

Pursue real success in 2014

From talent to management to engagement, Mark Zweig covers the gamut in nine points.

Stop accepting poor performance from any line unit and instead make changes in management.



Mark Zweig

EDITORIAL

So you are tired of muddling along with your A/E or environmental firm. Want to really break out in the coming year? Here's a list of nine things I would stop doing and what I would start doing instead:

1) Stop whining about a lack of talented applicants and start spending money on recruiting!

It isn't going to happen by wishful thinking. Most firms in our business have NO budget for talent acquisition. Is it any wonder we don't have the choice of quality people we need, when we need them then? Of course not! We have to budget for and spend money on either in-house or outside recruiters to get on top of this issue that is holding so many firms back.

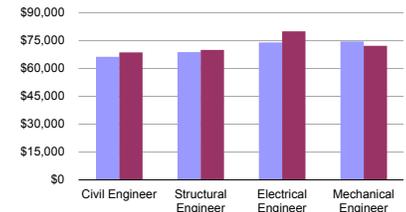
2) Stop complaining about the lack of organized selling efforts and hire a business development manager.

It's impossible to manage selling efforts when no one is doing it. Your people just chase after anything that moves willy-nilly and charge whatever they want to marketing and business development because there is no one managing them! Emulate other industries and hire someone who understands managing business development and selling activities improves results! Most firms in this business desperately need (an experienced) someone in this role.

See MARK ZWEIG, page 2

TRENDLINES

Engineering demand



Salaries for project engineers at leading engineering firms have risen again this year, according to the 2014 Salary Survey of Central Engineering Firms. The median base salary for civil engineers increased from \$66,318 last year to \$68,701 this year; for structural engineers, from \$68,800 to \$70,000; and for electrical engineers, from \$74,000 to \$80,000. However, the median base salary for mechanical engineers dropped slightly to \$72,181 this year, from \$74,569 last year.

— Margot Suydam, Survey Manager

FIRM INDEX

BDG Architects.....	3
DMKING Consulting LLC.....	8
Fentress Architects.....	11
Gensler.....	8
Klotz Associates.....	12
McDonough Bolyard Peck, Inc.....	12
PROCESSPLUS.....	9
Spicer Group, Inc.....	9
Stantec.....	3
Urban Studio Architects.....	3
WHR Architects, Inc.....	9

EDITOR'S NOTE:

THE ZWEIG LETTER will not be published Dec. 23 in observation of the Christmas holiday. We will return on Dec. 30. Happy holidays!

ALSO INSIDE

- GUEST SPEAKER: Creativity and quality in harmony? Page 6
- FROM THE CHAIRMAN: The ability to inspire. Page 7
- HR: Managing staff allocations. Page 9

PROFILE



COO takes flight

Page 11

What do buyers want? What do sellers need?

Page 3

MARK ZWEIG, from page 1

3) Stop accepting poor performance from any line unit and instead make changes in management.

No other industry tolerates poor performance from any unit manager as easily as most firms in the A/E business do. It's ridiculous. You can work with your managers only so long and if they prove to you they cannot make it happen you need to make a change. It doesn't mean that these people have no place in your company but maybe that place is NOT in a management job.

4) Stop whining about having to chase every job and spend the money necessary on brand building activities to get clients calling you.

You CAN get clients calling you in this business. The best firms are in that position in the markets they make the most hay in. It takes spending money – consistently – on a wide variety of marketing and brand-building activities to make it a reality. If you allocate nothing to these activities and don't believe they really make a difference, you will never get off the job-to-job treadmill that 98 percent of firms in this business are on!

5) Stop tolerating 80-100 day average collection periods and start doing what you NEED to do to

collect your money. It's ridiculous. Lawyers and CPAs have half the AR collection times we have in this business. Why? Because they don't accept three-month ARs as normal like we do! There is a science on this stuff. We have written about collection processes that WORK many times in these pages. Search the TZL archives and start doing it. If you need to, hire someone who can collect. Check within days of sending bills out to be sure the client has them and they are in the payment process. Stop letting your principals stop the collection process. Get firm with your clients sooner.

6) Stop griping about low hit rates and completely overhaul your proposal and presentation process.

If you do the same thing over and over how can you expect a different result? That's precisely the problem with most firms in this business. Bad "standard" proposals and presentations do nothing to convince a client that the firm is the ONLY choice! Boring, clichéd garbage. Take out a clean sheet of paper and answer the question of why that specific client should hire your firm and only your firm.

7) Stop being jealous of the other guy who gets more press and instead do what it takes for you and your firm to be in the news regularly.

It's real simple. Have a good press list (300- to 500 editors). Get on PR Newswire for God's sake – anyone can afford it! And send out press releases one, two, or three times a week. Finally, have SOMETHING to say. Be controversial. Be funny. Have an opinion. Have unique info. But don't just brag about your latest project!

8) Stop going to work in a dingy, disorganized, unprofessional mess of an office and instead clean and fix it up!

It kills me (especially) when I go to architects' offices that look like dirty, messy hovels. Clean it all up! Show some pride! Make it a nice place to be for all who work and visit there! It does matter!

9) Stop rationalizing why it's OK for you to be non-responsive/slow to respond to calls and emails.

It never is – plus you set the example for everyone else in the company! It isn't OK. You will lose if you think "they can wait." No one wants to wait today. We live in the era of immediate response no matter where or when. Invest in a good phone. Buy one for everyone in the firm. Be the most responsive firm in your market. You'll win if you do. ▲▲

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

CALENDAR

BECOMING A BETTER SELLER: Could every person in your firm describe your services in a succinct and persuasive way that demonstrates what sets you apart from the competition? It's not enough to have the technical expertise to complete projects, you need seller-doers who can convey excitement and tailor the message for the audience.

That's why ZweigWhite developed a one-day program that will help anyone who could possibly be involved in selling and who wants to be more successful and increase their value to their employers – design and technical professionals as well as marketing and business development professionals, principals, managers, architects, engineers, planners, scientists, surveyors, designers; anyone who wants to know more about selling.

Becoming a Better Seller was specifically developed to help design and technical professionals become more comfortable dealing with clients and promoting the firm and your services. Seminars will be led by

Mark Zweig, ZweigWhite CEO and chairman, or Chad Clinehens, executive vice president, ZweigWhite.

Here's what attendees will learn:

- What's different about business development, marketing, and selling
- Dispelling the myths about selling
- How to overcome "sales reluctance"
- Proposals that get noticed
- Presentations that get the job
- The client-centric approach
- Building a personal brand

Seminar dates scheduled for 2014 include Feb. 6 in Orlando, Fla., Feb. 7 in Atlanta, March 6 in San Diego, March 7 in Dallas, April 10 in Cincinnati, Ohio, and April 11 in Washington, D.C.

Group discounts are available for teams of four or more attendees from the same firm. Please call 800-466-6275 or log on to www.zweigwhite.com/seminars/better_seller for details.



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M & A

What do buyers want? What do sellers need?

Companies that went through the mergers and acquisitions process offer some advice.

By LIISA SULLIVAN
Correspondent

Are you considering a firm purchase, sale or merger? If so, there are certain key factors to focus on when looking to make a move.

FOCUS ON 3. Stantec (Edmonton, AB), a 13,000-plus person firm that provides professional design and consulting services in planning, engineering, architecture, surveying, and project management, with more than 200 offices in North America, is no stranger to acquisitions.



Bjorn Morisbak,
VP, Acquisitions
and Strategic
Planning,
Stantec.

Bjorn Morisbak, vice president, acquisitions and strategic planning, says that Stantec has a clearly defined growth strategy.

“At any given time we are talking to a number of firms that have reached out to us exploring a fit, based on our reputation as a very capable acquirer,” he says. “We also

reach out to firms we have identified as a good fit. The decision has to be a mutual one and both parties have to be able to agree on a strong value proposition that involves the following three factors: 1) alignment with our strategic purpose and growth strategy; 2) cultural fit; and, 3) mutually agreeable commercial terms.

FOCUS ON 5. BDG Architects (Tampa, FL), a 55-person firm, recently joined forces with **Urban Studio Ar-**

chitects (Tampa, FL) to establish a new firm to enhance client relationships and broaden their impact on architecture and design across the nation. The combination of these two firms creates a much stronger architectural brand.

“The decision has to be a mutual one and both parties have to be able to agree on a strong value proposition.”



Mickey Jacob,
Executive VP of
Architecture,
BDG Architects.

Individually, BDG Architects and Urban Studio Architects are two of the most highly respected firms in the Southeast, having worked on thousands of projects, including many of the most recognizable structures in the region. Together, they have more than \$750 million in

architecture and interior design projects completed or underway. The firms' combined talent and depth of experience will elevate their offerings with personnel, expertise, and experience to work on projects of any type, size and scope.

Mickey Jacob, executive vice president of architecture, discusses some of the top things to consider when planning for a merger. They include:

■ **Compatibility.** The greatest challenge of a merger is to combine the cultures of two firms. Everyone needs to feel that they have a role and value in the new organization. Carefully planning how employees integrate into the change will provide a clear direction for staff and outline performance expectations and job objectives.

WHEN IS THE OPTIMUM TIME TO SELL A BUSINESS?

Acquisition Advisors, an M&A firm for buyers and sellers of midsize U.S. companies, provides skilled advice and expert assistance on the purchase and sale of companies valued between \$1 million and \$100 million. It reports that the best time to sell a firm is when:

- Revenues and profits are growing.
- Continued upside and buildup of new business is in the pipeline.
- High proportion of revenue is EBITDA (earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation and amortization) and there is positive cash flow.
- Industry business cycle is at or near the recent peak and when there is high demand for your products and services.
- Positive press, accreditation and good reputation.
- Competitive advantage and differentiation, which lead customers to prefer your products or services.

Installing a concise organizational chart and reporting procedure eliminates uncertainty and helps build the new staff relationships that are important to future success.

- **Financial potential.** The base concept of merging is to grow business. Determining the potential of expanding existing markets and developing new markets is critical to the success of the merger. Both firms must feel that there are growth opportunities for projects, clients and employees in order to maximize the potential of the new operation.
- **Leadership.** The new merger must accommodate the needs of individuals who have been used to presiding over the decision-making process of their individual firms. Establishing a new leadership structure that clearly

See BUYERS, page 4

GOOD TO KNOW

Less than two-thirds of firms (65 percent) report M&A is in their strategic plan for the next five years.

Source: 2013 Merger & Acquisition Survey, ZweigWhite, www.zweigwhite.com/p-2146-Merger___Acquisition_Survey__2013.

A/E BUSINESS NEWS

PREDICTING THE FUTURE: Microdesk, a provider of business and technology consulting services to help firms successfully plan, design, build and operate land and buildings, unveiled its annual list of architecture, engineering, construction and operations (AECO) industry predictions for 2014 at Autodesk University.

The top three predictions highlight advancements and perception shifts around technology, public engagement and building processes that will culminate to bolster U.S. infrastructure.

After a year that saw both strides in technology and setbacks to U.S. infrastructure, Microdesk predicts that 2014 will be a pivotal year in which the foundation will be laid for a major industry overhaul. The technological tools are available, and in 2014 firms will employ innovative and creative tactics to solve everyday infrastructure problems such as the nation's aging roads and bridges.

As Microdesk revealed in its 2013 State of the Industry survey of over 2,000 U.S. adults, 95 percent of Americans fear risks to the nation's infrastructure. That said, with the promotion of ideas such as Autodesk's Smart Cities, Elon Musk's Hyperloop and Google's Driverless Cars, it is clear the industry is at a turning point and must prepare for these breakthrough ideas that are likely to become reality by 2020.

Based on its survey findings and AECO industry expertise, Microdesk predicts the top trends and necessary vehicles for change in 2014 and beyond will include:

- Proliferation of futuristic technologies: Staying ahead of innovation
- Universality of public engagement: Becoming infrastructure intelligent
- Necessity of building standards: Driving adoption at the owner, developer level

AIA LAUNCHES SUSTAINABLE PROJECTS DOCS: The American Institute of Architects announced the release of seven new Sustainable Projects (SP) contract documents. The release includes SP versions of the AIA's two families of Construction Management documents, Construction Manager as Adviser (CMA) and Construction Manager as Constructor (CMc), as well as B103-2007 SP, Standard Form of Agreement Between Owner and Architect for a Large or Complex Sustainable Project.

"The Construction Manager as Adviser and Construction Manager as Constructor delivery models are beneficial for sustainable projects. The construction manager's involvement in the early stages of the project results in collaboration between the owner, the architect, and the construction manager in the development of the owner's sustainable objective, and in the development of the measures they will take toward achieving that objective," said Ken Cobleigh, managing director and counsel at the AIA.

BUYERS, from page 3

shows "who is in charge" and how leaders interact, accept new responsibilities and preside over a clear employee reporting/responsibility network will give the employees confidence that there is a strategy in place to lead the transition, growth and performance of the merger.

- **Project opportunities.** In planning for the merger, groups must take a look at the project portfolios, specific project types and employee expertise and experience and how that will fit into the strategy of the new firm structure. How the merger strengthens the ability of the firm to go after new markets, enhance performance with current project types and build new strategies to be innovative and trend-setting should be

B103-2007 SP is an agreement between owner and architect that is specifically developed for use on large or complex sustainable projects. It is written for use in the design-bid-build delivery model; however, and with some modification, it is also well suited for use on CMc projects.

The new Sustainable Project documents are currently available through the current version of AIA Contract Documents software, and individually through AIA Documents-on-Demand.

EUROPEAN TRANSPORTATION REPORT: Many cities in Europe are changing, according to a new report that points to rapid transformations in urban transportation in some areas. While cycling and efficient public transportation are becoming the norm in some urban areas, Europe's transportation sector is still a major contributor to excessive levels of greenhouse gases, air pollution and noise, the report says.

Changing transportation in cities is just one story in the 2013 edition of the annual Transportation and Environment Reporting Mechanism (TERM) published by the European Environment Agency (EEA), which presents a comprehensive analysis of transportation's effect on the environment in the European Union.

Urban transportation has a marked effect on quality of life for the three quarters of Europeans living in cities. Road transportation is a major source of air pollution in cities, leading to a high proportion of the population being exposed to pollutant levels above EU and World Health Organization standards. The seriousness of this was underlined in October when the UN classified outdoor air pollution as carcinogenic.

Traffic noise is also a major health issue in many cities. More than a quarter of the inhabitants of Sofia, Luxembourg, Paris and Tallinn are exposed to night-time traffic noise above WHO limits, according to data on 17 European capitals published in the report. Quality of life is also affected by commute times, with commuters in London and Budapest are most likely to travel more than an hour to work, according to a survey of 75 cities in the EU and Turkey.

Many cities have successfully improved the urban environment by addressing two sides of the issue – encouraging people to switch to non-motorized modes and public transportation, while simultaneously restricting car use. Despite initial opposition, such schemes often become very popular with residents, the report notes, citing the example of Stockholm's congestion charge. The report argues that such positive examples should encourage municipalities to replicate policies elsewhere.

Hans Bruyninckx, EEA executive director, said: "Many cities are applying innovative ideas which will make the car-based transport system seem like an idea belonging to the last century."

evaluated. Maintenance of existing contracts and clients are also critical elements in making sure that current revenue streams are preserved and expanded.

- **Communication.** An effective and well-planned communication strategy for the merger must be put in place and implemented aggressively. It is important to make sure that employees are fully informed of the details of the new firm, along with preparing the existing client-base with how their accounts will be serviced. Additionally, placing announcements in the marketplace to inform the business and professional community on the value, capabilities and experience/expertise of the new firm, but also shows the staff that the firm leadership has a strategy and vision for the future growth and prosperity. ▲▲

HISTORY

TZL *time* machine

Dec. 15, 1993

The holiday season doesn't skip those in the design industry universe. So, an article in the Dec. 15, 1993 issue (#40) of the **THE ZWEIG LETTER** asks: "Why give client gifts?"

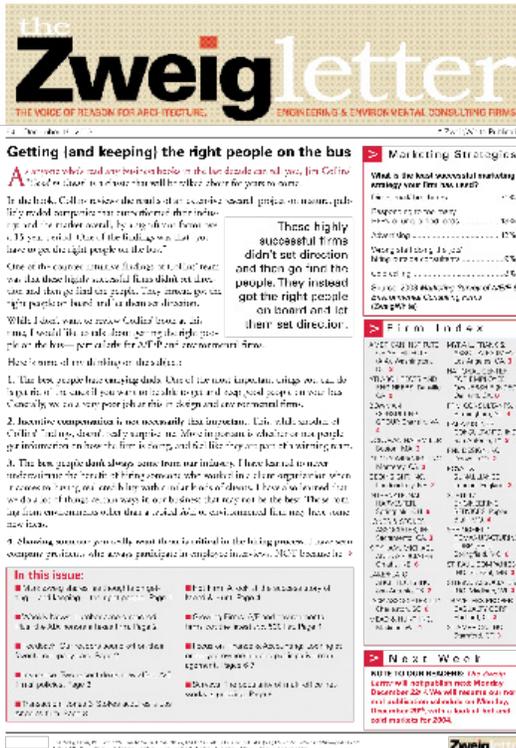
The answer: "EVERYBODY likes to get a present, even if it's only worth 35 cents," Jack McKeown, president of **KM&A** (San Diego, CA), a 30-employee A/E firm, told **THE ZWEIG LETTER**.

And if everybody likes a gift, do they like it enough to *give* you more business because they *get* a gift from you? Or is that really the purpose? TZL went to find out and garnered the following reasons from practitioners in the industry:

- 1) To thank a long-term client.
- 2) To cultivate prospective clients.
- 3) To maintain contact with clients.
- 4) To make a design or marketing statement.
- 5) To "keep up with the Jones's."

Not at all unrelated, Mark Zweig wrote about marketing in his editorial – namely about marketing myths debunked. Below is Zweig's list of most common marketing myths, which he readily clears up:

- 1) Specialized firms are hit hardest when the market they serve declines.
- 2) Marketing people are supposed to sell.
- 3) It takes seven (or five, or six, or eight) contacts to make a sale.
- 4) You have to make cold calls to be successful.
- 5) You have to have done "X" number of similar projects to get a job.
- 6) Being a "TQM" firm gives you a selling advantage.
- 7) Proposal covers should be standardized.
- 8) Newsletters should only go out quarterly.
- 9) Every firm could benefit from becoming more *proactive* in their marketing.
- 10) A good brochure is important to your marketing.



Dec. 15, 2003

Employee ownership, a topic that still fascinates many in the A/E/P and environmental consulting industry.

In 2003, **THE ZWEIG LETTER** took an in-depth look at the topic on the Dec. 15 issue (#541), with an article titled, "Employee ownership and participative management in the A/E industry."

The article quoted statistics from the 2003 Financial Performance Survey pointing to 12 percent employee ownership among firms, while 19 percent had employee stock ownership programs.

The interesting fact in the article, however, is that at the time "13 of the 100 largest 'employee-owned' companies in the United States operate in the architecture-and-engineering industry." In fact, the article said, the A/E industry and, interestingly, the supermarket industry, tie for the most represented industries on the list.

"There is undoubtedly a common culture in this industry that places a high degree of importance on being an owner," the article concludes. "In fact we find that the terms 'principal' and 'owner' are often used synonymously within the industry."

Mark Zweig analyzes Jim Collins' book "Good to Great" in his editorial. Zweig covers the topic of getting the right people on the bus in the design industry, offering seven tips.

- 1) The best people hate carrying duds.
- 2) Incentive compensation is not necessarily that important.
- 3) The best people don't always come from our industry.
- 4) Showing someone you really want them is critical in the hiring process.
- 5) The more you can personalize the entire recruiting process, the better.
- 6) You need to continuously look for candidates, even when you aren't in a growth mode.
- 7) You will never bat 1.000 on your new hires.

Creativity and quality in harmony?

Total Quality Management systems and processes have vanished from our lexicon – but essential lessons can improve design solutions and enhance the bottom line.

Ask most young practitioners today what they believe are the essential characteristics of an outstanding design firm, and you’re likely to get descriptions like nimble, flexible, adaptable, agile, visionary and inventive. You’re much less likely to hear adjectives like predictable, repeatable, consistent or reliable. Granted, design is often seen as a free flowing and inspirational exercise – hardly a process at all. Certainly not a sterile manufacturing productivity-focused imperative, they would argue. Not something that is comfortable in the “design matters” world of innovation.

A LITTLE PERSPECTIVE. Not so fast. Good design is still built on a foundation of high quality and responsive service. Trade publications often have articles highlighting the failures and litigation surrounding some creations that were just as recently heralded as breathtaking design. Solutions that are so complex and untested that the designers cannot consider and resolve all of the possible problems in advance, nor can the builders anticipate the engineering challenges they are contracted to erect. Failure to maintain industry quality standards can be fatal.

In the early 1980s the Total Quality Management revolution took hold in North America. It seems that stability and predictability in society had given way to productivity – doing more with less. That pursuit of productivity led to quality sacrifices and nowhere was it more evident than in the Detroit auto industry.

In today’s world economy, high levels of quality and reliability are essential and expected. So where has differentiation gone to in the design industry? Unique design solutions are one approach that is most often pursued. The relentless examples that fill the pages of our trade publications might suggest that it is the only approach, or at least the preferred approach. But there is another I would argue for.

SERVICE IN A SERVICE INDUSTRY. High levels of profitability in the design profession can be traced directly to satisfied clients. Satisfied clients become repeat clients. Repeat clients offer reduced learning curves, more efficient communications, and even higher fees to compensate designers for their higher levels of service satisfaction. This virtuous spiral is built by staff delivering high levels of service surrounding predictable scope, schedule and budget parameters. Experts suggest that we must delight and astound our clients with solutions that far exceed their expectations. This is where the lessons of the TQM



Dennis King

GUEST SPEAKER

movement should not be lost. Each staff person in your firm has the power to contribute to your success. Called “daily moments of truth,” each contact with a client contributes to your reputation. While each event may be small stuff, unlikely to sink your firm, when taken as a whole these impressions allow clients to form conclusions about your firm and ultimately about your design quality.

DESIGN CREATIVITY AND REPEATABLE PROCESSES. The highest levels of design creativity require adequate hours spent on research, invention and perfection. Since most design service agreements have fixed fees of some measure, the design hours needed for creativity must be found during the more routine aspects of our practices. Time saved during the predictable phases of the design process can be accumulated and utilized during the more creative portions of the process. Most importantly, repeatable and error-free documentation will free up those valuable hours needed for exploration. My favorite lesson from the TQM movement was the, “price of not doing things right the first

See DENNIS KING, page 8

Satisfied clients become repeat clients. Repeat clients offer reduced learning curves, more efficient communications, and even higher fees to compensate designers for their higher levels of service satisfaction.

The ability to inspire

How will the role of the senior architect change over the next five years?

A recent post on KA Connect's LinkedIn blog posed the question in the subhead above. The first posted comments had to do with fluency in various technologies that are reshaping our profession. Building Information Modeling (BIM), Integrated Project Delivery (IPD), social networks and other information access channels are driving whole new ways of accessing knowledge and resources, and sharing information. There is no question that a comfortable and fluid working relationship with new processes that have become commonplace in architecture and engineering design, documentation, project management and team communication is just part of the job. But the continuing education necessary to stay current is just part of being a true professional today.

This was an appropriate comment, but I couldn't help but add my two cents:

Referring to said technologies in my post: "All of the above is interesting, but the most salient talent today and going forward will be leadership skills – the ability to inspire an entire team of participants to collaborate, to contribute the best they have to offer, in order to bring value to a client. We've all experienced the chaos that ensues when there is no leadership talent on a project, whether provided by the architect, contractor or another participant. We also know that when great leadership skill and style become manifest, the project flourishes, no matter who steps up to lead. The leader keeps everyone focused on achieving solutions that will explicitly contribute to the enhancement of the client's business – more sales in a store, higher repeat and referral guests in a hotel, less absenteeism, and higher employee satisfaction and engagement in the workplace. Expanding on the theme of Evidence Based Design, the leader insists on establishing and monitoring metrics that are important to the client, engaging the entire team in working together to achieve that end."

Subsequently, I've thought about it further and recognize how very different and demanding the talent requirements are today for a senior architect or engineer. Solid technical skills are, of course, a threshold requirement. Professional managers who do not stay (or never were) current on the mechanics of what we do as professionals are ineffective in a lead role on a project. With the continuing increase in the complexity of the regulatory environment (think energy codes, life safety, disabled access, LEED, and so forth, which are constantly evolving and being redefined and vary from jurisdiction to jurisdiction), a senior project leader has an obligation to stay current.



Ed
Friedrichs

FROM THE CHAIRMAN

Add to that changes affected by BIM and IPD that alter who does what documentation. The whole concept of liability is being redefined (and argued about by lawyers and insurance companies). We're evolving toward a design-build environment, requiring project leaders to be adaptable as they set up and guide project processes. And no two projects today are set up the same way.

With large, complex projects today, there are really two "senior architect" roles at play, simply because it's virtually impossible for one person to have the bandwidth to stay current across the entire spectrum of knowledge and to embody the broad range of talents and skills required. I see projects being co-led by two people, both with strong leadership skills. One is best suited by talent and disposition for an outside role – working with the client, the funding source, governmental agencies, particularly those with discretionary review and approval authority, and guiding the project team through design. The second

See ED FRIEDRICHS, page 8

It's a very new world for the senior architect or engineer, and a time when the universities training future professionals need to shape their curricula to select for leadership talent and train students for this new professional world.

ED FRIEDRICHS, from page 7

is a more technical by nature, deeply immersed in the technology and engineering aspects of the project, able to negotiate code and other regulatory issues, manage the consultant and contractor teams, guide the structure and process of documentation, and to keep everyone working collaboratively.

Clearly, scale adds complexity but even smaller projects today are governed by the same complex codes and regulations, subject to the same array of varying team configurations regarding who does what in design and documentation. It's a very new world for the senior

architect or engineer, and a time when the universities training future professionals need to shape their curricula to select for leadership talent and train students for this new professional world. It's also a great time for universities to engage in continuing education for these senior roles. They're best equipped to do it. It would reconnect them with practicing professionals, bringing greater relevance to what's being taught, allowing the curriculum to be shaped by the real world. ▀▲

EDWARD FRIEDRICHS, FAIA, FIIDA, is a consultant with ZweigWhite and the former CEO and president of **Gensler**. Contact him at efriedrichs@zweigwhite.com.

DENNIS KING, from page 6

time.” One of the best measures in our industry of problems in our quality and/or service delivery is in accounts receivable. When clients are unhappy about something that is unresolved, they tend to hold on to our invoices and not send money. More often than not, you can ask about delinquent accounts to identify problem projects.

SIGNALING COMMITMENT. Quality and service excellence does not happen by accident. Just as great design solutions are the result of planning and process exploration, so are high levels of client satisfaction. The most valuable lesson is that it starts at the top of your organization. The intensity of your focus on both design and service improvements is a clear indication of your resolve to be successful. It should be unequivocal and at the center of your firm's culture. Here are some ideas to help communicate your commitment:

- Regular employee meetings to discuss quality and service excellence – lots of cheerleading for achievements.
- Include quality and service right along with design on your routine agendas.

- Invite clients in to discuss what they see as important deliverables. Include your staff so they hear it firsthand.
- Get out of your office (if you still have one) and get in front of your clients.
- Spend less paper-management time and more people-leadership time.
- Empower your process innovators. These “boat rockers” may be trying to tell you something about improving your design through reduction of waste.

So the point of quality-based management is designing predictable processes, where appropriate, in your creative design business in order to be able to do better design. It just doesn't happen by accident. Management consultant Peter Drucker once observed, “The only things that evolve by themselves in an organization are disorder, friction, and malperformance.” We should aspire to more than that in design. ▀▲

DENNIS MICHAEL KING is a principal **DMKING Consulting LLC** www.DMKINGconsulting.com.

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 be 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/.

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LOGISTICS

Managing staff allocations

It's a juggling act in many cases and hiring often comes into the equation.

By LIISA SULLIVAN
Correspondent

You're juggling projects, but what about staff? Proper staff allocation is the key to a successful project, but what happens when some gaps need to be filled? Do you hire new staff? Do you move existing staff around? Several factors need to be considered.

ALLOCATION AND SHIFTING TRENDS. Sue Slade, HR manager, **Spicer Group, Inc.** (Saginaw, MI), a 133-person professional engineering, land surveying, community planning and architecture services firm, says that when staff allocation takes place, Spicer first works to match specific skill sets with project requirements.

“Our long-term clients always receive the priority in staffing. When it does become necessary to shift, we must train the new team member, at our expense, to bring them up to speed.”

“We also take into account the availability of staff and where staff is needed most,” she says. “At times, we move people from one area to another if needed; cross training is a good thing most of the time.”

Shifting staff becomes a necessity when Spicer Group has areas that are not as busy as others, or areas that are too busy, and in need assistance. There are also times when a particular skill set is required and shifting of staff has to happen to fulfill client needs.

James Eller, engineering director, **PROCESSPLUS** (Cincinnati, OH), an engineering and architecture firm of 90 full-time, 23 part-time employees and 10 contractors, says that the first criteria for allocating staff is “availability.”

“We want to make sure that the appropriate folks are available to support the project and give it the necessary atten-



James Eller,
Engineering
Director,
PROCESSPLUS.

tion,” he says. “We then assess the fit of the team – our employees, the end user and the construction contractor. The personalities and skill sets must be compatible for a successful project.”

Because of the risks involved with changing team members, Eller says that PROCESSPLUS tries to avoid shifting staff. However, in some cases, it may become a necessity if a staff member becomes unavailable due to a prior commitment or an emergency.

“Our long-term clients always receive the priority in staffing,” he says. “When it does become necessary to shift, we must train the new team member, at our expense, to bring them up to speed. This is done to minimize the impact on the client.”



Gailand Smith,
COO, WHR
Architects, Inc.

Gailand Smith, COO, **WHR Architects, Inc.** (Houston, TX), a 148-person, full-service architecture, interior design and technology planning firm, says that several factors are involved in staff allocation at WHR.

First, the company assesses the project type, the owner and the services being provided.

“We prefer to have a project team that is familiar with the client,” Smith says. “Then, after a decision regarding the type of staff experience required, we review staff availability and determine if that team structure will be able to produce the results needed for the project.”

Staff allocation at WHR derives from the project team's fee versus workload required for the agreed-upon contract amount. The schedule required for delivery is also considered. The available staff and their respective direct salary costs are then applied to the number of hours required to deliver the project within the available fee.

WHR is set up internally as studios (two for higher education, five for healthcare and one for interior design). Studio leaders (project managers) meet every two weeks to review their current staffing projections and “needed” staff. The man-hour projections are compiled through Resource Management in Deltek Vision. Those projections are updated, at

See ALLOCATIONS, page 10

●●●● GOOD TO KNOW

Almost half of firms (49 percent) do workload or manpower planning on a weekly basis. In firms that do workload or manpower planning, 63 percent say project managers are involved in the process.

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

ON THE MOVE

GPI HIRES: Greenman-Pedersen, Inc. (Babylon, N.Y.), an engineering and construction services firm, announced that **N. Paul Rimmer** has joined the firm as a senior structural engineer/metals quality assurance Specialist in the Albany, N.Y. office.

Rimmer has over 30 years' experience and is currently providing welding expertise, metals quality assurance, design, fabrication and construction support, primarily on the Tappan Zee design build project, as part of the GPI Independent Quality Assurance Team. He manages off-site quality assurance in-plant shop inspections, and is also a subject matter expert for NHI training programs funded by FHWA. Rimmer resides in Guilderland, N.Y. with his wife, Linda and sons Joshua and Matthew.

GPI is a multi-discipline engineering firm that has been providing comprehensive professional design, planning, and construction inspection to all levels of government and industry from branch offices throughout the eastern U.S. for over 47 years.

ARUP PROMOTES AND HIRES: Arup (New York, NY), a multidisciplinary engineering and consulting firm with 1,000 employees in the U.S., an arm of London-based Arup, announced the promotion of **Anne Marie Moellenberndt** to associate, and the hiring of **Kirk Stinebaugh** and **Daniel Spencer** as mechanical engineers and **Sandy Duran** as marketing specialist.

"We are delighted to welcome Kirk, Daniel and Sandy to the Arup team in Seattle and also to celebrate the promotion of Anne Marie to associate," said Cormac Deavy, principal and Seattle office leader. "They have the skills and talent that are critical to our continued success and growth in Seattle."

Moellenberndt joined Arup in 2007 and has 11 years of mechanical engineering and design experience. She has worked on a variety of civic, commercial, mixed-use and public sector buildings such as the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation Campus, Pike Place Market PC-1 North, Royal British Columbia Museum master plan, and the King Street Station rehabilitation project. Moellenberndt's interests include sustainability and energy-efficient design, both through mechanical system design as well as working with clients, architects, contractors and other designers to improve overall building performance.

Stinebaugh was hired as a mechanical engineer. He has five years of experience specializing in mechanical system design and sustainability. Before joining Arup, he was with **Interface Engineering**.

Spencer was hired as a mechanical engineering graduate. He received a Bachelor of Science degree in mechanical engineering from Mississippi State University and a Master of Science degree in mechanical engineering from University of Maryland. He is currently working with Moellenberndt on the Pike Place Market PC-1.

Duran was hired as a marketing specialist. She has 10 years of marketing and business development experience in the architecture, engineering and construction industry. She will lead marketing initiatives, including proposal development, research and business development.

MICHAEL BAKER HIRES: 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, announced that **Edward La Guardia** has joined Baker as chief engineer of the company's Rail and Transit Practice. La Guardia, a 34-year seasoned professional in the railroad industry, brings extensive senior level experience and leadership in operations, engineering and construction management.

Previously, La Guardia managed the engineering, construction and operating maintenance of the physical plant for all modes for Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority. He is involved with a number of industry associations, including APTA, AREMA and TRB, and serves on various committees with these groups including as Chair of APTA's Elevator Escalator Consortium and the APTA Elevator Escalator Technical Forum.

"We are very pleased to welcome Ed to the Rail and Transit team," said Baker's David Wilcock, vice president and national practice leader for the Company's Rail and Transit Practice. "Considering his significant experience at multiple levels of the industry, we're fortunate to have him assist in our many current design and construction assignments, and we look forward to making great inroads with new clients and extending our service to our highly valued existing clients."

ALLOCATIONS, from page 9

minimum, once a month. HR attends the regular staffing meetings and works with project managers to identify what type of staff is needed.

HIRING HAPPENS. "We know hiring needs to happen when our people are stretched too thin to meet deadlines, have too many projects and are losing effectiveness, or when we don't have enough people to take on new work that's within our areas of expertise," Slade with Spicer Group says.

At PROCESSPLUS, all of its hiring is strategic.

"We avoid hiring based solely on the immediate need," Eller says. "If we don't start looking until the need arises, then it's too late. Because of the current 'war for talent' for engineers, we pursue quality employees even when the workload is reduced. So, when there is an immediate need that we cannot

staff internally, we will use our partner companies or contractors for assistance."

Smith says that when PROCESSPLUS no longer has available resources in other studios to pull from to meet the required hours to complete a project, it then begins a candidate search to fill that position.

"The timing for that decision is typically made at the staffing meetings (held every two weeks), but in an extreme case the studio leader will meet with the COO to discuss their needs and he will work to remedy the problem internally," says Kimi Duplichan, HR manager, WHR Architects. "The COO will also meet with HR to discuss any external measures that may need to be taken."

WHR has been in hiring mode for the past two years and it is enjoying an upturn in the design and construction industry. ■▲

PROFILE

COO takes flight

Patrick McCue has helped Fentress Architects build a world-class airport terminal practice.



Patrick McCue and Curtis Fentress, founding principal and principal in charge of design.

By LIISA SULLIVAN
Correspondent

In the summer of 2013, **Fentress Architects** (Denver, CO), a 150-person architecture firm, recruited Patrick McCue, former director of properties for the Norman Y. Mineta, San Jose International Airport (SJC), as the firm’s chief operating officer. By having McCue on board, Fentress Architects is successfully integrating an airport perspective in how they serve their clients and how they approach the engagement experience and design development.

McCue’s style is one of a true “front-of-house to back-of-house.” He brings a solid understanding in aviation practice, and has helped instill processes that guide design decisions with the client and user at the forefront.

“Visionaries,” said McCue to describe the designers at Fentress Architects.

McCue worked with the firm at SJC on the modernization of Terminal A, the new Terminal B and new consolidated rental car facility, but soon learned about their other aviation projects around

See PATRICK MCCUE, page 12

A CONVERSATION WITH PATRICK MCCUE



Patrick McCue,
COO, Fentress
Architects.

THE ZWEIG LETTER: Tell me a little about your background?

Patrick McCue: Sixteen years in accounting, business development and revenue management at Mineta San Jose International Airport and Salt Lake City International Airport; five years doing business strategy consulting at Accenture.

TZL: When did you start with Fentress?

PM: July 1, 2013.

TZL: Can you give me an overview of your current responsibilities?

PM: I manage the operations of the firm, including accounting, marketing, IT, human resources and administration.

TZL: What is a major accomplishment that you are most proud of since you have been COO?

PM: Increasing profitability on current projects and connecting Fentress with opportunities in the aviation market.

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

PM: 1) An analytical approach to finance and providing strategic direction to increase profitability; and, 2) A COO must have clear and strategic knowledge of accounting and finance. A firm is rudderless without knowing where it is and where it needs to be.

TZL: How would you describe your work style?

PM: Collaborative. So many great ideas come from encouraging free expression and nurturing discussions with different perspectives.

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

PM: To continue the development of our Shanghai and London studios and to ensure that all of our studios have the support and resources necessary to develop and implement industry leading, award-winning designs.

TZL: What is your favorite part of the job?

PM: Getting to work with all the incredibly talented architects and designers. Every day is rewarding.

TZL: What are some top challenges/solutions?

PM: Where to focus business development efforts. Fentress has such a large portfolio that we have to be selective about which projects we pursue or we risk being spread too thin. We meet on a weekly basis and discuss, as a team, our short and long-term business development strategy.

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

PM: Hiking and exploring the mountains of Colorado.

TZL: Is there anything else that you would like to add?

PM: Working at Fentress Architects is a dream job where I am able to stay engaged in airports and airport design.

FIRMS ON THE MOVE

KLOTZ LAUNCHES PRACTICE: **Klotz Associates** (Houston, TX), a 110-person transportation, traffic, ITS, water and sewer, aviation, drainage, land development and consulting engineering services firm, announced the launch of their new Construction Management Services Practice.

Klotz Associates has always provided some form of construction management services, but the firm's capabilities will now be expanded to include inspection, construction engineering and management, among others. The practice will be led by Brad Brown, vice-president.

Brown has 32 years of experience in management and design of major civil, site, transportation, and aviation projects. While at Klotz Associates, he has been responsible for management, overall productivity, project budgets and schedules, project coordination, and staff utilization for the firm's transportation practice. Brown has worked with several public agencies, such as the Texas Department of Transportation, the Texas A&M University System, Harris County Toll Road Authority, Texas Toll Road Authority, Fort Bend Toll Road Authority, Houston Airport System, Montgomery County, Galveston County, METRO and Harris County Flood Control, along with many

others.

Upon announcement of the service being led by Brad Brown, D. Wayne Klotz, president of Klotz Associates said, "We're pleased to have Brad lead our new Construction Management Service Practice. With his extensive experience and the expansion of services under the Klotz umbrella, our clients will be even better served."

Klotz Associates has been recognized by the ENR Top 500 List of Best Design Firms in the nation for the past several years and has twice been named to THE ZWEIG LETTER Hot Firm List.

MBP OPENS OFFICE: **MBP Carolinas Inc.**, a subsidiary of **McDonough Bolyard Peck, Inc.** (Fairfax, VA), a 270-person multi-disciplined construction management firm, announced the firm has opened a new office at 301 McCullough Drive in Charlotte, the firm's second in North Carolina.

"With our expanding client base in the area, Charlotte has been targeted as a strategic priority for MBP over the years and we felt it necessary to establish local presence. We are excited about the opportunities and relationships that lie ahead," said John MacKay, president, MBP Carolinas Inc.

PATRICK MCCUE, from page 11

the world, including Denver International Airport, the new Tom Bradley International Terminal at Los Angeles International Airport (LAX), and Incheon International Airport in South Korea, which he proudly notes, "Has been named by Airports Council International's 'Best Airport Worldwide' for seven years, a prestigious honor."

McCue was especially impressed with the relationship after Terminal B opened at SJC. Fentress Architects didn't just pack up and go on to the next airport; they stayed in communication with airport management. They wanted to understand if operational expectations were being met, how design improved concessions sales, the level of energy savings, and even how finishes were holding up. This continuing engagement allowed McCue and Fentress to recognize that they had similar goals in airport design management and ultimately an opportunity to continue their working relationship.

"When approached by Fentress Architects to take the position of COO, I realized that I would have oversight in the strategic direction, expansion, and operation of a firm that leads architecture design globally. The opportunity to be in-

"When approached by Fentress Architects to take the position of COO, I realized that I would have oversight in the strategic direction, expansion, and operation of a firm that leads architecture design globally. The opportunity to be innovative and work with creative's in an ever changing industry – to be a part of something that exciting – was an opportunity of a lifetime."

novative and work with creative's in an ever changing industry – to be a part of something that exciting – was an opportunity of a lifetime," McCue says. "The people at Fentress are passionate about what they do. The insatiable desire to learn is contagious. You really want to see them succeed in envisioning the future." ▲▲

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For more information about ZweigWhite staffing services call Jeremy Clarke, director of Executive Search, at 800-466-6275 or email him at jclarke@zweigwhite.com.