THE ZWEIG LETTER

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HR | FINANCE
SUPPLEMENTS
Pages 9 - 12

DECEMBER 9, 2013, Issue 1034

Keeping yourself positive

Ward off the negativism with these seven tips from Mark Zweig.

> I don't have a lot of use for negative people in my businesses. I have been around long enough to see what can go wrong.

Mark Zweig

EDITORIAL

I was talking with my father today about the state of affairs in the country. He remarked that no matter how screwed-up things get or could get, the speed of recovery, too, can be surprising. I told him that no one could be in business today (meaning own a business) who wasn't an optimist. If you weren't, you'd just throw in the towel because of all the bad things that could happen to you.

Now, some people out there would say that if you're an optimist, you need to be balanced out by people who are more realistic and pragmatic. That may be true to a point – but only to a point. It's not that I don't want to hear what could go wrong, but sometimes the "Debbie Downers" need to just bite their tongues and give success a chance! I don't have a lot of use for negative people in my businesses. I have been around long enough to see what can go wrong. I probably know what it is, but deliberately don't want to acknowledge it. I don't want the negativity to take a toehold in my psyche. I cannot afford it. I own and run a business. Other people depend on me. My experience is that you may be able to silence the negative people (temporarily) with a lot of coaching and counseling, and other information to fend off their negative response tendencies. But sooner or later,

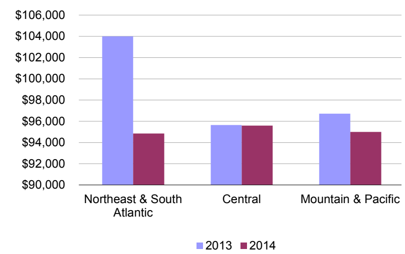
See MARK ZWEIG, page 2

ALSO INSIDE

- BEST PRACTICES: Get involved. Page 6
- SEARCH SAVVY: Elements of effective recruiting. Page 7
- HR: Attracting employees to remote areas. Page 9

TRENDLINES

Declining value



ZweigWhite's 2014 Salary Survey of Engineering Firms finds that marketing directors at engineering firms in all U.S. regions saw a drop in base salary from last year to this year.

In the Central region, for example, the median base salary for marketing director decreased slightly from $95,650 last year to $95,600 this year.

Meanwhile, marketing directors in the Mountain & Pacific region also saw a decrease, from $96,720 to $95,000.

In the Northeast and South Atlantic region, marketing directors' salary saw the steepest decline, from $104,000 last year to $94,848 this year.
– *Margot Suydam, Survey Manager*

FIRM INDEX

Daryl Jackson, Robin Dyke Architects 3
JQ 8
McDonough Bolyard Peck, Inc. 11
Michael Baker Jr., Inc. 10
Perkins+Will 10
Waggoner Engineering 10

PROFILE

Plan for the unexpected

Page 11

Avoid poorly administrated projects

Page 3

A/E BUSINESS NEWS

GREENBUILD GOES GLOBAL: Organizers of the Greenbuild Conference's International Summit announced that Greenbuild for Europe and the Mediterranean region will launch in Verona, Italy in 2014.

"Greenbuild for Europe and the Mediterranean region is part of the global expansion of the successful Greenbuild Conference & Expo brand," said Rick Fedrizzi, president, CEO & founding chair, U.S. Green Building Council. "USGBC and Hanley Wood entered into a strategic partnership earlier this year with plans to expand the conference and the Greenbuild brand. This new experience will serve as a platform for green building knowledge and shared expertise across continents, while scaling the breadth and reach of global market transformation."

Greenbuild is the largest event dedicated to green building education and features extensive educational programming, a vast expo hall, top notch inspirational speakers and the best in-person networking opportunities an event has to offer.

Greenbuild 2013 marks the 12th anniversary of Greenbuild, and the 20th anniversary of USGBC. Greenbuild for the U.S. will be held in November 2014 in New Orleans, in addition to Greenbuild for Europe and the Mediterranean region in Verona, Italy.

"Greenbuild for Europe and the Mediterranean region will be all about green building," said Rick McConnell, president, Hanley Wood Exhibitions. "Combining the resources of GBC Italia, USGBC, Veronafiere and Hanley Wood to deliver cutting edge education, the conference will feature top speakers in sustainability and combine the live event experience of Veronafiere and Hanley Wood. This indeed is going to be a game changer."

A call for proposals for all Greenbuild conferences will be open on Dec. 9, 2013. Interested parties are invited to submit proposals for presenters and topics via greenbuildexpo.org.

CEMENT CONSUMPTION UP: Growth in U.S. construction markets could be dampened by Congressional drama that erodes consumer confidence and hinders recovery, according to the latest forecast from the Portland Cement Association.

PCA expects 2013 cement consumption to reach nearly 80 million metric tons, a 4.5 percent increase over 2012. Consumption levels will reach 86 million metric tons in 2014, an 8.1 percent year-over-year gain.

Consumer and business confidence is a key ingredient for stronger economic gains. Recessions generate pent-up demand to correct their imbalances. Large imbalances need a long correction process. While the economy is positioned for stronger growth, it needs a trigger to unleash this potential. The trigger lies with consumer and businesses' willingness to spend and reinvest in capital. Congress can easily derail recovery momentum with political drama created by the federal shutdown and debt ceilings.

During 2014, it is possible that all sectors of construction record growth – namely residential, nonresidential and possibly public. While the growth will be broad based, half of it anticipated for 2014 will come from residential construction activity, where there is the largest amount of pent-up demand. The commercial and institutional sector will contribute another 25 percent.

Typically, when each sector contributes to growth, robust growth rates in cement consumption materializes. PCA predicts real construction spending to grow 1.3 percent in 2013 and by eight percent in 2014.

MARK ZWEIG, from page 1

their true negativity will have to come out. Who you surround yourself with will greatly affect how you think. It's just human nature.

If you're in the A/E/P or environmental business, there's plenty to make you negative. Clients can be upsetting. Stress of winning "must-win" projects that you ultimately don't win can be maddening. Trying to collect money so you can pay your employees and subconsultants can be hard. Meeting constantly changing government regulations on one thing or another can be frustrating. There are a zillion things that could get you down. But you cannot let it happen.

So what *can* you do – besides surrounding yourself with positive people – to stay positive and optimistic? Here are some thoughts:

1) **Don't follow negative people on Twitter or friend negative people on Facebook.** Their negativity is bound to affect you.

2) **Read inspirational biographies and other success stories.** We can all use a positive example to help shape our thinking.

3) **Tune into the works of Zig Ziglar, Tony Robbins, and other similar "motivationists."** Don't idolize them or make them Gods, but these people do have something to offer.

4) **Set small goals that you can accomplish every day.** Some people set the bar so high there's no way they can meet it. Then disappointment and negativity sets in.

5) **Try to stay healthy.** Less alcohol, drugs you don't need, regular exercise, better diet – you know what you need to do. It's hard to be optimistic when you feel bad physically.

6) **The right life partner.** Some relationships are toxic. If yours is, maybe it is time to do something else. I know it's not easy but it may be worth it.

7) **When you have difficult problems you can't solve, ask for help.** There are myriad professional service providers – for both business and personal problems – who can help you when you need it. Try them out!

2013 was a good year for many of us. Here's to making 2014 even better – by staying positive!

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BEST PRACTICES

Avoid poorly administrated projects

Project management needs discipline and processes for the firm to move forward.

By LIISA SULLIVAN
Correspondent

You finally landed that big project, but now it seems to be going off track. Why did this happen? What can you do to get things back on track?

Nurture staff. Ceilidh Higgins, senior interior architect, **Daryl Jackson, Robin Dyke Architects** (Sydney, AU), a firm of approximately 30 employees, says that good management and delivery of projects is what makes the difference between a successful consulting practice and one that is not.

Ceilidh Higgins, Senior Interior Architect, Daryl Jackson, Robin Dyke Architects.

"It's evident that a practice that manages projects well is going to make more money, and this is the reason why most practices would believe they need to change or improve their project management, administration and delivery," Higgins says. "However, poor management, administration and delivery have a much higher cost than the initial obvious impact on your individual project's bottom line. There are many hidden costs to your business as a result, and in my view, the biggest one is the costs associated with staff satisfaction and retention."

Higgins says that most people don't enjoy working in a chaotic environment where they feel they have no understanding of the end goals or the overall timeframe. While deadlines can sometimes drive a team to action, a team under constant deadline pressure with no understanding of the full picture beyond what documents need to be issued "right now," quickly becomes disillusioned. Consequently, quality starts to suffer, rework becomes the norm and the risk of insurance claims increases. Mentoring and training of staff suffers too.

> "Your practice system needs to be a living system that learns from every project, every mistake and every team member – no matter how junior."

"In the end, staff leaves (or worse – ends up on sick or stress leave) and the cost of replacing them is borne by another future project," Higgins says.

Benoit Hardy-Vallee, a consultant for Gallup, a research and analytics firm, says that when it comes to project management, most organizations put their practices before their people. They place more emphasis on rational factors – the process itself – and less on emotional drivers that could lead to project excellence – like their employees' engagement with the project and company.

"Project managers should consider the emotional needs of team members and stakeholders, rather than relying on rational processes alone," he says.

Rally together and then review. To avoid the problems described above, Higgins recommends that firms create clear goals and check in often. Here are three tips:

1) **Map it out**. Create a project schedule or program that communicates with the whole team and the client the major tasks that need to be accomplished. This should include a list of who will achieve which goals and by when. Everyone should be held accountable to a program once it's agreed upon.

2) **Review and restructure as needed.** The next challenge is to meet the agreed upon program. Every job will be different, but common issues will rise across projects. If final reviews always seem to take longer than expected or generate more comments and issues than anticipated, then maybe you need to restructure your review process to allow for early inputs and staged reviews by these staff.

3) **Consider automation.** If there are many manual tasks that are being done over and over, are time-consuming and prone to error (for example

See PROJECTS, page 4

STUDY SHOWS MORE WORK NEEDS TO BE DONE

A recent study from the Project Management Institute, Pulse of the Profession, shows that both the public and the private sector have work to do in effectively aligning program management with organizational strategy and mission. More than half of government respondents (52 percent) acknowledged that they frequently focus on their specific departmental performance objectives as opposed to the strategic goals of the organization or agency.

Only 37 percent of government respondents reported that their organization has a formal process for developing program management competency and only 25 percent reported having a defined career path for those engaged in project and program management.

So, overall, aligning with organizational strategy and understanding what it takes to become a high performer – completing 80 percent or more of projects on time, on budget and within goals – can improve an organization's outcomes.

GOOD TO KNOW

Over a quarter of firms (28 percent) track project rework.
Firms most often perform rework because of unclear/incorrect scope (50 percent).

Source: 2013 Project Management Study, ZweigWhite: www.zweigwhite.com/p-2160-project-management-survey-2013

AWARDS

2013 marketing awards announced

The Zweig Letter recognizes entries in seven categories.

ZweigWhite has announced the winners of **THE ZWEIG LETTER** 2013 Marketing Communications Excellence Awards. The awards recognize exceptional marketing efforts in the architecture, engineering, planning, and environmental consulting industry.

A panel of judges composed of industry practitioners and marketing communications professionals assessed each entry based on results achieved (such as increased leads, more inbound inquiries, new projects, etc.), as well as creativity and marketing objectives.

TOP FINISHERS FOR EACH OF THE SEVEN CATEGORIES

External Newsletter

1. Urban Engineers, Inc.

2. SWCA, Inc.

3. Short Elliott Hendrickson, Inc.

Integrated Marketing Campaign

1. Hickock Cole Architects

2. Delcan Corporation (Employee Communication Program)

3. Delcan Corporation (Rail & Transit Campaign)

4. Process Plus, LLC

Online Marketing

1. Perkins + Will Engineers, Inc.

2. Miyamoto International

Social Media

1. Miyamoto International

2. Finley Engineering Group, Inc.

Special Event Marketing Campaign

1. P2S Engineering, Inc.

2. Urban Engineers, Inc.

3. Woolpert, Inc.

4. Hanson Professional Services Inc.

Target Marketing

1. Baskervill

2. CSArch

3. Finley Engineering Group, Inc.

Web Site

1. MacKay Sposito

2. SmithGroup JJR

3. FUSE International

PROJECTS, from page 3

transmittals), you need to think about whether there are ways you can automate these tasks.

DEBRIEFINGS HELP. The three points above demonstrate some key ways to improve your project management and administration – a process known as "continuous improvement."

"Your practice system needs to be a living system that learns from every project, every mistake and every team member – no matter how junior," Higgins says.

She adds that project debriefing meetings are not common enough in most firms; they should occur on every project, regardless of size, and these debriefings should be a time for sharing and congratulations, for recording positive achievements, and discussing how problems could be avoided next time.

"These debriefings shouldn't be a finger-pointing exercise," Higgins says. "Often, the best time to hold these sessions is right after design documentation is complete. If you wait 'till the end of construction, people's memories are not fresh. On some projects it may be necessary to have a further discussion post construction – and if you do – try to involve the contractor in this session."

In some cases, involving the client can be a great way to build an ongoing relationship and demonstrate a firm's commitment to improving services.

"Imagine if on every project you could just do one thing better each time – over the course of a year that adds up to a lot of improvements," Higgins says.

Note: Ceilidh Higgins blogs about collaboration on the practice of interior design, architecture and multidisciplinary consulting. Her blog can be found here: www.theMidnightLunch.com.

ADVICE

Tidbits from the Inc. 500

From the inspirational to the thought-provoking, speakers roused attendees' interest.

By JOÃO FERREIRA
Managing editor

The Inc. 500|5000 Conference held in Washington, D.C., in October presented a litany of opportunities for entrepreneurs to get inspired.

Below, **THE ZWEIG LETTER** compiles tidbits of helpful information to any business owner from two sessions, one with author Lewis Schiff and the other with Twitter "queen" Laura Fitton, now with inbound marketing expert Hubspot.com.

LEAP TO SUCCESS. Lewis Schiff, the author of Business Brilliant (www.business-brilliant.com), disclosed the secrets to success through the letter play scheme L-E-A-P (learn, earn, assistance, persistence). What each of these letters means in some detail below:

- **Learn.** "Best practices, when faithfully followed with rigor, tend to produce the same results," Schiff said. "Do you know what you are exceptionally good at that makes you money?"

  Schiff presented survey data from his book showing that 55 percent of middle class respondents don't know what they are good at, while 97 percent of what he defined as "ultra-high net worth" people know.

  "Stop trying to be good at things you are not good at," Schiff said. "We know that focus on a few things leads to success."
- **Earn.** Pricing your services is always a complex process. What pricing scheme (hourly rate versus flat rate, for example) will work better for you?
- **Assistance.** It's essential to know people who know people, Schiff said. Successful people make luck happen; surrounding yourself with successful people makes you successful.

  Schiff said that networking for networking sake doesn't equal new business prospects. Networking needs to be a targeted effort. He said that value really only takes place "when you don't know each other and need each other." Having a network that can connect you to those you don't know but need becomes the goal, then.

  Schiff said that Steve Jobs of Apple did exactly this by bringing artists and engineers together. Artists needed tools and engineers could build them.

  Again citing survey data, Schiff said that most ultra-high worth people say that luck, not education, leads to wealth. Schiff said those successful people try to create environments where luck happens.

  So, he advised: 1) start looking for networks that don't know each other and need each other; 2) hire people who are smarter than you; and 3) learn what you're best at and focus on it relentlessly.
- **Persistence.** Everyone responding to the survey had significant career failures, Schiff said. Middle class respondents experience failure as shame, he said, but ultra-high worth people don't. When they fail, they try a new way.

Bottom line: 1) learn what you do best; 2) earn money doing that; 3) find assistance with everything else; and 4) use persistence to overcome adversity.

CONSUMER POWER. Laura Fitton, once known as "queen" of Twitter, co-author of "Twitter for Dummies," and currently inbound marketing evangelist at HubSpot, shocked the audience at her session with a revelation: consumers have all the power now on where they get information about their buying decisions.

While television and the news told consumers what to buy and how to think in the dark ages before the Internet and Twitter, today the message is not unilateral – it's a conversation.

"Iif you want influence now, you better be giving a lot of value to others," Fitton said. "You need to be shooting attention out at others."

So, instead of getting on your soapbox and shouting out "buy, buy, buy," Fitton said that companies should, "Flip it around and make it all about your audience."

Social media, she said, is "about coming into someone's presence but not invading them."

Twitter and other social media are the "ultimate opportunity to cultivate your network," Fitton said. "Make your customer the hero."

FOUR WORDS. Fitton's four-word guide to social media: listen, learn, care, serve. With that in mind, she offered the following:

- You don't just want a following, you want engagement and passion. "You need the right (followers) and you need them to be engaged," Fitton said.
- Take amazing care of the network you really have. Follow them on Twitter, read their stuff; share their stuff.
- Helpful is the new viral.
- Generous is the new cautious and controlled.
- Remarkable is the new business as usual.
- Link love is the new ad buy.
- The message is the influencer.

Get involved

It is time to join in public policy conversation.

STEPHEN LUCY

BEST PRACTICES

We are continuously saturated with news related to public policy issues that have a direct impact on our profession and our business. Who can say that the current policies related to the healthcare reform have not been a hot topic of conversation between you and your peers? And what about sequestration? There are also numerous local topics related to spending, land use, water rights and other public policy issues that can help or hurt your business.

However, the one constant about these discussions on topics that impact the engineering community is that the discussion is being led by others. How often do you hear commentary from an architect or engineer quoted by reporters or contained in the editorial section? How often do our elected officials come with architecture or engineering credentials?

We have only to look at the composition of the U.S. House and Senate, which have six engineers and zero architects as members, to know that we are underrepresented at a national level. Most state and local government bodies are similar. So the compelling question is: Have we become comfortable with relinquishing our leadership in public policy debates to others?

Are you a participant or a spectator? I am not advocating that we should all drop what we are doing and stand for public election. However, we should strive to participate in public debate so that our viewpoint can be heard and incorporated into public policy.

It is similar to a sporting event. After the event, everyone remembers the teams that played the game even if they lost, but no one remembers the spectators on the stands. Absent active participation, we cannot complain later if the final decision is not what we wanted or what we consider to be in the best interest of the public.

The public wants our involvement. In the last national Gallup poll regarding the honesty and ethical standards of 22 different professions, the public ranked engineering as tied for third. We ranked above the clergy and well above members of Congress, who ranked 21, just above car salespeople. Our ranking has increased steadily since it was first included in the poll in 1976.

The public holds us in high regard, so why should we be reluctant to voice our opinions? They want to hear what we have to say. At the very least, our credibility as honest and ethical practitioners should help pave the way for assuming a greater voice about important policy issues that affect us locally, regionally and nationally.

We have a duty to participate. State licensure regulations and the canons of practice for our related professional organizations all stipulate that we have a duty to safeguard the public welfare. We all accept these guiding principles as basic requirements in the practice of engineering or architecture. That being the case, we should also accept that contributing to the debate of public policy on topics impacting the public welfare is a natural extension of those principles. Participation is not a legal obligation we have, but it is the right thing to do.

You are an expert. As defined by Merriam-Webster's, a profession is a calling requiring specialized knowledge and often long and intensive academic preparation. An expert is a person displaying special skill or knowledge derived from training or experience – practically the same definition.

We are experts and, therefore, should be the source of information and lead public debate on topics that impact our professions, especially those of a technical nature.

See STEPHEN LUCY, page 8

We have only to look at the composition of the U.S. House and Senate, which have six engineers and zero architects as members, to know that we are underrepresented at a national level.

Elements of effective recruiting

Evaluate your current program and make the necessary changes for 2014.

Jeremy Clarke

SEARCH SAVVY

As 2013 comes to a close, I'd like to suggest to the HR leaders out there to do a careful evaluation of their recruiting enterprise, and begin making some important adjustments in anticipation of the talent needs they'll have in 2014.

Here are the top evaluations I would suggest making:

1) **Openings per recruiter.** I've managed corporate recruiting teams for two very large companies. I appreciate the fact that a single well-trained recruiter can administratively manage 25 openings or more (at one corporation, our recruiters had as many as 75 assigned openings). The problem is that once you burden your recruiters with so many openings, they cease to be recruiters. Let's be honest. With so many openings, all they're doing is receiving résumés being collected via your careers site and distributing them to the hiring community. There's no real talent search/recruitment taking place because there's no time. There's no real comprehensive screening being done because there's no time. Meanwhile, your hiring managers are getting inundated with marginally qualified, marginally vetted candidates and, ultimately, marginal hires are being made. The whole organization suffers and loses money. And for what? My suggestion:

- Recruiters should have no more than 10- to 12 openings that are true searches, per desk.
- Positions that will be filled by the administrative function of transfers/promotions should be an effort entrusted to the affected business unit, not recruiters.
- All other positions (particularly hard-to-fill or time-sensitive openings) should be outsourced to a capable agency. Yes, it's costly, but the alternative is to hire more recruiters or suffer quality.

2) **Recruiter-to-business-unit alignments.** Your recruiters need to work very closely with their hiring managers. Familiarity between hiring managers and recruiters tends to breed more cooperation and foster credibility – both critical to your recruiting success. The further removed your recruiters are from having personal, direct and consistent contact with hiring managers, the less likely they are to place top people. My suggestion:

- Hire a recruiter as a fully assigned resource to each business unit (if the number of openings justifies this).
- Decentralize your recruiting team by putting each recruiter physically "inside" each sector or line-of-business to which the recruiter is assigned.
- Make sure recruiters have a dotted line reporting relationship to their respective line-of-business leaders in addition to the corporate recruiting or HR leader.

3) **Assessment practices.** I would make it a priority in 2014 to train both recruiters and hiring managers in effective screening and interviewing techniques. The best firms have the best people in part because they have the best vetting methodologies. You've got to get folks trained to start interviewing candidates for their demonstrated capacity to perform well in the job, rather than just hiring them because they seem "really nice" or because they'd be "a good culture fit." My suggestion:

- Map a consistent process for every position that incorporates: 1) a preliminary recruiter telephone interview; 2) a hiring manager telephone interview; and 3) at least one on-site interview with all stakeholders.
- Get everybody involved in the interview process trained in the science of "performance-based interviewing."
- Mandate consensus across hiring teams before any hiring decision is made.
- Validate candidates' credentials and experience through careful background and reference checks.

See JEREMY CLARKE, page 8

> Your recruiters need to work very closely with their hiring managers. Familiarity between hiring managers and recruiters tends to breed more cooperation and foster credibility – both critical to your recruiting success.

RESOURCES

SALARY SURVEY: The 2014 Salary Survey of Architecture, Interior Design & Landscape Architecture Firms is the most up-to-date and comprehensive compensation survey for architecture firms across the country. Based on data from a broad sampling of architecture firms in the U.S. reporting salaries for all positions, this report is the gold standard for firm leaders looking to benchmark their own and their staff's compensation against their peers.

You'll get salary comparison tables for each position, broken down into demographic subgroups such as firm type, firm staff size and region of office so you can make reliable comparisons between your firm and others just like it. Regions include: New England, Middle Atlantic, South Atlantic, North Central, South Central, Mountain, and Pacific. Descriptions and average years of experience are included for all titles in the survey.

It's all here, laid out in an easy-to-read format for firms just like yours.

The 2014 Salary Survey of Architecture, Interior Design & Landscape Architecture Firms will help you:

- Compare your staff's salaries to those in firms just like your own
- Find out what the normal salary range is for every type and level of position in architecture firms
- See how salaries change as firms grow in size and help you prepare for your own firm's future
- Evaluate salaries on a regional basis
- If you have offices in more than one state, see where employees are earning the most – and the least

The Salary Survey of Architecture, Interior Design & Landscape Architecture Firms gathered responses from more than 100 representative firms from all regions of the country to document base salaries of employees at those firms.

Don't underestimate the importance of staying on top of the very latest developments in salary trends, and don't rely on outdated or non-industry-specific sources. Make your salary decisions with confidence using the up-to-date information in this new report.

For more information or to buy a copy, call 800-466-6275 or log on to www.zweigwhite.com/p-2181-salary-survey-of-architecture-interior-design-landscape-architecture-firms-2014.

JEREMY CLARKE, from page 7

4) **Honing negotiating techniques.** The best recruiters know how to convince top passive talent to say "yes" to your opportunity. They're effective in this regard because they're meticulous about managing candidate expectations throughout the selection process. Further, they know the importance of negotiating an offer before an offer is ever presented to a candidate. And finally, they know the value of being a true consultant to the hiring community by working closely with managers to design "smart" and equitable offers. Too many corporate recruiters just take a weak transactional approach when it comes to presenting/negotiating an offer of employment. This might work for a candidate who needs a job but for a top candidate who could go anywhere, this can be disastrous. My suggestion:

- Train recruiters to work closely with hiring managers so they can design/build competitive packages that allow for creative negotiation.
- Train recruiters to negotiate the anticipated offer with their candidates before an offer ever materializes.
- Train recruiters to effectively articulate the merits of an offer, verbally. Also, be sure that they are familiar with the follow-up best practices once an offer has been made (offer confirmation letters, benefits materials, etc.).

In short: 1) Evaluate the number of openings-per-recruiter; 2) Consider creating specific recruiter-to-business-unit alignments; 3) Develop your company's assessment practices further; and 4) Get world-class in your offer design and negotiating techniques. These small adjustments can create significant inroads for you in 2014.

JEREMY CLARKE is the director of executive search consulting with ZweigWhite. Contact him at jclarke@zweigwhite.com.

STEPHEN LUCY, from page 6

In this past election, Texas voters approved Proposition 6, which is a constitutional amendment approving the creation of the State Water Implementation Fund For Texas, with $2 billion in initial funding. However, if you search for articles about the proposition, almost all public debate was undertaken by non-technical people.

The regional business journals for the state's four largest cities ran a total of one editorial written by an engineer. We are fortunate that the proposition passed, but given that this proposition will shape the public policy for water use for years to come, how can we be satisfied with our apparent lack of participation in the public debate?

Take the first step. We recently lost an outstanding advocate for our profession with the death of Richard Weingardt who, in his book "Forks in the Road, Impacting the World Around Us," encouraged us all to "show up" so as to be involved in public policy debate.

Participation can be that simple, yet that first step can be extremely stressful as it forces many of us to operate outside our comfort zone. Involvement with the political action committees of your professional organizations can be a relatively easy way to begin the process. You can also attend public meetings, submit editorials to your local publications, or even inform the media that you are available to provide input on topics for which you have expertise. You will probably be surprised with how quickly some of your offers of participation are accepted.

Are we up to the challenge? We are all busy in our personal and professional lives and the thought of taking on more can be daunting. However, the real question we need to ask is: Can we afford not to accept the challenge? By our training, we are uniquely qualified to address numerous pressing public policy issues that will have lasting impact on our professions, our businesses and the greater public.

I hope that we choose to lead those discussions and not acquiesce to the paths created by others.

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

LOCATION

Attracting employees to remote areas

Advice from a top recruiter on how to do so.

By LIISA SULLIVAN
Correspondent

Finding key people and keeping them may already be a challenge, but what if you have the added factor of being in a more remote area? How do you connect with people and then how do you convince them to come aboard?

WORKING ENVIRONMENT – KEY DRIVER. Workopolis, Canada's largest and most popular online job site, provides customized recruitment solutions for businesses – large and small. Kelly Dixon, president, advises that attracting people to remote areas often goes beyond benefits and salaries.

"That's always been the focus of what people thought would be a major driver, but one of the things we've found recently in surveying our own job candidates as far as what they are looking for to move is that the number one driver is working environment," she says.

Nearly 60 percent of the people Workopolis has surveyed ranked working environment first and foremost. It actually ranked above compensation, and it included things like room for advancement, location, flexible hours, training and development.

REMOTE RECRUITMENT. Tara Talbot, vice president of human resources at Workopolis, adds that in their experience, in order to recruit skilled workers to relocate to remote opportunities, employers really need to accomplish two things. They need to connect with a larger audience of potential candidates and they need to convince more of that audience to the idea of moving for work. This can be accomplished with a recruitment communications strategy that reaches previously untapped talent pools and delivers them powerful employer branding messages.

Tara Talbot, VP of HR, Workopolis.

She provides five key strategies for achieving this:

1) **You have to tap into the local community**. You won't likely find a large enough pool of workers you need in a remote area, but by promoting your jobs locally, you can also tap into the word-of-mouth network through the community. This not only reaches locals, but also potentially connects your jobs with friends and family who have moved away for economic reasons. These candidates may have an affinity for the rural area where the job is and will be committed team members if they return.

2) **You have to reach further afield**. Advertising your jobs in the rural communities themselves won't reach a large enough audience of talented workers to fill your positions – especially for the more highly-skilled roles that are in demand. Employers need a robust communications plan to connect with new sources of talent. Have a search-engine optimized recruitment site, broadcast your jobs across the web, and make the most of targeted social networks and industry association websites.

3) **Reach diverse audiences**. Some of the more often overlooked talent pools are women, Aboriginal peoples, visible minorities and persons with disabilities. There are specific outreach solutions for reaching diverse groups of people – one of them, Equitek (a Workopolis partner) automatically broadcasts job postings to 800 Canadian outreach organizations. This can be a win-win as on the one hand, companies are seeing a challenge in recruiting the candidates they need, while on the other hand there are whole new sources of previously untapped talent out there.

4) **Communicate the benefits of the job itself**. Just reaching candidates isn't enough. When competing for talent, employers have to convince potential hires that their company is a great place to work. You recruitment messaging should share the information that candidates most respond to when considering jobs (e.g., incentives, perks, culture, working conditions and more). Communicate what sets you apart as an employer of choice – why a candidate should prefer to work for you over a similar company.

5) **Communicate the benefits of living and working where the job is**. This gets more complicated when attracting remote candidates. Relocating is a lifestyle decision that affects many more aspects of people's lives than just their jobs. In this case, employers need to communicate more than just the benefits of the job. They need to sell the advantages of the location as well – why it's a great place to both live and work.

"Working in a more remote location can really be the best of both worlds," Talbot says. "Employees earn very competitive salaries with comprehensive benefits and pension programs, while enjoying the friendliness of small-town or rural living that also comes with a significantly lower cost of living."

Communicating that message to a broad and diverse audience of candidates is the key to filling those in-demand positions in remote locations.

PUBLIC IMAGE COUNTS. What about a company's image? Do job seekers re-

See REMOTE, page 10

"People want to go to a company where they think there is fairness, where there are roads to advancement, where leadership is ethical and honest and where it's not all about work, but also work-life balance and individuality."

ON THE MOVE

BAKER SUBSIDIARY PROMOTES: Michael Baker Jr., Inc., an engineering unit of **Michael Baker International, LLC** (Moon Township, PA), a 5,000-person engineering, development, intelligence and technology solutions firm, has promoted the following individuals to vice president and assistant vice president positions. The appointments include:

Sarah Cathcart – assistant vice president and Texas Transportation business development lead. She is responsible for all transportation business development activities, including developing client and industry official relationships, promoting Baker's identity across multiple markets, and assisting in the development of strategic and business plans. She is located in Arlington, Texas.

Jim Cramer – vice president and Construction Services cost center manager overseeing construction services for the Southeast Region. He is responsible for business development, resource management, technical and financial performance. He is located in Columbia, S.C.

Chuck Duggar – vice president and operations manager for the Louisiana and Arkansas cost center. He provides focus for design-build project delivery methods, procurement support, contract administration, and design and construction quality assurance for transportation projects. He is located in Baton Rouge, La.

Greg Fredrickson – assistant vice president and Aviation director for the Philadelphia Region. He is currently senior project manager in Baker's Mid-Atlantic Region, and will be capture manager for aviation business development along the Northeast corridor from Northern Virginia to Boston. He is located in Baltimore, Md.

Thomas Montgomery – vice president and state transportation manager for Georgia and Alabama, in support of Surface and Aviation Transportation, as well as the pursuit and execution of design-build and alternative delivery projects in Georgia. He is located in Norcross, Ga.

Carrie Rocha – assistant vice president responsible for Program Management Services for New England. She will serve as the deputy program manager for the $567 million CTfastrak project for the Connecticut Department of Transportation. Additionally, she will support Baker's New England business development efforts and will provide project oversight. She is located in Rocky Hill, Conn.

Quintin Watkins – assistant vice president responsible for Baker's Aviation practice in Norcross, Ga., where he is located. He plays a crucial client services role with important clients, such as Hartsfield-Jackson International Airport.

PERKINS+WILL NAMES: Perkins+Will (Chicago, IL), a 1,500-person interdisciplinary, research-based architecture and design firm, announced that **Gabrielle Bullock** has recently been named the firm's director of Global Diversity. As a member of the American Institute of Architects and the National Organization of Minority Architects, Bullock has been a long-standing advocate for advancing diversity initiatives within architecture.

"Diversity within our firm is crucial for continued growth and success," Bullock said. "In order to remain competitive and relevant within an evolving marketplace, it's important that the diversity of design professionals mirror the societies they serve."

As Perkins+Will continues to extend its global reach, it is imperative that project teams possess an array of expertise and backgrounds in order to best serve diverse communities. The results of Bullock's research will help her develop programs and outreach, dovetailing with the AIA's diversity mission. Over the next few months, Bullock will conduct in-depth research into diversity programs across a wide range of architectural firms and other industries in order to gather data and identify best practices and bench marks. A Perkins+Will diversity council will be identified within the first quarter of 2014.

"Employees from diverse backgrounds bring individual talents and experiences that enrich our work environment," Bullock said. "They offer a greater variety of solutions and viewpoints in order to best serve our clients and our community."

Bullock joined Perkins+Will in 1988 and has held leadership roles in both the New York, Pasadena, Santa Monica, and Los Angeles offices. She most recently served as the managing director of Perkins+Will's Los Angeles office for the past 8 years. Throughout her tenure, Bullock provided strategic and financial leadership as well as planning and management of large-scale facilities.

"I'm happy to announce Gabrielle's new role as Director of Global Diversity," said Phil Harrison, Perkins+Will president and CEO. "We are excited to undertake this initiative and I can't think of a more qualified leader than Gabrielle to bring a fresh and impactful look at diversity awareness and offerings. Her hands-on experiences as a leader of global projects have provided her with in-depth knowledge about the importance of diversity in advancing architecture."

PITTMAN NOMINATED: Waggoner Engineering (Jackson, MS), a full-service engineering firm, announced that **Dustin Pittman** has been elected president of the American Society of Civil Engineers, Mississippi section.

"This is a great recognition for the years of dedication Dustin has given to ASCE and is a very deserved achievement," said Joe Waggoner, founder of Waggoner Engineering. "Dustin is a visionary leader, who is advancing our profession, our communities and our company throughout the state of Mississippi and across the Southeast."

Pittman has been very active in both the Jackson, Miss. branch and state sections of ASCE. He has served as young member chair and president-elect of the Mississippi section, and young member chair, treasurer, vice president and president of the Jackson branch.

REMOTE, from page 9

ally care?

Workopolis' Dixon thinks they do.

"People want to go to a company where they think there is fairness, where there are roads to advancement, where leadership is ethical and honest and where it's not all about work, but also work-life balance and individuality," she says. "The reason the leader has a role is because it's they who are in the newspapers or it's they who are on the employer brand or video. Large brands in certain markets are wondering how they get the same level of brand recognition in other communities. I think leaders' presence in the media and throughout all these touch points does help their reputation."

PROFILE

Plan for the unexpected

Hard-working CFO takes hands-on approach to finances, constantly refining budgets.

By LIISA SULLIVAN
Correspondent

It takes a well-organized team player to help manage finances across a firm with 11 offices all over the nation.

Roy Mitchell does just that as CFO at **McDonough Bolyard Peck, Inc.** (Fairfax, VA), a 270-person multi-disciplined construction management firm experienced in assisting clients in managing the construction process from initial budget, through design and construction, to successful project closeout.

Mitchell oversees a variety of finance-related projects that include accounts payable and receivable activities, general ledger, financial reporting, and company audits.

"Mitchell's extensive experience in accounting makes him a valuable asset to our corporate team," says Charles Bolyard Jr., CEO and chairman of the board.

Mitchell has nearly 20 years experience, specializing in government contract accounting, with a solid background in project management and the implementation of multiple financial accounting systems. He has a Bachelor in Business Administration with a major in accounting from Marymount University.

Mitchell started with MBP in 2010 and currently manages the finance, accounting and forecasting functions for the firm. He prepares and presents the financial performance results to senior management and owners and interfaces with operational leadership, while managing the annual financial audit and valuation engagements.

A CONVERSATION WITH ROY MITCHELL

THE ZWEIG LETTER: What major accomplishment are you most proud of since you have been with MBP?

Roy Mitchell, CFO, McDonough Bolyard Peck, Inc.

Roy Mitchell: I have had the opportunity to build a wonderful, cohesive accounting team. We are the epitome of teamwork and customer service – qualities that I value greatly and that integrate into MBP's values-based organization.

TZL: What are your key strengths? What do you feel the key strengths are for an effective CFO?

RM: Solid problem-solving skills, excellent communication and a hard-working attitude.

TZL: How would you describe your work/management style?

RM: I am usually hands-off (not a micromanager), unless the situation warrants it. Otherwise, and I like to lead by example, coach and mentor my team.

TZL: What are your top priorities for 2013/2014?

RM: Our objective is to continue to be profitable and to ensure that our backlog remains strong.

TZL: How do you plan for "tough" economic times?

RM: We create our budgets on an annual basis. To better manage the turbulent economic times in recent years, we have also added a monthly projection process where we continuously refine the budget based on events that have transpired or what we now expect to occur differently than when we created the original budget. When deciding on who gets what funding for their budgets/projections, we primarily base that on need, with an eye on expected availability of funds.

TZL: What financial reporting system do you use?

RM: Deltek Costpoint – it caters to the government contracting industry.

TZL: Any ongoing challenges to speak of?

RM: Well, given that we have used Deltek Costpoint for more than 14 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 offices, which can operate very uniquely depending on location, client base, etc.

> "I have had the opportunity to build a wonderful, cohesive accounting team."

TZL: What is the favorite part of your job?

RM: I enjoy interacting with the breadth of talent here at MBP on a daily basis. I learn new things every day; I guide and assist others with the financial and project management process and I consider the team here to be my extended family.

TZL: What do you enjoy doing in your spare time?

RM: Spending time with my wife and three boys.

TZL: Any financial words of wisdom to share?

RM: Most firms plan in advance for large and other budgetary needs. But, you also need to plan for the unexpected. We create our budgets on an annual basis, but to better manage turbulent economic times in recent years, we've also added a monthly projection process where we continuously refine the budget based on events that have transpired or what we now expect to occur differently than when we created the original budget. When deciding on who gets what funding for their budgets/projections, we primarily base that on need, with an eye on expected availability of funds.

Choosing the right tax preparer

Filing taxes is a complex and comprehensive process, so make sure you have all the ducks in order.

Jesse Abercrombie

GUEST SPEAKER

When you first started out in your adult life, things were probably pretty simple: no house, no spouse, no kids, and few investments. So, when time came to do your taxes, you might have gotten along just fine by using Form 1040EZ – which, as the name suggests, is pretty darn easy to use.

Fast forward a few years, however, and here you are today: family, mortgage, 401(k), IRA, stocks, bonds, debts, charitable contributions. Now, when you sit down to do your taxes, they're looking a lot more like high school trigonometry. If that's the case, it might be time to get some help. However, anyone can claim to be a "tax preparer." How can you find the one that's right for you?

Here are a few tips:

- **Check credentials.** While your brother-in-law, your barber and your daughter's friend who is really good in math all may be able to do your taxes, none of them are going to be as familiar with tax laws as a CPA, a tax attorney or an "enrolled agent" (an individual licensed by the U.S. Treasury Department to represent taxpayers before the Internal Revenue Service). So, before you hand over your tax returns to someone, ask about his or her credentials and experience. If your taxes are too complicated for you to handle, you need a professional.
- **Get references.** Ask your friends, relatives and co-workers who they use for their taxes and if they're satisfied with this person.
- **Avoid preparers who promise 'big refunds.'** No reputable tax preparer can guarantee you a big refund – or any refund – before looking at your taxes. Stay away from these people. Also, avoid tax preparers who base their fee on a percentage of the amount of the refund. While refunds are nice, you don't want one that might invite serious questions, or an audit from the IRS.
- **Get organized.** Once you have chosen a professional to do your taxes, what can you expect? Can you just toss a shoebox full of receipts, investment statements and pay stubs at your preparer and then wait for your return?

It's not that easy. Even if you use a tax preparer, you're going to have to do some work, too. Try to be as organized as possible with your documentation. For example, you may want one envelope devoted solely to investment information, one to earnings, one to charitable gifts, one to other deductions, and so on. The more organized you are, the easier it will be for your tax professional to complete your return in the most favorable manner possible.

However, don't assume that what you're giving to your preparer is sufficient. If you have sold shares of stock, make sure you've got the cost-basis of those shares available. If this information is not printed on your statements, call your investment professional to get it.

Here's one final tip: See your tax preparer as soon as possible. Once the tax season gets into late March, you'll find few people anywhere as harassed and harried as tax preparers – so give them the time they need to help you.

JESSE ABERCROMBIE is a financial advisor at Edward Jones Investments. Contact him at 972-239-0852 or jesse.abercrombie@edwardjones.com.

The more organized you are, the easier it will be for your tax professional to complete your return in the most favorable manner possible.

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