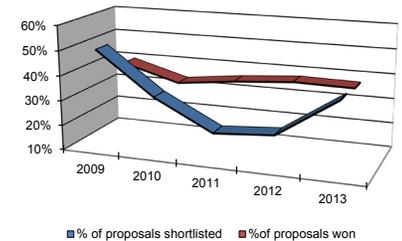


The people you associate with

Mark Zweig contrasts five examples of individuals best avoided.

TRENDLINES

The short list



According to ZweigWhite's 2013 Marketing Survey, A/E/P and environmental consulting firms report a significant increase in proposals shortlisted and a slight decrease in proposals won. In 2009, the percentage of proposals shortlisted hit a high of 50 percent, declining to a low of 21.1 percent in 2011. This year, the median increased to 38.6 percent from 22.9 percent in 2012. Meanwhile, the percentage of proposals won reached a high of 39.5 percent in 2009, dropping to low of 33 percent in 2010. After increasing to 35.7 percent in 2011 and to 37.5 percent in 2012, firms' proposal win rate decreased slightly to a median of 37.1 percent this year.

— Margot Suydam, Survey Manager



Mark Zweig

EDITORIAL

Those who are fully engaged are thinking about their work 24 hours a day. I get great ideas from them. I feed on their energy. Those who aren't never come up with anything new.

It has been said before that you “can tell a lot about someone by the company they keep.” It is such a true statement!

Successful people – like the CEOs on **THE ZWEIG LETTER** Hot Firm List (announced in this issue) really understand this. Their mood, energy level, opportunities, and morale are greatly impacted by the people they spend time with every day. You, too, can learn from their example, as I have over the years.

Here are my thoughts and observations:

- 1) Successful people like other successful people.** I'm not just talking about successful people in the same business or profession but also those who are successful in other fields of endeavor. You get ideas from things they are doing to be successful and some of them may be usable in your firm or life. Sure, you may be able to learn from a fool. But think how much more you can learn from a smart person!
- 2) Engaged people like other engaged people.** I put everyone I work with into one of two camps. Either they are engaged in their business or they aren't. Those who are fully engaged are thinking about their work 24 hours a day.

See MARK ZWEIG, page 2

FIRM INDEX

Cardno	3
Cline Design Associates, PA	11
Farnsworth Group, Inc.	11
Humphreys & Partners Architects, L.P.	4
KCI Technologies, Inc.	12
Life Cycle Engineering.....	9
LS3P.....	11
MBP.....	11
O'Neal	4
SAM, Inc.....	3
SFL+a Architects	4
WHR Architects, Inc.....	9

Here come the 2013 hot firms



Profiles of the top five **Pages 3 and 4**

The full list **Pages 5 and 6**

ALSO INSIDE

- BRAND BUILDING: An organization reenergized. Page 7
- HR: Employee referral programs are effective. Page 9

MARK ZWEIG, from page 1

Who are you associating with?

I get great ideas from them. I feed on their energy. Those who aren't never come up with anything new. They suck me down and lower my energy and enthusiasm. Whom do you think I want to hang out with?

3) High energy people versus low energy people. High energy people are starting new projects, going to new places, and doing things all of the time. Low energy people want to stay in the office, stay at home, and do nothing when they have a chance to do nothing. Life's too short!

4) Losers and hard luck cases can bring you down! It's really easy for me to say, "Don't hang out with people like this." I've generally been lucky in life and things tend to work out well for me. Some folks seem to have one disaster after another befalling them. Be careful about spending too much time with these people. Their bad luck can rub off on you in the form of negativity and cynicism. Both of those qualities will drag you down into the muck and mire.

5) Dishonest/unethical people. You know who these people are. They cheat every way they can – on taxes, on not following rules, and on screwing the other guy. Their whole value system is warped and basically comes down to, "It must be OK if you don't get caught." Now, I realize we're all adults here and no longer teenagers but peer pressure can still affect any of us. Watch out for these folks and steer clear of them. You could even have certain clients who clearly operate this way. Steer clear my friends – they aren't worth it!

Yep, the people you hang out with are either bringing you up or driving you down. Who are you associating with?

If you'd like to hang out with some really great folks come to our Hot Firm Conference and Awards Celebration in Miami's South Beach in October. You don't have to be a winner to attend but you will be a winner by attending! I promise! ▲▲

MARK ZWEIG is the chairman and CEO of ZweigWhite. Contact him with questions or comments at mzweig@zweigwhite.com.

A/E BUSINESS NEWS

ABI HOLDS STEADY: The Architecture Billings Index remained positive again in June after the first decline in 10 months in April. The American Institute of Architects reported the June ABI score was 51.6, down from a mark of 52.9 in May. This score reflects an increase in demand for design services (any score above 50 indicates an increase in billings). The new projects inquiry index was 62.6, up sharply from the reading of 59.1 the previous month.

As a leading economic indicator of construction activity, the ABI reflects the approximate nine- to 12-month lag time between architecture billings and construction spending.

"With steady demand for design work in all major nonresidential building categories, the construction sector seems to be stabilizing," said Kermit Baker, AIA chief economist. "Threats to a sustained recovery include construction costs and labor availability, inability to access financing for real estate projects, and possible adverse effects in the coming months from sequestration and the looming federal debt ceiling debate."

Key June ABI highlights:

- Regional averages: Northeast (55.6), South (54.8), West (51.2), Midwest (48.3)
- Sector index breakdown: commercial/industrial (54.7), multifamily residential (54.0), mixed practice (52.4), institutional (51.8)
- Project inquiries index: 62

APARTMENT MARKETS MIXED: While demand for apartment homes remained strong, rising interest rates exerted negative pressure on the industry's ability to secure debt financing, according to the National Multi Housing Council's (NMHC) July Quarterly Survey of Apartment Market Conditions. Only the Market Tightness Index (55) remained above the breakeven line of 50 this quarter. Sales Volume (46) and Equity Financing (49) dipped, with Debt Financing dropping sharply to 20.

"Debt costs for apartment firms have been rising. In addition to the 90 basis point increase in interest rates from the April survey, spreads over Treasuries have also gone up, likely dampening transactions somewhat. Rates are still low by historical standards, and at current levels should not put too big a crimp in apartment activity going forward," said Mark Obrinsky, NMHC's Senior vice president for research and chief economist. "Underlying demand trends remain strong, and we are approaching the cusp of a meaningful increase in supply

that will hopefully be enough to meet the current need for apartment homes."

Key findings include:

- Construction costs are rising nationwide. More than two-thirds (68 percent) of respondents indicated that construction costs had increased by more than 5 percent since last year.
- Market Tightness Index edged up to 55 from 54. Just 14 percent noted looser conditions in the markets they were familiar with.
- The Sales Volume Index dropped from 55 to 46. This was the second time in the last three quarters in which the Sales Volume Index was below 50, though just by a little.
- The Equity Financing Index dropped 7 points to 49. This was the first sub-50 reading in the last four years. Forty-nine percent viewed equity financing as unchanged.
- Debt Financing Index dropped sharply to 20 from 59. Two-thirds (67 percent) of respondents indicated that debt financing conditions had worsened since April, and 21 percent considered conditions unchanged.

Full survey data are available at www.nmhc.org/goto/61291.

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HOT FIRM 2013

Here come the 2013 hot firms

Winners represent diverse fields and show power of ambition.

By CHRISTINA ZWEIG
Contributing editor

Making **THE ZWEIG LETTER** Hot Firm List defines success for any participant in the A/E/P and environmental consulting industry.

In a crowded field of over 100,000 peers, only 100 firms make the Hot Firm List, which identifies the fastest-growing design firms in the U.S. and Canada (placement is based on firms' percentage revenue growth and dollar revenue growth over a three-year period compared to the other entrants). This year's top three demonstrate just how varied the 2013 Hot Firm List is, with firms of every possible size, type, location and structure imaginable.

Just as in 2011 and 2012, one aggressively expanding firm stands tall at the top.

#1 CARDNO



Paul Gardiner,
General
Manager, Cardno,
Americas and
Software.

Cardno, Americas Region (Portland, OR), the American arm of Brisbane, Australia-based 8,000-person professional infrastructure and environmental services firm with 220 offices around the world, has managed to carry out expansive growth while staying unified and profitable. In practice, that means that Cardno is No. 1 on the Hot Firm List for the third year in a row!

With a mix of service offerings, Cardno leaders believe that diversity and balance helps keep them strong. Cardno is growing both organically and by carefully planned mergers/acquisitions.

Paul Gardiner, general manager, Americas and Software, is responsible for the growth and successful performance of Cardno within the U.S. He attributes Cardno's continued successful growth to a number of factors, but especially

the firm's well-thought-out M&A strategy, and a strong culture.

"We are very selective in choosing partners, they have to be a cultural fit and help to fill a void," he says. "We don't go after turnarounds or those with a lot of overlap. We go for successful firms that show growth potential. We try to keep everyone and often want to add people – that's a much better way to start a good marriage."

When adding firms, Cardno focuses on maintaining goodwill and the other firm's brand. Gardiner says that while other companies may drop the brand of an acquired firm on day one, Cardno keeps it for a time and transitions it slowly, something that helps keep engagement. Gardiner says the 'Cardno-glue' of systems, processes and culture is something that helps in this and keeps the focus on people. He says people truly enjoy coming to work every day at Cardno and some have been with the firm (or another firm Cardno acquired), for many decades.

#2 SURVEYING AND MAPPING, INC. (SAM, INC.)



Samir Hanna,
President,
SAM, Inc.

SAM, Inc. (Austin, TX), was founded in 1994 and has risen to be a leader in geospatial services, now employing 571 people. SAM, Inc.'s "complete geospatial" approach is something that provides the firm with tools and skills to develop efficient and customized solutions for projects of any scale. The firm has a project portfolio that includes work in rail, roadway, aviation, electric, civic, and

federal sectors, and demonstrates their track record of surveying, geospatial, SUE and utility coordination services for a wide variety of clients.

"The cornerstone of our success has been a continuous focus on delivering the highest quality work to our clients. This has been reinforced by our unique ability to deliver a broad range of services to meet the most demanding project needs with efficient, integrated solutions," says Samir "Sam" Hanna, president.

So far, the firm has grown organically. Hanna says SAM, Inc., firm has recently begun to explore plans to extend growth through acquisition opportunities.

The firm has employed a careful strategy of expanding services and diversifying markets. According to the firm's award application, "By leveraging the talents of our professional workforce, we are able to bring our multidisciplinary expertise to bear across a range of geospatial solutions. The increases in people-power and corporate infrastructure have enabled SAM, Inc. to pursue substantial projects using the very finest technology available. We know that by investing in the best, we can deliver the best. Dedication to quality and value of service deliverables for our clients has been the foundation of our growth."

Continues on the next page

HOT FIRM 2013

#3 SFL+a Architects

SfL+a Architects (Raleigh, NC), a 24-person firm, defined the company's future by setting an audacious goal (or BHAG) "to become the nation's preeminent designer of high performance buildings with a specialty in alternative delivery methods."

"This goal shapes the company, from determining what markets to serve to defining how a building is designed. To support this process, the firm established innovative financing and delivery systems that allow design and construction teams to work together from the outset of the project. We are discovering new ways to bring projects to fruition," says Robbie Ferris, CEO.

The firm has grown organically, thanks to innovative financing and delivery systems that allow design and construction teams to work together from the outset of the project.

"Having the right people work at SfL+a has been the key. With the right people and with their understanding of our BHAG, our team works daily toward a common goal," Ferris says.

In 2010, SFL+A was awarded two multiple contracts with the US Army Corps of Engineers, which has helped to the company maintain its vision and success over the past three years.

Ferris says, "I am amazed every day at the opportunities our firm has. We are moving closer and closer to our BHAG and where this will take us, is exciting! The future for our industry is going to be very exciting. The downturn in the economy has been challenging but as we come out of it, the opportunities to redefine our future, prospects to get work and complete work is incredible."

#4 O'NEAL, INC.



Kevin Bean,
President and
CEO, O'Neal, Inc.

Founded in 1975, O'Neal (Greenville, SC), is a 240-person industrial engineering and construction company providing comprehensive services. As an EPC (engineering, procurement and construction) contractor, they focus on the business of project delivery – integrating overall project planning, design, procurement, and construction to create cost-effective capital solutions. O'Neal President and CEO Kevin Bean says, "As an employee-owned firm, our employees have the final word when it comes to the work environment and our overall success. Our work process is being changed every day by the emergence of new technologies and challenging projects. Our employee-owners consistently rise to meet these challenges and deliver successful projects."

Despite the challenges of the past few years, the firm has grown organically. Brian Gallagher, director of marketing says, "During the recession in 2009 and 2010, we chose to focus our resources on strategic targets in the industrial, chemical and pharmaceutical industries. Since then we've been fortunate to secure work and grow. While we did not acquire any other firms, we were able to add a number of very talented and experienced people in design, procurement, construction management, and business development. Since 2010, we've also increased our investment in business development and marketing. We've more than doubled our sales staff."

The firm also added two new strategic business units to offer additional services to clients and expand their current markets.

Bean and Gallagher attribute much of the firm's success to their unique approach to project delivery.

"The owner's capital approval process has become more stringent and drawn out as corporations manage smaller and less forgiving capital budgets," Bean says. "For this reason, engineering-lead engineer-procure-construct is becoming more prevalent and popular. The ability to develop realistic project definitions and 'go to market' based cost estimates are the new norm. Owner's project managers do not have the latitude for design and cost development that the traditional design-bid-build process requires."

#5 HUMPHREYS & PARTNERS ARCHITECTS, L.P.

Humphreys & Partners Architects, L.P. (Dallas, TX), is a 150-person architectural and urban design, masterplanning and land planning firm engaged in the design of high-rise, mid-rise, mixed-use, luxury, senior, affordable, military and student housing – both rental and for sale – in markets across the country.

Humphreys & Partners is the largest multifamily architect in the U.S., with seven U.S. offices and four international offices, designing approximately 12- to 15 percent of the U.S. apartment market, which equates to about 20,000 units in 2012. The firm says their size during the recession was a big asset. They're growing, hiring back early in order to capitalize on the "hot" multifamily market. The firm also attributes success to their horizontal management structure, something that has cultivated an environment that drives innovative thinking and instills a desire in the team to succeed.

Humphreys & Partners Architects is sought after for projects across the U.S. due to their in-depth knowledge of trends and demographics nationally. The firm has developed a number of technologies including "The Big House," e-Urban and the groundbreaking e-Max for apartments, and the Home-Rise for high-rise residential.

CELEBRATE AT THE HOT FIRM CONFERENCE

The success of growing firms is celebrated at **THE ZWEIG LETTER** Hot Firm Conference, an event ZweigWhite Founder & CEO Mark Zweig calls, "the single most fun, inspirational, and exciting event for our industry."

This year's conference, Oct. 24 and 25, will take place at the Eden Roc Hotel in Miami Beach, Fla. Hot Firm winners and many other CEOs, principals and entrepreneurs will gather for two days of education, participation, networking and celebration – including a black tie dinner and reception where award winners will receive awards and be acknowledged during a special awards ceremony. The success stories of Hot Firms will be shared at the event, along with a variety of speakers who will challenge and inspire other firms to achieve even greater success.

"Anyone who has been there can tell you we always have a great time, and this year's event will be better than ever!" Mark Zweig says.

This year's event will feature a new track specifically for "future leaders of growing firms" that will include sessions on business development, strategic planning, and other topics designed to prepare people for the demands and challenges of managing fast growing A/E firms. Activities will also be held for spouses and families.

HOT FIRM 2013

Firm handle on the top spot

Three times is the charm for **Cardno**.

For the third year in a row, the American arm of the Brisbane, Australia-based infrastructure and environmental services company topped **THE ZWEIG LETTER** Hot Firm List.

However, the firms that follow on the list are newcomers to the top three: **Surveying And Mapping, Inc.** and **SfL+a Architects**. (See complete list below.)

These and the remaining members of **THE ZWEIG LETTER** 2013 Hot Firm List will be honored at **THE ZWEIG LETTER** Hot Firm Conference, Oct. 24 and 25 in Miami Beach, Fla.



THE TOP 5

1. **Cardno**
Portland, OR
2. **Surveying And Mapping, Inc. (SAM, Inc.)**
Austin, TX
3. **SfL+a Architects**
Raleigh, NC
4. **O'Neal, Inc.**
Greenville, SC
5. **Humphreys & Partners Architects, L.P.**
Dallas, TX

Rank	Firm	HQ	State	Website
1	Cardno	Portland	OR	www.cardno.com
2	Surveying And Mapping, Inc. (SAM, Inc.)	Austin	TX	www.saminc.biz
3	SfL+a Architects	Raleigh	NC	www.sfla.biz
4	O'Neal, Inc.	Greenville	SC	www.onealinc.com
5	Humphreys & Partners Architects, L.P.	Dallas	TX	www.humphreys.com
6	GENIVAR Inc.	Montreal	QC	www.genivar.com
7	Watermark	Lowell	MA	www.watermarkenv.com
8	Hunt, Guillot & Associates, LLC	Ruston	LA	www.hga-llc.com
9	Hargrove Engineers + Constructors	Mobile	AL	www.hargrove-epc.com
10	Harrison French & Associates, LTD	Bentonville	AR	www.hfa-ae.com
11	EN Engineering, LLC	Warrenville	IL	www.enengineering.com
12	Buckland & Taylor	North Vancouver	BC	www.b-t.com
13	Braun Intertec	Minneapolis	MN	www.braunintertec.com
14	Pond & Company	Norcross	GA	www.pondco.com
15	Anderson Engineering Co. Inc.	Salt Lake City	UT	www.andersoneng.com
16	Core States Group	Ambler	PA	www.core-eng.com
17	HBA / HIRSCH BEDNER ASSOCIATES	SANTA MONICA	CA	www.hba.com
18	SEPI Engineering & Construction	Raleigh	NC	www.sepiengineering.com
19	GATE, Inc.	Houston	TX	www.gateinc.com
20	Gateway Engineers	Pittsburgh	PA	www.gatewayengineers.com
21	Apex Companies, LLC	Rockville	MD	www.apexc.com
22	JLG Architects	Grand Forks	ND	www.jlgarchitects.com
23	EHS Support LLC	Pittsburgh	PA	www.ehs-support.com
24	I & S GROUP, INC.	MANKATO	MN	www.is-grp.com
25	Ware Malcomb	Irvine	CA	www.waremalcomb.com
26	Klohn Crippen Berger Ltd.	Vancouver	BC	www.klohn.com
27	Array Architects	king of prussia	PA	www.array-architects.com
28	Landpoint, Inc.	Bossier City	LA	www.landpoint.net
29	KSQ Architects	Tulsa	OK	www.ksqarchitects.com
30	Testengeer Inc.	Port Lavaca	TX	testengeer.com
31	A. Morton Thomas and Associates, Inc.	Rockville	MD	www.amtengineering.com
32	exp Global Inc.	Montreal	QC	www.exp.com
33	Hatch Mott MacDonald	Millburn	NJ	www.hatchmott.com

HOT FIRM 2013

Rank	Firm	HQ	State	Website
34	M&S Engineering	Spring Branch	TX	www.msengr.com
35	BSI ENGINEERING INC	Cincinnati	OH	www.bsiengr.com
36	Matrix Technologies, Inc.	Maumee	OH	www.matrixti.com
37	Thrasher Engineering, Inc.	Clarksburg	WV	www.thrashereng.com
38	FRCH Design Worldwide	Cincinnati	OH	www.frch.com
39	Trihydro Corporation	Laramie	WY	www.trihydro.com
40	Maser Consulting PA.	Red Bank	NJ	www.maserconsulting.com
41	Ehlert/Bryan, Inc.	McLean	VA	www.ehlert-bryan.com
42	Haynes Whaley Associates	Houston	TX	www.hayneswhaley.com/
43	Pennoni Associates	Philadelphia	PA	www.pennoni.com
44	T.Y. Lin International	San Francisco	CA	www.tylin.com
45	LHB, Inc.	Duluth	MN	www.LHBcorp.com
46	JBA Consulting Engineers	Metairie	LA	www.jbace.com
47	Hart Crowser, Inc.	Seattle	WA	www.hartcrowser.com
48	Integral Consulting Inc.	Seattle	WA	www.integral-corp.com
49	Great Ecology	La Jolla	CA	www.greatecology.com
50	BrightFields, Inc.	Wilmington	DE	www.brightfieldsinc.com
51	Lowe and Associates dba LAI Engineering	Marietta	GA	www.laiengineering.com/
52	Sanderson Stewart	Billings	MT	www.sandersonstewart.com
53	GEI Consultants, Inc.	Woburn	MA	www.geiconsultants.com
54	MacKay Sposito	Vancouver	WA	www.mackaysposito.com
55	Bartlett & West, Inc.	Topeka	KS	www.bartwest.com
56	HDR	Omaha	NE	www.hdrinc.com
57	ACAI Associates, Inc.	Fort Lauderdale	FL	www.acaiworld.com
58	Advantage Engineers, LLC	Columbia	MD	www.advantageengineers.com
59	Hnedak Bobo Group, Inc.	Memphis	TN	www.hbginc.com
60	ECS	Chantilly	VA	www.ecslimited.com
61	Moye Consulting	Irving	TX	www.moyeconsulting.com
62	Process Plus, LLC	Cincinnati	OH	www.processplus.com
63	WRK Engineers	Vancouver	WA	www.wrkengrs.com
64	TerraTherm, Inc.	Gardner	MA	www.terratherm.com
65	Tectonic Engineering & Surveying Consultants PC.	Long Island City	NY	www.tectonicengineering.com
66	Slater Hanifan Group	Las Vegas	NV	www.shg-inc.com
67	Hammontree & Associates, Limited	North Canton	OH	www.hammontree-engineers.com
68	Viridian	Little Rock	AR	www.ViridianUSA.com
69	Environmental Management and Planning Solutions, Inc.	Boulder	CO	www.EMPSi.com
70	Sam Schwartz Engineering	New York	NY	www.samschwartz.com
71	Bowers + Kubota Consulting, Inc.	Waipahu	HI	www.bowersandkubota.com
72	Bolton & Menk, Inc.	Mankato	MN	www.bolton-menk.com
73	MEAD & HUNT, INC.	MADISON	WI	www.MEADHUNT.COM
74	Cobb Engineering Company	Oklahoma City	OK	www.cobbengr.com
75	SWCA Environmental Consultants	Phoenix	AZ	www.swca.com
76	Simpson Gumpertz & Heger	Waltham	MA	www.sgh.com
77	Hill International, Inc.	Marlton	NJ	www.hillintl.com
78	Marstel-Day, LLC	Fredericksburg	VA	www.marstel-day.com
79	Chambers Group, Inc.	Santa Ana	CA	www.chambersgroupinc.com
80	Crafton Tull	Rogers	AR	www.craftontull.com
81	Garver	North Little Rock	AR	www.GarverUSA.com
82	BL Companies, Inc.	Meriden	CT	www.blcompanies.com
83	Michaels Energy	La Crosse	WI	www.michaelsenergy.com
84	The Cadmus Group	Waltham	MA	www.cadmusgroup.com
85	HR Green, Inc.	Cedar Rapids	IA	www.hrgreen.com
86	Miyamoto International	West Sacramento	CA	www.miyamotinternational.com
87	Hall & Foreman, Inc.	Tustin	CA	www.hfinc.com
88	CRB	Kansas City	MO	www.crbusa.com
89	Wight & Company	Darien	IL	www.wightco.com
90	MMM Group Limited	Thornhill	ON	www.mmm.ca
91	Hoefer Wysocki Architecture	Leawood	KS	www.hwa.net
92	Hanson Professional Services Inc.	Springfield	IL	www.hanson-inc.com
93	Hillmann Consulting, LLC	Union	NJ	www.hillmannconsulting.com
94	SHEA, INC.	MINNEAPOLIS	MN	www.sheadesign.com
95	Larson Design Group	Williamsport	PA	www.larsondesigngroup.com
96	Integrated Design Group	Boston	MA	www.idgroupae.com
97	Sullivan International Group, Inc.	San Diego	CA	www.onesullivan.com
98	Vanasse Hangen Brustlin, Inc. (VHB)	Watertown	MA	www.vhb.com
99	Butler, Fairman and Seufert, Inc.	Indianapolis	IN	www.bfsengr.com
100	LJA Engineering, Inc.	Houston	TX	www.ljaengineering.com

An organization reenergized

Putting theory into practice and attaining success in this real-life case study.

How would you like to do something with such an impact that your clients sing you praise and want to meet you again to talk about future projects? It can happen.

In my last two columns for **THE ZWEIG LETTER**, I talked about various aspects of reenergizing your brand and your organization. I want to cap it off with a story about how the initiatives discussed in the May 20 and June 24 issues of **THE ZWEIG LETTER** can produce results.

We just completed a six-month engagement with a firm in North Carolina where I was hired as interim chief marketing officer. Our initial charge was to aid them in starting up a marketing department from the ground up and getting some basic items in place to prepare for the recruitment of a full-time CMO. This arrangement included me being on-site in their offices one week per month for the past six months. Their story is like many in our industry. They are an engineering and planning firm that is heavy in development and grew to record levels in the years leading to 2008 – only to see it all nearly vanish during the recession. They employed over 180 people at the peak and then shrank to about 50 before experiencing a strong rebound recently.

Just a stroll through their corporate office during my initial visit provided a sense of what this company and much of our industry has experienced over the past five years. They have about 30,000 square feet, with the front 16,000 sq. ft. being currently used. I got a surreal sense when transitioning from the space being used now to the space that once housed the other 80 employees laid off post-2008. It is 14,000 sq. ft. that still has desks, chairs, and other items that made it feel like it was frozen in time – like people should be sitting there today. Unfortunately, the area also accumulated many obsolete office items over the past five years and pretty much serves as a gigantic storage space.

During my initial visit, I also got a sense of what a great company this is. They are fortunate to have strong leadership at the top, with a solid and well-thought-out transition plan. The company has a strong reputation across North Carolina and in the Triangle region (Raleigh-Durham). They are the go-to firm for developers. They retained much of their stars during the lean times and are poised for an epic comeback. It was evident that we had to capture these strong qualities and embed them in the brand as we developed our campaign.



Chad
Clinehens

BRAND BUILDING

Leadership at the firm is enthusiastic about the future. Their positive attitude rubbed off on me immediately, resulting in a plan that expanded from establishing a marketing department and finding talent to developing a rebranding campaign, energizing the company, and realigning the teams to serve market sectors. We went to work immediately on developing a plan to unveil a new logo and shortened name as well as new branded materials, including website, along with an aggressive PR campaign.

One of the more time-consuming initiatives was a restructuring of all the teams to focus on market sectors, as opposed to services. The importance of starting this first was to organize teams so we could better focus marketing strategy on the buyer groups they serve. We needed to know who we were going to target. Once we established that, we were able to better focus our rebranding activities.

See ORGANIZATION, page 8

The energy from the rebranding put a positive spin on the reorganization. Staff saw the firm making changes internally that helped put 'meat on the bones' of the rebranding.

NEWS

Mixed bag for industry in June

Nevada and Illinois lead in monthly job growth while Wyoming and California are top gainers for the year.

Equal numbers of states gained and lost construction jobs in June, highlighting the fragmentary nature of the industry’s recovery, according to an analysis by the Associated General Contractors of America of Labor Department data. Association officials added that, despite the fact most states added jobs year-over-year, construction employment levels are below peak levels for nearly every state.

In June, 23 states and the District of Columbia added construction jobs, while 24 states shed them. Nevada had the largest one-month percentage increase (5 percent, 2,500 jobs), followed by North Dakota (4.2 percent, 1,300) and Iowa (4 percent, 2,600). Illinois added the most jobs in June (5,400, 3 percent), followed by Washington (4,100, 2.9 percent), Iowa and Nevada. There was no change in Alaska, New Hampshire and Oklahoma.

Connecticut experienced the sharpest decline in construction employment from May to June (-3.4 percent, -1,900), followed by West Virginia (-3.0 percent, -1,100) and Vermont (-2.9 percent, -400). Texas lost the largest number of jobs between May and June (-8,500, -1.4 percent), followed by Pennsylvania (-3,600, -1.6 percent).

Over the past 12 months, 36 states added construction jobs – the larger number with year-over-year gains since May 2012. 

ORGANIZATION, from page 7

The rebranding part of the engagement energized staff the most. We designed a complete switchover of all branded materials in one day. We promoted it internally and got the staff high with anticipation. There is an improved sense of recovery in the market and this is a good time to show people at work that the same good things are going to happen there as well. One of our initiatives to get the staff talking and feeling optimistic was to clean up that unused space. The message was, “We are growing and it is time to get ready to add staff and create opportunities.” They hired a few college interns from the local college and started cleaning the unused area. Talk in the office exceeded our expectations.

As we neared the launch date for the new brand, we increased our inclusion of other staff to get buy in. We did this first at the leadership level and then extended it beyond. One of the benefits that firms can get by doing several things like this at once is that they all feed off of each other. In other words, the energy from the

rebranding put a positive spin on the reorganization. Staff saw the firm making changes internally that helped put “meat on the bones” of the rebranding. We have to recognize that our staff see the big picture better than we give them credit for. They respond well when they see leadership positive and working hard to create opportunities and growth.

Likewise, our clients respond the same way. When they see a company that is full of positive energy making big changes and investments, they want to be a part of it. I’m writing this article one week after the July 1 launch date and the company reports continued congratulatory notes and calls. Just today, the president was delighted to have one of the largest players in the region reach out and request a lunch appointment. This is great stuff. I hope your firm is energized and reaping the rewards of an improving economy. 

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

CALENDAR

MARKETING IN TODAY’S WORLD:

ZweigWhite’s popular “Marketing In Today’s World” seminar continues its series of one-day events throughout the nation.

Next stop is Los Angeles on Sep. 12.

Marketing in our industry is changing! It is not business as usual for A/E/P and environmental firms.

The tough economy and the increasing power of the Internet and electronic communications are changing everything marketing-wise.

Spend the day with the industry’s leading management expert, Mark Zweig, for an in-depth discussion of how marketing needs to adapt to deliver results now.

Attendees will learn:

- The role management needs to play in marketing
- How everyone in the firm can be selling
- Ways to help technical people overcome marketing-phobia

For more information or to register, call 800-466-6275 or log on to www.zweigwhite.com/seminars/mktsem.

PRINCIPALS ACADEMY: The Principals Academy, a crash course in all aspects of managing a professional services firm, is coming to several cities.

The program is presented by a team of speakers – including ZweigWhite founder and CEO Mark Zweig – with extensive experience working with and for A/E firms.

They have a clear understanding of what it takes to survive, and even thrive, in any economy.

The two-day agenda covers six critical areas of business management from the unique perspectives of architecture, engineering and environmental consulting firms, and is presented in tutorial and case study workshop sessions.

The Principals Academy program also includes a case study workshop session that will provide an opportunity to practice implementing these management strategies in a supervised test-case scenario.

Upcoming events include Sep. 19 and 20 in Boston and Nov. 14 and 15 in San Francisco.

For more information or to register, call 800-466-6275 or log on to www.zweigwhite.com/seminars/tpa.



RECRUITING

Employee referral programs are effective

Firms using them save money and report faster onboarding, more engagement and less turnover.

By LIISA SULLIVAN
Correspondent

Having an employee referral program offers many advantages. Among them are saving on unnecessary recruiting fees, faster onboarding and better retention.

REFERRALS OFFER UNIQUE PERSPECTIVE ON RECRUITMENT. Kimi Duplichan, associate and HR manager, **WHR Architects, Inc.** (Houston, TX), a 135-person, full-service architecture, interior design and technology planning firm, says WHR has had an employee referral program for approximately five years now.

“We recruit the best, and in turn, they refer their friends and colleagues.”

“Some of our best recruits come from employee referrals,” she says. “It takes a special kind of talent to consistently deliver the level of client experience that WHR offers. At WHR, we take team building very seriously. We recruit the best, and in turn, they refer their friends and colleagues. Many of our people are very active in the profession and in our communities. We have built a strong network to call upon for recruiting top talent.”

Another great resource is “boomerangs” – employees who return to WHR.

They have actually rehired 10 people who were affected by the 2010-2011 workforce reduction.

“At WHR, our goal is to foster a work environment that attracts top talent and inspires innovation,” Duplichan says. “We believe that our employee referral program is an effective recruiting strategy. Our employees will recommend only those professionals whom they believe will perform at a high level and will fit in well with the WHR culture.”

Duplichan goes on to explain why she is an advocate for employee referrals.

“It’s a great way to get to that passive candidate who can usually only be accessed by expensive recruiters,” she says. “Our employees can get to these candidates in a casual way and our people have first-hand experience of what it’s like to work for WHR. Another benefit of employee referrals is that it takes less ‘onboarding’ time when the new employee has a friend in the office to show them the ropes. With referrals, we see better retention. And, most significantly, referrals save the firm unnecessary recruiting fees.

In the near future, Duplichan says that she believes WHR will increase the referral bonus as an incentive.

“This economy has turned around in Houston and it has already become an ‘employees’ market again,” she says. “We will need to get more aggressive with our recruiting efforts. At WHR, we also use LinkedIn as a recruiting tool. Our employees can share this job post with friends and colleagues; this works very well.”

As if these were not reasons enough to get started on an employee-referral

program, Duplichan explains that by using this program, they are also satisfying EEOC compliance requirements.

“Auditors often recommend that companies use employee referral bonus programs as part of their EEOC compliance, as procedures to equally consider all résumés submitted,” she says. “Also, as a federal contractor, we are required to use several avenues for recruiting to target veterans and minorities.”



Greg Walls,
Senior VP,
Life Cycle
Engineering.

BUILD ON PROGRAM FOR MAXIMUM RESULTS.

At **Life Cycle Engineering** (Charleston, SC), a 627-person consulting, engineering, applied technology and education solutions firm, Greg Walls, senior vice president, human resources, explains that LCE decided to implement a formal

employee referral program in 2008 for several key business reasons:

- 1) Reduce the time required to fill positions
- 2) Improve the quality of new hires
- 3) Reduce the cost to hire
- 4) Reward and engage current employees
- 5) Perpetuate the existing culture

And, Walls says, LCE’s employee referral program has been a “tremendous success.”

“Essentially, it empowers all of our employees to be an extension of the recruiting team. To date, employee referrals have accounted for approximately 30 percent of our total hires,” he says.

See REFERRAL, page 10

GOOD TO KNOW

Firms cite name recognition or reputation (34 percent) and a good work environment (33 percent) as their biggest reasons for success with hiring.

Source: 2013 Policies, Procedures & Benefits Survey, ZweigWhite, www.zweigwhite.com/p-2150-policies-procedures-benefits-survey-2013.

ON THE MOVE

HLW INTERNATIONAL HIRES: **Mark Griffith** has joined **HLW International LLP** (New York, NY), an architecture, planning, interior design, and engineering services firm, as principal and director of the Los Angeles office. In this role, Griffith will lead the business development, operations and oversee the expansion of HLW's presence in California. Griffith brings more than 25 years of professional experience in the architecture and design profession. In recent years, Griffith was responsible for the growth, business development and strategy of five principle markets: commercial, healthcare, education, federal and aviation.

Griffith, a Los Angeles native, has worked throughout the United States and internationally through all phases of architectural design, including initial concept and design development and preparation of construction documents and construction support. Griffith began his career in Southern California. He has held various leadership positions at **Parsons, Perkins+Will** and **Leo A Daly**.

"Mark's addition to our team is another step toward HLW's commitment to *Better Performance by Design*," said Scott Springer, principal-in-charge, Los Angeles & Shanghai. "His combination of professional experience, business development and strong interpersonal skills are exceptional. With his leadership, I am confident that our Los Angeles office will continue to grow and develop as a formidable part of our international practice."

MERRICK APPOINTS: **Valerie Walker** has been appointed a vice president for **Merrick & Company** (Aurora, CO), the board of directors announced at their May, 2013 meeting. Walker leads the firm's commercial nuclear practice, which includes the firm's work in nuclear power, medical isotopes, and domestic and international nuclear R&D facilities. Most recently she has been involved in projects for Exelon, the Australian Nuclear Science & Technology Organisation, the National Institute of Standards and Technology, and a domestic medical isotope production client.

Walker has been with Merrick for 12 years, where she has continually advanced in engineering and project management positions.

Merrick & Company is a \$116 million engineering, architecture, design-build, surveying, planning, and geospatial solutions firm, serving domestic and international clients in the energy, nuclear, national security, life sciences, geospatial, and sustainable infrastructure markets. The employee-owned company maintains 16 offices in the U.S. as well as offices in Canada, Mexico, and the United Kingdom.

FINLEY HIRES: **Finley Engineering Group** (Tallahassee, FL), a bridge design and construction engineering firm, announced the hiring of **Jason Hatcher** as project manager.

Hatcher has 21 years' experience in the industry. His experience includes construction projects throughout the United States, Israel, New Zealand, Australia, Guam, Indonesia, Hong Kong and United Arab Emirates. Notable projects include: Q Bridge (Connecticut), Boston Central Artery Projects (Massachusetts), Galena Creek Bridge (Nevada), Benicia Martinez Bridge (California), Woodrow Wilson Bridge (Washington, D.C.) and Saadiyat Bridge (Abu Dhabi). Hatcher is a member of the American Segmental Bridge Institute (ASBI) and Construction History Society of America.

Hatcher will be assigned to work on the precast approaches for the Bayonne Bridge project in New York. The Bayonne Bridge is the fourth longest steel arch bridge in the world. This \$743.3 million project was awarded to Skanska Koch, Inc. / Kiewit Infrastructure Co. (JV) and will raise the roadway of the Bayonne Bridge 64 feet to overcome the navigation restriction on the larger container ships.

HCEA HIRES: **Hillis-Carnes Engineering Associates, Inc.** (Annapolis Junction, MD) has hired **James Thornton**, who has joined the multidiscipline engineering firm's State College/Williamsport, Pa. offices as a senior geotechnical engineer.

Thornton has over 20 years of experience within the geotechnical, environmental, and construction materials testing and inspection service fields. HCEA is expanding its technical expertise and personnel in Pennsylvania and surrounding markets to continue providing its services to these regions.

HCEA specializes in geotechnical, environmental, structural/forensic, construction materials testing and inspections, field exploration, and specialty geotechnical construction services for owners, general contractors, construction managers, commercial real estate developers, educational institutions, energy providers, sports authorities, municipalities and government agencies.

GPI HIRES: **Ronald Foley** has joined **Greenman-Pedersen, Inc.** (Babylon, NY), an engineering and construction services firm, as a municipal and parks and recreation liaison in both its Babylon and Buffalo, N.Y. offices.

In his new position, Foley will provide senior project management and supervision of its municipal and parks-related projects. He will be assisting GPI clients in the areas of community development, public park enhancements, environmental protection, and emergency preparation and response services.

Holding key government positions in various regions throughout New York State during his career, Foley recently retired as regional director for the Long Island Region of the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation.

REFERRAL, from page 9

"An unanticipated, but positive development is that referral hires adjust to LCE faster than other new hires and they are generally more aligned with our culture and client services business model. Based on our experience, we are less likely to lose a new hire that was the result of an employee referral than we are other recruited candidates."

Walls adds that the program is undergoing constant improvement. In this case, he believes that the way in which employees find out about current openings/priorities and also the communication mechanism back to them about the status of their referred colleague needs a little more work.

"The hiring/recruiting landscape is very dynamic in a professional services environment, which causes positions to open

and close quickly. With increasing instances where a referred candidate may be in the loop for multiple positions throughout the span of a few months, updates to our employees are sometimes ineffective," he says. "We have deployed several tactics to combat these known gaps in our process."

For example, LCE recently improved its internal communications with the launch of an enhanced intranet that will make sharing job openings and priorities immediately visible throughout the company. It has also included an originating source to its referral process to help keep employees updated on referred candidates throughout the interview/hiring process.

"We will continue to use, evaluate and improve upon this important employee management process," he says. ▀▀

SOFTWARE

Ensure uniform financial reporting

Firms with multiple offices rely on specific software, but complexities abound.

By LIISA SULLIVAN
Correspondent

It's enough of a challenge to develop effective financial reporting systems in a one-office firm, but the challenge grows even more as the number of offices increases. So, how do firms with multiple locations keep financial reporting uniform across the organization?

DELTEK TOPS LIST. Robin Kullberg, financial manager, **Cline Design Associates, PA** (Raleigh, NC), a 47-person architecture, planning, landscape architecture and interior design firm with two locations, says that it uses Deltek Vision for all of its accounting/financial reporting.

"This information is shared across the organization via email, video conferences and financial meetings," Kullberg says. "I am the one who is ultimately responsible for all financial reporting and analysis."



George Temple,
Executive VP of
Business, LS3P.

At **LS3P** (Charleston, SC), a 215-person architecture, interior architecture and planning firm with six locations, George Temple, executive vice president of business, says that it too uses Deltek Vision.

"While the cost is expensive, it's effective and meets our needs," Temple says. "Our finance group, with assistance

from our technology group, works together on the financial reporting to ensure uniform delivery of information."



Stephen Baner,
CFO and
Treasurer,
Farnsworth
Group, Inc.

Stephen Baner, CFO and treasurer, **Farnsworth Group, Inc.** (Denver, CO), a 325-person architecture and engineering firm with 16 locations, says they also use similar software to standardize its multi-office financial reporting.

"This keeps everyone on the same platform and using the same formats for reporting results," Baner says. "We also monitor our projects (financially) using this same platform and standard reports are used by all project managers across the company."

Baner explains that Farnsworth has developed some Excel format derivative financial reports for uniform project performance reporting that are channeled back to the technical staff from centralized accounting.

"Deltek, while expensive, is a great integrated ERP system," Baner says. "Beyond the initial software investment, we spend about \$55,000 per year on software maintenance and support for this platform. We do have one person on our staff tasked with the primary responsibility for maintaining the Deltek Vision system (along with other project accounting responsibilities). In addition, we have one of our IT staff members who serves as the technical supervisor for maintaining the ERP system infrastructure."

Farnsworth Group uses standard met-

rics for utilization, operating profitability by business unit and location, and project performance analysis.

"This provides our technical operations managers with baseline comparisons that can cross both geographical and discipline boundaries," Baner says.

NOT WITHOUT CHALLENGES. Baner acknowledges that Farnsworth faces significant challenges each year in developing operating budget figures that maintain consistency across all sites and operations for comparability.

"We've developed Excel budget modules that help with consistency, but the diverse locations and communication is laborious and very cumbersome to coordinate," he says.



Roy Mitchell,
CFO, MBP.

Roy Mitchell, CFO for **MBP** (Fairfax, VA), a 265-person multi-disciplined construction consulting firm with 11 locations, says that for financial reporting purposes, MBP uses DeltekCostpoint, a widely used project-costing application that caters to the government contracting industry.

"We have been using this system for 14 years and it costs us about \$60,000 annually," Mitchell says. "It is operated exclusively by our accounting team. Given this system has been in place for so many years, many of the challenges have been addressed, but the one challenge that is constantly changing is providing actionable financial data to the varied requirements of our branch

See FINANCIAL REPORTING, page 12

GOOD TO KNOW

The most frequently cited finance and accounting programs in use are Deltek Vision (51 percent), Ajera (10 percent), and QuickBooks (10 percent).

Source: 2013 Financial Performance Survey, ZweigWhite, www.zweigwhite.com/p-2155-financial-performance-survey-2013.

TRANSACTIONS

GEI BUYS: GEI Consultants, Inc., P.C., a Delaware-based affiliate of **GEI Consultants, Inc.** (Woburn, MA), announced that **Feld, Kaminetzky & Cohen, P.C.** (New York, NY), a consulting engineering firm, has merged with GEI effective June 29.

FKC and its predecessors have served New York metropolitan area architectural and engineering firms, builders, contractors, private clients and public agencies for more than 80 years. The GEI companies are among the nation's leading civil, geotechnical, environmental, water resources engineering and ecological services firms. FKC staff continues to service its clients as the FKC division of GEI Consultants, Inc., P.C.

In a joint statement, the leaders of GEI and FKC noted, "FKC's merger with GEI demonstrates our collective commitment to expand our local presence and technical offerings in the New York metropolitan market, supported by our offices in Manhattan, Long Island and Northern New Jersey. In addition, the two companies share a very strong common culture. Since the first meeting between principals of the two firms, we have found that our expressed core values of client service, high quality work, professionalism and concern for our employees are very similar and compatible."

FKC was formed in 1966 as a successor to the firm of Feld and Timoney. Dr. Jacob Feld was the original founder, beginning his engineering practice in 1926. Dr. Feld was internationally recognized for his work in the fields of structural design, soil mechanics, foundations, and structural failure analysis. GEI's FKC division continues this long tradition of technical expertise.

The FKC division's capabilities in specialty analyses and design for existing and new structures are supported by GEI's integrated environmental and geotechnical engineering services and geotechnical design offerings. The FKC division's forensic evaluation and design of repairs of existing structures that have undergone distress due to settlement and deformation or aging further strengthens the combined companies' offerings, particularly in metropolitan New York. FKC division engineers also maintain particular expertise in the evaluation and rehabilitation of masonry, concrete structures, and building façades and envelopes of all types.

GEI's acquisition of FKC officially closed on June 28. Terms were not disclosed.

FIRMS MERGE: RRM Design Group (San Luis Obispo, CA), an architecture, civil engineering, planning and surveying firm, is joining forces with **Peikert Group Architects** (Santa Barbara, CA), an architecture firm. PGA is a recognized leader in the design of

high quality market-rate and affordable multifamily housing, senior housing, mixed use, and commercial projects along the South Coast of California. The firm has received over sixty local, state and national design awards.

By combining each firm's unique expertise the new firm will be able to offer a greater range of services and skills to their collective client base. Erik Justesen, RRM CEO, noted that the merger "capitalizes on each firm's strengths and provides high value expertise to existing and future clients."

PGA will continue to operate in Santa Barbara as an RRM company under the name of Peikert +RRM Design Group.

PBA BUYS: Peter Brett Associates LLP (Reading, UK), a 500-person development and infrastructure consultancy, has acquired 85-person civil and structural engineering firm **Hannah, Reed and Associates Limited** (Oxford, UK).

The acquisition creates one practice that provides a comprehensive range of services to support the planning, design and delivery of new infrastructure and buildings. It expands PBA's geographical reach across all UK regions, giving clients access to a broader network of multi-disciplinary teams. PBA now employs almost 500 people and has a turnover of £40 million.

PBA adds 85 employees, based in Hannah-Reed offices in Oxford, Cambridge, Doncaster and Glasgow, extending and strengthening PBA's civil and structural engineering teams. Henry Martin joins as a partner of Peter Brett Associates LLP.

Peter Woolley, managing director of Hannah-Reed, has been a director of the practice since 1979, and will continue to work with PBA as a consultant. Eight regional directors will continue to lead their office teams.

The two firms have worked side-by-side on a number of projects, including prestigious schemes such as Center Parcs in Woburn, UK. Key clients of Hannah-Reed include University of Cambridge, Center Parcs, Henry Boot and Taylor Wimpey.

Hannah-Reed will continue to trade as Hannah, Reed and Associates Limited, with a view to beginning the integration into PBA's management systems in early 2014.

The acquisition is the third such move in two years for PBA in a concerted drive for growth. In 2011, the practice merged with both **Roger Tym & Partners** and **Baker Associates**, adding town planning and economics to its services portfolio.

FINANCIAL REPORTING, from page 11

offices, which can operate very uniquely depending on location, client base, etc."

PROPER TRAINING YIELDS FINANCIAL SUCCESS. For more than a decade, **KCI Technologies, Inc.** (Sparks, MD), a construction and consulting firm with 25 office locations and more than 1,000 employees, has used a company-wide Oracle-based financial accounting system that produces uniform project-based and corporate financial reports.

"Our Oracle system is tied into our human resources, accounting, finance and project management functions," says Christine Koski. "Updated reports are published every evening via our company intranet, giving our managers easy access to the latest key performance indicators."



Christine Koski,
KCI Technologies,
Inc.

Koski goes on to explain that all of KCI's managers require basic financial information on their projects in order to manage their schedules and budgets.

"Our custom reports provide them with the expense, chargeability and multiplier information that they need to balance resource allocation with project demand," she says. "The key in companywide success is available and uniform training. Among our more than 1,000 employees, hundreds need access to or the ability to interact with our Oracle system.

We tackle training via a formal, online Project Management Academy as well as through mentoring and user groups."

