

End of year clean-up

Mark Zweig offers eight tips that will help you step into the New Year with a reinvigorated attitude.



Mark Zweig

EDITORIAL

Clean out those dead projects that aren't coming back. I'm talking about jobs that were underway when the client stopped them. And if there's a fee to be billed, bill it. Then, close the project and move on.

Now's the time of year to clean up everything in your business and set the stage for the new year to come. If you're anything like me, here are some things you might want to be looking at cleaning up:

- 1) Clean up that marketing prospective job list.** You and I both know there are projects on there that are long gone. They just clog up your list and inflate your totals. That, in turn, distorts your sense of prospects. You need an ACCURATE assessment of prospective work!
- 2) Clean out those dead projects that aren't coming back.** I'm talking about jobs that were underway when the client stopped them. And if there's a fee to be billed, bill it. Then, close the project and move on.
- 3) Clean out all unbilled WIP that's just sitting there.** This "inventory" of completed work should be billed. And if it cannot be billed, write it off. You're just inflating your balance sheet if you don't.
- 4) Clean out the uncollectible AR.** Why leave this stuff on your balance sheet? Who are you trying to fool? The three-year-old money from the Middle Eastern developer client who's no longer in business probably isn't going to come in. Get it off the balance sheet!

See MARK ZWEIG, page 2

ALSO INSIDE

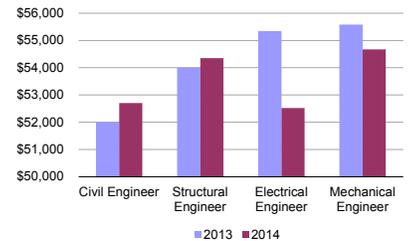
- GUEST SPEAKER: Banking on relationships. Page 6
- PM PERSPECTIVES: Project management resolutions for 2014. Page 7
- RIGHT NOW: Pounding the pavement. Page 9

2013 THE ZWEIG LETTER MARKETING EXCELLENCE AWARDS WINNER PROFILES



Upcycling: Repurposing the new with the old Page 10
Excellence: A tribute to men and women in the field Page 11

TRENDLINES Ups and downs



The 2014 Salary Survey of Northeast & South Atlantic Engineering Firms finds that the median base salaries for entry-level engineer have fluctuated from 2013 to 2014. Some specialties saw slight increases in base salary, while others saw a decline. The base salary for entry-level civil engineers increased from \$52,000 last year to \$52,705, and structural engineers saw an increase from \$54,000 to \$54,350. Meanwhile, the median base salary for electrical engineers dropped from \$55,341 to \$52,550, and for mechanical engineers, from \$55,580 to \$54,672.

— Margot Suydam, Survey Manager

FIRM INDEX

Affinis Corp.....	9
Bowers + Kubota.....	5
Chambers Group, Inc.....	5
Cobb Fendley.....	3
Dade Moeller.....	3
Gateway Engineers.....	5
GeoDesign, Inc.....	5
Hirsch Bedner Associates.....	9
P2S Engineering, Inc.....	10
Testengeer Incorporated.....	3
Urban Engineers.....	11

The under/over problem

Page 3

A/E BUSINESS NEWS

ABI PAUSES: After six months of steadily increasing demand for design services, the Architecture Billings Index paused in November.

The American Institute of Architects reported the November ABI score was 49.8, down from a mark of 51.6 in October. This score reflects a slight decrease in design services (any score above 50 indicates an increase in billings). The new projects inquiry index was 57.8, down from the reading of 61.5 the previous month.

“Architecture firms continue to report widely varying views of business conditions across the country. This slight dip is likely just a minor, and hopefully temporary, lull in the progress of current design projects,” said Kermit Baker, AIA chief economist. “But there is a continued uneasiness in the marketplace as businesses attempt to determine the future direction of demand for commercial, industrial, and institutional buildings.”

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

- Regional averages: South (52), Midwest (51.6), West (50.2), Northeast (47.5)
- Sector index breakdown: multifamily residential (55.2), mixed practice (53.1),

commercial/industrial (48.6), institutional (47.7)

- Project inquiries index: 57.8

USGBC RELEASES NEW REPORT: The U.S. Green Building Council has released the third and final installment of its LEED in Motion report series: Impacts and Innovation. The report details key impact areas and results of the thousands of projects that are utilizing the LEED green building rating system, as well as innovation highlights related to LEED and green building technologies.

The LEED in Motion report series, available exclusively to USGBC member organizations, provides a holistic snapshot of the LEED movement, equipping readers with the numbers and insight they need to build the case for sustainability.

“LEED in Motion: Impacts and Innovation highlights the revolutionary thinking that has been the catalyst for the transformation in the built environment we are witnessing worldwide,” said Rick Fedrizzi, president, CEO and founding chair, USGBC. “Even as LEED is in itself an innovation, it has and will continue to serve as a gateway to further advances in the movement to create healthier, high-performing buildings and vibrant, resilient communities.”

With a foreword written by Bridges to Prosperity Executive Director Avery Bang, who spoke at USGBC’s 2013 Greenbuild International Conference and Expo Master

Series in November, Impacts and Innovation plots a course for the future by examining current and possible positive impacts related to LEED buildings – from resource conservation to cost savings – and lauding industry innovations. The report looks at the impacts of LEED through the lens of both business and human health.

The report also features a number of highlights, including details on the top three credits pursued by LEED projects across different rating systems. It notes the spread of innovation, showcasing standout approaches to earning credits in the LEED Innovation credit category, along with interviews with LEED professionals and USGBC figures as well as LEED project highlights from Facebook, Bank of America, Dell Children’s Medical Center of Central Texas, Transwestern and more.

Impacts and Innovation also features LEED project energy data, revealing that 450 LEED projects that reported data over a 12-month period experienced an energy use intensity (EUI) that was nearly 31 percent lower than the national median source EUI. Additionally, 404 LEED projects indicated an ENERGY STAR score of 85 in the same period, well above the level required for the Environmental Protection Agency’s “Top Performer” designation.

The report is now available for download for USGBC members.

MARK ZWEIG, from page 1

Stop kidding yourself. And if it ever does come in, who says you can’t still deposit the check?

5) Clean out your email! 3,032 messages in your inbox? Is that necessary? Is that good? You know you are forgetting stuff, plus creating unnecessary work for yourself every day, by NOT cleaning it out. So do it!

6) Clean off your desktop. Why have everything in your computer on your desktop? That’s a mess! Makes it hard to find anything! Makes it less likely to be backed up! Create subdirectories. Use them!

7) Clean off (and out) your physical desk. Piles are bad. Messy drawers don’t help. Stuff gets lost. You look like a slob. You aren’t convincing anyone of how busy you are with that disaster of a desk.

8) Clean out your staff. Move out the bad people. You know who they are.

3,032 messages in your inbox? Is that necessary? Is that good? You know you are forgetting stuff, plus creating unnecessary work for yourself every day, by NOT cleaning it out. So do it!

And “bad” doesn’t mean they are really bad people – but they just don’t fit the firm today in their present role. There’s no time like a new year to get your staff where it needs to be.

It’s been said before: “Cleanliness is next to Godliness.” I like that expression! ▲▲

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OPERATIONS

The under/over problem

It's a balancing act that takes lots of preparation, plus knowing yourself, knowing your client and over-delivering, among other things.

By LIISA SULLIVAN
Correspondent

What are A/E/P and environmental consulting firms doing to avoid underestimating, overpromising and under-delivering? It's a tall order to adhere to all parameters, but the players in the design field seem to be working to keep the lines of communication well oiled.



Charles Eastland,
Principal/
Regional
Manager,
Cobb Fendley.

Charles Eastland, principal/regional manager, **Cobb Fendley** (Houston, TX), a 208-person multidiscipline engineering firm, says that the primary key for avoiding underestimating, overpromising, and under-delivering is communication.

"It's imperative to know your clients' service expectations and to manage those expectations based on budget," he says. "If they have champagne taste, but a beer budget, make sure they know that up front and then let them know what brand of beer you'll be serving."

"It's imperative to know your clients' service expectations and to manage those expectations based on budget. If they have champagne taste, but a beer budget, make sure they know that up front and then let them know what brand of beer you'll be serving."

PREPARE, PREPARE... AND PREPARE SOME MORE. At **Testengeer Incorporated** (Port Lavaca, TX), a 275-person full-service engineering firm, Shane Dworaczyk, president and CEO, says that when estimating services to be provided, firms should ensure that they have the proper scope and then clarify any unknowns along with risks in the clarifications and assumptions of the proposed estimate.



Shane
Dworaczyk,
President and
CEO, Testengeer
Incorporated.

"Firms should also have some proven historical data that should be used as an overall check of estimated costs," he says. "Checking similar project costs for services and percentages will help to ensure the costs are in line with proven historical project costs. If similar project costs are not available, then a check of percentages of services estimated versus anticipated total installed costs should be used as a minimum."

Dworaczyk advises that firms should also avoid using the "gut-feel" as the only check to estimates that have any significant size.

"You will greatly lower your risks of underestimating and losses to the bottom line," he says.

"Gut feel estimate checks and any adjustments should only be relied on once

proven checks have been performed."

6 STEPS TO STAY ON COURSE. Calista Daigle, project director at **Dade Moeller** (Richland, WA), a 182-person firm that specializes in occupational and environmental health sciences, provides the following tips:

- **Know your client.** Really get to know your client and their project. If you've performed this task for the client previously, review project records. If it's a new client or a new task, try to gain a thorough understanding of the task being requested – it will lead to a better estimate of the time, expertise, and materials required.
- **Know yourself.** After you understand the task at hand, take a hard look at where your company excels and where you may need assistance. Be up-front and honest, and only promise what you can actually deliver. If you aren't sure you can provide all of the necessary skills, consider a teaming partner. Just be sure to thoroughly vet that partner prior to signing them on because their failures will become your failures in the eyes of your client.
- **Establish expectations.** Take a "one price does not fit all" approach and establish specific expectations and deliverables with the client. Even if you've performed this task before, various factors can affect the final cost (e.g., location, transportation, weather, labor). Factor in enough time to realistically complete the project, and, when possible, negotiate the contract in such a way as to allow for adjustments once work begins. This will help to offset any unforeseen requirements (which always turn into expenses).
- **Know when to say no.** Know when to decline a project. If the project doesn't feel like a good fit, it probably isn't. You can earn a better reputation by declining work you cannot complete than by accepting it and under-delivering. If you decline, be sure to recommend another

See UNDER/OVER, page 8

GOOD TO KNOW

Before submitting a proposal to a potential new client, firms are most likely to meet with the client (65 percent) and/or visit the client's website (52 percent).

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

OUTLOOK

Economic growth continues in 2014

Projections part of the forecast issued by the Institute for Supply Management.

Economic growth in the United States will continue in 2014, say the nation's purchasing and supply management executives in their December 2013 Semiannual Economic Forecast.

Expectations are for a continuation of the economic recovery that began in mid-2009, as indicated in the monthly ISM Report On Business. The manufacturing sector is optimistic about growth in 2014, with revenues expected to increase in 16 manufacturing industries, and the non-manufacturing sector predicts that 14 of its industries will see higher revenues. Capital expenditures, a major driver in the U.S. economy, are expected to increase by 8 percent in the manufacturing sector and by 4.6 percent in the non-manufacturing sector. Manufacturing expects that its employment base will grow by 2.4 percent, while non-manufacturing expects employment growth of 2.1 percent.

These projections are part of the forecast issued by the Business Survey Committee of the Institute for Supply Management.

NON-MANUFACTURING SUMMARY.

Fifty-eight percent of non-manufacturing supply management executives expect their 2014 revenues to be greater than in 2013. They currently expect a 3.6 percent net increase in overall revenues for 2014 compared to a 4 percent increase reported for 2013 over 2012 revenues. The 14 non-manufacturing industries expecting revenue improvement in 2014 over 2013 include the construction and design sector.

"Non-manufacturing supply managers report operating at 86.3 percent of their normal capacity, higher than the 84.7 percent reported in April 2013. They are optimistic about continued growth in the first half of 2014 compared to the second half of 2013, and

they have a higher level of optimism about the next 12 months than they had last December for 2013," said Anthony Nieves, chair of the ISM Non-Manufacturing Business Survey Committee. "They forecast that their capacity to produce products and provide services will rise by 1.9 percent during 2014, and capital expenditures will increase by 4.6 percent from the 2013 levels. Non-manufacturers also predict their employment will increase by 2.1 percent during 2014."

Respondents in non-manufacturing industries expect the prices they pay for materials and services will increase by 1.9 percent during 2014. They also forecast their overall labor and benefit costs will increase 2.6 percent in 2014. Profit margins are reported to have decreased in the second and third quarters of 2013, and respondents expect them to increase between now and April 2014.

Survey respondents report that the most challenging problems facing their businesses as they plan for 2013 are: domestic sales growth (31.8 percent); government regulations (18.9 percent); healthcare costs (14.9 percent); healthcare reform uncertainty (14.9 percent); ongoing government shutdown and debt ceiling concerns (8.1 percent); inflation (6.1 percent); international sales growth (4.1 percent); and taxes (1.4 percent).

Survey respondents indicate that technology and process improvement is the most frequently cited means of improving supply chains in 2014. Other improvement approaches include: strategic cost and contract management; strategic sourcing; supplier relationship management; and professional development.

MANUFACTURING SUMMARY. Expectations for 2014 are positive as 69 percent of survey respondents expect revenues to be greater in 2014 than in 2013. The panel of purchasing and supply executives expects a 4.4 percent net increase in overall revenues for 2014, compared to a 4.6 percent increase reported for 2013 over 2012 revenues.

In the manufacturing sector, respondents report operating at 80.3 percent of their normal capacity, up very slightly from 80.2 percent reported in April 2013. Purchasing and supply executives predict that capital expenditures will increase by 8 percent in 2014 over 2013, compared to a 12.3 percent increase reported for 2013 over 2012. Survey respondents also forecast that they will increase inventories by 0.9 percent to support their planned level of sales in 2014. Manufacturers have an expectation that employment in the sector will increase by 2.4 percent in 2014, while labor and benefit costs are expected to increase an average of 2.3 percent. Manufacturing purchasers are predicting growth in exports and imports in 2014. Respondents also expect the U.S. dollar to strengthen on average against the currencies of major trading partners.

The panel also predicts the prices they pay for raw materials will increase 1.2 percent during the first four months of 2014, and will increase an additional 0.4 percent during the balance of the year, with an overall increase of 1.6 percent for 2014. This compares to a reported 0.9 percent increase in raw materials prices for 2013 compared with 2012.

Survey respondents report that the most challenging problems facing their businesses as they plan for 2014 are: domestic sales growth (32 percent); international sales growth (18 percent); healthcare reform uncertainty (14.6 percent); ongoing government shutdown and debt ceiling concerns (13.5 percent); government regulations (9.6 percent); healthcare costs (8.4 percent); inflation (3.4 percent); and taxes (0.6 percent).

The panel also indicated that supply chain management practices will be improved in 2014 using the following strategies, listed in order: strategic sourcing/supply base rationalization; process and information systems improvements; supplier relationship management; inventory management and control; and improved cross-functional planning and scheduling. ▀▲

STAFF

The quest to put on a happy face

Keep employees abreast of the positives and they will pull together and share an image of optimism.

By LIISA SULLIVAN
Correspondent

Whether business is up or down, the importance of maintaining a positive image – inside and outside the firm – is critical to future success. So, what do you do to ensure that your company is working as a team to get the job done?



Brian Bowers,
President,
Bowers + Kubota.

PREP PEOPLE. Brian Bowers, president of **Bowers + Kubota** (Waipahu, HI), a 125-person architecture and construction firm, says that he holds quarterly company-wide meetings to let everyone know what is happening in the company, especially with respect to future work,

and to keep current project and client information updated on the company intranet.

“This helps communicate positive messages with respect to how the firm is doing,” Bowers says. “We also encourage all employees to have an ‘elevator message’ to deliver to anyone who inquires about the company. This message is a short 10-15 second message that describes what we do.”

Craig Neslage, executive vice president, manager of operations, **Chambers Group, Inc.** (Santa Ana, CA), says that every firm has its ups and downs. For Chambers Group, Inc., an environmental consulting firm of 100 employees, 2011 represented a major high with some large energy sector projects that have now been completed.

“We will finish 2013 with somewhat higher revenue than prior to those projects, but are looking to get back to that peak again,” he says. “The good news is



Craig Neslage,
Executive VP,
Manager of
Operations,
Chambers Group,
Inc.

that the larger projects forced us to enhance our support systems (accounting, IT, HR) to handle the volume and we have become stronger and more sophisticated because of it.”

Neslage says that the company is intent on keeping its image of being a very capable firm – both inside and outside. In order to accomplish this, it uses three

methods to maintain this image with employees. They are:

1) Lobby TVs. The company has six offices and each one has a TV monitor near the reception desk in its lobby. These TVs display significant new project wins, employees who have high utilization rates, company ratings on business journal lists and other published lists, such as the **THE ZWEIG LETTER** Hot Firm List; and motivational quotes from famous people.

2) Monthly news updates. This is one-page colorful newsletter that each employee receives with the latest happenings from the marketing, HR, finance, and operations departments.

3) Leadership emails. On a less scheduled, but equally important basis, an email from the president or executive vice president is sent to all employees. It includes information about general business topics, such as company plans or new procedures.

WORK TOGETHER. Traci Nolan, business development manager at **GeoDesign, Inc.** (Portland, OR), a 62-person geotechnical engineering, environmental, geological, hydrogeological, mining, and pavement design consulting services firm, says that clear communication and transparency within the organization are keys to a positive message.

“Even when situations are not ideal, a constructive, solution-oriented approach can make all the difference. If everyone understands the issues and the steps that are being taken to mitigate them – and there are no hidden



Traci Nolan, BD
Manager,
GeoDesign, Inc.

agendas – then all can move toward resolution,” Nolan says.

Internally, tough decisions had to be made at GeoDesign during the recession. Resources were tight and obtaining work was more competitive than ever. The company’s position included com-

municating financials and utilization numbers to employees on a regular basis. The internal attitude was: “We will not only survive this, but thrive during this.” This positive outlook and sharing of information, rather than dictating ramifications due to the changing circumstances, motivated staff to find ways to do the same, or more, with fewer resources while leveraging internal skillsets to meet new challenges.

“Even when situations are not ideal, a constructive, solution-oriented approach can make all the difference.”

“Externally, it’s always best to be positive,” Nolan says. “Clients want to work with others who are not only successful, but confident and engaged. There is no easier way to damage your brand than to allow negative messages to circulate outside the company. On occasion, when things don’t go as planned, communication is, again, key. Providing employees with accurate information and even a list of talking points to address a situation outside the organization can be extremely useful in keeping communication accurate, concise, and positive. Taken a step further, having a company communication plan that touches on employees, stakeholders, and the media is ideal.”

Lastly, every company gets the question: “So, how is business these days?” Regardless of whether or not there are record profits to report, all firms agree that a positive response is, “Business is great, though we can always use more.”

Banking on relationships

Your overall net worth revolves around how much you serve other people by making deposits rather than serving yourself and taking withdrawals.

Relationships are like bank accounts. You can hold a positive balance or a negative balance in any of your relationships. Like bank accounts, you build a positive balance in three ways: making deposits, limiting withdrawals and giving the account time to accrue interest.

MAKING DEPOSITS. We make deposits when we put other people first and find ways to solve their problems or make their lives easier. The most powerful people in the world understand this and give more than they receive. In business relationships, it's most obvious in providing a lead for a project. But there are so many creative ways to make deposits: pick up lunch, don't charge for additional work, finish a project ahead of schedule, connect people with other people they want to know, send a book that you think someone would like, connect them with ideas or resources for parenting their children, invite them to dinner, bring pastries to a meeting, send a letter of reference or treat them to a round of golf. The key is understanding what's important to people, both in business and personally. I had a client who was struggling with a teenage daughter acting out. I called a therapist friend of mine who found my client someone who specialized in adolescents. Take the time to listen to your clients. Be curious about their lives and challenges. Make notes, and keep them in mind.

LIMITING WITHDRAWALS. A former neighbor had a bad habit of always asking me for favors without any sense that there's a limit to generosity: Could he borrow my drill? Can he park his boat in my driveway? Could I drive him to the airport? Did I have any sugar? Did I have any nutmeg? Don't get me wrong, I'm a helpful guy by nature, but my neighbor was all about asking for favors and taking withdrawals from our relationship account. After a while, I wanted to draw the blinds and not answer the door. Think about your relationships, both personal and business. When was the last time you did something nice or helpful? If you take an evaluation and find you went over budget on a project, your subcontractor didn't finish the flooring, you didn't pay someone on time, or you're always presenting problems and not solutions, then you're most likely in a deficit position with your relationship. Be mindful about how much you are asking for favors versus how much you are reciprocating.

GIVING IT TIME. Bank accounts grow over time, and so do relationships. Your strongest relationships are those into which you've consistently made deposits and limited



Leo
MacLeod

**GUEST
SPEAKER**

your withdrawals over time. The longer the amount of time in the relationship, the larger the equity. Think of it this way: You meet someone new at a networking event, and you follow up by connecting the person with an architect you know. The relationship account is too new to really make a withdrawal, such as asking to be included in bidding on one of their projects. Often, we are so anxious to cash in on relationships that personally benefit us that we sometime don't allow enough time for the account balance to grow. Otherwise, the initial deposit appears as a cheap ploy to make an immediate withdrawal. We are naturally attuned to who owes us and who doesn't.

I have found that your overall net worth in the industry revolves around how much you serve other people by making deposits rather than serving yourself and taking withdrawals. People will want to take your calls and meet with you if you're seen as someone who looks to fill their relationship accounts. You will both win if you think of relationships as investments that reap dividends over time.



LEO MACLEOD is a new business coach and strategic consultant. He can be reached at leo@mainspringmarketing.com.

Article originally published in the Daily Journal of Commerce.

People will want to take your calls and meet with you if you're seen as someone who looks to fill their relationship accounts.

Project management resolutions for 2014

That year went by fast. Time to think about some resolutions for your firm.

Year-to-year transitions always bring resolutions to mind. Whether or not you make them in your personal life, they are worth exploring for your organization. We have all made resolutions that didn't last and yet we have all identified a handful of habits we could drop and practices we could build.

Most firms can claim that 2013 was far more successful than those immediately preceding it. That kind of confidence allows you to focus more on other areas of the business that may have been put on autopilot – including project management. Improvements in PM – small or large – are always worthwhile. The following is a suggested list of actions you should pledge to work on as your New Year's resolution. They are extracted from my 2013 series of articles in **THE ZWEIG LETTER**. Choose one or two and make the best of them!

- **Find out what's standing in the way.** When I work with firms, I run a survey of their PMs and technical folks asking, "What's standing in the way of doing the best job with each other?" The answers highlight the internal areas these teams struggle with. Each survey unfailingly produces the same themes or challenges. So even though every firm believes they are unique or different than another – they really do wrestle with the same issues of resource planning, clarity of roles, and communication channels. You want to do the best job for your clients. Ask your teams what's standing in the way of making that possible. Then, start fixing it.
- **Good communication includes good writing.** The volume of communication conducted via email puts the PMs written skills in the spotlight – and in a bad way, including misspellings, poor grammar, and improper or misconstrued tone. Many principals may say that technical and managerial skills place higher on the essentials list than writing style. Not every project manager is the perfect specimen in all talents but ignoring the inadequacy altogether also isn't a good solution. Everything written – including email – is a representation of the firm. Enrolling in a simple course – even online – would be highly beneficial.
- **Being organized won't kill your firm's culture.** Implementing procedures that call for tracked project financial data, centralized information, or resource planning meetings is good business – not a bureaucratic system found in mega-firms. Procedures, when followed, are also a good insurance policy against poor client service, loss of profitability, and anxiety across the team – and that's a good culture to follow. So if your project management system needs some of this but other key people are afraid it will turn the firm into the red-tape behemoth they left behind – they're wrong.



Christine Brack

PM
PERSPECTIVES

- **Some PMs need a little rattling to get them rising.** Everyone has a story about the "one" project manager in the firm who shouldn't be in the role. They seem distracted, disconnected, and disinterested. As a principal, you may think that if you ignore them hard enough, they'll just go away. "Daniel" was one such person – until another owner in the firm, watching from a distance, saw his potential and gave him a lecture filled with compliments but a solid warning. "If you want to waste your talents, do it somewhere else, otherwise, I will help you shine." Under that mentorship, Daniel turned everything around. Think about those in your firm who might excel with attention and different leadership.

Beyond this list, think about the ways you know you could practice better project management because it is something you trip up on in your own work or project environments. Like any commitment, you need to stay at it until it becomes a good habit. Even when you slip a little or have an all-out failure, you should understand that's all part of the process. The point behind any resolution is to stop something not helpful or become something better. I hope 2014 is a happy and prosperous year for you! ▲▲

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Most firms can claim that 2013 was far more successful than those immediately preceding it. That kind of confidence allows you to focus more on other areas of the business that may have been put on autopilot.

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.

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.

UNDER/OVER, from page 3

qualified company for the task – it's the right thing to do, and your integrity will pay off in the end.

- **(Over) deliver!** Once you have agreed upon the expectations, deliverables, and costs, always give the client everything you agreed upon, and, when possible, give them even more. By over-delivering, you'll increase client satisfaction, which will lead to repeat business and word-of-mouth referrals. Exceeding a client's expectations is awesome – it's just good business.

- **Remember the long road.** If the profit margin on an initial project isn't as large as you might have wanted, remember that the quality of your work will speak

“Checking similar project costs for services and percentages will help to ensure the costs are in line with proven historical project costs.”

volumes and will pave the way for the future. Once the client is assured of the value and quality you bring, more lucrative ventures (and additional word-of-mouth clients) will come your way.

KEEPING BUSY. Finally, Dworaczyk of Testengeer says that most firms have a difficult time with overpromising and under-delivering because they want to keep its staff busy. At any given time, multiple bids are out with an undetermined number of those to possibly be awarded. Firms should be prepared to supplement their staffing capabilities with overtime of existing employees or temporary contract staffing if awarded more projects than anticipated. ▀▀

RIGHT NOW

Pounding the pavement

Design firms clearly seem to prefer the seller-doer model over dedicated sales staff.

By LIISA SULLIVAN
Correspondent

New sales are the key to growth. So, who is doing the selling at your firm? Do you have a dedicated sales team or are principals and project managers sealing the deals?

A CROSS-SELLING TEAM. Affinis Corp. (Overland Park, KS), a 25-person transportation planning and design firm, does not have a dedicated sales team or a dedicated “business developer” who identifies leads and opportunities, says Peggy Amor, marketing coordinator.

“What we do have is a business development team of principals and project managers who focus on prospecting and client retention, respectively,” she says. “We are truly a seller-doer firm with in-house marketing support.”



Jason Jesso,
COO, Gateway
Engineers, Inc.

“We find that by giving this responsibility to the project managers that we avoid overselling or making false guarantees.”

Generally speaking, at Affinis, different people are not solely responsible for selling any one service, but those who work on specific kinds of projects will tend to pursue similar and future work.

“Each project manager or principal is not only focused on their specific expertise, but also cross sells, and represents the entire company,” Amor says. “We have three internal teams: streets and storm; highways, thoroughfares, and traffic; federal and special projects. When anyone brings in a lead we use our CRM system to record it and share it with the group to capitalize on the relationships we have across our own and our clients’ organization.”

SUCCESS SELLS. Rene Kaerskov, co-CEO, **Hirsch Bedner Associates** (Los Angeles, CA), a 1,272-person hospitality design firm, says that 90 percent of selling is directly related to the success of past prominent project(s) – whether large or small, it makes no difference.

“The project’s success and the client’s experience with the design team’s excellent service is what creates solid client relationships and seals future deals,” he says.

While HBA does not have a designated sales team, it has marketing people who facilitate meeting potential clients, and who also inform of potential and contract signings.

“Our designers, and especially associates and principals, are the best



“We are truly a seller-doer firm with in-house marketing support.”

Peggy Amor, marketing coordinator, Affinis Corp.



“Our designers, and especially associates and principals, are the best marketers.”

Rene Kaerskov, co-CEO, Hirsch Bedner Associates.

See PAVEMENT, page 12

2013 MARKETING EXCELLENCE AWARDS

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.

The winners of the 2013 Marketing Communications Excellence Awards were displays of incredible ingenuity, and managed to adeptly capture the attention of their intended audience while expressing the individual personalities of the firms they represented.

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.

The top finishers for each of the seven categories were:

External Newsletter

1. Urban Engineers, Inc.
2. SWCA, Inc.
3. Short Elliott Hendrickson, Inc. (SEH)

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
2. Miyamoto International

Social Media

1. Perkins + Will
2. Miyamoto International
3. 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 Spósito
2. SmithGroup JJR
3. FUSE International

WINNER PROFILE

Upcycling: Repurposing the new with the old

By CHRISTINA ZWEIG
Contributing editor

To mark the holidays, **P2S Engineering, Inc.** (Long Beach, CA), created a special publication that reveres creativity and sustainability, earning the first place in the Special Event category, **THE ZWEIG LETTER** 2013 Marketing Communications Excellence Awards.

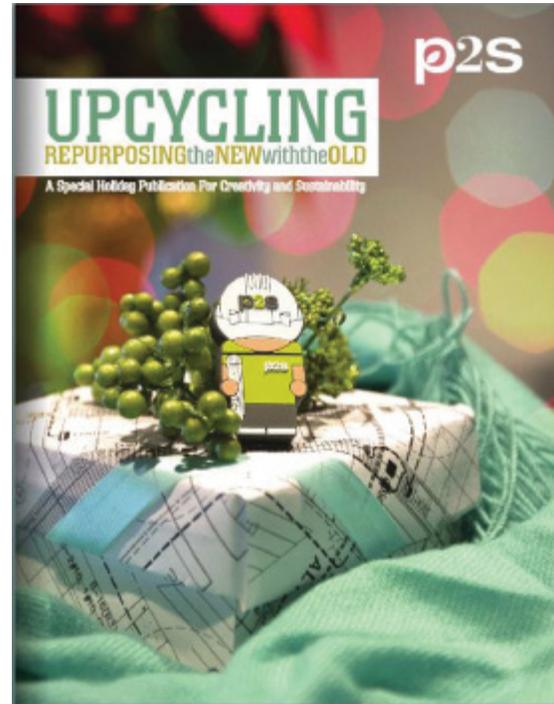
The e-book shares inventive ways to give new life to items that have served their original purpose and might otherwise end up in landfills, yet went beyond the standard suggestions to recycle these items.

The content of the e-book (which can be seen at <http://tinyurl.com/p2supcycle>) was surprising and captivating – quite a few new uses for old wine bottles, engineering plan CD coasters, and skateboard wall sconces – just to name a few! The end result was an electronic holiday greeting complete with audio effects as the recipient clicks through the pages.

DEVELOPMENT. “We invited all of the P2S staff to participate in the winter greeting in order to create a diverse piece and to make it personal and fun for employees, as well as to support the ‘sharing and giving’ theme of the greeting,” said Liz Nguyen, marketing manager.

The entire e-book was created with in-house photography and graphics. P2S Engineering wanted to make sure the piece would become a resource to be saved by recipients and also passed on to others. The holiday greeting was sent as a link to a little more than 1,800 current clients, vendors and business contacts/potential clients.

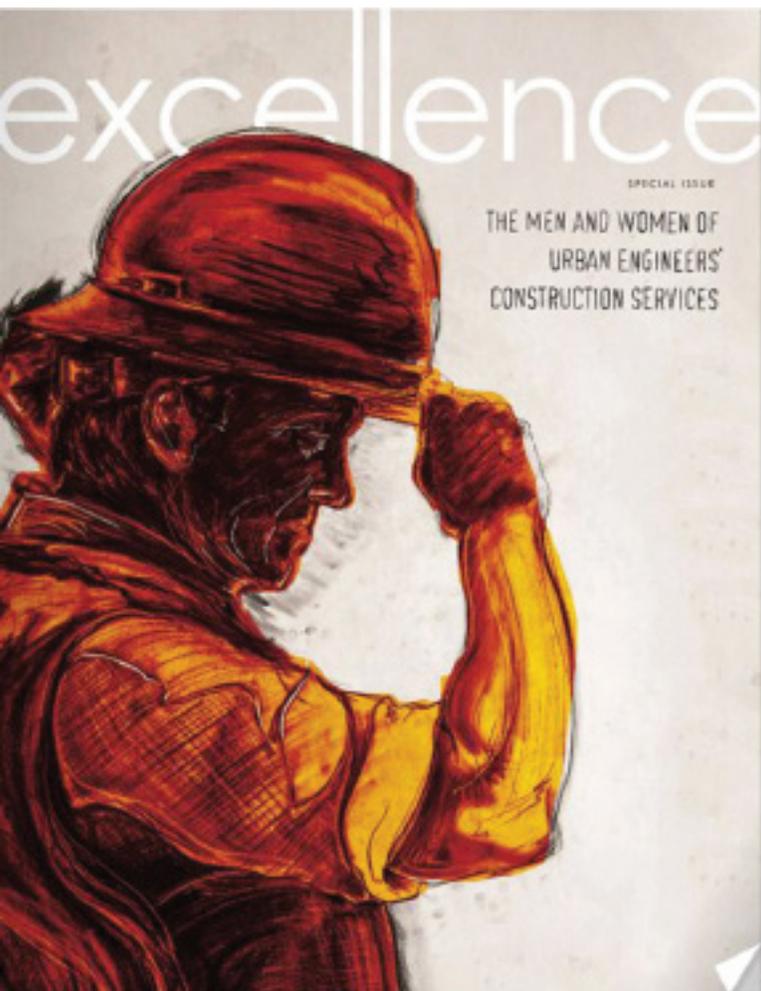
RESULTS. According to MailChimp



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reports, P2S Engineering’s 34.3 percent open rate was 18.2 percent higher than industry average and 10.4 percent higher than P2S in-house list average. The piece also had a 97 percent click through rate and increased website traffic by 25 percent. The firm received heaps of positive feedback and was a great conversation starter for project managers. ▲▲

WINNER PROFILE



“By focusing the lens on these professionals, we aimed to portray a sense of gratitude and reassure these men and women that they are not just numbers, but threads of personalities interwoven into the quality of this company’s culture.”

THE ZWEIG LETTER will cover other award winners in greater detail in upcoming issues.

Excellence: A tribute to men and women in the field

By CHRISTINA ZWEIG
Contributing editor

Urban Engineers (Philadelphia, PA), a multidisciplinary design, construction management, construction inspection, planning and environmental consulting firm, created a special issue of their quarterly electronic magazine Excellence to pay homage to the men and women in the firm’s growing construction services division.

The effort earned the first place winner in the External Newsletter category, **THE ZWEIG LETTER** 2013 Marketing Communications Excellence Awards.

“By focusing the lens on these professionals, we aimed to portray a sense of gratitude and reassure these men and women that they are not just numbers, but threads of personalities interwoven into the quality of this company’s culture,” said Luke Cloran, graphic artist/photographer.

The firm “sought to leave an impression on clients that ‘we are the right people for this job.’ Additionally, we hoped to bring attention to the general construction services industry, shedding light on what they do and why their jobs are important,” Cloran said.

DEVELOPMENT. Urban Engineers’ in-house team researched, planned, and developed the magazine from start to finish. Members of corporate development embarked on “field trips” across six states and 17 project sites to obtain content. The piece was developed to help the firm achieve their goals of retention and recruitment, connect with an internal and external audience, drive traffic to the firm’s website, and strengthen the firm’s corporate identity. An email containing a link (www.urbanengineers.com/publications/ExcellenceSummer2013.html) to the Excellence magazine was sent to an impressive 23,000 clients, colleagues, employees, family and friends!

From the photography to the artistic and creative graphics, layout and text, the end product is a highly professional piece that celebrates Urban’s “unsung heroes” in a raw and deeply personal way.

RESULTS. Overall, the magazine was well received internally and Urban received numerous positive comments via social media, phone, email and in person discussions. The firm reported 4,000 people opened the email, and 1,200 unique visitors continued to Urban’s website. ▀▀

AWARD WINNERS

SWA GROUP WINS NATIONAL PRIZE: **SWA Group** (Sausalito, CA), a landscape architecture, planning and urban design firm, has been honored with a National First Prize Award from the China Exploration & Design Association, an entity of the Ministry of Housing and Urban-Rural Development regulating the architecture and design industry.

The only foreign design firm this year to receive one of China's highest-regarded awards, SWA's winning design is for the Shenzhen Bay urban coastal plan that restored a former industrial and land reclamation zone into a 15-km waterfront habitat, public park and multi-use corridor. Another SWA project in the region, Shenzhen OCT Bay, received a design prize as well.

In a separate awards program, Design China 2013, Shenzhen Bay won top honors with a Gold Award and the Giant Interactive Group Campus design won the only Green Innovation Award under the landscape category. Considered the "Oscars" of China's real estate industry, the program is organized by China International Real Estate & Architectural Technology Fair, a real estate industry recognition of international scope. The Gold and Green Innovation Awards are formally presented Dec. 12 at the Design China 2013 conference in Shenzhen.

"We're highly honored to have our work recognized by these important award programs, and believe it is also a recognition of China's move toward more balanced urban growth," said Kevin Shanley, CEO of SWA in Houston, and design leader on Shenzhen Bay. "Our design for environmentally sensitive new development at Shenzhen Bay, OCT Bay and Giant Group's headquarters campus are case-studies in creating thriving, walkable, human-scale urban

communities for today's cities, whether in China or anywhere in the world."

JQ WINS AWARDS: Civil engineering firm **JQ** (Austin, TX), a structural and civil engineering, surveying and facility assessment services firm, has garnered two more industry honors during the recent 2013 Topping Out Awards ceremony held at the Trinity Grove in Dallas.

The firm was recognized for its outstanding engineering work performed on the Dallas Independent School District's Zan Wesley Holmes Jr. Middle School, a 192,000 sf 3-story facility designed to meet The Collaborative for High Performance Schools goals to provide the best possible learning environment with the smallest environmental impact. JQ also earned first place for its work on the Tarrant County College Trinity River East Campus, a 144,000-square-foot, four-level multi-building facility, seamlessly carved into the south side of the Trinity River Bluff. Construction cost was \$203 million.

The project team for the DISD Zan Wesley Holmes Jr. Middle School included the architecture firm **Perkins+Will** (Chicago, IL) and general contractor Rogers-O'Brien Construction, among others. The project team for the Tarrant County College Trinity River East Campus included **Bennett Benner Pettit Architects + Planners** (Fort Worth, TX) and general contractor Austin Commercial, among others.

According to Thomas Scott, JQ principal in Fort Worth, "The Topping Out Awards serve a dual purpose: to recognize project excellence and to raise money for a good cause. We are proud to have been on the winning teams that were recognized for these highly competitive awards."

PAVEMENT, from page 9

marketers," Kaerskov says.

EMPOWER PROJECT MANAGERS. Jason Jesso, COO, **Gateway Engineers, Inc.** (Pittsburgh, PA), a 150-person full-service civil engineering firm, says that project managers are the ones who are doing the selling at Gateway.

"We find that by giving this responsibility to the project managers that we avoid overselling or making false guarantees," he says. "This model delivers more effective communication as well as lasting relationships."

Additionally, Jesso explains that by empowering the project manager from selling through project initiation and execution, project ownership is clear and the communication channels are open for routine questions during all project phases. ▀▲

WIN NEW WORK

A leading provider of online education for the AEC industry, RedVector.com, offers the following tips for winning new work and building solid client relationships:

- **Keep up on current events.** Understand what is going on in the world. This is important because this knowledge often helps marketers when it comes to addressing client needs and also in targeting clients likely to have new business opportunities. Some firms, for example, have seen their residential development work disappear, but have been able to remain busy and profitable by winning federal projects.
- **Stick to what you know.** This might sound like it's contradicting the previous point, but it's not. For example, there are civil engineering firms involved in grading and drainage for residential clients that are now providing similar services for public sector clients. Know your firm's strengths and understand how your firm can solve the needs of prospective clients.
- **Read the blogs and articles that your clients read.** This will help you to stay up to date on issues that are important to your clients. You can also occasionally send articles that may be relevant to them.
- **Send note cards periodically.** Sending a good, old-fashioned, hand-written note card does a lot in differentiating yourself from others in the marketplace.
- **Record what you learn about your contacts.** If a client tells you that he or she enjoys boating, log this information into the database. Having this type of knowledge about your client can be quite useful the next time you look to make contact.
- **Publish trade journal articles.** Getting published is a great way to position your firm as an expert in your field.
- **Be a resource.** Find solutions for your clients and they will contact you when they have a need for your services.