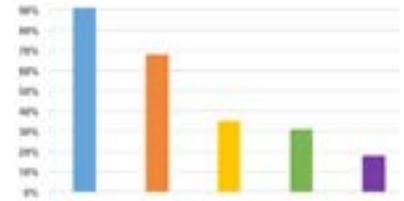


TRENDLINES

Firms' remote network access



Of respondents to Zweig Group's 2015 Information Technology Survey of A/E/P & Environmental Firms whose firms offered remote network access to employees, 91 percent said their access was through a **virtual private network (VPN)**, followed by **Microsoft Exchange Webmail** at 68 percent. Only 35 percent said they used **Microsoft Exchange RPC over HTTP**, followed by **Citrix or Windows terminal server** at 31 percent, and **direct access** at 18 percent. Percentages total more than 100 because respondents were asked to choose all that applied. — *Vivian Cummings, research analyst assistant.*

Hot Firm or Best Firm to Work For?

Conference confirms that when people like their jobs, the firm is usually more profitable; here are some things to consider.

“The linkage between a company’s ability to grow and make a profit and having good people who like working there has never been more clear.”



Mark Zweig

EDITORIAL

On September 3 and 4, I had the pleasure of being at our annual Hot Firm and A/E Industry Awards Conference in Boston. What a great event! I was really proud of our people and how smoothly the whole thing went. Two days of presentations, parties, and ceremonies came together without a glitch.

Combining the Hot Firm Conference with our Best Firms to Work For Conference proved to be a good decision. The linkage between a company’s ability to grow and make a profit and having good people who like working there has never been more clear. Many firms at our conference were both Hot Firms AND Best Firms to Work For – double winners.

It’s absolutely critical to have the right workforce, and it’s getting harder than ever to hire and maintain them. Here are some things I would urge you to consider, if you are serious about competing for talent in this red-hot employment market:

- 1) Have humble leaders who don’t have crazy perks.** You all know what I’m talking about. One firm owner I met at our conference told me about how she came into a small company with about nine employees years ago that was really suffering. Meanwhile, the firm owner had a special garage at their office where he kept his company Bentley. This kind of stuff demotivates and demoralizes everyone. Humble leaders are tuned-in to these situations and work hard to not demoralize anyone.

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Big River Steel builds super mill

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Miyamoto helps Nepal to rebuild

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BUSINESS NEWS

H2M ANNOUNCES ADDITION OF INTERIOR DESIGN AND SPACE PLANNING H2M architects + engineers (Melville, NY), a full-service consulting and design firm with more than 290 architects, engineers, planners, designers, inspectors, surveyors, and scientists, has announced the addition of interior design and space planning to its roster of architectural services.

Interior design is a multifaceted profession that includes conceptual development, communication, management, and execution of the design. Space planning is a critical part of the interior design process, during which the design professional hones the program requirements to lay out interior spaces based on function for people and process and then later adds the equipment and furniture.

"As the firm and our client-base grew, we started receiving more requests for interior design and space planning services," said Joe Mottola, H2M's

director of architecture. "We always want to provide a complete range of services for our clients, so we saw tremendous value in making this investment."

With the addition of the service, H2M has brought in Allison Linsky as the firm's senior interior designer and space planner. She joins H2M with more than 30 years' experience as an interior designer and an established record of accomplishments in corporate and commercial space planning, interior design, and construction. She was most recently principal of Woodbury-based William Allison Design Associates Ltd.

"I am excited for the opportunity to help develop H2M's interior design and space planning department," Linsky said. "When you are able to build something from the ground up, with a company of this size, you have unlimited potential."

MARK ZWEIG, from page 1

2) Get everyone involved in the business-planning process. Asking everyone for their opinions and input – and really trying to incorporate their thinking into the business plan – is certainly one of the cornerstones of effective management and leadership. People want to be involved and feel like they have some influence over their work environment and their futures.

3) Institute some form of open-book management. It's so critical to share your numbers with your employees – I cannot overemphasize it. Do it quickly, succinctly, and clearly. Give the numbers to everyone. Don't share salary info – that is harmful. Do share info on revenues, profits, cash position, marketing stats, and more. This helps build trust between you and your people.

4) Make your office cool. Most offices I see are not creative spaces. In fact, they might be the opposite! They are dark, dirty, messy, cramped, and filled with tiny cubicles. Collaboration is just a word or something you do electronically. That's really crazy, especially when you consider what many firms in this business actually do for a living – in many cases, they design workspaces! Consider your office a tool – a place to help you **SELL** good employees (who always have other opportunities) on coming to work for your company.

5) Have some fun. Everyone is too serious. If you do some fun stuff at the office – having something fun or funny happening – you **WILL** have happier people. Happier people will be positive. And positive people make good things happen. Most people in this business are just too serious. Best places to work are **FUN** places to be.

6) Share the rewards. Spread the money around. Don't be greedy. Firm owners, you know the difference in being greedy

or not. Years ago, we worked with a small firm owner – he had about 28 employees. He paid himself \$380,000 a year. His next highest paid employee made \$75,000. They weren't doing very well, and morale stunk. People sense huge gaps and disparity. And they really appreciate it if you share some of the spoils around the table.

7) Get the right people in. The "right" people are those with the right attitude. They want to succeed, they're nice, they don't just move from one complaint or gripe to the next. They also want to learn and help out their fellow employees. Clients like them, other people in the firm like them, and you like them. They are good to work with. Competent, smart, and can-do in spirit. Good people want to work with other good people and bring them in.

8) Move the bad apples out. The bad apples are the opposite of the right people described above. They're negative or chronically unhappy, hard to work with, incompetent, angry, hostile, and more. Lazy, with bad attitudes, bad communicators, dishonest ... what else can I say? They need to go. If bad people are allowed to stay, good people will leave.

I could go on and on: Your success is so tied to your people and leadership and management practices. It is really clear when you meet the leaders of our Hot Firms and Best Firms to Work For at our conference. The best aspect of this event is the people who come. Always an entrepreneurial, optimistic group, so many of them my personal friends – of 20 or 30 years in some cases. It is great to see these successful people in action. They're smiling, they're upbeat, they're winners! And they make good things happen in their companies! ▀

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Are you prepared to turn over the reins?

Small to midsize firms should consider some key areas when thinking about the next generation of company leaders.



STEPHEN
LUCY

BEST PRACTICES

We all regularly read the industry news regarding the purchase or merger of other firms. For mega-firms, these might be driven by stockholder demands for increased revenue and growth. For others, it might be an avenue to cash out and begin to enjoy that elusive retirement. But, what about those small to midsize firms that want to maintain independence and perpetuate the firm into the next generation of leaders?

As a small to midsize firm, competing against global giants may seem like a David vs. Goliath scenario, but there can be benefits that come from being smaller, provided you have a strong game plan to guide your firm's future. *Engineering News-Record's* performance metrics point to revenue increases linked with list-rank gains, in which 10 of 17 firms in the study's "leadership quadrant" are midsize, with only one very large firm as among the "best of the best." So, success without consolidation is entirely possible.

However, while flying by the seat of your pants might have worked when your firm was smaller, growing and perpetuating a firm requires organizational planning and division of duties that tap the business skills of your existing team or those skills that you have identified as essential to your firm's success. If you truly seek to remain independent and successful, then consider these steps for effective leadership transitions:

- 1) **Create the plan and work the plan.** Involve your team in the process of laying the path for leadership and management transitions. Don't wait until the day before your founder, partner, or firm leader departs. Planning is an intensive, collaborative process, and a good transition plan requires time and participation to prepare. Time spent up front in planning will pay multiple dividends during implementation.
- 2) **The plan must include contingencies.** Murphy's Law is everywhere, so you need to consider reasonable alternate scenarios which could occur and incorporate those possibilities into your plan. "Reasonable" is key, as you also do not want to get bogged down in an infinity of what-ifs. Alternate plans, or even exit strategies, from your plan should be discussed and understood by the transition team.
- 3) **Identify future leaders.** Successful leaders should know their possible replacement from the moment they move into a leadership position. If they do not, they should actively identify, cultivate, and educate their successors. Just like the saying "there is safety in numbers," there is safety in having redundancy in your leadership ranks. Heaven forbid something

"If you truly seek to remain independent and successful, then consider these steps for effective leadership transitions."

should happen to you, but won't you rest easier knowing that staff and plans are in place to address unforeseen conditions?

- 4) **Provide the training and support leaders need to succeed.** Evaluate the management skills of those identified to lead, just as you evaluate their technical competency. If they are not capable of leading, don't push them into the job. For most firms, internal training resources are focused on technical or work product topics, so plan to utilize external training programs focused on the business of our industry. And even consider hiring from outside our industry for the expertise you will need. Fresh viewpoints not tainted by a career spent in the AEC industry can be beneficial.
- 5) **Communicate your leadership transition plans to everyone.** Communicate internally and externally. If you hold this information close, the unknown will create an atmosphere of fear and speculation. Share your views and the value of your transition plan with your entire team. Take the time to have personal candid conversations and better understand your team's expectations and needs. Inform your clients and introduce them to your up and coming leaders. Our industry is built on relationships, many built over years of interaction. So don't think that transitioning those all-important relationships to the next generation of the firm will occur in an instant. Take the time and the effort necessary to bring others into your client relationships and all new relationships to be developed.
- 6) **Recognize that the firm's owners are not necessarily the firm's best leaders.** I am a strong believer that leadership and ownership are two distinctly different things. A majority owner

See STEPHEN LUCY, page 4



PRODUCT NEWS

TRIDENT'S COMPOSITE POLE AN EFFECTIVE STORM HARDENING TOOL As utilities continue to look for new ways to keep the power on during severe weather, reports find that the total number of minutes customers are without power each year has increased over time. Researchers at Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory and Stanford University recently found that severe weather events are linked to a 5-10 percent increase in the total number of minutes customers are without power each year.

The culprit is the inability of wood poles to stand up to the force of winds coupled with snow, ice, sleet, and freezing rain. Trident Industries (Chicago, IL), a manufacturer of composite utility poles for utility transmission and distribution, offers products with advantages over traditional materials such as wood, steel, and concrete.

"Utilities face significant challenges following major weather events, such as thunderstorms, hurricanes, tornadoes, ice storms, and fires," said Peter Ceko, CEO of Trident Industries. "In order to safely and quickly restore power to residential and commercial customers following these events, more and more utilities are utilizing Trident products."

The report, "Assessing Changes in the Reliability of the U.S. Electric Power System," analyzed a cross-section of utilities representing nearly 70 percent of U.S. electricity customers spanning from 2000 to 2012. Researchers pinpointed what utilities and their regulators refer to as "major events," or events generally related to severe weather, as the principal driver for the increase.

W. R. MEADOWS' AIR-SHIELD LMP EVALUATED BY AIR BARRIER ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA W. R. MEADOWS (Hampshire, IL) has announced that its AIR-SHIELD LMP – a water-based, air/liquid barrier product – was evaluated by the Air Barrier Association of America and listed on its website. The announcement comes on the heels of the company's AIR-SHIELD product having also been evaluated.

ABAA is the national voice of the air barrier industry in America and is dedicated to the education of all parties involved in building construction. It also provides training to designers and contractors and offers a listing of materials and assemblies evaluated by the association. The ABAA ensures products' standards and requirements are up to code as guidelines continue to change.

"ABAA evaluates a number of different types of air barrier materials and systems providing the industry with assurance that the listed materials meet all of the material properties being published, as well as meeting the requirements that ABAA has established," said Russ Snow, W. R. MEADOWS' building science specialist. "Having both a sheet applied and fluid applied air barrier listed with ABAA provides a choice of materials for the consultant, as well as giving them that level of comfort that the different materials and assemblies meet the industry requirements."

AIR-SHIELD LMP is formulated to act as a barrier to air and liquid moisture, allowing vapor to pass through it. It is suitable for new construction and retrofit applications and available in five-gallon and 55-gallon sizes.

STEPHEN LUCY, from page 3

does not necessarily make the best leader, and a failure to recognize the difference between leadership and ownership will invariably lead to firm performance problems. At some point, successful firms put people into positions that take best advantage of their strengths and will most likely result in success. Choose a leader who understands how to run a business and grow it. Choose a leader who epitomizes your culture and cares about preserving those core values that have enabled your firm to succeed. Choose a leader who values your best asset, your employees, and has their respect and support.

"While flying by the seat of your pants might have worked when your firm was smaller, growing and perpetuating a firm requires organizational planning and division of duties that tap the business skills of your existing team or those skills that you have identified as essential to your firm's success."

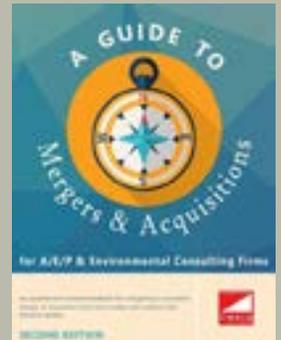
7) When it is time to leave, let go. Possibly the single most important step, but also possibly the most difficult especially for those current leaders who may also be founders. A firm must have a clear leadership team under which to operate and creating confusion by vacillating on who is in charge or when leadership transition occurs can be both inefficient and demoralizing. Former leaders can still advise when called upon, but they must give up the reins so that the firm's new leaders can act independently and confidently.

CHANGE CAN BE A GOOD THING. If you have organized your firm so that there is a transparent path for assuming managerial and leadership responsibilities, then leadership transitions will be welcomed. When properly executed, everyone should embrace the change in command, support the firm's goals for the future, and enjoy the successes that lie ahead because of good planning and foresight. ▀

STEPHEN LUCY is managing principal at JQ in Dallas. Contact him at slucy@jqeng.com.

MORE ON OWNERSHIP TRANSITION

There are several means by which firm leaders can transition out of company ownership, including employee stock ownership plans, mergers and acquisitions, and selling to a private equity firm. Each of these options is addressed in Zweig Group's forthcoming publication, *A Guide to Mergers & Acquisitions for A/E/P and Environmental Firms*, an updated revision of the *M&A Cookbook* (2003).

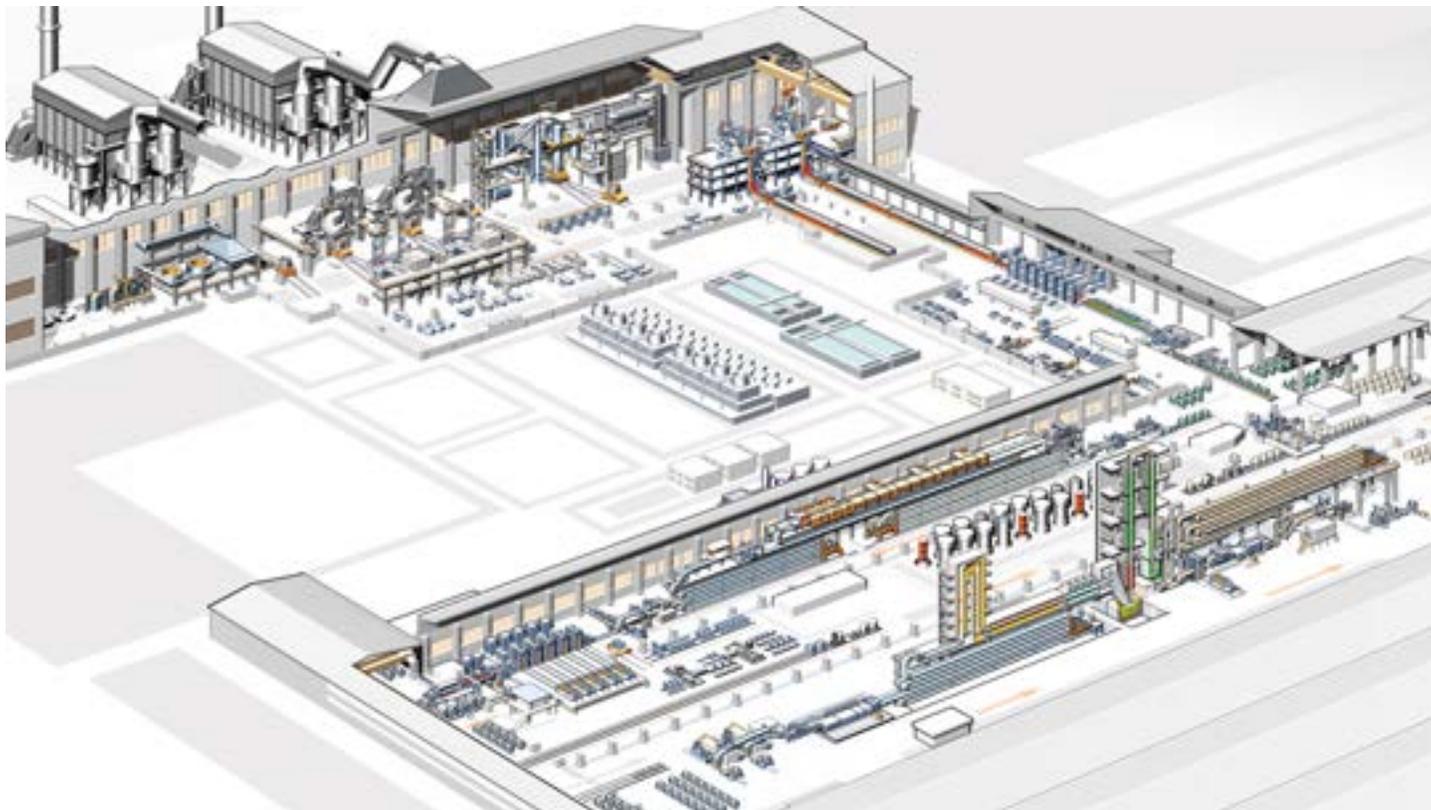


Use *A Guide to Mergers & Acquisitions* to:

- Learn how to prepare your A/E/P or environmental firm for a merger or acquisition
- Find appropriate targets and get tips for drafting a letter of intent
- Get strategies for conducting thorough due diligence
- Learn about standard transaction documents and structuring the deal
- Prepare for closing the deal, and learn the post-closing integration issues to look out for
- Read case studies of real-life mergers and acquisitions in the A/E/P and environmental industry

Preorder *A Guide to Mergers & Acquisitions* now at ZweigGroup.com for \$100 off the cover price.

PROJECT PROFILE



Big River Steel builds super mill

\$1.3 billion project touted as single largest private investment in Arkansas history; mill will generate up to 1.6 billion tons of various steel types annually.

By RICHARD MASSEY
Correspondent

A \$1.3 billion steel mill in northeast Arkansas is taking shape and, by next summer, should be producing a variety of goods, including the widest and thickest hot strip ever made by a North American thin slab caster.

Big River Steel LLC (Osceola, AR) has already completed the site prep with more than 1.1 million cubic yards of excavation, and about a third of the foundation is finished. The single largest private investment in Arkansas history, the Flex Mill will open the door for more than 500 jobs with an average annual salary of \$75,000.

Speaking at the September 2014 ground-breaking, John Correnti, chairman and CEO of Big River Steel, said, “Never has a day touched me as deeply as being here celebrating with all of you. Northeast Arkansas is my home, so to have the opportunity to build the world’s most advanced steel mill here – powered not just by technology but by the work ethic of the people of Mississippi County – is for me an experience that is hard to put into words.”

SMS Group, a German global supplier of machines and services for the metallurgical industry, is providing the equipment package for the mill. Associated Bringham Contractors and Cache Valley Electric, both of Utah; Bracken and Schueck Steel of Arkansas; and Eutaw Construction of Mississippi are the lead sub-contractors on the mill that’s being called “revolutionary” by Mark Bula, Big River Steel’s chief commercial officer.

“Our long-term focus is on the process that will allow us to produce the most challenging steels, from

See STEEL, page 8

EDITOR'S NOTE

Soon after this article was written, John Correnti passed away in Chicago. Zweig Group's thoughts go out to his family and friends.



SPOTLIGHT ON: Doir



Miyamoto is helping rebuild Nepal

Earthquake and structural engineering firm, along with affiliated nonprofit, seek to enable Nepalese families to meet seismic construction standards with new constructions.

By LIISA ANDREASSEN
Correspondent

Kit Miyamoto, Ph.D., CEO of **Miyamoto International Inc.**, a 200-person global earthquake and structural engineering company based on the West Coast, travels the world visiting natural disaster sites and earthquake-prone areas. As CEO, he is dedicated to making the world a better place.

“Our responsibility as engineers is to make buildings safer by sharing what we know around the world.”

DISASTER STRIKES...MIYAMOTO REACTS. Miyamoto Relief is a nonprofit organization that works globally to save lives through engineering, especially in places affected by disaster.

“One of the reasons we exist is to send teams of engineers to help affected populations after an earthquake. This is particularly important in developing countries, where the lack of engineering knowledge is critical for the life safety of community,” Miyamoto says.

Most recently, a team flew to Nepal after earthquakes rocked the area in April. Thousands are homeless and afraid to return. Others remain in dangerous buildings. Miyamoto is providing much needed technical advice to help people stay out of harm’s way.

In the immediate aftermath of an international disaster, many large organizations often provide relief by supplying water, food, temporary shelter, and medical support. While this support is critical, Miyamoto provides aid in the form of engineering and construction advice. Experts assess whether homes and buildings are safe to re-enter and help locals develop a plan for rebuilding to seismic standards that will withstand the next earthquake.

When the earthquake hit Haiti, Miyamoto led a rebuilding effort that ultimately returned more than 12,000 families to their homes.

“It’s our hope and mission that our presence in Nepal will ultimately help families return to safe homes and rebuild their lives,” Miyamoto says.





“Many lost their lifetime investment and place to live.”



“Our responsibility as engineers is to make buildings safer by sharing what we know around the world.”



MIYAMOTO BUILDS HOPE. In a joint public-private initiative, earthquake engineering specialist firm Miyamoto International received funding from SAMARTH-UKAID on behalf of the government of Nepal to conduct an expert safety assessment. The report from Miyamoto’s experts confirmed that the Annapurna region in the Himalayas in north-central Nepal, a major tourist area, sustained “very little damage, with the 3 percent of buildings damaged in the quake easily repairable.”

The assessment of the Annapurna region was made by a team of geotechnical and structural engineering experts, accompanied by local mountain guides. The teams were sent to conduct a technical inspection of the main trekking routes and select villages ahead of the monsoon season.

“The aim of the report was to develop an overall understanding of the extent of the damage from the earthquakes so that we could assess the safety of the region’s trekking routes,” Miyamoto explains.

HOW CAN YOU HELP?

Miyamoto’s nonprofit organization is collecting money, which will go to disaster relief in Nepal.

Learn more here: Miyamotorelief.org.

The assessment is believed to be the first ever completed by international earthquake engineering specialists on trekking routes in Nepal, and the recommendations include opportunities to manage potential hazards not associated with the April and May earthquakes.

“Annapurna is ready to open for business,” Miyamoto says. “The report highlights areas where organizations can help Nepal rebuild stronger than ever. We now have the information needed to take action.”

Relief and reconstruction is led and provided by the Nepalese private sector, which continuously sends supplies and food to disaster areas: They contacted Miyamoto to ask for his firm’s support.

“Many lost their lifetime investment and place to live,” he says.

Miyamoto is working to provide expert consultation to developers and residences. But the firm’s experts sometimes find themselves acting in more of a counselor role than that of an engineering firm.

“The government of Nepal also often asks for our advice,” Miyamoto says. “We are developing a rural housing concept with our partner. More than 700,000 houses have been lost here.”

Miyamoto says that the firm is currently in the process of hiring Nepalese engineers to staff a joint venture company with two of the largest multinational businesses, which will be called Miyamoto Nepal.

The villages outside the city were hit especially hard and are awaiting relief.

Miyamoto says he is hearing from people all over Nepal who need help. As a result, he had a meeting with U.S. Embassy officials to see what could be done. He says that the firm even got an email from a villager who asked Miyamoto to assess his small house, “our only house, built by my father.” ▀

IN THE FIELD

Friend of **THE ZWEIG LETTER** and marketing director of **Shive-Hattery Inc.** (Cedar Rapids, IA), **Greg Kanz**, shares some of what he learned at a recent social media conference.

Social media experts at the August 6 PR News' Big 4 Conference in San Francisco shared many ideas about Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, and Twitter. While most of the speakers were with product-based companies and nonprofit organizations, several suggestions apply to professional services marketing.

■ **Facebook.** Facebook is a powerful channel for recruiting and retaining employees. Lauren Friedman, head of social business enablement at Adobe, says people trust people more than branded channels, so get your employees talking. For example, #AdobeLife allows employees the ability to share experiences at Adobe.

Show Facebook a little money and your traffic will dramatically increase. Jen Martin Hall, vice president of communications at Sharecare, says a paid ad investment of only \$200 makes a significant impact. Experiment and track the results.

Sponsored Facebook posts strengthen recruiting efforts by driving traffic to your website. Use Facebook Insights and other analytics platforms to show management the return on investment.

■ **Instagram.** Instagram has the most engaged users and has doubled in size over the past 13 months. Katie Keating, program manager for social brand strategy at IBM, recommends showing off your creativity and culture while leaving "the heavy branding" elsewhere. Keating unites audiences around hashtags such as #Viewfrommydesk (images of where IBMers are working) and #IBMDesign (employees sharing interesting ideas and design).

Keating's Instagram tips include: Use only three #s in a post or it

looks like SPAM, add additional hashtags as a comment to increase a post's search visibility, and use a custom bit.ly as your Instagram URL to conserve space.

Charlene Macielag, social media strategist for FedEx, does not showcase products, but rather the people that bring the brand to life. Her posts revolve around two basic principles: educate their audience or share something beautiful. To extend the reach of FedEx's Instagram channel, Macielag asks partners to tag them and reciprocates the favor by reposting followers' content. This allows them to show their own perspectives of the brand.

■ **Snapchat.** Companies such as General Electric and Intel are using Snapchat to reach a younger audience.

Unique features of Snapchat include: Less than 1 percent of marketers are using this platform, more than 70 percent of Snapchat users are under age 25, geofilters allow you to bring location-specific angles to your content, you can segment your existing social audience to determine if they are on Snapchat. Post your Snapchat ID on other platforms such as Twitter and Facebook.

■ **Twitter.** Twitter is unique, with 49 percent of monthly users following brands or companies, compared with 16 percent of social networks overall. This makes Twitter ideal for brands to reach audiences with a consistent presence.

Serena Ehrlich, director of social media for *Business Wire*, offers useful Twitter tips: Add multimedia to your posts if possible; pin your most engaging Tweets to the top of your page; tweeted content should be text, links and thoughts; ideal content includes brand updates, ideas, feedback, quotes, statistics, and facts; use hashtags, but research them first (see twubs.com); test headlines and headline styles to find what works with your audience.

STEEL, from page 5

lightweight advanced high-strength steels to complex electrical steels, energy pipe grades, and coiled plate dimensions," Bula says. "Connecting an electric arc furnace to an RH degasser is key to producing these steels, and that is one of the components that is making Big River the world's first Flex Mill. The mill is revolutionary for not only Arkansas, but for all of North America. It is the first time this combination of equipment has been used in a mill."

When fully operational, the mill will produce as much as 1.6 million tons of steel per year. Varieties of steel include hot rolled, hot rolled pickled and oiled, cold rolled, cold rolled motor lamination, and galvanized. The mill will make steel for the automotive, oil and gas, and electrical energy industries.

For a project of this size to move forward, a lot of moving pieces had to come together. Amendment 82, passed by Arkansas voters in 2004, authorized the state to issue \$125 million in general obligation bonds, which were purchased by the Arkansas Teacher Retirement System. The funds were used for a loan, site prep, subsurface stabilization, and the bond issuance cost. Arkansas also offered an assortment of tax incentives and training funds – \$5 million from the Quick Action Closing fund and \$5 million from the Department of Workforce Services Trust Fund.

Mississippi County and the city of Osceola gave a combined \$14 million. The Arkansas Development Finance Authority came through with a \$5 million bridge loan, and the Ar-

kansas Economic Development Commission helped facilitate the deal. Other participants were the Arkansas Department of Finance and Administration, Arkansas Department of Environmental Quality, attorney general, Arkansas Capital Corporation, Entergy Arkansas Inc., and BNSF Railway.

That a project of such magnitude would attract the attention of the state's highest elected official is of little surprise. Former Gov. Mike Beebe spoke at the ground-breaking, and in July, Gov. Asa Hutchinson traveled to Dusseldorf, Germany, to meet with SMS Group CEO Burkhard Dahmen.

Big River Steel announced plans to build the mill in early 2013. In preparation for the mill's opening, two workforce development programs are already being offered by Arkansas Northeastern College in Paragould. The collateral boost to the economy, anchored by high five-figure jobs, is expected to have a profound impact on the economy of Osceola, a town of about 7,700 on the Arkansas Delta. The site was chosen in part due to its location on the Mississippi River and its proximity to Memphis, which is 55 miles south.

Speaking at the 2014 ground-breaking, Osceola Mayor Dickie Kennemore pointed to the hopes surrounding the plant now under construction on 1,300 acres between the Mississippi and the BNSF railroad.

"Big River locating in Osceola will positively impact many families in the Delta for generations," Kennemore said. "Helping people help themselves is the greatest accomplishment one can have in this life, and that is what all those involved have done for the citizens of Arkansas and Mississippi County in particular." ▀

Confrontation and conflict

We're each leaving a trail behind us – our reputations and our effect on the world – as industry leaders, we should focus on making those as pleasant as possible.



Ed
Friedrichs

FROM THE
CHAIRMAN

If you have a leadership role in your organization – if you're the place where the proverbial buck stops – you're going to find yourself eyeball-to-eyeball with someone in-house, a client, or a consultant who is unhappy about something. The "something" could be work-related, or the person simply could have gotten into an argument at home before going to work and is itching for a fight.

You may be the boss and have the authority to say, "I don't care what you think; this is the way it's going to be," but that is going to leave behind a very messy trail and reputation.

Why do more and more people today seem as if they're "just itching for a fight"?

It's nearly impossible to go into a meeting in any public forum from the United States Congress, a courtroom, a city council, or a planning commission meeting and not see the degradation of civility in our society. We witness it every day through examples of "road rage" on our streets and highways or fighting it out – horns honking and fists shaking – over a parking place at the shopping center. A bad attitude seems to be more common than not these days.

I have neither the knowledge nor the academic credentials to tell you why we've devolved to this state, but I've taken it upon myself to work at remedying it in my own encounters. I'm increasingly running across people, young and old, who are saying, "How do I get away from this?"

"One tactic I've used for years and have observed in others when faced with someone who is angry or just being disagreeable is to ask the person to 'tell me more about that' in a genuinely curious tone."

Returning to "the trail you leave behind" analogy, I believe this might be age-related. I'm finding older folks like me care; younger folks, less so. I'd like to make the case for why I think you should care, particularly if you're young.

People have long memories and, if you've worked out your aggressions by pushing back when pushed on, you're building a personal brand

"You may be the boss and have the authority to say, 'I don't care what you think; this is the way it's going to be,' but that is going to leave behind a very messy trail and reputation."

of being part of the problem. That brand, or reputation, will be very hard to shed, making your job of leadership increasingly difficult.

As I have become more conscious of these new rules of engagement, I've begun to watch for and study those who are pros at defusing conflict and reaching consensus on issues.

One tactic I've used for years and have observed in others when faced with someone who is angry or just being disagreeable is to ask the person to "tell me more about that" in a genuinely curious tone. It's non-confrontational, slows down the heat of moment, and delivers a very clear statement that "I respect you and what you have to say." It does not imply "I agree with you" nor "I am going to cave on my position," but it does provide an opportunity to listen to why the other person feels the way he or she does. Who knows: I may learn something by listening to the way the other person thinks, causing me to shift my position. At the least, the exchange will help me gain insights into how we're going to negotiate a compromise that is acceptable to both of us.

Then, there's the termination discussion. This type of discussion doesn't have to be about termination, as in dismissal. It could simply be an expression of concern when a person isn't performing well. But the concepts and tone are the same.

The person is performing poorly at their tasks. He

See ED FRIEDRICHS, page 10



ON THE MOVE

DEREK POLLARY JOINS WIDSETH SMITH NOLTING AS MECHANICAL TECHNICIAN **Derek Pollary** has joined the engineering department of **Widseth Smith Nolting's** Brainerd office as a mechanical engineering technician. In this role, Pollary defines, researches, and designs engineering solutions to address building comfort, energy efficiency, and cost effectiveness as they relate to client needs. His other responsibilities include energy modeling and analytic comparison of multiple HVAC systems for new and existing facilities, performing load designs on buildings to determine their heating and cooling requirements, design and construction phase commissioning of building systems, sizing of air and water distribution systems, selecting equipment, reviewing shop drawings, and coordinating mechanical engineering work with other disciplines to ensure quality control.

MERRICK ANNOUNCES NEW DIRECTOR OF BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT **Wayne Wajciechowski** has recently accepted the position of director of business development with the energy division of **Merrick & Company** (Greenwood Village, CO), an engineering, architecture, design-build, surveying, planning, and geospatial solutions firm.

"I am delighted to welcome Wayne to our energy business development. He brings a wealth of knowledge and relationships and will be an integral part of our growth plans," said Peter Dixon, vice president of energy.

With more than 36 years of experience in the chemicals and allied products and bio derive products industries, Wajciechowski brings expertise in the areas of design, design-build, operations, and program management. He has experience leading project development and execution efforts in the process industries. Throughout his career, he has negotiated and managed the execution of major contracts and service agreements

where he has served as executive sponsor and program manager. He has managed ongoing relationships with many clients and served as a client account manager for numerous key national clients.

SMPS ANNOUNCES 2015-2016 BOARD OF DIRECTORS The **Society for Marketing Professional Services** (Alexandria, VA), an AEC marketing and business development association, has announced its 2015-2016 board of directors, comprised of senior marketing and business development leaders representing the architectural, engineering/planning, and construction industry. The SMPS board took office on September 1.

- **President:** **Paula Ryan**, director of marketing, Jezerinac Geers & Associates Inc., Dublin, Ohio
- **Past President:** **Barbara Shuck**, marketing communications manager, Wilson & Company, Omaha, Nebraska
- **President-Elect:** **Craig Galati**, president, LGA, Las Vegas
- **Secretary/Treasurer:** **Chris Rickman**, principal and business manager, ZFI Engineering Co., Oklahoma City, Oklahoma
- **Chapter Delegate:** **Dawn Greco**, business development director, ICF International, Sacramento
- **Fellows Delegate:** **Thomas Townes**, director of business development, Van Note-Harvey Associates PC, Princeton, New Jersey
- **At-Large Delegate:** **Carla Thompson**, chief marketing officer, NAC|Architecture, Seattle

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or she doesn't seem engaged sufficiently with the work, the team or the firm to figure out why and do something about it. You've concluded that the person no longer belongs with your firm. How do you have the conversation? Do you hand them their final check and say, "you're fired"? After all, what does it matter to you? Once the person is gone, your problem is solved, right? Wrong! Every person who leaves your firm is part of the trail you're leaving. If the person walks away disgruntled and angry, he or she is going to tell a lot of people about it.

For years, prior to termination, I've used a very simple line, "You don't seem happy here. Do you think you ought to look elsewhere?"

With this phrasing, I've shown respect for a person who is clearly unhappy about something, and we've usually been able to work out a mutually acceptable exit plan. Occasionally, I've learned that the person was having a genuine problem with something or someone in the firm that I was able to correct, keeping a newly valuable member.

When it is simply the end, I've reworded my line to say, "I can see you're really not happy here. It's time for you to find somewhere else where you will be happy. That's what you deserve. Let's work out how we're going to make that happen." Once again, I've shown respect for the person and offered to work out a gracious and honorable way for that person to move on.

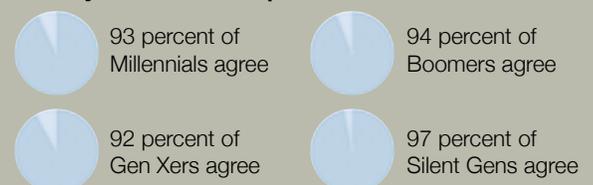
I sincerely hope you'll try these ideas. First of all, it's about time that each of us began to exert an effort to reinstate civility in our own lives and for those around us. Secondly, you'll be leaving a trail of respect that will serve you well as a leader. ▀

EDWARD FRIEDRICHS, FAIA, FIIDA, is a Zweig Group consultant and former CEO and president of Gensler. Contact him at efriedrichs@zweggroup.com.

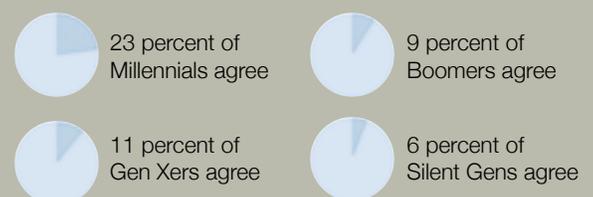
INCIVILITY IN AMERICA

According to Civility in America 2014, the fifth and most recent national poll conducted by Weber Shandwick and Powell Tate with KRC Research, the forecast for civility in America is bleak, but there is a glimmer of hope among millennials.

"Civility in America is a problem"



"In the next few years, civility will get better"



TALKIN' 'BOUT MY GENERATION



According to *The Atlantic*, Millennials are individuals born between 1982 and 2004; Generation X encompasses those born between 1965 and 1984; Baby Boomers are individuals born between 1946 and 1964; and the Greatest Generation, or what Shandwick and Tate call the Silent Generation in their study, comprises people born through 1945.

Go/no-go: How to make it work

Deciding whether a bid is a worthwhile venture requires answering several questions related to the project, plan, client/owner, timeline, budget, team, and proposal.



**Bernie
Siben**

THE FAST LANE

To paraphrase William Shakespeare: “To go or not to go; that is the question.” A go/no-go evaluation is neither rocket science nor an extended research project. It should take no more than 30 minutes and require no more than two or three phone calls. It should be done as soon as possible after learning about the opportunity, by the person who would manage the project when you win it.

Importantly, a go/no-go evaluation is not a committee activity; you will waste too much production time just getting the committee together and involve too many senior staff, who really have little to contribute other than “best guesses.”

The go/no-go evaluation is a thought process that enables you to take the ego and wishful thinking out of the pursuit decision. The following is a sample of the questions your go/no-go evaluation should pose.

THE PROJECT

- What is the complete name of the project, including solicitation number?
- What project details do you know (facility type, size, scope, budget, schedule, permits, etc.)?
- What services/disciplines will be required?
- Have we done this kind of project before?
- Do we provide these services/disciplines, and which must be subcontracted?
- Are there additional services you think should be included to get the job done?
- Where is the project actually located?
- Have we worked in this area before (experience with local politics, agencies, geology, climate, building codes, environmental requirements)?
- Has the client/owner done this kind of project before?
- Is the project currently funded?
- Is there anything about the market sector into which the project falls that is a recommendation or a warning (check with market sector leader, your first of a few phone calls)

THE PLAN

- Is the project aligned with the firm’s strategic plan (have you identified this kind of project as something you do [or do not] want to do)?

“The go/no-go evaluation is a thought process that enables you to take the ego and wishful thinking out of the pursuit decision.”

- Is the project aligned with your department’s/group’s plan?
- Does the project have any strategic value to the firm?
- Does the project have public relations or marketing value for the firm?

THE CLIENT/OWNER

- Do we have the client’s complete and accurate name?
- Is the client’s office running the project?
- Is this a strategic client (according to our Plan)?
- Does this client already know our firm and our qualifications?
- Have we worked for this client before?
- Does the client pay its bills timely? (check with accounting; the second of your few phone calls)
- Do we want to work for this client? (check with previous project manager; your last phone call)
- Does the client have a good reputation in the local business and A/E/C community?
- Have we spoken with the client about this project (do we know anything that nobody else knows)?
- Do we understand the client’s selection criteria/process?
- Do we know anyone on the Selection Committee?
- Is the client also the owner (if not, who will make the final selection)?

TIME AND MONEY

- Do we know the client’s desired schedule?



See BERNIE SIBEN, page 12

ON THE MOVE

GZA GEOENVIRONMENTAL PROMOTES JOHN OSBORNE TO SENIOR PRINCIPAL
GZA GeoEnvironmental Inc. (Norwood, MA), an environmental and geotechnical consulting firm with more than 550 employees, has announced that **John Osborne** was promoted to senior principal in its Waukesha office.

Osborne, who has been with GZA for 22 years, has nearly 30 years of experience as a hydrogeologist. His current work includes providing geoscience consulting services in the areas of environmental risk management, contamination releases, groundwater resource development and environmental permitting in energy, mining, construction, and manufacturing. He also serves as a district manager.

JQ ANNOUNCES LEADERSHIP TRANSITIONS IN AUSTIN AND FORT WORTH
JQ (Dallas, TX), an award-winning structural and civil engineering firm, has announced that two of its veterans have relocated to support future growth of the firm: **Thomas Scott** moved from the Fort Worth office to lead the Austin office as partner and principal, and **Carlo Taddei** moved from Dallas to lead the Fort Worth office as principal.

“These moves are part of our succession and leadership plans, and we have targeted both of these geographic markets for significant growth. We are very pleased to fill these leadership roles internally. Tom has a great understanding of our clients’ needs, our internal operations and staff. His relocation will provide partner continuity at our founding office. Carlo has earned this tremendous opportunity for his personal leadership development and is recognized for driving the success of projects, dedication to clients’ interests and maintaining relationships,” says Stephen Lucy, managing partner of JQ.

Scott joined JQ in 2002. In his new role in Austin, he is responsible for business development, client interaction, consulting, and review of projects from inception through construction. With more than 24 years of experience in structural design, Scott has extensive knowledge of mul-

iple building types and projects, including municipal, higher education, healthcare, commercial, and residential projects.

Taddei joined JQ in 2004. In his new leadership role in Fort Worth, he is responsible for office operations, client interaction, consulting and review of projects from inception through construction. With more than 13 years of experience, he has worked on diverse projects that include commercial, healthcare, institutional, municipal, and living facilities.

BECKER MORGAN GROUP STAFF OBTAIN ENGINEERING LICENSURE
Becker Morgan Group has announced that two of its engineers passed the professional engineer examination to become licensed engineers. To obtain licensure, an individual must fulfill education and experience requirements and pass the Fundamentals of Engineering Exam and the Principles and Practice of Engineering Exam, set forth by the National Council of Examiners for Engineering and Surveying.

Newly licensed civil engineers **Jonathan Richard’s** and **Steven Fortunato’s** responsibilities include site, road, stormwater management, and utility design, site grading, agency and client coordination, and construction phase services.

H2M CFO NAMED ACEC TRUSTEE
H2M architects + engineers (Melville, NY) has announced that its CFO, **Gregory Smith**, was named a trustee of the American Council of Engineering Companies Retirement Trust. Smith’s term as trustee will begin on October 1, and he will serve ACEC RT’s Region 2, which includes New York, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Indiana, Michigan, and northern Wisconsin.

“I am deeply honored to be selected as one of seven trustees across the United States,” Smith said. “I look forward to contributing to the organization and making a positive impact.”

In his 28-year tenure with H2M, Smith has worked his way from controller to CFO. He is a member of the firm’s board of directors and serves as a trustee of its 401(k) plan.

BERNIE SIBEN, from page 11

- Can the project be completed within the desired schedule?
- Do we know the client’s anticipated budget?
- Can the project be constructed within the client’s budget?
- Can the project be designed/performed for the anticipated fee?
- Does the potential profit exceed the anticipated marketing cost?

THE TEAM

- Do we have enough relevant experience to pursue as prime (projects of comparable size, scope, complexity, schedule, budget)?
- Do we have a viable project manager (years and relevance of experience, registrations)?
- Do we have experienced staff (required registrations, relevant experience) including subconsultants?
- Do we have the required resources (hardware/software, equipment, vehicles, etc.)?
- Does our likely project manager have a relationship with the client?
- Do we understand all applicable laws/regulations/ordinances and/or technology?
- Do we know the probable competition?

- Does anything differentiate us from the probable competition?
- Do we have any relevant proprietary assets (software, equipment, patents, etc.) that set us apart?

THE PROPOSAL

- Is someone in the marketing group available and qualified to manage the proposal effort?
- Do we have proposal writers and graphics staff available in-house to prepare this proposal?
- Do we have a technical champion to lead the technical aspects of the proposal (understanding approach, detailed work plan, schedule, fees)?
- Will the technical champion be in the office and available during proposal preparation?
- Is there sufficient time to produce a winning proposal?
- Do we have the “inside track” for this project?

Note: If the client asks for huge amounts of information with little time, or with restrictive page limitations, another firm probably has the “inside track.”

- Initial gut response: Do we have a shot at winning this? ▀

BERNIE SIBEN, CPSM, is owner and principal consultant of The Siben Consult LLC, in Austin, TX, which provides strategic and marketing services to A/E/C and environmental firms nationwide. Contact him at bernie@sibenconsult.com.