep our name in front of clients and prospects."

Though **DUDEK** has multiple environmental disciplines, its biology practice had perfect content.

"We published a calendar that featured a beautiful image of an endangered species each month. These were images

photographed from field biologists," he says.

Shortly after the calendar mailed, one of their managers called and asked: "What's up with this calendar?" He had gotten a call from one of the firm's better clients, a developer with projects throughout California. The client asked the manager why they had sent him a calendar that reminded him each month of the endangered species that presented permitting challenges to his projects. Fortunately, the client was only half-serious.

"It was a 'no harm, no foul' wake-up call to better understand the firm's diverse client base," Forster says. "Since then, we've evolved the popular calendar into a fun and informative publication about multiple aspects of California life – from staff-selected 12 best spots for a California road trip to an infographic-based calendar about the most populous state in the nation."

Moorefield says that people can learn from these mistakes and that professionals should share their gaffes with peers.

"Pass on the lessons learned to others in marketing and your firm staff as needed. Some more important advice: Have a sense of humor ... we need it in this business," she says. ▀