

TRENDLINES

Long-term results

Use these tips to achieve long-term results in a short-term world.



Chad Clinehens

Zweig Group's latest data continues to reinforce a troubling trend – firms are spending less on longer-term investments while becoming increasingly mired in short-term demands. Our research team annually collects more than 2.2 million data points studying nearly every aspect of AEC firms you can imagine. This information provides a great opportunity to understand how the industry is trending and for firms to benchmark themselves against their peers while enabling them to elevate their practices.

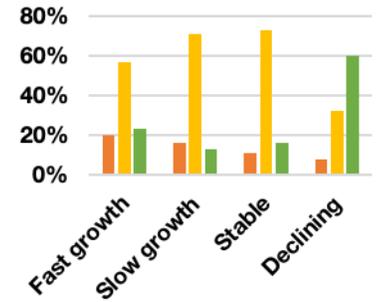
The industry is now in its third year of a notable shift in a number of key statistics that reflect the challenges of managing today's AEC firm. The collective conclusion is that the industry is busy and the challenges of managing growth and profitability are increasing.

Here are some things you can do today to stay focused on the long-term health of your firm and maximize your competitive advantage:

- **Focus on client experience.** According to our data, while the industry is becoming increasingly aware that client experience is a critical business strategy, many are doing worse than ever. Your client's experience directly affects your bottom line and must be a priority. Zweig Group regularly conducts third-party, client-satisfaction surveys where we see declining satisfaction scores, especially in the areas of accessibility and responsiveness. The response we commonly hear from firms when confronted with these client frustrations is, "We are just too busy."
- **High workloads are shifting focus to putting out fires rather than proactively servicing clients.** Commit to a regular client-satisfaction survey process and address every issue that comes from the data. Asking your clients to provide feedback and not doing anything with the information is worse than never asking at all. You have a huge opportunity to shine and differentiate your services. With proper attention to the client experience, you can position your firm to be very strong in any economic condition. To learn more about how to build a client-experience program, or to discuss your firm's challenges, feel free to contact me directly. And, one last tip. Be careful that your flexible work practices do not erode the client experience. Accessibility and responsiveness can be greatly affected by these policies. Firms must design programs that balance employee perks while maintaining strong client service.
- **Spend more on marketing and business development activities.** Over the last three years, we've seen a declining investment in marketing and BD activity. The continual decrease in proportion of marketing staff to total firm headcount is one of the best indicators we are losing long-term focus. In a highly competitive market, now is the time to invest more in marketing and business development resources

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Project schedules



In Zweig Group's 2019 Project Management Report of AEC Firms, project managers were asked what percentage of their projects were finished **early**, **on time**, or **late**. A firm's ability to finish projects early trended up as the firm's growth rate increased. Additionally, firms reporting a decline in revenue and staff size were struggling to finish projects on time.

Participate in a survey and save \$320 on any Zweig Group research publication. Visit bit.ly/TZLsp to learn more.

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ZWEIG GROUP SERVICES

ZG SERVICES Zweig Group approaches each project as a cross-functional team consisting of professionals with different expertise working toward a common goal. ZG has been in the AEC industry for more than 30 years and brings that collective knowledge to every assignment. ZG's history isn't just extensive, it's also successful. Zweig Group is a three-time listed

Inc. 500/5000 Fastest-Growing Privately-Held Firm.

Advising services provided by Zweig Group include business valuation; ownership transition planning; firm mergers, sales, and acquisitions; management audits; strategic business planning; and more. Visit zweiggroup.com/service to learn more.

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to build backlog and brand preference. Train your technical team as doer-sellers and empower and incentivize them to build relationships to fill a pipeline for the future. Employ the best creative marketing staff you can to elevate your website, social media programs, thought leadership, pursuit-strategy process, and other awareness activities to build your brand and position your firm as the preferred choice in your markets. It is critical to act now, when the economy is good. There will come a day when your clients have fewer dollars to spend. Position yourself now so they spend those dollars with you. For more information on how to position your firm and build a doer-seller team, contact Doug Parker, FSMPS, CPSM, Zweig Group's managing principal and CMO, at dparker@zweiggroup.com or Jen Newman, CPSM, Zweig Group's managing director of business development strategy, at jnewman@zweiggroup.com.

- **Commit to continuous learning firm wide.** The number one challenge firms face is recruiting and retention. The number one benefit identified and highly valued by employees of AEC firms for the past two years is training and development. But, we continually hear that firms aren't providing training and development. In fact, Zweig Group has seen firsthand this unfortunate trend over the last year in declining attendance at training seminars and decreased commitment to internal formalized training programs.

Compare that to the overwhelming data in our [Best Firms To Work For](#) survey, which indicates that firms with active training programs have employees who believe they work for a great firm. There is a disconnect here. Firm's struggling to recruit and retain need to start with a progressive training program to meet the needs of their employees. Zweig Group is here to help. This year, we made a significant investment in learning with the addition of Marci Thompson, Zweig Group's chief learning officer. We have greatly expanded our ability to provide in-house training programs. If you would like to learn more about options for your firm, contact Marci at mthompson@zweiggroup.com to design a custom solution.

- **Make strategic planning a yearly activity.** With more than 70 percent of strategic plans not fully executed, the opportunity for you to make your firm strong now when times are good will greatly improve your resilience in future turbulent economic times. Make sure your long-term strategic plan is up to date and your C-suite is able to commit the time and resources necessary for continuous execution of initiatives. Make business planning and annual activity where every market sector of the firm has specific, measurable goals to ensure advancement of the overall plan. Firms with strategic plans are 12 percent more profitable and enjoy stronger recruiting abilities. We recommend that firms get a third-party facilitator with AEC-specific expertise to design a plan that advances the firm. For more information on strategic planning, contact Phil Keil, Zweig Group's director of strategy, at pkeil@zweiggroup.com.

I recognize the challenge of committing resources to even the few things listed above. However, you must find a way to make it happen. Many of the recommendations I've made require concurrent or consecutive execution to realize the full benefits possible, making the challenge even greater. The value of maintaining long-term focus in this short-term environment cannot be understated. Your firm can increase your competitive advantage at a time when the industry is lowering the bar. You can become bigger, better, and stronger today, enabling you to be resilient in any conditions of tomorrow. Despite short-term issues eroding long-term focus, you can beat the metrics and be the contrary example. If you have questions, are have similar issues, or want to share your own story, reach out to me anytime. ▀

CHAD CLINEHENS is Zweig Group's president and CEO. Contact him at cclinehens@zweiggroup.com.



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THE ZWEIG LETTER

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Social media and your business

“Social media is a virtual world. It’s a false world. Spend more time in the real world and less time on your individual PR program, and encourage your staff to do the same.”



**Mark
Zweig**

I’m sorry to say this, but social media is bad. While there may be **SOME** good that comes from social media, the bad far outweighs any benefits. And it is causing lots of problems for your business!

I’m not sure I can list all of the problems social media is causing for your business, but some of them follow:

- 1) It wastes a lot of your people’s time during work hours. The amount of time people spend on their phones or work computers on Facebook and Instagram in particular is significant. A recent study found that one out of every eight minutes online is spent on Facebook. This is time your employees are getting paid for and should be spent on their jobs. It is costing you dearly in terms of their productivity!
- 2) It wastes a lot of your people’s time after work hours. Why is this a concern for you? Your people spend plenty of time at work and getting to and from the office. When they go home and spend time on social media instead of time with their families or doing personal stuff, they may blame their jobs instead of how they are deciding to use their non-work time. That isn’t good for you if you think happy, engaged workers are going to be more productive.
- 3) It creates dissatisfaction in your people – dissatisfaction with their jobs and dissatisfaction with their lives overall. This is a biggie. When they see everyone else in the firm traveling to cool places or eating luxurious dinners on company trips, they may feel left out and think “the other guy” has it better than they do. Conversely, if they have to travel constantly and miss out on home activities, seeing their coworkers doing fun things with their families may make them feel like they are missing

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BUSINESS NEWS

TWO PFLUGER PROJECTS ARE FINALISTS FOR THE TASA/TASB CAUDILL AWARD Two projects designed by **Pfluger Architects** are finalists for a Caudill Award for the 2019-2020 Exhibit of School Architecture competition sponsored by the Texas Association of School Administrators and the Texas Association of School Boards.

The Exhibit of School Architecture recognizes new and renovated Texas schools with stars of distinction in six categories, Design, Value, Sustainability, Community, Planning, and School Transformation. To be considered for a finalist in The Caudill Class, selected projects must receive at least four stars of distinction.

Pieper Ranch Middle School (Comal ISD), was recognized for Design, Sustainability, Planning, and School Transformation. As one of the fastest-growing districts in the nation, Comal ISD needed a middle school that could be flexible in use and purpose. The terraced, circular layout created a busy, activity-filled courtyard that serves many purposes for the campus and community.

The Nature to Neighborhood Studio (Round Rock ISD), received stars for Value, Sustainability, Community, and School Transformation. Perched on a bluff overlooking the Balcones Canyonlands National Wildlife

Refuge, the N2N Studio is 100 percent off-grid and honors the unique nature and topography that surrounds it.

The Caudill Class winners will be announced at the 2020 Texas Association of School Administrators Midwinter Conference in Austin in January.

Other Pfluger projects receiving recognition are the E.L. Turbon Student Center (Alamo Colleges), for Value; and the San Gabriel Campus (Austin Community College), for Design, Sustainability, and Planning.

Founded in Austin, Texas in 1973, Pfluger Architects plans and designs educational facilities that engage and inspire. With offices in Austin, Houston, and San Antonio, Pfluger has completed more than 450 projects totaling more than \$1 billion in the last five years alone.

Pfluger is committed to the responsible use and management of energy and natural resources by recommending locally sourced products and efficient building systems that meet client needs and budgets.

The Exhibit of School Architecture awards are given at the discretion of a 12-member jury, which includes: four school board members, four administrators, two representatives from the Texas Society of Architects and

two representatives from the Association for Learning Environments. To be eligible for consideration for the 2019-20 Exhibit of School Architecture, projects had to be newly constructed or renovated public education facilities completed in the past five years.

The Texas Association of School Administrators is the professional association for Texas school superintendents and other administrators. The mission of the organization, which focuses on professional learning, advocacy and member engagement, is to promote, provide and develop leaders who create and sustain student-centered schools and develop future-ready students.

The Texas Association of School Boards is an association established in 1949 to serve local public school boards. School board members are the largest group of publicly elected officials in the state. The districts they represent serve approximately 5.3 million students. The Texas Association of School Boards's mission is to promote educational excellence for Texas schoolchildren through advocacy, visionary leadership, and high-quality services to school districts.

MARK ZWEIG, from page 3

out, too. Neither of these situations is good for you as their employer. Not to mention all the jealousy that comes from coworkers when they see someone moving into a new house or buying a new car. They may think the other person is making more than they are or being treated better by the company. This can lead to them being dissatisfied with their jobs and lives.

“I’m sorry to say this, but social media is bad. While there may be SOME good that comes from social media, the bad far outweighs any benefits. And it is causing lots of problems for your business!”

4) It divides your people and creates relationship problems for them with their coworkers. We all know too much about each other thanks to social media. We know how everyone we work with feels about politics, religion, current events in the community, and much more. And all of this divides us. Some people find it difficult or even impossible to work with someone who feels differently from them about some of these contentious topics. They judge them when they wouldn't if they didn't have so much information. Not to mention all of the relationship woes that come from who “likes” or doesn't “like” a particular social media posting. These things can give someone the idea that another person doesn't like them. None of this enhances your employees' work relationships with each other or with you.

5) It may show a side of your firm and people to your clients that isn't helping your image in the marketplace. When clients see all of your company parties, or learn about the political orientation of your staff or the person in your firm responsible for their business or project, they may feel that they aren't getting what they are paying for or that you even think bad things about them. Or perhaps all they notice is the person they are dealing with posts a lot of stupid, superficial stuff or bad jokes, and that leads them to think they aren't very intelligent. None of this is helping you.

The only solution I know of for all of this stuff is to just get off of social media. And if you won't do that yourself, you will have a hard time getting your people to do so. Remember, it's “monkey see, monkey do” when it comes to leadership. And if you can't make yourself get off social media entirely, spend your time on it carefully and only post things that are potentially helpful or inspirational to your clients and coworkers.

Let's face it – social media is a virtual world. It's a false world. Spend more time in the real world and less time on your individual PR program, and encourage your staff to do the same. Your relationships, both inside and outside of the company, will improve. We were all so excited with email and texting as productivity boosters. I know I was. But social media – I'm confident to predict – will prove to be a negative for us in the end. ▀

MARK ZWEIG is Zweig Group's chairman and founder. Contact him at mzweig@zweiggroup.com.



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*Zweig Group 2019 Marketing Survey

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PROFILE



Culture setter: Ernesto Aguilar

CEO of Ardurra Group (Tampa, FL), an engineering consulting firm with a focus on the positive.

By LIISA ANDREASSEN
Correspondent

Aguilar is a seasoned professional engineer with nearly 30 years of experience in all aspects of management and operations of an engineering consulting firm. As CEO, he's focused on driving strategic growth and acquisitions, managing operations, engaging staff, and ensuring quality project delivery. He has worked at some of the fastest-growing firms in the U.S., and has experience managing national private, public, and private equity portfolio companies in the AEC industry. His experience includes sourcing, valuation, and integration and merging of acquired companies.

"You have to balance patience and results," Aguilar says. "Patience has to be part of the equation. Success doesn't happen overnight. If you push people too much, they'll move on. Don't be impatient."

A CONVERSATION WITH ERNESTO AGUILAR.

The Zweig Letter: What are the three to four key

business performance indicators that you watch most carefully? Do you share that information with your staff?

Ernesto Aguilar: Utilization, effective multipliers, and backlog. We share this information with managers who are responsible for business units. We want the rest of the staff to focus on the jobs at hand.

TZL: How far into the future are you able to reliably predict your workload and cashflow?

EA: Nine to 12 months.

TZL: What role does your family play in your career? Are work and family separate, or is there overlap?

EA: It kind of fits together. Family needs to always override work stuff, but they're often intertwined. Some days, I may need to work late, but then another day, I may

work until early afternoon and then go for a swim with my son in the pool. I'm flexible and know when to cut off, but still need to get things done. My kids are now 18 and 16, but when they were younger I signed contracts with them that if they ever wanted me to leave work early or not take a business trip because they had a personal reason – they could override my work. My daughter put this to the test one day for a music recital and I honored the contract and postponed the work trip. They know they take priority.

“We identify where people's roles should reside based on their strengths – business development, operations, or technical. We also have some seller-doers who straddle more than one of these roles.”

TZL: What, if anything, are you doing to protect your firm from a potential economic slowdown in the future?

EA: Seventy-five percent of our work is public. It's a bit more stable than private and not as cyclical. I believe that when the next recession comes (and it will), dollars will flow into infrastructure projects to boost economic output.

TZL: It is often said that people leave managers, not companies. What are you doing to ensure that your line leadership are great people managers?

EA: I never realized this statement was true until it happened to me. I do believe that people follow people. Ardurra is comprised of eight different companies. Some of the companies are made up of employees who followed their managers. These are people who have built companies and by nature are just good. We focus a great deal on human resources and have an Employee Council that helps to establish and maintain culture. It also meets on a quarterly basis to review how to improve leadership styles.

TZL: What novel approaches are you bringing to recruitment, and how are your brand and differentiators performing in the talent wars?

EA: We've been very fortunate that many staff members have come to us via word of mouth. We've started project management and leadership programs and people want to know that we have their best interests

at heart. For example, Ardurra Leadership is a program that takes 10 staff members through a year-long educational and networking experience that will help them develop their careers. We've established a culture where people do not want to leave. We're very proud of being a Best Firm To Work For, and that's attracted people too. We have an aggressive recruitment bonus program that ranges from \$1,000 for a lower-level position to anywhere from \$5,000 to \$10,000 for a higher-level position. We also have an internal recruiter. We're very on top of our culture and when someone leaves, the board is made aware of it and the reason for leaving is closely examined. We have not lost a key principal from the acquired companies.

TZL: When you identify a part of your business that is not pulling its weight in terms of profitability or alignment with the firm's mission, what steps do you take, and what's the timeline, to address the issue while minimizing impacts to the rest of the company?

EA: We try to focus more on the positive. If part of the business is not doing well, we address it quickly. Don't drag it out. So far, it hasn't been an issue.

TZL: How often do you value your firm and what key metrics do you use in the process? Do you value using in-house staff or is it outsourced?

EA: Once a year we hire an outside valuator. We use comparables, revenue, growth, and profits.

“Seventy-five percent of our work is public. It's a bit more stable than private and not as cyclical. I believe that when the next recession comes (and it will), dollars will flow into infrastructure projects to boost economic output.”

TZL: What financial metrics do you monitor to gauge the health of your firm?

EA: Cash flow, accounts receivable, and backlog. I examine cash flow daily, and the other two monthly.

See CULTURE SETTER, page 8



HEADQUARTERS: Tampa, FL

NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES: 375

YEAR FOUNDED: Originally founded

in 1977 as King Engineering,

the company was renamed and

rebranded in 2017 to Ardurra.

NUMBER OF OFFICE LOCATIONS: 16

WHAT'S IN A NAME? In the Basque

language, Ardurra means diligent

and responsible; in Gaelic

är-'DUR-e means superior. The

company embodies all of these

qualities.

SERVICES:

- Water
- Land development
- Public works
- Disaster management
- Structural
- Surveying
- Aquatics
- Environmental

BUSINESS NEWS

STRATEGIC PROPERTY PARTNERS, LLC BEGINS CONSTRUCTION ON TAMPA'S FIRST DOWNTOWN TROPHY OFFICE TOWER IN OVER 25 YEARS

Strategic Property Partners, LLC announced the start of construction on 1001 Water Street, the first new trophy office tower to break ground in the city's downtown in almost three decades. As part of the 56-acre Water Street Tampa development transforming the urban waterfront, SPP is introducing an array of workspaces to support Tampa's growth and robust economy.

1001 Water Street is sustainably designed and will be both WELL Core and Shell certified as well as LEED certified, a first for the region, once complete in late summer 2021.

"The start of construction at 1001 Water Street signifies the beginning of a new chapter for workplaces. It is not just the first new trophy office tower in Tampa in decades, but the first office of its kind," said James Nozar, CEO of SPP. "We are seeking to reimagine the workplace, where employees, their experiences, and overall wellbeing are at the heart of the design and functionality of the space."

A 20-story mixed-use building with approximately 380,000 square feet of office space and retail, 1001 Water Street has been designed by **COOKFOX Architects**. True to COOKFOX Architects' signature biophilic design philosophy – which has been shown to reduce stress, enhance creativity, improve well-being, and expedite healing – 1001 Water Street incorporates natural materials and access to daylight and vegetation, including

an expansive rooftop terrace, to connect people with nature on a daily basis. Nine double-height exterior terraces will adorn the building's façade, providing space for tenants to enjoy an indoor/outdoor work experience, while expansive floor-to-ceiling windows will flood the offices with natural light.

1001 Water Street will feature additional outdoor space via a public plaza that connects it to the adjacent University of South Florida's Morsani College of Medicine. Designed by Nelson Byrd Woltz Landscape Architects, the vibrant plaza embraces regional ecology, encourages community interaction and celebrates place with a large-scale art installation to be created by LED artist Jim Campbell.

"We saw a tremendous opportunity to support the city's growth and provide cutting-edge office space along with the lifestyle and amenities-driven experience that businesses and employees are looking for within the Tampa Bay area today," said David Bevirt, executive vice president of corporate leasing and strategy for SPP.

The start of construction on 1001 Water Street comes on the heels of the recent announcement that Water Street Tampa is the first neighborhood in the world to receive the WELL Design and Operations designation under the pioneering WELL Community Standard. Grounded in an evidence-based approach, a WELL community is designed to promote health and wellbeing across all aspects of community life.

Global commercial real estate services firm

JLL is exclusively handling the leasing efforts for 1001 Water Street. **Coastal Construction**, one of the Southeast's preeminent construction companies and one of the top 100 construction management companies in the country, is constructing the office tower.

Water Street Tampa is a multi-phased, mixed-use community that, upon completion, will include more than 9 million square feet of commercial, residential, hospitality, educational, entertainment, cultural, and retail space, making it one of the largest mixed-use developments in the country.

The initial phase of the development will include 1 million square feet of office space across three properties with Water Street Tampa. In addition to 1001 Water Street, Sparkman Wharf offers 180,000 square feet of unprecedented, loft-inspired creative office space to the neighborhood. 400 Channelside will span 500,000 square feet and feature a 30,000-square-foot sky garden that offers diverse spaces for outdoor meetings, informal gatherings, events, fitness activities and more.

COOKFOX Architects, DPC is a New York City based architectural and interior design studio founded in 2003. COOKFOX has built a studio focused on high-performance, environmentally responsive design. COOKFOX focuses on biophilic design to create architecture that supports physical health and mental wellness. With a portfolio of diverse residential, workplace, and education projects, COOKFOX seeks to understand each project in its unique environmental, cultural, and historical context.



Ardurra is committed to investing in its employees and has established a formal leadership training initiative that builds strong bonds across geographies and disciplines, while educating the group on key company goals and processes. Recently, the 2019 Leadership Team participated in a team building ropes course in Miami.

CULTURE SETTER, from page 7

TZL: You want high utilization for profitability, but that means employees are fully loaded with assignments. How do you balance growth, utilization, new clients, and new hires?

EA: We identify where people's roles should reside based on their strengths – business development, operations, or technical. We also have some seller-doers who straddle more than one of these roles. We assign utilization goals based on these roles. You have to understand the differences in people and figure out where they can be best utilized.

TZL: They say failure is a great teacher. What's the biggest lesson you've had to learn the hard way?

EA: You have to balance patience and results. Patience has to be part of the equation. Success doesn't happen overnight. If you push people too much, they'll move on. Don't be impatient.

TZL: In one word or phrase, what do you describe as your number one job responsibility as CEO?

EA: Culture setting. ▀

OPINION



Lessons learned

Trust your judgement, speak up, and keep learning. Your efforts will pay dividends down the road.



James Vigil

As a supervisory civil engineer for the federal government in Albuquerque, I've had some real life experiences with problems that can arise in this industry. Here are some insights for other engineers on lessons learned and pitfalls to avoid.

SATISFY YOUR QUESTION BY COMPLETING YOUR OWN RESEARCH OF THE TOPIC:

It was a spring afternoon in eastern New Mexico and I found myself completing routine activities while walking my jobsite for a rebar inspection prior to our next concrete placement. I was the project engineer for two Squadron Operation Facilities estimated at \$22 million and approximately 60,000 square feet of new construction.

As the contractor was approaching concrete placement on the second floor metal deck, I noticed several wide flange beams that appeared smaller, but were supporting the same spans as the larger ones directly adjacent.

I asked the superintendent and quality control manager why those specific beams were different when they were supporting the same span as the adjacent larger beams. The response did not sit

“I truly believe the lesson here is to trust your engineering judgment, and if something seems off follow through and complete your own research of the topic until you receive an answer that relieves your concerns in any situation.”

well: They stated other engineers designed the facility and that's what the drawings specified, so that's what was installed.

Disturbed with the answer I went back to the office trailer and looked at the structural drawings to confirm the beam sizes per the contract. The

See JAMES VIGIL, page 10



BUSINESS NEWS

LGE DESIGN BUILD ANNOUNCES LGE RESIDENTIAL DESIGN BUILD LGE Design Build has officially launched a brand new residential architecture, design, and construction division, LGE Residential Design Build.

For more than 25 years, LGE Design Build has been a leader in the Valley's commercial market by offering a full-service, client-oriented model of design and construction. Now the residential division will seek to provide that same dynamic level of service on a personal scale.

"Capitalizing on the proven processes, management, and relationships LGE has cultivated for years, LGE|RDB will guide owners every step of the way, providing personalized services for all phases of the process," said

David Sellers, president and CEO of LGE. "Building your home is an art form that requires the highest levels of collaboration, empathy, and discipline, and we will work tirelessly to deliver those pillars of service to our clients."

The LGE|RDB team will be led by Lead Project Manager Will Ryczek. Ryczek brings more than 10 years of experience in construction working for prominent builders in Arizona as well as world renowned architects. Ryczek earned his master's degree in architecture from ASU and has since constructed high-end, modern projects across Arizona, Texas, and California.

"Building a modern, architectural home is challenging," Ryczek said. "Having an

informed, capable team you can trust to guide you through it on your behalf is game-changing."

Also joining the team in the field is Lead Residential Superintendent Cody Jones. Jones has spent the last 15 years working to build some of the finest homes in the Valley and across the country, capitalizing on his skill set and resourcefulness.

"For us, no two homes are ever the same," Jones said. "It's that challenge I look forward to each day."

LGE|RDB will concentrate its projects in constructing modern architecture and will break ground on its inaugural project in Paradise Valley this year.

JAMES VIGIL, from page 9

contract drawings called for W12x14s that were installed just as the superintendent insisted. I was concerned with the deflection requirements from experience as these beams seemed smaller than I would've anticipated for the specific clear span. I notified the superintendent that I believed there was a typo in the beam sizes during the drafting stage and we needed to notify the DOR for a final verification prior to concrete placement. The DOR confirmed the beam sizes were incorrect and the quick fix was to provide an additional beam below the existing W12x14s by stitch welding a secondary beam to support the load and satisfy deflection requirements set forth by the LRFD design code. The true beam size should've been W21x44 to match surrounding wide flanges.

I truly believe the lesson here is to trust your engineering judgment, and if something seems off follow through and complete your own research of the topic until you receive an answer that relieves your concerns in any situation.

"Set high expectations and then explore different methods to obtain and reach your goals. All the hard work and effort you put in will pay dividends down the road."

SPEAK WHEN NECESSARY IF YOU HAVE THE KNOWLEDGE OR INSIGHT ON THE DISCUSSION: I went to work for the federal government immediately following my graduation with a civil engineering degree in 2007. I considered obtaining a master's degree then, but I felt the need for real experiences that came with being an engineer.

I began in the general engineering section utilizing Bentley software platforms, Specs Intact, and various modeling programs to generate construction drawings and specifications.

I'm definitely an introvert and have been considered shy throughout my life. I've found myself in many situations/meetings where a question or concern arose which I had an answer for, but was shy and didn't want to sound

inexperienced. Numerous times I didn't speak up when I had an educated response, and I've learned that never helps any project delivery team, especially during meeting collaboration.

It's always better to identify a concern or share the knowledge you have on a specific situation if you feel it's beneficial to the discussion. Time and time again I find myself in situations where a topic or concern is identified which someone responds to intelligently and it can help others on their specifics for the project or uncover another concern/issue that needs to be addressed.

ALWAYS STRIVE FOR PROGRESSION IN SOME AREA OF YOUR CAREER: Always keep an open mind and be the type of professional you would want to interact with. In my opinion, any type of job experience can contribute to professional growth. Embrace opportunities for cross-training within the industry and vigilantly learn from all experiences. As you see yourself advancing and developing, maintain your software proficiency and always push for progression in some area of your career.

There are many different approaches or methods you can use to grow your career. A great example is learning a new software program or learning about a topic or discipline related to your career. You can maximize professional experiences by attending high performing seminars by leaders within the industry, leaders who provide great examples and can even serve as unofficial mentors for what you can strive for professionally. Pursue additional certifications and possibly even graduate-level education as you become more discipline focused throughout your career.

A career is a relationship you have with yourself. You're the only person with the knowledge and insight on the level of effort you're putting in to progress it. Be honest with yourself about how you want your career to progress. Set high expectations and then explore different methods to obtain and reach your goals. All the hard work and effort you put in will pay dividends down the road. ▀

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Reaching our personal peak (Part 2)

Why is work today so unfulfilling and how can we change that? Let's set our sights on having an impact and figure out a way to get there.



**Peter
Atherton**

Today, most high-achieving professionals want impact. They want to leverage their skills, talents, assets, gifts, and experiences to make a difference and leave a legacy at the office and beyond.

This is not only possible – especially in the AEC industry. It can be a profitable strategy for leaders and organizations in terms of growth and employee engagement, recruitment, and retention. To achieve impact, however, leaders and organizations must decide whether they are more about their projects or their people.

An important consideration is to understand how work and workplace motivations are, and can be, designed to align with our human needs.

NEW RULES. Business – especially today – is about people.

Whether our organization is large or small, its success rests on people serving people. So, it only makes sense that our needs to thrive at work would align with our needs to do so as a human.

Based on my work, research, and direct

“Early in our careers we strive to ‘master our craft’ and ‘make our name.’ Later, we strive to ‘make a difference’ and ‘leave a legacy.’”

experience, I’ve developed the following hierarchy for work-related motivation as illustrated in the image on the next page.

A summary of these needs and how they track with our human needs (See Part 1 of this series for more on this) is presented below:

- **Basic competence and readiness need.** Our general ability to work and maintain employment. To do so, we must be sufficiently advanced in satisfying our overall human needs.

See PETER ATHERTON, page 12



It is especially true today that we bring our “whole-self” to work. Employees at all levels need to recognize that this foundational component can be compromised at any time due to life circumstances that affect us, even if just temporarily.

- **Performance need.** The desire to work and produce positive results (i.e., be fruitful) is built into us. Doing so is also our largest source of “safety” on the job.

The aspects of work we are drawn to the most, however, are often connected to our work and life seasons. Early in our careers we strive to “master our craft” and “make our name.” Later, we strive to “make a difference” and “leave a legacy.”

- **Engagement need.** To feel good about, connected to, and grow in our work, we need to be acknowledged and cared for on the job. We also need to know that our contributions matter and that they are recognized. This forms our sense of belonging and “love” in our work environment.

Our direct supervisor has the largest influence on engagement, especially early in our careers.

- **Connection need.** Early in our careers, we work mostly with our clients, teams, and supervisors. To further progress, however, we need positive and effective peer-to-peer relationships.

These relationships help us measure progress and build self-esteem. They can also be a critical source of new ideas, encouragement, support, and accountability as we expand our influence and brand both inside and outside of our organization. Unfortunately, these peer-to-peer relationships for most are comparatively weak.

- **Continuous growth need.** What comes next after we have mastered our craft and made our name? Another 10, 20, or 25 years of the same? That will not inspire most professionals, and will not drive organizational growth.

As we progress into the mid-career and beyond, we need higher-levels of personal and professional development. For most technical and professional services industries, the most significant areas of need today are related to “people skills,” “mission,” and technology advancement.

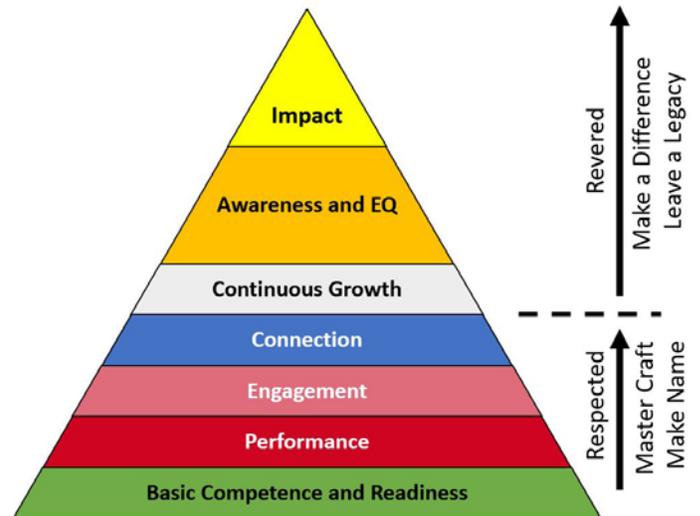
- **Awareness and high EQ need.** The conditions and the environment where others want to be and thrive. In order to successfully lead and influence others, we need to truly know and effectively lead ourselves.

Change is constant and momentum can be a trap. To be able to advance and improve, we need to understand our past, how it has influenced our present, and how both can work together to realize a greater future. We need to know our who, not just our why, what, and how. We also need to discover our gifts and learn how best to leverage those along with our skills and talents. Our quickest and most direct path, and ability to shorten “learning curves” and eliminate “blind spots” will be with the help of wise counsel, coaches, and mentors.

We then need to apply this to others and demonstrate a high-level of emotional intelligence (our “EQ”) and management effectiveness so that others want to be led by us.

- **Impact need.** The use of our skills, talents, assets, gifts, and experiences to positively change the lives and conditions of others. We want to make a difference and to leave a legacy.

ACTIONSPROVE’S WORK AND WORKPLACE MOTIVATION MODEL



Early in our careers this can be through our work. Later, no matter our position, prominence, or level of achievement, our new peak extends beyond our projects and our “day jobs.” Our drive will be to serve and advance others in new ways and in new contexts both inside and outside of our workplace and marketplace. And ideally this will include the communities in which we live, work, serve, and play, as well as those we are called to.

Although we progress through and between our work and workplace needs similarly to our human needs, most talent today fully recognizes and “wants” to begin to experience all these needs as they develop. This is particularly true for impact – an element with true generational convergence.

NEW RESULTS. To thrive in the new era, we need new approaches to both strategic planning and learning and development.

This article is intended to provide an initial framework to adjust our focus and aim so that we can begin to create new levels of engagement, growth, performance, achievement, and success.

Part 3 of this series focuses on what leaders and organizations can do to break through and beyond the very elusive hurdle of engagement that limits us. **Part 4** focuses on how to leverage a fully engaged and motivated organization to maximize our collective and client success. ▀

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