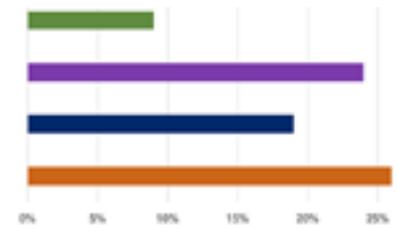


## TRENDLINES

### Internal factors that affect project performance



**Communications breakdown** is the most common internal factor affecting project performance, according to respondents of Zweig Group's 2015 *Project Management Survey*, with 26 percent citing it as a factor. Another 24 percent cited **unrealistic deadlines/schedules**, while 19 percent chose **inadequate fee for work required**, and 9 percent selected **inexperienced professional/technical staff**.  
— Vivian Cummins, research analyst assistant.

## Things usually go as expected

In work and in life, our past experiences, relationships, and the information we consume contributes to our outcomes.

“If you expect to fail, you probably will fail. Conversely, if you expect to be wildly successful, you probably will be that.”



Mark Zweig

### EDITORIAL

**Y**ou know – in life, or in business – things pretty much happen as you expect them to. That may sound crazy to some of you, but I firmly believe it. If you expect to fail, you probably will fail. Conversely, if you expect to be wildly successful, you probably will be that.

Why does it work out that way? There are many reasons. Here are some of them:

- 1) The programing we've had.** Our parents are the ones who program us. If they think we can be successful and tell us so, it affects our thinking. We won't settle for less than we should. They help us develop an expectation. Hopefully, they ALSO help us understand the work ethic, diligence, and sacrifice that go along with the expectation and help us realize our individual potential as well – because those things also have to be there. By the same token, if our parents tell us the world is evil and we will be beaten down by the man and never get ahead, that, too, will probably happen. Not so say that people cannot ever overcome their programing. Some do.
- 2) The people we surround ourselves with.** We all pick winners or losers as friends. And then we also pick those who bolster us up and support us or those who knock us down and defeat us. The people we surround ourselves with have a huge impact on our individual ambition level and sense of possibility. Being with the right circle of friends will have a huge impact on any of us. Pick them closely!
- 3) What we read and watch.** Inputs DO matter.

See MARK ZWEIG, page 2

## MORE COLUMNS

■ THE FAST LANE: To blog or not to blog ... Page 3

■ BEST PRACTICES: Are you stressed out? Page 11

## PLUS



■ PROFILE: Small business wins big contract. Page 5

## FIRM INDEX

Blu Homes	9
EFI Global	4
ENGEO Incorporated	2
Environmental Science Associates	2
HGA	12
Industrial Loss Consultants	4
JQ	12
Lighthouse Consulting and Restoration Services	4
McLennan Design	6
Perkins + Will Architects	12
Tetra Tech Inc.	4
The Siben Consult LLC	4
Trigon Associates	5

## IN BRIEF

On the Move	2
Business News	4, 12
Doing Good	8
Industry News	10

## Addressing global problems with design

Page 6-7



## Blu Homes: Faster and greener

Page 9

## ON THE MOVE

**ESI NAMES NEW COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PRACTICE LEADER** Environmental Science Associates (Los Angeles, CA), an environmental consulting firm, announced that **Terri (Vitar) Avila** has been promoted to community development practice leader. She takes over the position from Brian Boxer, who was recently named northern California regional director.

"Terri's leadership has been integral to the successful completion of numerous CEQA and NEPA planning documents for development and natural resources projects throughout California," said Gary Oates, ESA's president. "Her award-winning environmental documentation and public facilitation expertise is key to advancing our community development practice as we help communities and agencies who strive to balance the built and natural environments while addressing growth demands and the challenges of aging infrastructure and climate change adaptation."

Avila brings more than 30 years of experience in environmental consulting and natural resource planning. With a diverse background that includes urban and greenfield development, natural resources management, transportation, and water, she approaches her work from a multi-faceted perspective, demonstrating a unique ability to reconcile the competing demands of development and natural resources management. Terri managed the Candlestick Point-Hunters Point Shipyard Phase II EIR, which won the American Planning Association National Achievement Award for Hard Won Victories and an Award of Excellence from the American Council for Engineering Companies. She has completed many environmental documents throughout the state, from communities in Orange and Los Angeles counties to the Central Valley, and beyond. Her diverse clients include the cities of San Francisco, American Canyon, Pasadena, Huntington Beach, and Santa Ana and the County of Madera; the State Coastal Conservancy; private developers; and transportation agencies, such as the Los Angeles Metropolitan Agency and the United Kingdom Department of Transport.

**ENGEO PRESIDENT INDUCTED TO ACADEMY OF DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI AT UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, BERKELEY** Uri Eliahu was inducted to the Academy of Distinguished Alumni at the University of California, Berkeley on October 8. He received his B.S. in civil engineering from the university in 1981. Since 1986, he has worked at **ENGEO Incorporated**, holding positions from project manager to president and CEO, the position he has held for the past 23 years.

The Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering Department at UC, Berkeley recognizes many alumni whose accomplishments have contributed to societal well-being and development.

CEE leadership and faculty, aided by the generosity of its Advisory Council and the guidance of the College of Engineering, established the CEE Academy of Distinguished Alumni in 2012.

MARK ZWEIG, from page 1

Too much of any negative information is bound to influence our thinking in a negative way. That's why one has to balance their input of news so as to stay informed but not be tricked into thinking the world is so evil and hostile it makes no sense to try to do anything. Ditto for books and movies that are all about conspiracies, murder, and crime. Too negative. We all desperately need positive messaging – things that inspire us. History, biographies, nature, art, and other sources of inspiration should all be on our reading/viewing list versus just negative information on terrorist attacks or senseless murders or child abuse.

**4) Our life experiences.** They either confirm that things will turn out good in the end – or bad. Small successes lead to larger successes. Luck plays a part. Where you live – the quality of your schooling, success (or lack of it) in athletic pursuits, early relationships, student government, small business ventures, early jobs and more all make such a difference in terms of whether or not one "expects" good or bad things to happen to them. Of course, some people use negative events to make them stronger – however, most don't.

I'm thankful for the great parents, friends, education, and life experiences I have had. What's important for all of us as leaders in A/E/P and environmental firms is how we deal with the people who work for and with us. Are we painting the picture of how good things could be – and then reinforcing that idea through our own actions as role models? Are we setting the expectations high enough and meeting them ourselves? ▀

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



### EDITOR'S NOTE

THE ZWEIG LETTER does not run on the week of Christmas. Please look for issue 1132 on December 28. Everyone at Zweig Group wishes you and yours a very happy holiday.

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

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# THE ZWEIG LETTER

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## To blog or not to blog...

Since starting his blog 10 years ago, an AEC marketing expert has found opportunities and inspiration through the platform



**Bernie  
Siben**

### THE FAST LANE

**I**n early 2005, a business friend asked me, “How could you not have a blog? It’s such a great marketing tool.” I remembered a previous employer who had a poster that said, “Stronger than all the establishments of man is an idea whose time has come.”

I decided that creating my own blog was just such an idea.

**MY STATISTICS.** I started [builtenvironment.blogs.com](http://builtenvironment.blogs.com) May 7, 2005.

Later this week, I will publish post No. 200 in a series that now averages more than 500 words per post.

So far, those 199 posts have resulted in more than 150 comments – about a third of them came through the blog; the rest came to me by email. Some of these comments resulted in additional blogs.

More than a year ago, I started emailing a notice every month to the more than 900 AEC and related contacts in my address book. Each notice provides a quick message and links to the previous month’s posts, along with an “opt-out” statement. To date, fewer than 10 people have opted out of these notices.

And, because people have shared these notices with others, several new people have liked my blog enough to request that they be added to the notification list.

**MY PHILOSOPHY.** When I created the blog, my description stated, “A visible expert shares random thoughts about marketing professional services

for the ‘built environment.’”

The blog is still my random thoughts – any subject related to the marketing of professional AEC, environmental, and related services is fair game. Subjects are suggested to me by business friends and taken from what I read in Zweig publications, on LinkedIn, and in various SMPS and other publications. Occasionally, I revisit a subject – sometimes because I have changed my opinion, other times because I have learned things I didn’t know then.

“The blog affords me the ongoing opportunity for one of my greatest professional joys – the sharing of what I have learned in my three decades as an AEC industry marketer.”

In the end, it’s all about sharing information, experience, and expertise.

**MY PROCESS.** I keep a running list of possible topics for blogs and full-length articles. When I think of something – or read something – that strikes my

See BERNIE SIBEN, page 4



## BUSINESS NEWS

### U.S. AIR FORCE AWARDS TETRA TECH \$500 MILLION A/E SERVICES CONTRACT

**Tetra Tech Inc.** (Pasadena, CA) announced today it was awarded an indefinite delivery, indefinite quantity contract by the U.S. Air Force for architectural-engineering services worldwide (A-E13 Environmental Services). This multiple-award contract ceiling is \$500 million. Tetra Tech will support the U.S. Air Force Civil Engineer Center's environmental program at various government installations in the United States and other worldwide locations.

Tetra Tech will provide technical services for restoration, pollution prevention, and compliance for environmental projects. Work may include all aspects of remediation systems design, advanced planning, investigations, geospatial data analysis, conceptual design, value engineering, monitoring, and optimization of environmental treatment or control systems. The base contract period is five years with two additional option years.

### EFI GLOBAL PARTNERS WITH LIGHTHOUSE CONSULTING AND RESTORATION SERVICES

**EFI Global** (Houston, TX) – a Cunningham Lindsey Company and a provider of forensic engineering, fire investigation, environmental, and laboratory testing services – announced its partnership with industrial production machinery and equipment rehabilitation experts **Lighthouse Consulting and Restoration Services** and its subsidiary company **Industrial Loss Consultants** to provide loss, repair and replacement analysis for industrial machinery and equipment.

EFI's partnership with Lighthouse and ILC will provide clients with a depth of expertise in the industrial production machinery arena that significantly increases the range of rehabilitation and repair options that were previously unavailable in the property and casualty insurance market. In losses involving industrial machinery or heavy equipment, EFI mechanical engineers determine the cause of the loss or failure, and once identified, Lighthouse provides the hands-on, technical evaluations to determine if and how the insured assets can be restored to pre-loss condition. Working together, EFI and Lighthouse will enhance the range of claim resolution solutions for clients dealing with heavy equipment losses.

"We're thrilled to have a valued partner like Lighthouse supporting our growth and ongoing commitment to strengthen the expertise available to insurers of industrial machinery," said Jeremy Mele, President of EFI Global. "By providing insurers with quality engineering evaluations and validated repair methodologies, we enable a realistic avenue for insureds to minimize business interruption and to experience creative solutions for repair and replacement."

"This partnership with EFI is ultimately a major money saving win for insurers and the insured," said Scott Kiley, Chairman and CEO of Lighthouse Consulting and Restoration Services and ILC. "When machinery and equipment is restorable, Lighthouse provides warranted solutions that minimize business interruption, and in many cases, eliminate total loss. It is our warranty that allows the carrier to settle the claim and avoid writing the big check for new equipment replacement."

BERNIE SIBEN, from page 3

fancy as a potential "random thought," I add it to the list.

I also keep a list of useful quotes that I find in a variety of books and websites. Sometimes the quote merely supports or enhances a post; sometimes the quote is the subject and main message of a post.

**MY RESULTS.** New clients don't always tell me why they selected my company to assist them with their strategic or writing needs, and "why me?" always sounds gratuitous. But I know that I have worked with three new clients in the last three years who, in our first conversation, mentioned my blog – whether one specific post, a few posts, or they were dedicated readers. And those three new clients have resulted in eight new assignments over that same time period.

**ADDITIONAL RESULTS FROM REPURPOSING.** In late 2012, my brother suggested that I collect my published articles and blog posts into a book. Early in 2013, I asked Matt Handal to look at the book. He suggested that I make a book of just my Go/No-go writings, because he hadn't seen very much on the subject and felt it would be valuable.

In the late summer of 2013, I published *Go/No Go – the hardest decision of all*. I used the book as a give-away when I gave presentations. As of writing this, I've published a half-dozen more e-books that cover subjects like differentiation, mentoring, planning, proposing, leadership, and success in A/E and related discipline marketing.

I make all these e-books available for free. I periodically offer them, along with other products, through SMPS groups on LinkedIn and on my company Facebook page. I have also announced their availability as my holiday gift, through mailings to my client list.

To date, almost 150 people have requested my e-books.

Some people request one or two; some request all seven. While I can't say that any new assignments came to me because of these e-books, several speaking opportunities have come to me by that route.

In addition, I have repurposed a few posts for secondary platforms, and more than one organization has asked me for permission to reprint a post on their own blog or in their newsletter, which has helped me grow my business network.

"I started emailing a notice every month to the more than 900 AEC and related contacts in my address book. Each notice provides a quick message and links to the previous month's posts, along with an "opt-out" statement. To date, fewer than 10 people have opted out of these notices."

**MY BOTTOM LINE.** I definitely think creating and maintaining my blog has been a good investment of my time. In addition to the projects and speaking opportunities that have come my way, and the new people added to my network, the blog affords me the ongoing opportunity for one of my greatest professional joys – the sharing of what I have learned in my three decades as an AEC industry marketer. ▀

BERNIE SIBEN, CPSM, is owner/principal consultant of **The Siben Consult LLC**, in Austin, TX. Contact him at 559-901-9596 or [bernie@sibenconsult.com](mailto:bernie@sibenconsult.com).

## PROFILE

# Small business wins big contract

USAID awards Trigon Associates a \$600 million contract to advance infrastructure in developing countries.



Lisa Cookmeyer, CEO, Trigon Associates.

By LIISA ANDREASSEN  
Correspondent

**S**mall but mighty **Trigon Associates** (New Orleans, LA) – a 7-year-old, 80-person, woman-owned business that offers professional full-service engineering, consulting, and management services to both public and private sector clients – was recently awarded a \$600 million U.S. Agency for International Development global architect-engineer services contract.

The USAID is a U.S. foreign assistance program that provides economic and humanitarian assistance in more than 80 countries worldwide. Trigon will provide A/E services that include design, construction supervision, and related support on both short- and long-term services for infrastructure projects involving water resources, water supply, wastewater, utilities, environmental, transportation, and facilities to develop vitally important infrastructure in developing countries.

**KEYS TO LANDING THE CONTRACT.** Lisa Cookmeyer, Trigon's CEO, says that while being a woman-owned small business was helpful in getting this contract, it's not the primary reason, as many other small businesses also pursued the contract.

"We consider our small business designation as an added value to clients over and above our capabilities," Cookmeyer says. "Trigon is honored to have been selected by USAID for this important contract, and we look forward to supporting USAID in its goal to provide institutional and infrastructure development via this effort, building upon our successful projects with USAID over the past five years."

Cookmeyer says it's really their past performance with the USAID that led to this contract, coupled with their demonstrated ability to recruit and develop local talent with support from global experts in order to build the best team to successfully deliver the services needed.

Trigon also developed a strategic teaming plan to identify firms they included as proposed subcontractors to Trigon, which would allow them to realistically perform just about any type and size of project in any location around the world. Overall, the process for this pursuit took just over two years.

**PROJECTED SUPPORT AND SERVICES.** The services to be provided include broad technical support and

"We anticipate hiring more staff, especially in the host countries that we will be working, in support of USAID's goal of building local capacity. We also believe this contract will open up more teaming opportunities with other firms in the future due to the visibility it will give Trigon in the federal contracting and international development arenas."

advice to participating host government entities and regulatory bodies in overall institutional and infrastructure development including, but not limited to, policy, legal, regulatory, financial and commercial development and reform, feasibility studies, design and construction supervision, equipment and commodities provision, human resource development and training, operations and maintenance improvements, and private sector participation.

The assistance will be planned and implemented in coordination with other donors, national, provincial, and local governments, NGOs, community groups, and private and public enterprises as required.

Although the specific projects have not been shared by USAID to date, the projects under this contract will support the engineering aspects of USAID focus sectors, such as:

- **Education:** schools, water supply and distribution systems, wastewater collection and disposal, information communication technology, power supplies
- **Environment and global climate change:** hydroelectric dams and storage reservoirs, green buildings and sustainable construction, power station systems, power generation from alternative sources
- **Health:** hospitals, clinics, solid waste and medical waste collection, recycling and disposal
- **Water and sanitation:** water resource management, urban and rural water systems, drinking water

See TRIGON, page 8



# SPOTLIGHT ON: Doing

## Addressing global problems with design

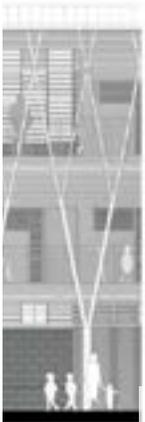
McLennan Design uses green design methods in the hopes of changing the way people view and interact with the natural world.



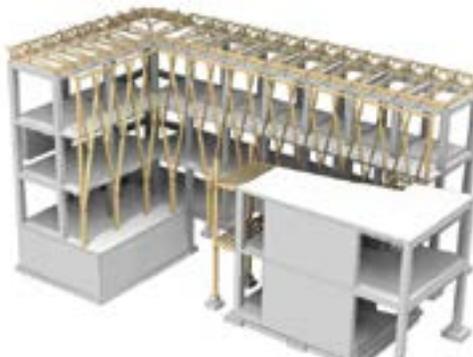
William Jefferson Clinton Children's Center, Haiti



William Jefferson Clinton Children's Center, Haiti



William Jefferson Clinton Children's Center, Haiti



By Liisa Andreassen  
Correspondent

Jason McLennan, founder of the Living Building Challenge, plans to launch a new architecture and planning firm to focus on globally significant design projects. **McLennan Design** (Bainbridge, WA), a nine-person firm, will team with other leading architectural firms and organizations to design deep green, regenerative projects, which aim to transform the building market worldwide.

“My goal has always been to help transform humanity’s relationship with the natural world as quickly as possible,” McLennan says. “I believe that through better design, we can address the globe’s most pressing problems – climate change, habitat and species loss, and social inequities – while elevating regenerative design solutions to beautiful and meaningful art forms.”

McLennan Design will work across all scales – from designing new products to the design of living buildings and net zero facilities and the planning of entire neighborhoods and communities. In fact, the firm has already landed several high-profile design projects in several countries, including the William Jefferson Clinton Children’s Center in Haiti, the world’s first living building resort in partnership with the award-winning actor Leonardo DiCaprio, and a living building planning project at Yale University.

McLennan is also launching the Green Warrior Society in collaboration with other design and engineering firms. The charitable design arm will provide free or deeply discounted regenerative design services to qualified organizations and individuals around the world.

McLennan launches his firm alongside senior partners Dale Duncan and Tom Knittel, who share his interest in setting new standards for design and construction across multiple scales including products, buildings, and communities.

McLennan Design also has a strategic partnership with the Integral Group, a large international engineering firm noted for innovation and leadership in sustainability.

**WHAT IS A REGENERATIVE DESIGN?** Implicit in the term regenerative is that the context matters deeply: ecological, social, material, and energy flows are place-specific.

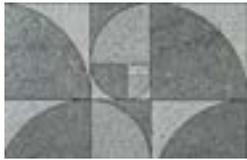
“Our goal is to actively restore ecological resilience, seek cultural and social improvements, celebrate local material practices, and rid carcinogens and unhealthy micro-biomes from buildings and landscapes, and find the right energy balance in a specific climate zone using the technology we have today to be net-zero or net-positive,” Knittel says.

The Save a Warrior village they are designing in Kansas City is one example of this. It is a retreat facility for veterans coping with

# ing Good:

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## MATERIALS USED IN LIVING BUILDING PROJECTS

Coldspring Granite teamed up with McLennan to develop and launch Earth Measure. Small pieces of remnant stone from other stone products that are normally ground up as aggregate are fully utilized in this design-materials product line.

post-traumatic stress and offers a series of activities designed for healing and re-entry to normal life. The concept of living buildings, deeply connected with place and resources, fits their core philosophy and mission.

**WANT TO GO FAR? GO TOGETHER.** The William Jefferson Clinton Children’s Center is a project started with Rick Fedrizzi and the U.S. Green Building Council’s decision to rebuild an orphanage for Foundation Infant Jesus, which led to an all-volunteer charrette that included their mentor Bob Berkebile.

“HOK agreed to take on the design pro-bono,” Knittel says, who joined the HOK team and over time took the design lead. “Since May of this year, we have been continuing this great work at our green Warrior Society through McLennan Design. I can’t say enough about how critical and important the ground work HOK did for the client was and this vision continues now as we finish the project.”

Now there is a new team of volunteers on the engineering side, and Roger Limoges at the USGBC and Al Skodowski at Transwestern are pushing it all forward.

“We are making it work on a new site, with many design refinements and new developments. The African proverb ‘if you want to go fast, go alone, if you want to go far, go together’ is correct here,” he says.

The orphanage will be designed to LEED Platinum standards, and includes a training and administration wing that also supports the two other orphanage sites. The most important thing is that the design supports a safe and nurturing environment.

The project is oriented to capture the trade winds, and the three-story courtyard is framed by a wood structure that grows like a tree. It’s designed to function with natural ventilation principles, solar energy provides all electrical needs, and water usage is innovative, using rainwater and deep aquifer sources. Local labor up-skilling, and the integration of Haiti’s vibrant decorative arts is a big part of the approach.

**LUXURY MEETS SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY.** So, how do you change the expectations of luxury to one of personal and social responsibility and environmental restoration? The first living building resort in the world, consisting of a hotel, multiple rental homes, over-the water villas, and other amenities will serve some of the world’s most influential global citizens.

Construction is slated to begin late this year and showcases an entire village that is powered by renewable energy, onsite ecological water treatment, and other deep green strategies as part of a major ecological restoration and habitat preserve. Major issues to be tackled include how to adapt to climate change, rising sea levels, ocean acidification, and habitat loss, with goals to restore and build greater resilience through ecological health and economic development. ▀



Blackadore Caye



Blackadore Caye, Dock



Leonardo DiCaprio’s eco-resort, Belize

## DOING GOOD

**REPORT EXPLAINS WHAT WORKERS GET FROM GIVING BACK** With the holidays approaching, many people may be looking for opportunities to give back. What they may not realize is how their community service also could be helping their careers. In a Robert Half survey ([roberthalf.com/management-resources/blog/strengthening-your-business-network-through-volunteering](http://roberthalf.com/management-resources/blog/strengthening-your-business-network-through-volunteering)), more than four in 10 (41 percent) U.S. professionals said they volunteer outside of work.

Respondents said their philanthropic activities help them improve their sense of well-being and effectiveness at the office (61 percent), expand their network (57 percent), develop new skills (49 percent), and enhance their company's visibility (35 percent). The research also revealed demographic differences: More male (45 percent) than female professionals (37 percent) said they volunteer outside of work. Greater numbers of workers ages 18-34 (49 percent) reported donating their time than colleagues ages 35-54 (35 percent).

"Volunteering can help employees at any level build their careers," said Paul McDonald, senior executive director for Robert Half. "Not only does it provide the gratification of giving back to the community, but it could open doors to a new professional opportunity or business connection."

McDonald added, "Managers may find that encouraging their employees to volunteer is a beneficial retention and recruitment tool. Many professionals value the chance to give back to causes that are important to them and their community."

For those who aren't presently volunteering outside of work, Robert Half offers the following four tips for getting started:

- **Find an organization in need.** Search for organizations you care about in your community ([volunteermatch.org/](http://volunteermatch.org/)) and then contact them to see how they could use your help. Be sure to explain your particular skills and interests.
- **Invite your colleagues to join you.** One person can make a big impact, but there could be power in numbers if your coworkers come, too.
- **Look beyond the holidays.** There are community service opportunities available throughout the year, such as park cleanups and exercising for a good cause.

TRIGON, from page 5

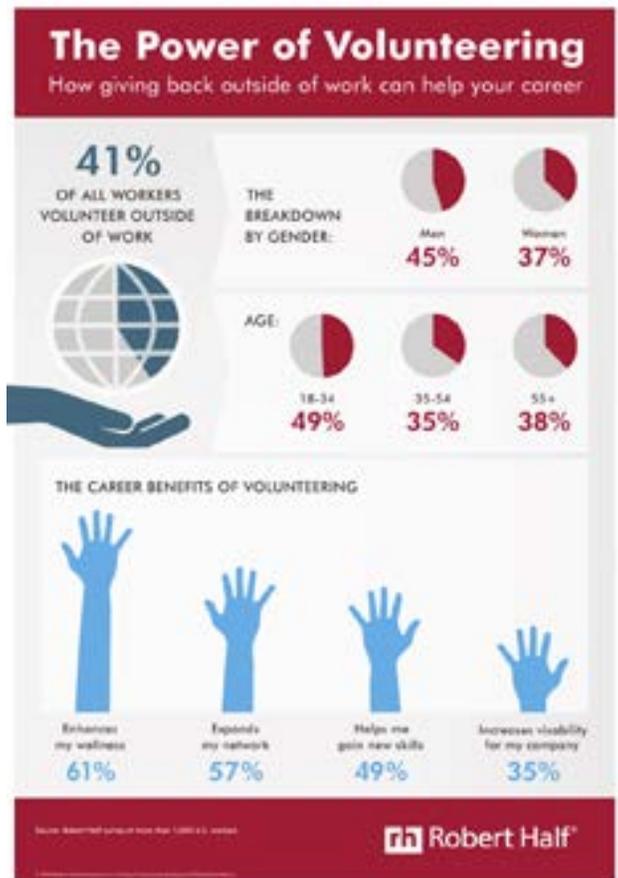
disinfection, watershed management systems, alternative water treatment systems, drainage basins and irrigation systems, dams and storage reservoirs, flood control programs, groundwater resources, wastewater collection, treatment and disposal, wastewater recycling, materials reuse, coastline erosion mitigation

- **Economic growth and trade:** shipping and transportation systems, power generation, transmission and distribution
- **Agriculture and food security:** irrigation systems, erosion mitigation, buildings, roads, ports, railroads, and bridges that support agriculture projects

"A specific area which we anticipate working on will be to provide technical assistance to host country institutions, such as for planning and establishing technical requirements, policies, and procedures," Cookmeyer says. "And projects/task orders could occur anywhere in the world that USAID has a presence."

**PRIME GROWTH.** Cookmeyer believes that this project will support the firm's growth, especially as it is a significant federal contract for Trigon as a prime.

"We anticipate that this will allow Trigon to develop more experience as a federal prime contractor which will be beneficial in other pursuits," she says. "We anticipate hiring more staff, especially in the host countries that we will



"Trigon will provide A/E services that include design, construction supervision, and related support on both short- and long-term services for infrastructure projects involving water resources, water supply, wastewater, utilities, environmental, transportation, and facilities to develop vitally important infrastructure in developing countries."

be working, in support of USAID's goal of building local capacity. We also believe this contract will open up more teaming opportunities with other firms in the future due to the visibility it will give Trigon in the federal contracting and international development arenas."

The bottom line is that Trigon is excited about this award, taking it as a significant vote of confidence from USAID in their capacity and capability.

"We look to continue our focus on our core principals of quality, commitment, and client service to successfully deliver the services under this IDIQ contract and use this experience to further expand our client base," she says. ▀

## PROFILE



# Blu Homes: Faster and greener

California-based firm Blu Homes is changing the way people think about prefabricated construction.

By SARA PARKMAN  
Editor

One firm in California says that it can build homes in half the time it takes to build conventional custom homes. Despite the shorter timeline, the firm isn't skimping on quality. The homes feature spacious lines, soaring ceilings, and walls of glass that seamlessly connect interiors to the outdoors.

The firm is **Blu Homes** (Vallejo, CA) – the leading provider of premium prefab homes in California. “Prefab” is a broad term that encompasses several different types of building. Technically, any home that has sections of the structure built in a factory and then assembled onsite can fall under the prefab designation. Just because the homes are partially built in a factory doesn't mean that they are any less personalized or customizable than a custom home.

Though there are only six different homes to choose from at the moment – ranging in size from 633 square feet to 3,655 square feet – all are fully customizable. The firm utilizes online 3-D tools to enable customers to easily design their homes. Clients can choose everything from fixtures to finishes, and can even add on a garage or a deck. In some

“A Blu Home has about half the energy costs of a traditional home with twice the insulation, low flow fixtures, energy efficient appliances, an easy solar installation option, and more.”

of the homes, there is also an option for an extended living area.

“Some people still think prefab means double-wide trailers or mobile homes,” says Stephanie Nixon, a visual designer with Blu Homes. “We have to educate people about what prefab is and how it is more sustainable and better constructed than traditional homes.”

Blu Homes was launched in 2008 by Bill Haney, an environmental and technology entrepreneur, and Maura McCarthy, an analyst and investor in consumer goods and tech companies. With founders that are interested in the environment and technology, it's no wonder the firm uses technology to simplify the production of homes that are energy

See BLU HOMES, page 10



## INDUSTRY NEWS

### 75 PERCENT OF CONSTRUCTION COMPANIES WERE AFFECTED BY FRAUD IN THE PAST YEAR

Three quarters (75 percent) of construction, engineering, and infrastructure companies have experienced a fraud incident in the past year, according to the 2015 Kroll Global Fraud Report.

The findings reveal the most common type of fraud experienced in the sector was theft of physical assets or stock, experienced by 36 percent of construction companies, followed by vendor, supplier or procurement fraud (24 percent). These are some of the highest incidence rates of any sector surveyed and are second only to levels experienced by the retail industry. Respondents in this sector also reported the highest level of regulatory or compliance breach fraud (18 percent) of any sector surveyed.

Nine in 10 (92 percent) respondents in the construction industry say their exposure to fraud has increased in the past year, the highest increase in fraud exposure of any sector. The biggest drivers of this are high staff turnover (49 percent) and entry to new, riskier markets (21 percent). In terms of responsibility, a senior executive or middle manager was involved in a fraud against the company at just under one-third (32 percent) of all construction firms surveyed.

Despite problems caused by high staff turnover, only 30 percent of construction companies are looking to invest in background screening in the coming year and just 25 per-

Type of Fraud	Firms Affected in Past Year
Theft of physical assets	36 percent
Vendor, supplier, or procurement fraud	24 percent
Regulatory or compliance breach	18 percent
Internal financial fraud	11 percent
Corruption and bribery	11 percent
Information theft	9 percent
Management conflict of interest	9 percent
IP theft	7 percent
Money laundering	4 percent
Market collusion (price fixing)	4 percent
Misappropriation of company funds	1 percent

cent plan to spend on management controls – less than the survey average.

Daniel Karson, chairman of Kroll, observed, “One of the most telling results from this year’s report is how vulnerable to fraud companies are feeling. In one form or another, the specter of fraud arises in virtually every business relationship. What our report drives home is that fraud is often an “inside job” and that companies must address both internal and external relationships if they are to most effectively protect their money, property and private data.”

“While technology has enabled new ways to perpetrate fraud, our daily work with clients

confirms what the report also reveals — that old fashioned theft, bribery and kickbacks are still amazingly effective and pervasive,” he said. “Human nature being what it is, fraud will always be with us, whether it occurs in a company’s corner office or a world away in its supply chain. However, there are numerous strategies, resources and best practices available to companies that can go a long way toward helping them protect themselves and their investments.”

The Kroll Global Fraud Report 2015 includes a full detailed industry analysis across a range of fraud categories and regions. To obtain a copy, visit [kroll.com/global-fraud-report](http://kroll.com/global-fraud-report).

BLU HOMES, from page 9

efficient and that use environmentally responsible building materials.

“A Blu Home has about half the energy costs of a traditional home with twice the insulation, low flow fixtures, energy efficient appliances, an easy solar installation option, and more,” Nixon says.

In fact, Blu Homes that have solar panels installed have achieved net-zero status, meaning that the total amount of energy used annually is equal to the amount of energy created on the site.

Some home buyers might still be put off by a home that’s partially built in a factory, but Nixon cites that as one of the main reasons that prefab construction results in homes that are – in many ways – superior to traditionally constructed homes.

“Like any industry, building homes in a controlled factory environment allows for better quality, greener, and faster built homes,” Nixon says. “We believe this is the best way to provide people with a better home-building experience and a premium product.”

Partially building the homes in a factory also prevents some

problems that can arise in traditionally constructed homes.

“Our homes are built in a controlled factory environment as opposed to a traditional home, where build materials are left out in the elements and can cause mold and allow termites to be sealed up in your home.”

The homes are built with steel frames that fold down, so that they can be shipped and unfolded once they’re placed at their final sites. They fit onto standard trucks for shipping across North America, and once placed onsite they unfold to reveal living spaces up to 41 feet wide and 18 feet high. And because Blu Homes are built with steel instead of traditional wood, they’re also more durable than traditional homes.

“Our steel framed homes last about 80-plus years, compared to the 60-plus years of a traditional home. We also have an extensive warranty program to provide peace of mind within the first 5 years of your purchase,” Nixon says.

While Blu Homes can be found from New York to Colorado and along the Pacific Coast, the vast majority are in California. According to Nixon, the firm is looking to change that.

“Blu Homes is focused today on building in the Bay Area, but in the next five years, we hope to serve other areas of the country.” ▀

## OPINION

# Are you stressed out?

You have to recognize self-imposed stress before you can reduce it; here are six steps to help you accomplish both.



STEPHEN LUCY

### BEST PRACTICES

If you are like most of your peers, you did not think about what your everyday stress level might be when you chose to pursue a career in the AEC industry. You considered the magnificent buildings you would design, the vital infrastructure you would develop, or the positive societal impact your projects would provide. You did not consider the stress caused by the hunt for work during a recession, the search for staff during the recoveries, or the clients who demand immediate attention.

Some of the causes of this stress are outside your control, but much of the stress in your job is caused by you, either through your own actions or by the processes you have established in your firm. Just as stress can be a major contributor to health problems, stress can also be a major source of dysfunction within a company. So what can you do to recognize the problem areas and mitigate the stress within your professional life?

**STEP 1. Admit you have a problem.** No one likes to admit to themselves or others that they have a problem, but without acknowledging that you want to change, nothing positive will happen. This admission not only gets you ready to make changes, but it also shows others within your firm that you want to make changes that will probably be beneficial to everyone. As a leader, you set the tone and have a significant impact on the work experience of those around you. Odds are, if you make sound life and business decisions that result in reduction of your stress levels, you will do the same for your most valuable asset – your staff.

**STEP 2. Recognize the benefits and the harm of technology.** All you have to do is sit back and look around to see how tied people are to their smartphones. Every aspect of life, including recreation, has been permeated by technology. I have been in a meeting where the person next to me has sent me text messages about the meeting we were both sitting in instead of turning to me and talking.

Don't get me wrong, I am a big proponent of incorporating new technology into business practices, but dependence or focus solely on technology as a means to conduct business is problematic. In a society driven by immediate satisfaction, we must understand that technology may not make our lives easier, only more demanding. Address this by setting parameters on how often and willing you are to interface with clients and employees throughout the day and especially after work or over the weekends. Just as we recognize the importance of vacations, we need

to disengage at regular intervals to recharge.

**STEP 3. Understand that not all firm benefits are beneficial.** As with many of your firms, we offer flextime and remote work options with the thought that we are allowing our staff more freedom. However, with those “benefits,” are we really providing more freedom or are we actually tethering our staff to the office? Is there an expectation of a higher level of responsiveness because we have been so magnanimous to our staff?

Ready to reduce the stress of your job? It all starts by admitting you want to make a change and then following through with the plan.

In a recent Gallup study that explored the effects of mobile technology on business and well-being in the U.S., Gallup interviewed 4,475 working U.S. adults and found that nearly half of all adults working remotely at least seven hours per week experienced more stress from the previous day than those who reported no remote work time. This study indicates that what is presented as a benefit to employees is actually damaging their well-being.

The best benefit is one that benefits the recipient. We must be realistic about evaluating the true purpose of the perks we provide and how we oversee their use.

**STEP 4. Learn to say “no.”** As service providers, we are predisposed to be pleasers. When asked if we can help, we immediately say “yes” before we know the full extent of what is being asked of us. Why bother worrying about the minor details of staff availability or fees as the client wants us, and that is reward enough?

See STEPHEN LUCY, page 12



## BUSINESS NEWS

### LUCILE PACKARD CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL STANFORD EXPANSION REACHES WEATHER-TIGHT CONSTRUCTION MILESTONE IN ADVANCE OF EL NIÑO SEASON

The Lucile Packard Children's Hospital Stanford Expansion reached an important milestone this week, becoming weather-tight before the anticipated wet El Niño season begins. The 521,000 square-foot expansion and new main building is more than halfway through construction, and the exterior of the building is anticipated to be completed at the end of this year.

"We are one step closer to opening the nation's most technologically advanced, family-friendly and environmentally sustainable hospital for infants, children and expectant mothers," said Christopher Dawes, president and chief executive officer of Lucile Packard Children's Hospital Stanford. "Our innovative facilities will help set the stage for the future of health care for children, and we are grateful that we will be able to meet the increased demand for pediatric and obstetric care as the Bay Area population continues to grow."

Scheduled to open in summer 2017, the expansion will optimize the hospital's services and infrastructure, adding more beds, private rooms, state-of-the-art operating suites, family-friendly amenities and the flexible floor space the hospital needs to adapt to new technologies and streamline services. Designed by **Perkins + Will Architects** with Executive Architect **HGA**, the expansion almost doubles the size of the current hospital and adds 149 patient beds when completed. This will make a total of 397 licensed beds for the San Francisco Bay Area's largest enterprise for children and expectant mothers, and ensures families needing the highest quality of care will not be turned away due to lack of space.

"As the wettest expected winter in years quickly approaches, we're thrilled that the hospital construction is weather-tight," said Michael Lane, vice president of construction. "This accomplishment will help to ensure the future functionality of the building and keep us on schedule as we move into the final phase of construction."

Since the project broke ground in September 2012, more than 40 million pounds of steel and rebar have been installed to support the building. Interior work is now under way in addition to construction of some of the distinctive and child-friendly architectural elements of the new facility,



including the glass Tree House façade and outdoor Discovery Garden.

A leader in sustainability, the \$1.1 billion Lucile Packard Children's Hospital Stanford expansion is also setting a new standard for sustainable hospital design. 100 percent of the irrigation needs for the hospital landscaping and gardens will be harvested from rainwater and wastewater, saving approximately 800,000 gallons of water per year. Inside the hospital, water-efficient bathroom fixtures and fittings will reduce potable water usage by 30 percent.

With the hospital expansion and new main building, high-demand programs like the Heart Center, Johnson Center for Pregnancy and Newborn Services, Bass Childhood Cancer Center and more will have room to grow and benefit from the additional space.

"More-efficient floor plans based on user feedback from our staff, the people actually using the rooms, will allow us to provide seamless, family-centered care," said Jill Ann Sullivan, vice president of hospital transformation and space planning. "By making these adjustments, we were able to integrate new technology into patient spaces and deliver care more efficiently, while providing our patients and their families with the comfortable, therapeutic environment needed to heal."

STEPHEN LUCY, from page 11

I have been as guilty of this offense as the next person. I behaved like a squirrel storing nuts for the winter, as I did not want our staff to want for work in the lean times or for our competitors to have access to our clients. We joke about it now, but my partners eventually asked me to repeat the word "no" 10 times before I came into work each day so I could understand what it sounded like. Understanding that saying "no" is acceptable can be empowering and allows you to manage your stress and funnel your energies into more productive paths.

**STEP 5. Manage expectations.** How many of us have stated in our firm profiles that we provide the "highest" level of service or a level of service "exceeding" industry standards? We all have, as we want to differentiate ourselves from our peers. But by making that statement, we have established a level of expectation that we will never be able to obtain. Why do you want to set your firm up for failure and likely increase the level of stress to achieve the unachievable?

I was taught early in my career that it was more important to have honest, open communications with my clients than to promise the moon and risk failure. Setting unrealistic

goals for performance is a disservice to ourselves and to others. Establishing realistic expectations will not only allow you to better develop long-term relationships, but it will reduce the level of stress on you and your staff.

**STEP 6. Understand what you want to achieve in business and in life.** Work-life balance is much discussed and just as much ignored. My engineer dad retired 30 years ago at age 58, so you'd think I would have better priorities. But while he is talking about golf, I am talking about what I need to do over the weekend to get ready for the next workweek. Taking a step back from the conversation, it seems pretty clear who maintained the best life balance during their professional career. Learning to let go, when it comes to stress, is an important first step to getting your priorities in line.

Ready to reduce the stress of your job? It all starts by admitting you want to make a change and then following through with the plan. You are not alone and with the help of those around you, you can reduce the load on you and on others. Lift some of those pressures from your back, and bring the balance back into your world. ▀

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