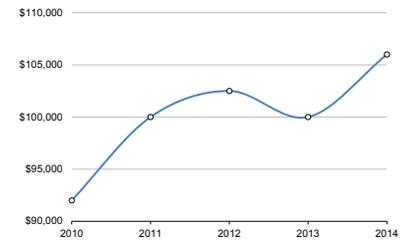


I like winners

Mark Zweig praises the winners of the 2014 Hot Firm List and Best Firms To Work For ranking.

TRENDLINES

Marketing pays



The 2014 Marketing Survey finds that marketing directors' total compensation has risen to a five-year-high of \$106,500 this year. At a low of \$92,000 in 2010, marketing directors' total compensation climbed to \$100,000 in 2011, and increased again to \$102,500 in 2012. This year's increase follows a drop to \$100,000 in 2013.

— Margot Suydam, Survey Manager

RIGHT NOW

Engage employees through social media

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I get energy, ideas, and inspiration from a positive group of can-do entrepreneurs and intrapreneurs whose firms are all working to make their firms – and our world – a better place.



Mark Zweig

EDITORIAL

With the winners of both ZweigWhite's Best Firms To Work For and Hot Firm competitions announced (both lists are found in this very issue of **THE ZWEIG LETTER**), it's great to see the excitement and joy as the principals of these firms find out they're on one or both of our lists.

You have to be doing something right or you wouldn't make these lists. When you consider that there are 100,000-plus design/planning/engineering/environmental consulting firms out there, being one of the best places to work or at the top of the growth stats is a real accomplishment. And it says that the marketplace is responding to your offerings – be that the employment market or clients.

That's why I am really looking forward to being with these winners at our all-new ZweigWhite Hot Firm and A/E Industry Awards Conference this September in Beverly Hills. I get energy, ideas, and inspiration from a positive group of can-do entrepreneurs and intrapreneurs whose firms are all working to make their firms – and our world – a better place. This year we combined two events into one "super-event." And then we decided to present even more awards at our conference. And then we got some

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MORE COLUMNS

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The importance of branding.
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Retail construction evolved.
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WINNERS REVEALED!

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WHAT'S WORKING



Video fusion

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A/E BUSINESS NEWS

AECOM SWALLOWS URS In one of the largest, if not the largest of all, deals in the A/E/P and environmental consulting industry, **AECOM Technology Corporation** (Los Angeles, CA) and **URS Corporation** (San Francisco, CA), announced July 13 the execution of a definitive agreement under which AECOM will acquire all outstanding shares of URS for a combination of cash and stock valued at approximately \$4 billion or \$56.31 per URS share, based on the AECOM closing share price as of July 11. Including the assumption of URS debt, the total enterprise value of the transaction is approximately \$6 billion.

The combined company will be a fully integrated infrastructure and federal services provider with more than 95,000 employees in 150 countries. It would have calendar year 2013 pro forma revenues of more than \$19 billion and EBITDA of approximately \$1.3 billion.

"This combination creates an industry leader with the ability to deliver more capabilities from a broad global platform to reach more clients in more industry end markets," said Michael Burke, AECOM president and CEO. "Clients, employees and stockholders of both companies will benefit from the opportunities created by these expanded capabilities, broad global reach in key growth markets and economies of scale. In one step, we will dramatically accelerate our strategy of creating an integrated delivery platform with superior capabilities to design, build, finance and operate infrastructure assets around the world."

Martin Koffel, chairman and chief executive officer of URS, said, "This is a compelling strategic combination that we believe will benefit our clients, stockholders and employees. URS stockholders will receive significant, immediate value from the transaction and will be able to participate in the future prospects of the combined company, which we expect will be better positioned to compete for major, complex projects across a diverse range of end markets and geographic regions."

Koffel continued, "Our two businesses are complementary, and our cultures are highly compatible. We anticipate that employees from the combined company will benefit as the organization integrates its leadership talent and capitalizes on its greater scale to invest in its people, improve their career opportunities and advance their capacity to compete globally."

AECOM stockholders will retain their shares following the consummation of the transaction. Upon completion of the transaction, URS stockholders will own shares that account for approximately 35 percent of the combined company, which will allow URS stockholders to participate in the prospects of a business that is well positioned to create long-term stockholder value. AECOM expects the combination to be accretive to its GAAP earnings per share and more than 25 percent accretive to its cash earnings per share in fiscal year 2015, excluding transaction-related costs. AECOM also expects annual cost synergies of \$250 million, nearly all of which it expects to achieve by the end of fiscal year 2016.

AECOM will become one of the largest companies by revenue in the engineering and construction industry. The combined firm will be headquartered in Los Angeles and will be the largest publicly traded company in that city. AECOM also expects to maintain a key operational presence in San Francisco, where URS is headquartered.

Burke will be the combined company's chief executive officer, and the companies have designed a new operating management structure that will include proven senior leaders from both URS and AECOM. John Dionisio, AECOM executive chairman, will be chairman of the board and, at closing, AECOM will elect two URS board members to the AECOM Board of Directors.

MARK ZWEIG, from page 1

exciting people from OUTSIDE our business, including Jonathan Ward of ICON – the creator of the absolutely coolest SUVs and hot rod cars and trucks I've ever seen; Greg Bentley of Bentley Systems, the leading software provider to our industry and an incredible privately held firm success story themselves; and marketing guru Michael Krauss – a guy who helped make Chips Ahoy the best known chocolate chip cookies in the world and rebrand Anderson Consulting into Accenture; and many, many more exciting speakers and panels.

We're going to hold this event in the world-famous Beverly Hilton (the last time I was there I saw Melanie Griffith, Demi Moore, and Sharon Stone all standing together at the bar!), peppering the lobby and conference area with ICON's vehicles and booths showcasing some of our winners' accomplishments – as well as much, much more. We're even planning some good giveaways this year.

2014 is shaping up to be a great year

Why not come join me and a number of other ZweigWhite principals and staff in Beverly Hills this September?

for many of the companies in this business. You are probably doing well. Our winners are doing especially well. If this sounds like fun, why not come join me and a number of other ZweigWhite principals and staff in Beverly Hills this September? You don't have to be a winner to attend, and you might actually learn something – and have some fun! What could be bad about that?

Meanwhile – read up on this year's winners in our special dedicated Hot Firm and Best Firms issue. Thanks and I'll see you in September! ▲▲

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2014 AWARDS

Here's the 2014 Hot Firm List

The 2014 ZweigWhite Hot Firm List is out, identifying the 100 fastest growing firms in the A/E/P and environmental consulting industry.

HOT FIRM AND A/E INDUSTRY AWARDS CONFERENCE

When: Sep. 25-26

Where: Beverly Hills, Calif.

How to register:

www.zweigwhite.com/conference

In an industry comprised of over 100,000 firms, those who have made the list have demonstrated their ability to grow, prosper and be recognized among the elite 100 fastest-growing firms. The economic recovery is well underway as firms on the list in 2014 boast an impressive median growth rate of 72 percent, up significantly from 44 percent in 2013.

“Getting on The ZweigWhite Hot Firm List is a tremendous achievement,” says Mark Zweig, firm founder and CEO. “That’s especially true now the economy is doing better. The goal post is getting higher!”

The success of growing firms will be celebrated along with other ZweigWhite award winners at the all new Hot Firm and A/E Industry Awards Conference (see box for details).

The Hot Firm List represents a look at the firms in the architecture, engineering, planning and environmental industries that posted the highest percentage revenue growth and dollar revenue growth over a three-year period compared to the other entrants.



TOP 5

1. **WSP Global Inc.**
2. **Surveying And Mapping, LLC**
3. **Landpoint** and **GATE, Inc.** (Tied)
4. **Hargrove Engineers + Constructors**
5. **DeNovo Constructors, Inc.**

Rank	Firm	HQ	State	Website
1	WSP Global Inc.	Montreal	QC	www.wspgroup.com
2	Surveying And Mapping, LLC (SAM)	Austin	TX	www.sam.biz
3	Landpoint	Bossier City	LA	www.landpoint.net
3 (tie)	GATE, Inc.	Houston	TX	www.gateinc.com
4	Hargrove Engineers + Constructors	Mobile	AL	www.hargrove-epc.com
5	DeNovo Constructors, Inc.	Chicago	IL	www.denovogrp.com
6	Westwood Professional Services	Eden Prairie	MN	www.westwoodps.com
7	Bowman Consulting	Chantilly	VA	www.bowmanconsulting.com
8	EN Engineering, LLC	Warrenville	IL	www.enengineering.com
9	Nova Consulting Group, Inc.	Chaska	MN	www.novaconsulting.com
10	Buckland & Taylor	North Vancouver	BC	www.b-t.com
11	Ware Malcomb	Irvine	CA	www.waremalcomb.com
12	Perkins Eastman	New York	NY	www.perkinseastman.com
13	The Vertex Companies, Inc.	Weymouth	MA	www.vertexeng.com
14	EHS Support LLC	Pittsburgh	PA	www.ehs-support.com
15	HGA	Ruston	LA	www.hga-llc.com
16	Natural Resource Technology, Inc.	Milwaukee	WI	www.naturalrt.com
17	LJA Engineering, Inc.	Houston	TX	www.ljaengineering.com
18	Matrix Technologies, Inc.	Maumee	OH	www.matrixti.com
19	BSB Design	West Des Moines	IA	www.bsbdesign.com
20	TerraTherm, Inc.	Gardner	MA	www.terratherm.com
21	JLG Architects	Grand Forks	ND	www.jlgarchitects.com
22	Testengeer Inc.	Port Lavaca	TX	www.testengeer.com
22 (tie)	The Thrasher Group Inc.	Bridgeport	WV	www.thrashergroup.com
23	Bartlett & West, Inc.	Topeka	KS	www.bartwest.com
24	Apex Companies, LLC	Rockville	MD	www.apexcos.com
25	SEPI Engineering & Construction, Inc.	Raleigh	NC	www.sepiengineering.com
26	CRB	Kansas City	MO	www.crbusa.com
27	O'Neal, Inc.	Greenville	SC	www.onealinc.com
28	Arrow Engineering Inc.	Edmonton	AB	www.arrowonline.ca
29	Woodard & Curran	Portland	ME	www.woodardcurran.com
30	Maser Consulting PA.	Red Bank	NJ	www.maserconsulting.com
31	I & S Group, Inc.	Mankato	MN	www.is-grp.com

Rank	Firm	HQ	State	Website
32	W&M Environmental Group, Inc.	Plano	TX	www.wh-m.com
33	Slater Hanifan, Group, Inc.	Las Vegas	NV	www.shg-inc.com
34	Tectonic Engineering & Surveying Consultants PC.	Mountainville	NY	www.tectonicengineering.com
35	Cardno	Portland	OR	www.cardno.com
36	CobbFendley	Houston	TX	www.cobbfendley.com
37	A. Morton Thomas and Associates, Inc.	Rockville	MD	www.amtengineering.com
38	Baseline Engineering Corporation	Golden	CO	www.baselinecorp.com
39	BSI ENGINEERING INC	Cincinnati	OH	www.bsiengr.com
40	Golder Associates	Mississauga	ON	www.golder.com
41	Wantman Group, Inc.	West Palm Beach	FL	www.wantmangroup.com
42	Harrison French & Associates, LTD	Bentonville	AR	www.hfa-ae.com
43	Houston Engineering Inc	Fargo	ND	www.houstoneng.com
44	Hill International, Inc.	Marlton	NJ	www.hillintl.com
45	BL Companies, Inc.	Meriden	CT	www.blcompanies.com
46	Olsson Associates	Lincoln	NE	www.olssonassociates.com
47	Jacobs Associates	San Francisco	CA	www.jacobssf.com
48	Sambatek, Inc (formerly MFRA)	Minneapolis	MN	www.mfra.com
49	Klohn Crippen Bergr Ltd.	Vancouver	BC	www.klohn.com
50	LHB, Inc.	Duluth	MN	www.LHBcorp.com
51	Wight & Company	Darien	IL	www.wightco.com
52	Wakefield Beasley & Associates Architects	Norcross	GA	www.WakefieldBeasley.com
53	Galier.Tolson.French Design Associates	Bedford	TX	www.gtfdesign.com
54	Array Architects	King of Prussia	PA	www.array-architects.com
55	Garver	North Little Rock	AR	www.garverusa.com
56	Marstel-Day, LLC	Fredericksburg	VA	www.marstel-day.com
57	Hillmann Consulting, LLC	Union	NJ	www.hillmannconsulting.com
58	Integral Consulting Inc.	Seattle	WA	www.integral-corp.com
59	Coffman Engineers, Inc.	Seattle	WA	www.coffman.com
60	Advantage Engineers	Mechanicsburg	PA	www.advantageengineers.com
61	Mulhern & Kulp Structural Engineering	Ambler	PA	www.mulhernkulp.com
62	Shive-Hattery, Inc.	Cedar Rapids	IA	www.shive-hattery.com
63	Mead & Hunt, Inc.	Madison	WI	www.meadhunt.com
64	Fehr Graham	Freeport	IL	www.fehr-graham.com
65	Braun Intertec	Minneapolis	MN	www.braunintertec.com
66	Viridian	Little Rock	AR	www.ViridianUSA.com
67	Great Ecology	San Diego	CA	www.greatecology.com
68	MMM Group Limited	Thornhill	ON	www.mmmgrouplimited.com
69	BrightFields, Inc.	Wilmington	DE	www.brightfieldsinc.com
70	MacKay Spósito	Vancouver	WA	www.mackaysposito.com
71	T&M Associates	Middletown	NJ	www.tandmassociates.com
72	ECS	Chantilly	VA	www.ecslimited.com
73	Environmental Management and Planning Solutions Inc	Boulder	CO	www.empsi.com
74	Michaels Energy	La Crosse	WI	www.michaelsenergy.com
75	VA Consulting, Inc.	Irvine	CA	www.vaconsultinginc.com
76	Leidos Engineering	Oklahoma City	OK	www.leidos.com/engineering
77	Cogstone Resource Management Inc.	Orange	CA	www.COGSTONE.com
78	The John R. McAdams Company, Inc.	Durham	NC	www.McAdamsCo.com
79	CR architecture + design	Cincinnati	OH	www.cr-architects.com
80	Cuhaci & Peterson Architects Engineers Planners	Orlando	FL	www.c-p.com
81	Arora Engineers, Inc.	Chadds Ford	PA	www.aroraengineers.com
82	WSB & Associates, Inc.	Minneapolis	MN	www.wsbeng.com
83	Ross & Baruzzini, Inc.	St. Louis	MO	www.rossbar.com
84	McCormick Taylor, Inc.	Philadelphia	PA	www.mccormicktaylor.com
85	Sam Schwartz Engineering, DPC	New York	NY	www.samschwartz.com
86	The Cadmus Group	Waltham	MA	www.cadmusgroup.com
87	Southeastern Archaeological Research, Inc.	Newberry	FL	www.searchinc.com
88	BKF Engineers	Redwood City	CA	www.bkf.com
89	Miyamoto International	Sacramento	CA	www.miyamotointernational.com
90	Crafton Tull	Rogers	AR	www.craftontull.com
91	Hall & Foreman, Inc.	Tustin	CA	www.hfinc.com
92	The Gateway Engineers, Inc.	Pittsburgh	PA	www.gatewayengineers.com
93	LS3P	Charleston	SC	www.ls3p.com
94	SCJ Alliance	Lacey	WA	www.scjalliance.com
95	Hanson Professional Services Inc.	Springfield	IL	www.hanson-inc.com
96	ESP Associates, PA.	Fort Mill	SC	www.espassociates.com
97	GDS Associates, Inc.	Marietta	GA	www.gdsassociates.com
98	Chen Moore and Associates	Fort Lauderdale	FL	www.chenmoore.com
99	EnSafe Inc.	Memphis	TN	www.ensafe.com
100	CME Associates, Inc.	Woodstock	CT	www.cmeengineering.com

2014 AWARDS

Here are the 2014 Best Firms to Work For

Firms ranked in five categories.

Once again, the Best Firms Work For in the A/E/P and environmental consulting industries have been identified.

Since the Best Firms To Work For Ranking began in 2001, hundreds of outstanding architecture, engineering, and environmental consulting firms have been recognized for their ability to inspire their teams to perform at the highest levels. These firms create an environment where their people feel valued, can make a difference, and can clearly see their contribution to the overall mission and success of the firm.

Firms that applied for this prestigious ranking were evaluated comprehensively on firm culture, workplace practices, employee benefits, employee retention rates, professional development, and more – both from the management and staff's perspectives. Awards were given in the categories of architecture, civil engineering, environmental, multidiscipline, and structural engineering.

The winners will be celebrated at the Hot Firm and A/E Industry Awards Conference held at the Beverly Hilton in Beverly Hills, Calif., on Sep. 25-26.

The full ranking follows in the next pages.

THE TOP WINNERS

ARCHITECTURE

1. Davis Bews Design Group, Inc.
2. The Collaborative
3. English + Associates Architects, Inc.

CIVIL ENGINEERING

1. Bowers + Kubota Consulting, Inc.
2. Nitsch Engineering, Inc.
3. Choice One Engineering Corporation

ENVIRONMENTAL

4. EHS Support
5. All4 Inc.
6. Comprehensive Environmental, Inc.

MULTIDISCIPLINE

1. Bowers + Kubota Consulting, Inc.
2. Garver
3. CRW Engineering Group, LLC

STRUCTURAL ENGINEERING

1. Hinman Consulting Engineers, Inc.
2. Structura, Inc.
3. Finley Engineering Group, Inc.



ARCHITECTURE

1. Davis Bews Design Group, Inc.
2. The Collaborative
3. English + Associates Architects, Inc.
4. NAC Architecture
5. JLG Architects
6. Cannon Moss Brygger Architects (CMBA)
7. Lionakis
8. FreemanWhite, Inc.

CIVIL ENGINEERING

1. Bowers + Kubota Consulting, Inc.
2. Nitsch Engineering, Inc.
3. Choice One Engineering Corporation
4. Provost & Pritchard Consulting Group
5. Foresite Group
6. V3 Companies
7. Hall & Foreman, Inc.
8. Comprehensive Environmental, Inc.
9. A Morton Thomas & Associates Inc.

10. West Yost Associates
11. Affinis Corp.
12. Delta Airport Consultants Inc.
13. P.W. Grosser Consulting
14. Transpo Group
15. EMCS Inc.
16. Crawford, Murphy & Tilly, Inc.
17. Timmons Group
18. LJA Engineering
19. Schnabel Engineering, Inc.
20. D.H. Charles Engineering, Inc.
21. Gunda Corporation, Inc.
22. Blueline
23. Leonard Rice Engineers, Inc.
24. Tighe & Bond
25. DKS Associates
26. R.A. Smith National
27. McAdams Co.
28. Kjeldsen, Sinnock & Neudeck, Inc.
29. Slater Hanifan Group
30. R&M Consultants

2014 AWARDS

31. Walter P Moore
32. Sanderson Stewart
33. Traffic Planning and Design Inc.
34. BKF Engineers
35. CP&Y, Inc.
36. Quad Knopf
37. KWC Engineers
38. Trigon Associates
39. Cannon & Cannon Inc.
40. Draper Aden Associates
41. Wantman Group, Inc.

21. SHW Group, now Stantec
22. Braun Intertec Corporation
23. Lionakis
24. Gale Associates, Inc.
25. Allana Buick & Bers, Inc.
26. R.E. Warner & Associates, Inc.
27. Half Associates
28. Nobis Engineering, Inc.
29. IIW, P.C.
30. RTM Engineering Consultants
31. Chen Moore and Associates
32. Sam Schwartz Engineering

ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

1. EHS Support
2. All4 Inc.
3. Comprehensive Environmental, Inc.
4. P.W. Grosser Consulting
5. TerraTherm, Inc.
6. Capaccio Environmental Engineering Inc.
7. Natural Resource Technology
8. Nova Consulting Group, Inc.
9. Quad Knopf
10. HELIX Environmental Planning, Inc.

MULTIDISCIPLINE

1. Bowers + Kubota Consulting, Inc.
2. Garver
3. CRW Engineering Group, LLC
4. Foresite Group
5. Kluber Architects + Engineers
6. Pond & Company
7. McDonough Bolyard Peck (MBP)
8. GATE, Inc.
9. Harper Houf Peterson Righellis, Inc.
10. GeoDesign, Inc.
11. Morrison-Maierle, Inc.
12. USKH Inc., now Stantec
13. Hanson Professional Services, Inc.
14. Architectural Engineering Design Group
15. E.K. Fox & Associates, Ltd.
16. JBA Consulting Engineers
17. Smith Seckman Reid, Inc.
18. O'Neal, Inc.
19. Maser Consulting P.A.
20. CP&Y, Inc.

STRUCTURAL ENGINEERING

1. Hinman Consulting Engineers, Inc.
2. Structura, Inc.
3. Finley Engineering Group, Inc.
4. SidePlate Systems, Inc.
5. Mulhern & Kulp Structural Engineering
6. Ehlert Bryan
7. Baldrige & Associates Structural Engineering, Inc. (BASE)
8. Schaefer
9. KL&A, Inc.
10. Beaudette Consulting Engineers
11. Integrity Structural Corp.
12. BHB Consulting Engineers
13. Walter P Moore
14. Reaveley Engineers + Associates
15. Magnusson Klemencic Associates, Inc.
16. JQ
17. PES Structural Engineers, Inc.

HOT FIRM AND A/E INDUSTRY AWARDS CONFERENCE

When: Sep. 25-26

Where: Beverly Hills, Calif.

How to register:

www.zweigwhite.com/conference

The importance of branding

Branding is more than a corporate concern, it is an organizational challenge.

More and more A/E firm leaders are realizing that branding is important in our industry. But as the A/E industry is embracing branding as a critical business strategy, we still have a way to go to fully understand the concept. Branding has often been viewed as a consumer products concern. Interestingly, it has wider implications for the A/E industry. Branding is defined as the marketing strategy of creating a name, symbol, or design that identifies and differentiates a product or service from other products or services. Let's discuss a few key points about branding that distinguish us from consumer products so we can better understand the importance and complexity of branding for our firms.

■ **Professional services firms have a very different, yet big job to do when it comes to branding.**

Consumer products have it easier than we do for several reasons. First of all, they have more control over their products. Factories that have tight quality control and manufacturing standards can produce a very consistent product. Second, consumer products firms can develop more consistent messaging for the markets that they serve. They don't have the variability in customers that A/E firms often do. Professional services firms are selling people and services, which can come with great variability in quality and results. Every project is different, with different constraints and challenges. Controlling the client's perception – along with the public and any other users – is difficult. For firms with multiple locations, this challenge increases greatly.

■ **The importance of the personal brand is immense.**

One of the most overlooked aspects of branding in A/E firms is building the personal brands of the company's representatives. Because we are selling the expertise and service of our people, much of branding comes out of the personal relationships that we develop and foster inside client organizations. It is therefore critical for firms to develop a branding strategy and identity that is drilled into the hearts and minds of every single employee. This is especially important for those who represent the firm to clients and the public. Firms need to be investing in adequate sales training for those who represent the firm externally. Each person needs to be able to leverage their unique personality while being mindful of the things they must do (and maybe have to change about themselves) in order to be an effective representative of the company and to positively reflect the overall company brand. These can include personal appearance, manners, clothing, language skills, and general approach.



Chad
Clinehens

BRAND BUILDING

■ **Differentiation is key for professional services firms.** This aspect is particularly difficult for firms to grasp. Many firms want to be all things to all people and this holds them back from really going deep and developing a differentiation strategy that defines a place for them in the market. Most firms just want to be in the market and have access to any client who may have a project they can qualify for. This leads firms to develop marketing materials that highlight a "commitment to quality" or "extensive experience" or "multi-disciplined". These do nothing for developing a brand. Again, going back to the definition above, if you are not differentiated from the competition, you do not have a brand. In fact, I see many firms that have strong differentiating qualities that they end up watering down with generic statements like the ones listed above. Don't be afraid to be different!

See CHAD CLINEHENS, page 12

A thoughtful and strategic approach to branding in your firm is enormously important. More firms are realizing this and although our industry was slow to adopt branding as a critical business function, the firms that invest now will rise above the competition.

Retail construction evolved

Cookie cutter is out of the scene, creating new opportunities for A/E firms.

The way business is executed within the retail construction industry may never be the same. The Great Recession is finally behind us, but it has since changed how retailers deliver stores, as well as how architecture and engineering professionals design them. The A/E delivery model is constantly being reimagined to meet the needs of the changing market, but typically not as quickly or drastically as in the last five years.

Before 2007, the industry was largely concentrated on ground-up construction. Architects and engineers were churning out prototype-based construction documents, producing hundreds each year, with special emphasis on strong and accurate prototype drawing sets. A well-developed, high quality prototype drawing set could often generate a set of construction documents delivered with A/E fees less than 1.5 percent of construction. Back then, the biggest problem was that retailers couldn't find acceptable real estate quickly enough to develop prototype buildings, as prime performing sites were not always readily available.

As the economy weakened, companies began to rethink the best way to control overhead and capital improvement costs in order to bolster a return on investment. Many companies scrapped plans for growth altogether; some refocused on efforts to refresh existing locations, while others eliminated entire construction departments via layoff. The A/E industry suffered the effects of the recession well before economists were willing to categorize it as such. In response, the industry had to adapt, reinvent and change its entire vernacular. Today, there are three major modifications to the way architects and engineers do business in retail construction: the reduced priority given to ground-up prototypical construction, the use of new technology to increase efficiency, and the composition of the A/E teams themselves.

THE DEMISE OF THE 'PROTOTYPE.' Focusing on retailers that develop out lots rather than those who occupy in-line retail spaces, the term "prototype" is typically reserved for ground-up construction. These retailers will usually have multiple prototypes to allow for comprehensive and flexible application due to variations in geography or demand. Often, the prototype documents are so detailed and developed to such a high level that client standards are contained implicitly within the prototype itself. Interior finishes, lighting levels, merchandising placement, circulation, spatial relationships between elements and other retailer-specific standards are captured and



Jason Christoff

GUEST
SPEAKER

implemented easily through the replication of the prototype. These standards are not necessarily documented elsewhere, as they are so easily executed within the repetition of prototype implementation.

So, what happens when ground-up construction stops? Retailers gripped by the poor economy had to be creative while seeking alternative, less expensive ways to bring products and fresh facilities to market. As weaker businesses began to fold, vacated structures in prime locations became available. In order to adapt to the changing market and save capital, interior renovations became prevalent and A/E firms created documents based on a kit-of-parts (or KOP).

See JASON CHRISTOFF, page 12

Thanks to the minimization of the cookie-cutter-architecture mentality, A/E teams are closer than ever to being an extension of the clients own staff. There is now more incentive to understand 'why' things are designed the way they are.

RIGHT NOW

Engage employees through social media

Design firms are collaborative environments by nature and social media fits that mold. But institute the rules first – and then enforce them.

By LIISA SULLIVAN
Correspondent

Architects and engineers already understand the value of collaboration and teamwork. As a result, they are well poised to take advantage of social media. They have the skills and the mindset to solve problems together – online or offline – and they already use document-sharing tools like BIM to collaborate. So, what are firms doing to engage employees in social media and what are they finding to be the most effective social media channels? Mixing it up, training and encouraging use are the keys to success.

“Through the use of news stories related to our markets and services to highlighting employee achievements, we can engage staff and create brand ambassadors.”

FACEBOOK AND LINKEDIN LEAD THE WAY. **H&A Architects & Engineers** (Glen Allen, VA), a 200-person firm, launched its social media program in 2010. It first started out with Twitter and LinkedIn, and then Facebook. It added Google+ to its roster in 2013.

When it comes to employee engagement, LaTonya Whitaker, senior associate, marketing and communications manager, says that Facebook and LinkedIn are the most effective.

“Since most of our employees are on Facebook and use it as a space to share personal stories, we want to provide content that will motivate them to interact,” she says. “For example, we post inspirational quotes that complement current events and photos from community outreach efforts. On the business side, LinkedIn is effective since a majority of H&A’s executive team is active on the network. Out of our 200 employees, 154 are connected to our company’s LinkedIn page.”

Whitaker finds that social media also helps to engage employees with the brand.



Greg Kanz,
Marketing
Director,
Shive-Hattery
Architecture
Engineering.

GOOD TO KNOW

Firms that use social networking sites for marketing or business development purposes are most likely to use LinkedIn (55 percent) and/or Facebook (36 percent).

Source: 2014 Marketing Survey, ZweigWhite: www.zweigwhite.com/p-2205-marketing-survey-2014

“Through the use of news stories related to our markets and services to highlighting employee achievements, we can engage staff and create brand ambassadors,” she says.

RESEARCH BACKS UP SOCIAL MEDIA EFFORTS. McKinsey Global Institute, the business and economics research arm of McKinsey, recently released

SOCIAL MEDIA TIPS

Greg Kanz, marketing director, **Shive-Hattery Architecture Engineering** (Cedar Rapids, IA) recently wrote an article for **THE ZWEIG LETTER** in which he shared tips on social media engagement. Here’s a summary of those tips:

- **Pick a point person.** This could be someone in marketing or a social media-savvy employee.
- **Train and encourage employees.** Help employees to make the transition to sharing professional content and make it part of their careers.
- **Map it out.** Provide guidelines and positive examples along with simple instructions.
- **Take baby steps.** Because of the business-centric nature of LinkedIn, this platform is a good place for employees to get started.
- **Go interactive.** Congratulate clients, partners and employees for accomplishments such as awards and special honors. Tag them in the post with the client’s handle (@) or use a hashtag (#) to trend events.
- **Tell a story.** Telling your client’s story through video is powerful.
- **Deep six silly voiceovers.** Keep videos natural. Let people speak in their own voices. Just make sure it is cleanly edited so it flows well.
- **Communicate and collaborate.** Social media plays a pivotal role at conventions and conferences. Remind attendees to use an event-specific hashtag (#) and interact with presenters or fellow attendees by mentioning them in posts.

a 40-page report: “The Social Economy: Unlocking Value and Productivity through Social Technologies.” It says that professional services firms, more so than other businesses, are innately social organizations. They depend very heavily on social interactions – with clients and among professional colleagues – to carry out their work and develop new business.

The MGI report lays it out as follows:

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BOOKS

BUSINESS ADVICE THAT STICKS TO YOUR RIBS!

Marilynn Deane Mendell, founder and president of WinSpin CIC, Inc., a growth strategy firm, and a frequent THE ZWEIG LETTER collaborator, uses her current experience as a well-documented entrepreneur, writer, and publicist in combination with her past life as one of the largest off-premise caterers in western New York, to cook up an inspiring book with recipes for both food and successful business.

“Each chapter reveals solutions to business pitfalls; intriguing ways a creative mind can improvise, along with best practices from ethical conduct to showing appreciation. Mendell explains how to gain balance and to be in a perpetual state of life learning,” one can read in the book’s description.

Of course, many of these tips can be applied to the A/E/P and environmental consulting industry, an industry Mendell

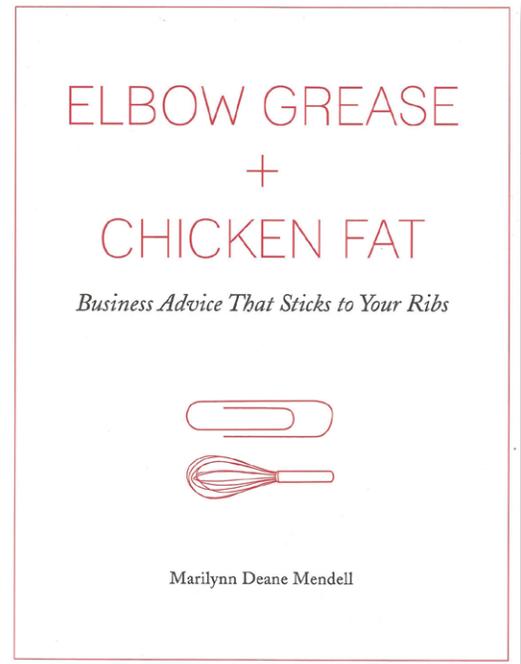
relishes.

Mendell speaks at national conferences, is often on television shows, and has been featured on ABC-TV Good Morning America.

Named Washington Women in PR’s Woman of the Year in 2008, Mendell also claims numerous other national awards for her business achievements as well as for her original client campaigns. She’s an adjunct professor at Georgetown and George Mason Universities, where she teaches marketing and business leadership to graduate students.

Bill Cunningham, television producer, Los Angeles, said, “Marilynn Deane Mendell’s inspirational book is not only a HOW TO but a WHY NOT? – offering entrepreneurial ingredients for tasty meals, healthy businesses, and fruitful lives. Delicious food for thought!”

“Each chapter reveals solutions to business pitfalls; intriguing ways a creative mind can improvise, along with best practices from ethical conduct to showing appreciation. Mendell explains how to gain balance and to be in a perpetual state of life learning.”



Find the book on Amazon at <http://amzn.to/1mR6M80>

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- Externally, social media is a powerful tool to build overall brand strength and awareness and to signal subject matter expertise.
- At relatively low cost, professional services firms can establish credibility as thought leaders with a wide audience.
- Firms can use social media – home pages, tweets, blogs – to share knowledge initiatives, circulate press releases or video interviews, stimulate debate around topical issues, and build public awareness about what they do.
- By creating and sharing valuable content, such as white papers, case studies, or how-to videos, even smaller professional services firms can create significant visibility and recognition as experts.

SPELL IT OUT. Shel Holtz, principal of Holtz Communication + Technology, a consulting firm that trains companies on the effective use of online platforms for communication, says that many companies question the appropriateness of giving their employees access to social media at work, but they shouldn’t. Much of the social networking that occupies employees’ online time can deliver competitive advantages to a company, he says.

Social media can turn your employees into brand ambassadors by promoting the company and its services to friends

and family. You just have to figure out how to turn this reality to your advantage.

and family. You just have to figure out how to turn this reality to your advantage. Doing so requires that leaders take several actions:

- Ensure policies are in place and well communicated, spelling out employee obligations and accountabilities when they’re engaging in social media at work. Nobody should ever be surprised when someone is disciplined for violating guidelines.
- Improve business literacy in your organization so employees are well-equipped to talk about the company. They may not be official spokespersons issuing statements of record, but they can still represent the organization well and drive sales and customer loyalty through their normal, day-to-day interactions.
- Offer training on social media so employees know the right way to use it. ▀▀

WHAT'S WORKING

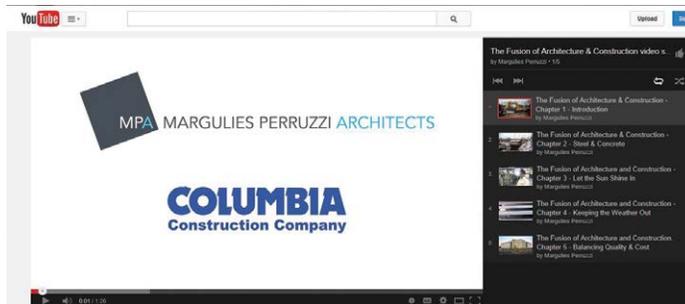
VIDEO FUSION Margulies Perruzzi Architects (Boston, MA), an architecture and interior design firm, teamed up with Columbia Construction to create a five-part video series that educates viewers on teamwork, design, and construction.

The video covers the design and construction of a new 160,000-square-foot building for Hobbs Brook Management in Norwood, Mass.

The series, titled "The Fusion of Architecture and Construction," illustrates the successful partnership and collaboration effort between the building owner, builder, and architect, while showing clients about building design best practices and providing an insider's look at the construction of a building.

MPA recently received an honorable mention in the Integrated Marketing Campaign category of the Society for Marketing Professional Services Boston 2014 Recognizing Outstanding Communications awards for the Hobbs Brook Management video series.

"Photography always shows the building well, but it doesn't say much about planning, process, or those who design and construct the space," said Barbara Hicks, director of marketing and media at Margulies Perruzzi Architects, in a press release.



"MPA and Columbia wanted this video series to go beyond a beautiful and efficient final product," Hicks said. "This video is distinctive because the filming process began before construction to tell the story of the entire project, not just the end result. Short of providing our target audience multiple site visits, the next best way to view the progression of this project is through video, providing different perspectives from all involved, yet all with the same goal."

The Hobbs Brook Management video series may be viewed at <http://bit.ly/1me2umf>.

AWARD WINNERS

BCA ARCHITECTS RECOGNIZED The Silicon Valley Business Journal has ranked **BCA Architects** (San Jose, CA), the 12th architectural firm in its annual rankings list, featuring its work in the assisted living market. This classification underlines a very successful year for BCA Architects and reflects how it is now celebrating its 25th anniversary.

With offices in San Jose, Sacramento, Orange County and Los Angeles, the team at BCA Architects has become a recognized thought leader in education within the state of California. They successfully master planned six of the school districts that passed bond measures earlier this summer, which was recognition of their team's ability to work with various communities on bringing 21st Century Education to their classrooms.

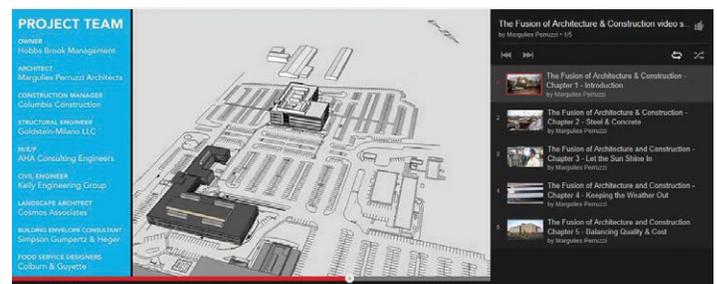
What's Working

- Series of five videos presents a more complex message in manageable bites.
- Teaming with another company is a great way to gain additional capacity, capability, reach new audiences, and provide a unique perspective.
- Short overview at the beginning of each video doesn't make a single video in the series appear out of context.

Results:

- Email blast click-through rates higher than industry benchmarks. Actual mean click through rate for this video series was 24 percent (lowest was 19.4 percent, highest was 31.2 percent). Exceeded goal by more than double.
- A return on the firms' investment on this video series in the form of new projects and/or increased leads.
- Positive viewer feedback.

"Short of providing our target audience multiple site visits, the next best way to view the progression of this project is through video, providing different perspectives from all involved, yet all with the same goal."



BCA has continued to expand over the past 25 years, most recently with the addition of Trevor Smith, the firm's first-ever Commercial Studio Project manager. Smith brings with him 14 years of experience as a commercial design professional and is excited to be leading BCA into the commercial market. This hire highlights BCA's expansion in the commercial space in California.

"As we celebrate our 25th anniversary, this affirmation from the Silicon Valley Business Journal encourages us to continue our work with clients needing expertise in the assisted living, 21st Century Learning Environments, and reuse of commercial spaces for charter schools in California," said Paul Bunton, president, BCA Architects.

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Your people can easily and quickly undo years worth of corporate branding efforts if they do not understand the importance of their own brand and how that fits into the corporate brand.

A thoughtful and strategic approach to branding in your firm is enormously important. More firms are realizing this and although our industry was slow to adopt branding as a critical business function, the firms that invest now will rise above the competition. As you approach this, realize that branding initiatives should touch every area of your firm and that the effort requires diligent effort to create and maintain a consistent brand across all service lines and

geographies. Additionally, the importance of aiding your firm leaders and representatives in developing personal brands congruent with the corporate brand is critical. Your people can easily and quickly undo years worth of corporate branding efforts if they do not understand the importance of their own brand and how that fits into the corporate brand. Lastly, start taking some risks and differentiate your firm and people with meaningful and specific value propositions that your clients can appreciate. If you need to ban generic phrases from all your marketing materials as a first step, then go for it. Brands in the A/E industry are built on trust. Trust is earned through meaningful marketing messages that are reinforced with reliable and consistent performance. Start building a trusted brand today. ▲▲

CHAD CLINEHENS is ZweigWhite's executive vice president. Contact him at cclinehens@zweigwhite.com.

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A KOP represents numerous individual design elements, for example, a customer reception desk and its associated lighting, finishes and adjacencies, which can be assembled with other "parts" to create an entire retail environment. However, a KOP alone is not adequate for comprehensive design. A plethora of additional information is needed to be extracted from clients about the programming, design and operations of the facility; information that had been previously taken for granted in the prototype-based development model.

EMERGENCE OF TECHNOLOGY. Client collaboration is even more critical outside of the prototype-based development model. The various client stakeholders need a greater level of involvement in projects, as the number of potential variables and project-based decisions increase dramatically. There is a balance between the ability to maintain and represent a space that reflects retailers brand identity, while catering to the actual characteristics of the space itself. The individual members of the client team responsible for making these decisions are often not used to this level of conceptualization, and not necessarily capable of thinking three-dimensionally. Traditional floor plans and elevations alone are not enough to paint the full picture of understanding to those who aren't used to looking at construction documents. To compensate, A/E teams have taken the use of technology as a visualization tool to the next level.

Utilizing 3D scanning technology in an existing facility allows for virtual walkthrough of unvisited spaces and easier integration into Building Information Modeling, producing photorealistic renderings and 3D printing of scaled physical models. Through these new visualization tools, we are able to portray a higher level of realism in order to communicate the as-built conditions and how they relate to the proposed concept. The shift in how the A/E team physically creates construction documents, how they communicate concepts and plug them into the client mentality, has been cause for a change in the overall

composition of the A/E team itself.

EVOLUTION OF THE A/E TEAM STRUCTURE. In the past five years there has been a significant change in the composition of retail A/E teams. Today, they seem to have a wider breadth of experience and understanding as well as greater flexibility and mobility, for the growing requirement of on-site observation. One of the most important factors is that they have a deeper understanding of meeting the goals of the client when delivering a building, rather than delivering it only to meet the characteristics of the site it sits upon.

Thanks to the minimization of the cookie-cutter-architecture mentality, A/E teams are closer than ever to being an extension of the clients own staff. There is now more incentive to understand "why" things are designed the way they are. Even the smallest details, such as "how many inches is the hand sink from the prep table" deserve to be pondered and discussed. When teams try to fit a square peg through a round hole, there evolves a deeper understanding for the design tradeoffs and priorities for elements that may not "fit".

Overall, A/E teams have been strengthened by numerous lessons learned throughout the economic downturn. Here, it is greater than the "do more with less" mentality that is echoed throughout nearly every industry. We have now learned a different way to staff projects, given the new set of steps involved to complete a project successfully. Fee structures and the menu of services offered to each project is more diverse and easier to navigate, with the desires of clients to see a more a-la-carte style of doing business. More importantly, we have diversified. The additional services that we now offer were developed in the effort stay on the cutting-edge of technology and to add value to our clients. If a design team can remain an invaluable resource to a client, the strength of those relationships can weather any economic storm. ▲▲

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