

Loose-Tight Management

At times laissez-faire, at others a micro-manager, this manager adapts to circumstances, Mark Zweig writes.

The LTM manager is all about results. He or she is a chameleon of sorts – changing their style as dictated by the results they’re getting.



Mark Zweig

EDITORIAL

While management is undoubtedly a “science” (there is quite a body of knowledge on the subject), it is also an art. Art is not bound by specific rules. It is a creative endeavor, practiced differently by different people.

One of those artistic practices is something I call “Loose-Tight Management,” or LTM for those of you who prefer acronyms.

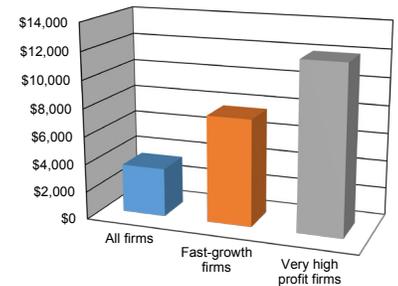
The LTM manager is all about results. He or she is a chameleon of sorts – changing their style as dictated by the results they’re getting. LTM is characterized by the following:

- 1) The LTM manager gives very little direction in terms of HOW to do a task or project.** The desired results are described in detail, but how to do it is left entirely up to the person or team being asked to accomplish the task. Some people love being treated this way – it can make others very uncomfortable. You, as the manager, need to know the people you are managing.
- 2) The LTM manager checks in periodically with the individual or group being managed to see how they are doing with the task or project.** IF they need help (and only

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TRENDLINES

Higher bonus



Bonus costs per employee at very high profit firms and fast-growth firms are significantly higher than for the overall sample, according to ZweigWhite’s 2013-14 Successful Firm Survey. The report finds that very high profit firms’ and fast-growth firms’ bonus costs per employee are a median of \$12,006 and \$7,661, respectively. Meanwhile, the overall sample shows a median of \$3,486. – Margot Suydam, Survey Manager

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A/E BUSINESS NEWS

DODGE CONTINUES ASCENT: The Dodge Momentum Index advanced 1.4 percent in August to 114.2 (2000=100), according to McGraw Hill Construction.

The Momentum Index is a monthly measure of the first (or initial) report for nonresidential building projects in planning, which have been shown to lead construction spending for nonresidential buildings by a full year. The Momentum Index had essentially leveled off during June and July, following the steady gains that were reported during the first five months of 2013.

With the August increase, the Momentum Index resumed its upward track, and is up 27 percent compared to the same month a year ago. While the overall economy remains sluggish, the prospects for commercial development continue to show improvement, as reflected by the growing volume of projects at the planning stage and such strengthening market fundamentals as occupancies and rents.

The August Momentum Index was bolstered by an upturn for its commercial segment, which climbed 3.7 percent. Among the larger commercial projects to enter the planning phase in August were several office buildings – a \$100 million renovation to the Health and Human Services Building in Rockville, Md., a \$90 million office building/mixed use development in Arlington, Va., and a 41-story office tower in Houston. The institutional segment of the Momentum Index, meanwhile, retreated 0.7 percent in August, marking its first monthly decline since February. Gains for amusement and healthcare projects were offset by a larger decline in plans for educational buildings.

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if), the LTM manager will make suggestions that they may want to consider. This is all part of the “loose” supervisory style of the LTM manager.

3) If things start to go off course, however, the LTM manager will get very involved – sometimes down to dictating even the smallest details. At this stage, the LTM manager may even be described as a “micro manager.” Again – results drive the LTM manager. In their mind, the end result cannot suffer under any circumstances.

I find the LTM management model useful for super busy people who are trying to do two things – maximize

EXP RELEASES SUSTAINABILITY REPORT:

Exp (Brampton, ON), a 3,400-person global engineering firm, announced that it has made public its first corporate social responsibility report, entitled “exploring exponential possibilities.”

“At exp, we take being a social responsible corporate citizen very seriously,” said Vlad Stritesky, president and CEO of exp. “This report provides a tool to measure and track our sustainable activities, both as individuals, and as a corporation.”

Stritesky added, “Sustainability isn’t just about reducing our carbon footprint, it’s about the way in which we conduct our business.”

The 2013 edition of the report, which can be viewed on www.exp.com, was developed by exp’s internal sustainability team from across North America, using the international Global Report Initiative framework as a guideline. The report details exp’s achievements in reducing their carbon footprint, their professional expertise in sustainability services, as well as social and community initiatives undertaken by the company and its employees.

AFFORDABLE RETIREMENT: With the economy still finding its way back from the Great Recession, retirees are looking at ways to save money just like everyone else, including where to live if they are trying to pinch pennies. MoneyRates.com recently announced the Top-10 Cities for Frugal Retirees.

The Top-10 cities are:

1. Harlingen, Texas
2. McAllen, Texas
3. Norman, Okla.

4. Fayetteville, Ark.
5. Wichita Falls, Texas
6. Pueblo, Colo.
7. San Marcos, Texas
8. Conway, Ariz.
9. Idaho Falls, Idaho
10. Youngstown-Warren, Ohio

These rankings emerged by taking the U.S. metropolitan areas with the lowest costs of living (according to 2012 data from C2ER) and removing the cities that also appear on NeighborhoodScout’s list of the 100 Most Dangerous Cities in America. After all, even frugal retirees may be willing to spend a little extra to avoid those places. (Sorry, Memphis, Tenn., and Springfield, Ill.)

This cost of living data doesn’t reflect every expense retirees may face, so data on property, sales and state income taxes from Tax-Rates.org are also listed. And while home prices are included in the cost of living data, the area’s median home prices from NeighborhoodScout appear for additional clarity.

Click here to read the full study: www.money-rates.com/research-center/cities-for-frugal-retirees.htm.

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the use of their time AND develop their people. Not spending time prescribing in detail how things need to be done just makes life easier (if you can get away with it!). And letting people find their way – invent their own problem-solving methods and make some mistakes – is critical to their learning. While both of those are potentially good outcomes, the organization is ultimately judged by results. If results are going to suffer, the LTM manager will jump in with both feet to do whatever is necessary to make sure that doesn’t happen.



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

LEADERSHIP

Pushing change in management

Architects and engineers are generally not trained as managers, and change often results from personality clashes or the effects of time.

By LIISA SULLIVAN
Correspondent

Every organization faces challenges from within. There may be issues of inefficiency, changes in the workforce or high levels of staff absenteeism. There may also be external factors that include a new set of standards, advances in technology or changes in the market or the economy.

To meet these challenges, managers need to anticipate and plan for effective improvements to processes. This may involve change management or change leadership. The goal with change management is to minimize change impacts. The goal of change leadership involves supporting the change process. Leaders need to have the vision to change an organization. To do this they need to harness the driving forces of change in order to transform it.

SIX SIGMA SAYS CHANGE MANAGEMENT. The Six Sigma Training program, originally developed in 1986 by Bill Smith at Motorola, uses some of the most innovative quality improvement methods from the preceding six decades. The term “Six Sigma” comes from a range of statistics known as “process capability.” Six Sigma’s goal is to improve overall processes to that level of quality or better.

“It’s rare to find an architect, who might have been with a firm for a very long time, who can take over a firm that was built by another architect.”

According to Six Sigma, change management encourages communication within all departments and systems associated with a project. And, when change is managed properly, everyone discusses issues when they arise and knows the project status at all times. There is no confusion and people do not get frustrated. Change management encourages people to work in teams and to collaborate on all project issues. Communication rarely is a problem, and results are positive project outcomes.

Six Sigma change management creates a structured environment for change within a workplace. Its philosophy is that doubling of efforts commonly occurs when change management is not in place. For example, it’s not uncommon for more than one person to be working on the same thing. This comes from poor communication. And, the greatest problems happen when people’s resources are used inadequately and deadlines are missed. This can be frustrating to all parties involved. Change management creates a structured environment and tasks within projects that are allocated appropriately – basically everyone is on the same page.

Another reason change management is important is for meeting deadlines and milestones. For instance, companies often assign a project to an employee and walk away assuming it will get done. However, what happens if this person is a procrastinator? Change management allows milestones to be set with goals of completion throughout the project to avoid everything being done all at once. It also eliminates

micromanaging supervision. People can work in a task-oriented manner and be more productive. Deadlines are met; projects are better managed.

A happier customer is the ultimate goal and often a change management can accomplish this. Change management is customer- and employee-driven. The goals with change management are to create a working environment where employees can work cohesively on projects to be more productive, reduce costs and make the customer happy.

CHANGE LEADERSHIP? MAYBE... MAYBE NOT...

Geoffrey Butler, architect and president, **Butler, Rosenbury & Partners, Inc.** (Springfield, MO), an 18-person design firm comprised of architecture, structural engineering, planning and development professionals, says, “In A/E firms, you will find very large egos. Those egos built the firm and they can break the firm.”



Geoffrey Butler,
Architect and
President,
Butler, Rosenbury
& Partners, Inc.

Butler says that management shakeups do not happen too often simply due to the way these firms are owned. The owners manage them. And, when you have partnerships with several owners, there are usually large and small owners.

“The small owners are there to take over and buy out the larger owners when they are ready to retire, or in case of some involuntary event (death disability, etc.),” Butler says. “The key thing to remember is to ‘follow the money.’ Or in simpler terms, ‘He who has the gold makes the rules.’”

In partnership with two equal partners,

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GOOD TO KNOW

Firms that have fired or laid off a principal most often do so because of the principal’s non-performance (28 percent).

Source: 2013 Principals, Partners & Owners Survey, [ZweigWhite](http://www.zweigwhite.com/p-2153-principals-partners-owners-survey-2013), www.zweigwhite.com/p-2153-principals-partners-owners-survey-2013.

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usually the larger ego and stronger personality will manage the firm simply because the other lets him. When they disagree totally, they usually split up.

“I guess you could call that a shakeup,” Butler says.

At Butler, Rosenbury & Partners, Inc., out of the 18 staff members, nine are shareholders. The ownership varies from 22 percent to one percent.

Right now the ones with a 22 percent stake can pretty much call the shots although Butler generally manages the firm in what he calls a “benevolent dictatorship.”

“I generally consult with my other shareholders and then, after taking everyone’s view into consideration, I do what is the proper thing to do,” he says.

Butler explains that the firm is currently looking at working to transition to equal ownership at which point it may become possible that there could quickly be a management shakeup where the younger staff vote out the older and vote in the new.

“That might coincide with my immi-

nent retirement,” Butler says. “The bottom line on firm management is that everyone who has ownership at any level wants to have some say in what is going on. But, they only really care enough to make changes (or leave) if the current management is being greedy, sloppy, uncommitted and inconsiderate, which then affects the firm performance and profitability. There is no reason to try to fix something that is not broken.”

Butler says that his firm has not experienced a management shakeup first hand. However, it is his opinion that architects are not really suited for business.

“They are not trained or educated in good business practices at any time in their early career,” Butler says. “Those architects who do manage firms well over time generally learn it through the ‘school of hard knocks’ as they build a firm. It’s rare to find an architect, who might have been with a firm for a very long time, who can take over a firm that was built by another architect. Just looking at firms here in this market, there are very few firms that are still around after 30 years. Most that are, still have the founders involved in the firm.” ▀▀

RESOURCES

2013-2014 SUCCESSFUL FIRM SURVEY:

How do the most successful architecture, engineering, and environmental consulting firms do business? What are they doing that you’re not? Find out with the 2013-2014 Successful Firm Survey of Architecture, Engineering, Planning & Environmental Consulting Firms. This new publication will tell you everything you need to know about how firms just like yours are growing and turning a profit.

The Successful Firm Survey is a compilation of all the major management topics covered in 10 of ZweigWhite’s survey reports conducted throughout 2013. In addition to compiling survey data from other reports, we also broke data down by the overall sample compared to the fastest-growing firms and the most-profitable firms. Whether you’re a firm president, CEO, vice president, principal, or division or department director or manager, you’re going to want to see these survey results!

Topics covered include:

- **Financial performance:** How does your firm stand up to your competition? Get hard data on revenue per employee, profit margins, multipliers, average collection period, and more for the top firms in the industry.
- **Marketing:** How much do fast-growth and high-profit firms spend on marketing? What kind of hit rates do they get on their proposals? How do they use websites, newsletters, press releases, and other marketing tools?
- **Billing practices:** How much should you be charging for your employees’ time? Compare fast-growth and high-profit firms’ billing rates for every level of employee to your firm’s rates.
- **Information technology:** IT can be a costly expense for many firms. But how much is really necessary to invest? Where’s the boundary between investments that will improve productivity down the line and those that just break the bank?
- **Compensation:** Are you paying your top managers enough? Too much? Find out how much financial managers, HR directors, IT managers, marketing directors, project managers, branch office managers, and principals are earning in the most successful design and environmental firms.

For more information or to buy a copy, call 800-466-6275 or log on to www.zweigwhite.com/p-2176-successful-firm-survey-2013-2014.

ON-SITE BUSINESS**TRAINING... YOUR EMPLOYEES, YOUR OFFICE, YOUR SCHEDULE**

Have ZweigWhite present a business management course at your architecture, engineering, planning or environmental firm.

In-house courses give you the opportunity for in-depth content and greater interaction. You’ll save hundreds of dollars on travel costs and your employees will get personalized guidance.

These training sessions are facilitated by ZweigWhite principals who have worked with countless architecture, engineering, and environmental consulting firms, helping them overcome business challenges and achieve success. Now you can schedule them to work directly with your staff, right in your office.

Schedule one of these courses at your firm:

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT FOR NON-FINANCIAL MANAGERS

Understanding about the numbers is NOT just something for CFOs and accounting staff. In today’s competitive business environment every manager needs to

accountable for the bottom line.

In addition to an overview of basic accounting principles and financial reporting requirements, this course covers other finance fundamentals that present the greatest challenges to non-finance staff. To review the agenda, click www.zweigwhite.com/seminars/fm/course-outline.php.

BEST PRACTICES IN A/E/P PROJECT MANAGEMENT

This seminar provides a review of fundamentals like: roles and responsibilities; accounting; communication, and planning, executing, and closing out a project. Attendees will also learn how to manage things that derail even the best of us at times like: what to do when the PM quits; what to do when there is a bad PR event; how not to lose your shirt; how not to tick off clients; how not to create liabilities, and how to make more money.

For more details about the project management program, click www.zweigwhite.com/seminars/pmo/.

To schedule a seminar at your firm, or for more information, please contact ZweigWhite at events@zweigwhite.com or call 508-318-5513.

AWARDS

Hot Firm leaders speak out

Some of the fastest growing design firms in the nation will be recognized during event in October.

Editor's note: First in a series of articles.

By LIISA SULLIVAN
Correspondent

Each year **THE ZWEIG LETTER** Firm List recognizes the 100, fastest-growing architecture, engineering, planning and environmental consulting firms in the U.S. and Canada. These are firms that have outperformed the economy and competitors to become leaders in their chosen fields. But, what does it mean to them and why do they think they made the list? What better way to find out than to ask? See what these three had to say.

"We consider this award to be the direct result of our successful growth strategy."

Pierre Shoiry, president and CEO, **WSP Genivar** (Montréal, QB), says it was a tremendous recognition to be ranked in the top 10 of this list, at No. 6.

"We consider this award to be the direct result of our successful growth strategy. 2012 was a transformational year as WSP and GENIVAR merged, and by joining forces, we've enhanced our geo-



Pierre Shoiry,
President and
CEO, WSP
Genivar.

graphic diversification and broadened our collective service offer. We are now one of the world's largest, pure-play providers of engineering and related professional services and are among the best in the building sector. We have made significant progress toward meeting our goal of becoming a leading global player in our industry. As a result of the merger, we are well positioned to maximize future opportunities and to create long-term value for our employees, clients and other stakeholders," he says.

Shoiry attributes this recognition directly to the expertise and dedication of employees around the globe.

"We now have 15,000 employees in 35 countries, on all continents, who are thrilled at the opportunities they have to work on some of the world's most challenging projects," Shoiry says. "They are delighted by the announcement that we are so high up on the Hot Firm List this year and we want them to know that they contributed to this success through their hard work on the integration of WSP and GENIVAR."

Shoiry adds that the company's greatest asset is its employees. He says they are "the secret of our success." WSP Genivar places its employees at the heart of its strategic priorities by:

- Being the preferred employer for existing and future staff

- Fostering a performance-driven, passionate and customer-oriented culture that attracts, retains and empowers its people and stimulates collaboration and innovation
- Having the highest-caliber skilled workforce
- Attracting globally recognized industry leaders in target market segments
- Fostering leadership at all levels of the business
- Instilling one set of values to be embraced by all employees

"Among our strategies to reach our objectives, we aim to provide a supportive work environment where we encourage each other to become the best at what we do locally and globally, focus on excellent knowledge sharing across our company and continue to invest in our people through training and development," Shoiry says.



Mac Farr,
Savannah
Operations
Leader, Hargrove
Engineers +
Constructors.

Hargrove Engineers + Constructors (Mobile, AL) was No. 9 on the list and has approximately 830 "teammates" working in nine offices across the eastern half of the U.S. and working onsite with clients.

Mac Farr, Savannah operations leader, says his immediate reaction was, "I thought it was great!" adding, "We are all dedicated to im-

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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.

For more information about the Hot Firm Conference log on to www.zweigwhite.com/conference/hotfirm.

Action is what counts

The failure to achieving the vision or direction a company revolves around results from poor execution of strategy.

The 2013 **THE ZWEIG LETTER** Hot Firm List is out. The companies that make this list exemplify the fact that one can grow and succeed during less than vibrant economic times. And it makes you wonder why these companies, along with the many that never apply to the contest, seem to grow in both difficult and good economic times.

What is it that they do differently?

Some leaders of companies that have not grown believe those that have done well are just in hot client or geographic market sectors and can't miss. That it's really just a matter of good fortune. Many Hot Firm leaders believe their strategic approach to picking those right markets or service offerings is what sets them apart. Other Hot Firm leaders point to client focus, unique technical differentiation, sound business fundamentals, their people, along with myriad other reasons that really make the difference. And running a profitable enterprise cannot be underestimated. Whatever the reasons, it's clear some companies do a better job growing their business than others. It can't be just good fortune. Rather, it's more likely a combination of all of those reasons.

How important is strategy in all this?

Having a well-defined strategy that includes the market focus and how you operate your business is pretty important. But even more so, "action" is critically central to achieving success. We know most companies today create strategies that guide them toward their long-term vision. Leaders spend the time to go through a process of collecting and analyzing data, generating ideas, while identifying and prioritizing the best strategies to move the company forward. The top leaders buy into a plan that is recreated often. And the work is done.

Or is it?

Strategy development comprises only 5 percent of the effort, while implementation is 95 percent. It is execution or action that sets those that succeed apart. And yet so many continually struggle with this.

One common reason companies struggle is that they develop too many strategies, which are either too complex or vague to be effective. The key is to reduce the number of strategic initiatives to those "critical few" that will make the difference and/or drive change. Leaders must avoid the temptation to take on too many initiatives and then try



Gerry Salontai

**GUEST
SPEAKER**

to accomplish everything at once in order to "conquer the world" or, conversely, keeping them so vague that the specifics needed for implementation are absent. Striking a balance between these is the right approach.

Another common pitfall is neglecting the internal operating environment of the company that enables the execution of the strategy. Understanding how the organizational structure, the approach to your people and clients, along with business practices, influences and supports the strategy rise to the top. One must ensure that the company has the financial capital, human (talent) resources, processes and systems, and business model needed to succeed. Strategy, structure, philosophy, talent and systems must all be aligned.

And then there is accountability. Success is best achieved by appointing a single champion. This person should "own" that initiative and be charged with the authority and responsibility to carry it out to completion. Using a co-champion or committee approach is fraught with problems and generally ends up with unachieved results. Having a single champion doesn't mean they do all the work – but simply designates the person in ultimate charge to attain the desired results.

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Strategy development
comprises only 5 percent
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The big year-end push

An over-compensating focus on productivity can cause missed opportunities in marketing.

Many firms find themselves in a similar situation to the retail industry as the fourth quarter approaches. They must work extra hard to get bills out and paid before the end of the year in order to record a profit. I have seen it time and time again – this “push” for billable work and minimizing accounts receivable interferes with a balanced business plan. From a marketer’s perspective, this is troubling because this is the time of year when many clients are planning for the following year. This provides extra opportunities for firms to assist in those efforts.

When it comes to this yearly cycle, the retail industry has a better excuse than the design industry. Retailers are highly dependent on holidays and consumer purchasing patterns. We are all familiar with “black Friday” and its importance for retailers. Unfortunately, some firms create their own black Friday, which is not necessarily a defined date but often a third quarter revelation that accounts receivable are high, cash is scarce, and there is much work to be done on projects that could be billed. This revelation then results in stronger messages from the top to batten down the hatches and work harder, gets bills out and call clients who have outstanding bills. The following three- to 6 months then involves extraordinary focus on current projects and a decrease in marketing efforts.

There are several problems with creating this cyclical environment in our companies. First of all, we have to consider how our clients perceive our business approach. Don’t think for a second that they do not notice a spike in your productivity toward the end of the year, or that we have an increased urgency in getting the bills they owe us paid. I recognize that there are cyclical aspects to our business that cannot be avoided but exasperating it because we do not stay focused on clear goals all year long has consequences. Consider that as you are reading this, many clients are starting their business planning for next year. Public sector clients are often starting their process of preparing fiscal budgets for the following year and you would be surprised at how many of them welcome assistance or input. When our technical staff has an increased attention to projects, tremendous opportunities for filling the pipeline with work for next year and beyond can be missed.

Another consequence of this cyclical approach is the effect it has on your people and overall business performance. You need to have clear goals that all your employees are aware of and accountable for. Do not make accounts receivable the problem of only your accounting staff.



Chad
Clinehens

BRAND BUILDING

Get your project managers, who are on the front lines daily with your clients, well-versed in the importance of enforcing a clear and consistent policy on collecting money. Having a relaxed approach to collecting your money part of the year and an aggressive approach the other portion wreaks havoc on your bottom line and frustrates your clients. These kinds of policies erode your brand. Consistency is essential to building a strong brand. Additionally, a culture that ignores important productivity goals part of the year and then has to work extraordinarily hard at the end of the year is frustrating and damages morale. ZweigWhite’s consulting business teaches us many of these lessons – over and over. Employee surveys are one of the services we perform for our clients that often provides them with the most valuable info. These surveys tell us the importance of clear, consistent goals that are well communicated. Employees would work harder and enjoy doing it if they were communicated with and incentivized to do it.

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Make marketing a priority year-round and recognize the parts of your business that can be in conflict with that important goal.

GERRY SALONTAI, from page 6

Effective strategy also ensures that all the stakeholders are on board and committed to success. There certainly can't be "holdouts" at any level of the organization that has an influencing role. Along with that, the strategy must be clearly communicated to the entire organization, so that every employee understands where the company is going and why the strategy is important and their role in achieving the desired results. The companies that do the best align the incentive performance system in order to achieve the expected outcomes.

Finally, the strategy should be monitored and contain feedback provisions to determine how well you are doing

against the objectives, the established metrics and overall schedule. This is the best way to ensure progress; more importantly, it helps verify that strategies are appropriate. Simply answering the question of the need to stick with it or begin to change direction is a good one. This then allows changes or mid-course corrections in the direction that can be vital for success.

The failure to achieving the vision or direction a company revolves around results poor execution of the strategy. Action is the critical ingredient for success. As Nike suggests – "Just Do It!"

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In summary, make marketing a priority year-round and recognize the parts of your business that can be in conflict with that important goal. As the end of the 2013 approaches, make sure to get out among your clients and participate anywhere you can in year-end planning or other future opportunities. Keep your marketing efforts consistent year-round by having clear goals for project managers related to project performance. When technical staff has a clear goal for the balance of projects and business development, it can minimize yearly fluctuations.

Keep your accounts receivable consistent year-round by empowering project managers with the info they need to be effective account managers. Do what you can to avoid exasperating a cyclical environment. Show your clients a consistent brand; one that values getting paid on time and one that values consistent project performance year-round. A strong brand isn't just what you tell your clients you are, it what you show them in the way you work. Be consistent and avoid being forced into the year end push.

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

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"We provide opportunities for teammates to realize their career goals and to create a team atmosphere that recognizes their hard work."

proving what we do at Hargrove. We aren't about awards, but that doesn't mean it isn't an honor when we get recognized for what we do. It's a great honor to be named to the list and a reflection of the hard work and dedication our teammates exhibit every day. We wouldn't have achieved the success we have had without the support of our clients, teammates and their families."

Farr also finds that the ranking is ideal to use in marketing efforts.

"When we found out that we were named number nine on the list, we immediately issued a press release and updated our awards and recognitions section of our presentations, website and other materials," he says. "Ralph A.

Hargrove, president, has a great saying that we hear a lot of when we receive awards, "This is a humbling and well-deserved recognition of our teammates. We need to continue doing what we do and not let this distract us."

Farr says that there really is no "secret to success." Part of Hargrove's success is that it treats its teammates the way anyone would want to be treated.

"We provide opportunities for teammates to realize their career goals and to create a team atmosphere that recognizes their hard work," he says. "One of the key statements we use is, 'What we build best are relationships.' That not only applies to our clients, some of which have been around since Hargrove was founded, but with our teammates."

Hargrove invests in its teammates, and wants them to have careers, not just jobs, he says.

Jason Jesso, COO, The Gateway Engineers, Inc. (Pittsburgh, PA), a 150-person firm, No. 20 on the list, attributes success to solid fundamentals.

"Gateway is proud to be included once



Jason Jesso, COO, The Gateway Engineers, Inc.

again on the nation's list of fastest-growing A/E firms," Jesso says. "We attribute our success to adhering to project management fundamentals, the diversification of our market segments, and the emphasis we put on continual improvement throughout the company. We believe the passion of

"We believe the passion of our employees, coupled with our proven systems, tools, and processes keep us moving forward in a direction that helps us to achieve our goals."

our employees, coupled with our proven systems, tools, and processes keep us moving forward in a direction that helps us to achieve our goals."

GENDER

Women in marketing

It may be a consequence of the youth of the discipline within the A/E sector, but it is a place where women are making inroads.

By LIISA SULLIVAN
Correspondent

According to 2013's Marketing Survey, published by ZweigWhite, women dominate A/E marketing departments. Why? What makes marketing a good match for women? To find out what is happening behind the scenes, we talked with a few women in top A/E marketing positions to learn their thoughts on the topic.

ROOM TO GROW. "It's a function of a couple of dynamics," says Dana Birkes, chief marketing officer, **Clifford Power Systems, Inc.** (Tulsa, OK), a power generation systems firm. "Typically, companies start out by hiring one person to provide marketing full time. My firsthand experience in hiring entry-level positions in marketing is that the candidates are overwhelmingly women. As their efforts in marketing help them to grow their company, so does the need for additional marketing support. As a result, they grow into leadership positions as the department expands."

Staying in the industry and developing a depth of understanding, including function and terminology, is really key to being positioned well for career growth. Birkes says that she is seeing more and more professionals entering the AEC marketing function at a coordinator level and then staying within



Dana Birkes,
CMO, Clifford
Power Systems,
Inc.

the industry throughout their careers. That is because there are more opportunities to do so.

"I believe this is a function of maturation of the role in the industry," Birkes says. "When I started out about 30 years ago, there were not many companies with dedicated mar-

keting personnel – let alone departments. Now, most AECs find marketing a necessity, so it has become feasible to have a career in the industry in marketing. Professionals have options now to enter into leadership with other firms if the opportunities for leadership do not become available within their current company."

It's also interesting to note that Birkes does not often see in the AEC industry (in comparison to other product service peers) companies moving women from marketing department director into senior leadership positions, such as chief marketing officer, or chief strategy officer.

"We still have a ways to go here as an industry," she says.

CHARACTER TRAITS ARE KEY.

"Studies show that women are better in team collaboration and communication, both ideal traits for the marketing role, which requires pulling teams of people together for short intense bursts of activity to deliver proposals and presentations and also to promote/position the company with a variety of stakeholders," Birkes says.

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BY THE NUMBERS

Here are some interesting stats from the Society for Marketing Professional Services (as of June):

- SMPS had 5,709 members; 71.8 percent were women
- Managers make up 19.8 percent of the membership; 16.2 percent of those are female
- Business developers represent 16.7 percent; 9.7 percent of those are female
- Directors make up 12.8 percent of the membership; of those 9.6 percent are female
- Out of chief marketing officers (0.8 percent of the membership), 27 are female and 20 are male.

Other categories include partner/principal (5.2 percent of membership – 3.3 percent female and 2 percent male); president/CEO (4.5 percent of membership – 2.2 percent female and 2 percent male); and vice president (3.9 percent of membership – 1.6 percent female and 2 percent male).

The SMPS has a certification program (Certified Professional Services Marketer), and there is a growing body of knowledge with best practices, education (workshops, seminars, and even SMPS University, an MBA-level executive leadership program), and networking that help a marketer's journey.

For more information, visit:
www.smeps.org.

"Marketers in our industry have often come from journalism, English, public relations and marketing programs, which typically have more women graduates than men."

GOOD TO KNOW

Over half of marketing directors (57 percent) are female; the majority of marketing managers (68 percent) are women; the majority of marketing coordinators (90 percent) are women.

Source: 2013 Marketing Survey, ZweigWhite, www.zweigwhite.com/p-2166-marketing-survey-2013.

Don't get blindsided by the media

A six-point guide to what to do when a reporter calls unexpectedly.

It's 4:30 p.m. and your marketing department is working busily to meet the deadline for a big RFP. You're sure they can do it. After all, they are proposal experts and that's what they do every day.

Nevertheless, just as you finish this thought one of them enters your office all flustered. A reporter from The Sacramento Bee just called asking for a comment on the parking garage collapse in Roseville, Calif. The reporter said that your firm is listed as the engineer, which explains the call.

Why should this scare you as a firm leader? Because most likely the members of your marketing department spend their days working on proposals and have little to no media experience. Additionally, they are pressured by time. The perfect recipe for your firm's marketing department to panic – opening up the strong possibility that they will say something that will damage your firm's reputation for the long term.

INVEST IN MEDIA TRAINING AND A "TRIAGE" PLAN.

The only sure-fire way to avoid any mishaps with the media when they call at a moment's notice is to make the investment in training and in developing a response plan. Provide your marketing department members with the training, tools, and knowledge they need to successfully deal with the media when they call in response to breaking news. Also, develop a "triage" plan that your marketing department can easily follow when these calls happen. The goal of this "triage" plan is equip your marketing department with the ability to respond appropriately to last-minute media inquiries and successfully do the immediate follow-up with the reporter.

If that's not a possibility, then your marketing department should at least be prepared to do the following:

1) Know what questions to ask. When your marketing department gets that initial call from the reporter, they should be prepared to ask the following questions:

- What's the story about?
- What questions are they looking to ask?
- Who are they looking to talk to?
- What's the deadline?
- What is the name of the reporter and the paper?
- What's the reporter's phone numbers and email address?



Franceen
Shaughnessy

GUEST
SPEAKER

You might be laughing at those last two bullet points, but they are the ones that are most easily forgotten.

2) Research the project. Find out what project the reporter was referring to and then get the specifics, including the principal in charge and project manager. Pull up any marketing collateral you have on the project to present to the principal in charge and/or project manager and, if necessary and warranted, the reporter. When you call the reporter back, you need to be sure that you have an understanding about the project, as well as your firm's role.

3) Research the reporter and publication.

Do a quick Google search on the reporter and check out the stories he covers as well as his writing style. Look at his LinkedIn profile and any other social media outlets as well. This will provide some insight into his reporting career and whether or not he's active on social media. If he's active, he will most likely be forwarding his published article out through his social media channels. Then pull up the publication's website and quickly become familiar with its

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The only sure-fire way to avoid any mishaps with the media when they call at a moment's notice is to make the investment in training and in developing a response plan.

PORTFOLIO

Celebrating through the viewfinder

Anniversary campaign positions Delcan as a long-term stable company and demonstrates the firm's breadth of services.

By CHRISTINA ZWEIG
Contributing editor

Delcan (La Palma, CA) a multidisciplinary engineering, planning, management and technology firm, is celebrating their 60th anniversary in a fun and unique way.

The large firm wanted something exciting that would stand out in an industry not known for too much outlandishness – especially when it comes to marketing. But they still wanted to keep the campaign focused on the firm's solid reputation and expertise. Ultimately, Janet Morrison, director of marketing and communications and Annette Franco, marketing manager, crafted a campaign around a theme of nostalgia that does much more than just celebrate the firm's past.

"The campaign celebrates the firm's legacy and well-established history, as well as builds excitement for the future," Franco says. "Some of the key messaging was innovation, leveraging the past to build a sustainable future and show high profile projects that we have been a part of."

THROUGH THE VIEWFINDER. One particular piece of the campaign involves a toy many may remember from their childhood – a viewfinder. Viewfinders are held up like a pair of binoculars and with the pull of a small lever will display an image. As a toy from 60 years ago that is still in use today, the viewfinder acted as a bridge between the past and present, and provided a fun medium for some of Delcan's projects. The first viewfinder was sent out with images featuring the theme of "transportation then and now," and other themes are scheduled for the future.

The marketing team expected that sending viewfinders would be a hard sell to typical professional organization management, but "They loved it, had a great reaction to it, and realized clients would be the same."

"It sold itself," Franco says.

Morrison and Franco, chose initial images for the viewfinder and Delcan's upper management along with Jeneane Prince, COO, corporate development, made the final call on the seven images that would go into the viewfinder. The campaign involved members at every level of the organization.

WHO GO IT? The viewfinder was sent to clients, staff, employees, various media contacts, prospective employees, and other organizations – a total of 4,000 people.



As part of its 60th anniversary campaign, Delcan went both retro and avant garde (for an engineering firm).

As part of the campaign the firm created a viewfinder with images featuring the theme of "transportation then and now."

DETAILS

MARKETING TACTIC:

Foward-looking 60th anniversary marketing campaign crafted around the theme of nostalgia. The centerpiece is a viewfinder.

WHO GOT IT: Clients, staff, employees, various media contacts, prospective employees, and other organizations – a total of 4,000 people.

RESULTS: Strong internal interest, as well as positive feedback from clients and former employees.

"This campaign has a lot of shelf life. The demographic of our target market is decision-makers in government and organizations, but this is more than a direct mail piece that someone reads and then you never see again. Many people have brought it home for their children to play with," Morrison says.

Franco adds, "Two project managers asked for more because they brought (the viewfinder) home and their kids played with it... future Delcan employees."

SHOWING WHERE THEY ARE, AND HOW FAR THEY'VE COME. Though Franco and Morrison say it was a significant

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coverage and coverage area. Find out who owns the paper and if it has sister publications. This will prepare you for the possibility that, if the story is big enough, it might run in the publication's sister media outlets.

4) Research any other media outlets that could call. You want to quickly determine if any other media outlets are already carrying the story. If so, they will most likely be calling your firm. Also, with immediate breaking news, you can never say for sure whether or not there will be follow-up stories. Therefore, it's always best, at the beginning, to think that there will be follow-up stories. If the story has a high newsworthy factor, then other media outlets will want to run it as well. It's important to prepare yourself for other reporters calling you, in particular reporters from the publication's competitors. Do a quick search of the publication's competitors and familiarize yourself with the coverage. That way, if they call you won't be caught off-guard.

5) Connect with the principal and project manager. Find out who was involved within this project within your firm. When you connect with them, make sure you present all of the information you've found out about the story (i.e. what the reporter is looking for), the reporter's background, the publication, other media outlets, as well as the marketing collateral and information the firm has about the project. Now, find out what the principal and project manager know about the

project and whether or not this is something that your firm can talk to the media about. Most likely, they will need to follow-up with their client, so let them know the deadline and explain how important it is to meet that deadline.

6) Be sure to call the reporter back. Stay connected with the reporter throughout the process. This lets him know that, even if you can't make the deadline, you are working hard to try to meet that goal. Communicating with the reporter and providing updates, even if they don't transpire into anything, will build a good reputation, and possibly a good start to a relationship with the reporter.

I cannot stress enough that this a triage approach to responding to a reporter's call. It's a temporary fix that will buy your firm some time. To truly excel at these types of calls as well as the possible follow-up articles, you need to invest in PR, including media training and the development of a long-term response plan. Firms that do this end up controlling the conversation with the media, resulting in positive play. Firms that don't, suffer long-term damage to their reputation. ▀▲

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Barbara Shuck,
Marketing
Communications
Manager, Wilson
& Company.

MARKETING IS MATURING. Barbara Shuck, firm-wide marketing communications manager at **Wilson & Company** (Albuquerque, NM), a multi-disciplinary engineering, architecture, surveying, mapping, environmental, and planning firm that employs more than 425 professionals in 16 offices and 12 states, says that marketing in the A/E industry is still relatively new. It dates back to the mid-1970s, mostly due to the Brooks Act and Qualification Based Selection.

"Most marketing courses at the higher education level have been product-focused, and professional services marketing as an academic program is still rather new," she says. "As a result, marketers in our industry have often come from journalism, English, public relations and marketing programs, which typically have more women graduates than men. As the profession matures, we

are likely to see more balance between men and women."

Shuck adds that what is even more interesting is that the marketing function itself is being recognized as a critical business function and not "just administrative." Other industries acknowledge marketing and sales as a legitimate career path, and the AEC industry is now catching up.

So, as women find rewarding career opportunities in the industry, and as marketing is being recognized as critical in a company's operations, it's natural that savvy female marketers will be moving up into leadership roles.

Professional services educational curriculum may have lagged, but the industry has responded with resources that encourage achievers to succeed at the highest level (see sidebar).

Shuck says, "Those early AEC marketers laid the groundwork for future generations to succeed, and the recipients of their efforts are beginning to get seats in company boardrooms." ▀▲

CELEBRATING, from page 9

challenge to get historical photos of good quality, this has helped involve more people in the campaign, making it even more impactful. The firm has even contacted a former CEO and people who were involved in the company during certain eras to ensure the accuracy of the images they are using. Franco calls it "a walk down memory lane."

The full campaign positions Delcan as a long-term stable company and demonstrates the firm's breadth of services. It

is helping to build morale, and provide recognition during a rapid growth phase.

A WALK DOWN MEMORY LANE. Many old employees have contacted the firm upon seeing the viewfinder, to say that they remembered working on a particular project.

"This campaign shows our technical abilities but also that we are a humanistic company, and we are caring in the way we treat team members and potential new hires. This has communicated so much in one initiative," Morrison says. ▀▲