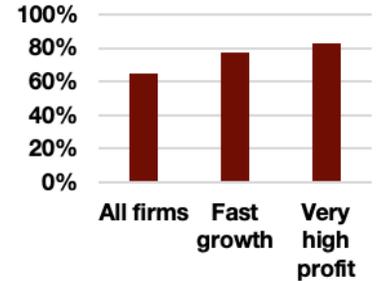


TRENDLINES

Benefits strategies



In Zweig Group's *2019 Best Performing Firms in the AEC Industry Report*, benefit strategies were analyzed between industry norms and the highest-performing firms. Paid time off created an interesting divide while comparing these best performing firms to all other firms. Seventy-seven percent of fast growth firms and 83 percent of very high profit firms allowed their employees to take unearned PTO on credit, outpacing the industry standard of 65 percent. Additionally, these best performing firms are more likely to buy back unused PTO from their employees at the end of the fiscal year relative to the rest of the industry. Different strategies work for different firms with regards to PTO, but it's important to continuously weigh the options as the years progress.

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

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Focus on recruiting in 2020

“For those of you running AEC firms – if I were you, I’d focus on recruiting in 2020.”



Mark Zweig

For those of you running architecture and engineering and environmental consulting firms – if I were you, I’d focus on recruiting in 2020.

We are absolutely in the midst of a battle – a battle to hire the people we need to do the work our clients are asking us to do. And the people shortage that was predicted for years is well underway.

But let’s be honest, we can’t use just anyone. Besides technical and/or design competence, we desperately need people who have good communication skills – people who can write reports, give instructions, develop proposals, make presentations, communicate through email, and more. And we need people who work well with others. Little we do as companies is a one-person effort. Egos have to be kept in check. Emotional intelligence is crucial.

So, how best to find and actually hire these outstanding people who will succeed in whatever roles we need them in? Here are my thoughts on how AEC firms can make it happen:

- **Have a budget for recruiting.** Stop thinking you are going to be able to make serious inroads to solving what your top management keeps saying is their biggest single problem without committing any financial resources to solving it. Look at what businesses in other industries spend on recruiting and then look at AEC firms. We spend a fraction of what is needed to actually solve this problem. We have to have a budget and it has to be realistic. And yes, you **CAN** afford it. We see the profitability’s day return on equity of firms in the AEC business today and it’s high. Spend what has to be spent.
- **Assign one person to manage the process firm-wide.** This is one of the keys to an effective hiring effort. You need one person driving the process – someone who is super-responsive, and someone who can really sell. Having **ONE** person manage the process ensures all of the steps are taken and that legal compliance is maintained. A consistent process is also more likely to yield consistent results. And this person needs to review all offers and offer letters. I cannot overemphasize, however, that you don’t want a bureaucrat in this job. You need someone with a zeal for recruiting. It has to be someone who “gets it” and who helps the individual managers with needs get those jobs filled.
- **Create a candidate database and use it!** If you would simply gather up every resume and application that has come into your firm in one place and make sure all future resumes go there as well, my experience is that you will probably be able to fill about half of your jobs quickly with candidates from that database going forward. That is a big claim, but believe me, this database is essential. As we used to like to say, “There’s gold in them thar files!”

See MARK ZWEIG, page 2

MARK ZWEIG, from page 1

- **Use your employees as recruiters!** Your best people know other good people. They went to school together or worked at other companies together or worked on projects across different firms together. Enlist their support! Ask them for help. Probe. Go see them to have these conversations – don't just send out an email to staff. Some firms pay recruitment bonuses to staff. I hate to do that for a number of reasons. First and foremost, I have seen good employees demotivated when they refer someone for a job who doesn't get hired.
- **Determine who your primary competitors are and look there.** This is so essential. Firms that you compete with have qualified people doing the jobs you need to fill. Stop acting like there is something wrong with going after them. If you were a college football team who needed a new coach, would you look to the worst teams not in your league to find one? Of course not!
- **Go after the people you are interested in versus waiting for them to call you.** You have to make the first move. It's not hard to identify these people in your competitors. Most companies have them listed right on their websites today. Call them. Ask them to lunch or coffee. Tell them about the good things happening in your firm. Sell them on the idea they may be better off working in your company than where they are at present. Remember that recruiting is selling! It takes someone who is enthusiastic and energetic. And when you do finally get one of these people to the table, make sure the rest of the people in your firm who will meet with them understand that **YOU** recruited them. All it takes is one person to ask, "Why are you looking to make a change?" to turn off a good candidate. And believe me, this happens frequently!
- **Make good employment offers.** Of course this means you first need to know what people are currently earning. Ask! Get the details. When someone says, "I make \$110K," you need to know how much of that is base salary, what portion is overtime, how much is bonus, and what other special benefits they may be counting. You will find often that that \$110K is really \$90K, which can greatly impact your idea of affordability. And one more thing – what your people make right now is not the question! You may have to pay more. That is another problem, but the reality of the situation.
- **Don't give people too long to make a decision on your offer, and don't agree to far-out start dates.** The more time you give someone, the greater the odds are that they will turn you down. You are giving them time to shop your offer and think of all the reasons not to take it. Same thing with delayed start dates. You are giving their current employers time to work on them and put them on a guilt trip about leaving. Odds are they will renege on their offer acceptance and you will really be behind schedule filling the job then because you waited for them.
- **Consider a long-term contract with a specialized recruiting firm.** It may be necessary to get outside help from a firm that can bring some recruiting manpower to bear on your problem. If you do go this route, hire a specialized firm – one with experience in the AEC business specifically. And give them a full year contract. It takes time to learn how to work together and time to fill the pipeline with job candidates. One more point – do not expect a competent firm to work on a purely contingent fee basis. They don't need to. Contingency fee firms are not the same caliber of those that do not work on that basis!
- **Have a real onboarding program so the new employee doesn't suffer from "cognitive dissonance."** I always say I never took a new job I didn't hate at first. That isn't right. But when companies aren't ready for you, don't have an office set up, don't have business cards, can't get you an email address or computer set up – and don't give you opportunities to really get acquainted with the other people there – how can you feel good about a new job? A real onboarding program is essential to making people feel good about making a job change.

I could go on but have already used too much space. We'll pick it up again in these pages soon! ▀

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



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Priorities for employee-owned companies

Employee-owned businesses' priorities differ from other organizations. Leaders must focus on people, transparency, and vision to achieve long-term success.



Michael Carragher

Those of us leading employee-owned companies – about 10 percent of U.S. companies and more than 50 percent among AEC businesses – are passionate about the unique opportunities this business model has to offer both employees and management. Our priorities are different than our counterparts' in sole proprietorship, limited partnership, LLCs, and publicly held organizations.

Leaders of employee-owned companies have to operate with a more hyper-generational viewpoint, making decisions that will prioritize the long-term over the short-term. That's why at VHB we are constantly guided by our "generational company" philosophy and core values that keep us focused on company stewardship. When I stepped into the role of president and CEO of VHB, I knew I had been handed a tremendous responsibility to carry on the founders' legacy to protect the future of employees they valued as family.

Being diligent to generational stewardship has paid off. Year over year, we've seen related and measurable returns, having exceeded industry growth rates from 2015 to 2019 with increasing profitability for the past five years. Additionally, we've enjoyed a highly stable and productive

"Strong employee-owned companies have been the backbone of our industry in the past. Let's make sure we continue to deliver as exceptional companies in the future."

employee base with a substantially lower than average industry voluntary turnover at 5.2 percent, the successful recruiting of top talent, and double-digit stock growth/CAGR for employee owners in the past 20 years.

Here are the top five foundational management

See MICHAEL CARRAGHER, page 4



BUSINESS NEWS

INSPIRED BY SUSTAINABILITY AND URBAN LIVING, CASACOR MIAMI RETURNED FOR ITS THIRD YEAR AT BRICKELL CITY CENTRE

CASACOR Miami, the most complete architecture, interior, and landscaping design exhibition in North America, returned for its third year during Miami Art Week at Miami's \$1.05 billion landmark, Brickell City Centre.

In partnership with Swire Properties, presented by COSENTINO and with the Global Sponsorship of DECA, the interior design exhibition took place from December 2-21, 2019 and featured an international mix of 20 established and emerging interior designers, all inspired by sustainability and the urban infrastructure of Miami.

"For CASACOR Miami 2019, we aimed to create a hub that brings architecture, landscaping, art, and interior design to the forefront of Miami Art Week and beyond," said Lucio Grimaldi, CEO of CASACOR Miami. "Over the past two years, CASACOR Miami has broken the mold of the traditional interior design exhibition and bridged the gap between Miami Beach and inland Miami during Miami Art Week."

An international purveyor of innovative design and world-class craftsmanship in the interior design category, CASACOR Miami continued the tradition of the CASACOR brand, annually bringing together renowned architects, interior designers, and landscapers from around the world and locally to present their distinct signature styles along with the

latest interior furnishings, art, color trends, textiles, lighting, home accessories, and global culture.

"This year, we added panel conversations to give our designers a voice while providing an educational component to the exhibition. Besides the talented interior designers and architects participating, we are working with landscape architecture firm L&ND and curatorial collective Ground Control who will curate art and create spaces inspired in nature and urban living," said Lina Hargrett, the curator for CASACOR Miami in 2019. "CASACOR Miami has become a platform for new and returning designers and artists to push their creativity."

Allowing visitors to move from micro-environments to vignettes, the designers transformed 25,000 square feet in the residential sales gallery (700 Brickell Avenue, Miami FL).

Visionaries, such as Moniomi Design, Allan Malouf, Pininfarina, Jesus Pacheco Studio, Edge Collections, Alberto Salaberri, and Léo Shehtman returned to CASACOR Miami.

In 2019, the three-week exhibition continued to add new top-tier designers to its impressive roster, such as Ukraine's rising design firm YODEZEEN, AD100 best interior designers for 2017 listed Sig Bergamin and Michelle Haim from award-winning design firm Fanny Haim & Associates. Other participating design and architecture firms new to CASACOR Miami

included Cristiana Mascarenhas, Alex Tate Design, Guimar Urbina Interiors, B+G Design, Tamara Feldman Design, Studio RODA in collaboration with Odabashian, IG Workshop, and Light on White Design Studio.

"Every year, I am surprised and blown away with the level of creativity and how the designers and curator pour their hearts and souls into the exhibition. The artists truly outdo themselves and go above and beyond anything I have ever seen in the interior design world," said Maile Aguila, senior vice president of residential sales for Swire Properties Inc. "At Swire, we aim to build transformational projects and partner with like-minded brands. CASACOR Miami does a beautiful job of curating the space and bringing forward-thinking designers together to deliver more than a typical exhibition; it's truly a work of art."

The 19-day exhibition brought together interior and architectural designs speaking to minimalism, maximalism, experiential, conceptual, organic, as well as innovative design spaces. Landscaping artists are curating living spaces to allow guests to truly connect with nature and create a sense of belonging and calmness in the epicenter of Miami.

The eclectic exhibition gave guests the opportunity to meet participating design professionals and brands while engaging with innovative design ideas that may be applied to their own living spaces.

MICHAEL CARRAGHER, from page 3

priorities I have learned foster the best potential in employee-owned companies:

- 1) Balance your focus on business performance with a focus on your people. Resist a short-term gain management mentality. Pushing too hard for a record quarterly return reinforces short-term thinking and generates misalignment with the most important behaviors needed for long-term success.
- 2) Build, embrace, and enliven a sincere company vision and strategic plan. Know what you are striving to become and include your people in shaping both your vision and strategic plan.
- 3) Align your day-to-day decision-making and position the company to ensure it succeeds in moving toward your vision.
- 4) Be fully transparent with company strategies, goals, and performance. Doing this builds trust with employees, inspires commitment and a sense of pride, and instills accountability throughout the team.
- 5) Create a fulfilling employee experience, continually investing in your people and driving rewards to people who are helping the company succeed in a manner consistent with your core values.

As I considered the recent [U.S. Business Roundtable's](#)

statement, I reflected on VHB's 40 years of values-based leadership, our generational company model, and the strong foundation our founders gave us. Our values continue to drive us to focus on delivering results for our clients, creating benefits for our communities, and ensuring a successful and sustainable organization for future generations.

"Our values continue to drive us to focus on delivering results for our clients, creating benefits for our communities, and ensuring a successful and sustainable organization for future generations."

When you use stewardship as a guiding light, good things happen, tough times are navigable, and you are able to feel proud every day knowing you are always focused on doing the "right" things. Strong employee-owned companies have been the backbone of our industry in the past. Let's make sure we continue to deliver as exceptional companies in the future. ▀

MICHAEL CARRAGHER, P.E., is president and CEO of VHB. Contact him at mcarragher@vhb.com.



Nice girls can finish first, too

Women must stop apologizing, speak up, and stand tall if they want to be successful leaders.



**Bridget
Shane**

In the working world, there is a myth about nice girls: they're weak, they're push-overs, you can't be both a nice girl and a leader. In a male-dominated industry like ours, it's easy to fall into the role of people-pleaser or trying to be tough and ruthless. Women are often told "you're too nice" or "you need to toughen up" and then when they do, they are put into a category that is construed as ambitious, bossy, and unlikeable.

How can women combat these stereotypes? And how can we advocate for our colleagues? Here are a few things to develop and maintain the confidence necessary to be a leader:

- 1) **Remove "sorry" from your email.** Women often fall into the habit of apologizing for things that don't warrant an apology, especially over email. Before hitting reply, take a minute to craft your message. An easy way to do so is by swapping "sorry" for "thanks." Instead of saying "sorry for the delay" try "thanks for your patience."
- 2) **Speak up assertively.** When speaking to a group or even to another individual, it's important to speak assertively and with confidence. To do this effectively, clearly define and set your needs or expectations, and make sure to use "I" statements and avoid "you" statements. For example, "I understand your position, and I want to lay out my concerns for the record."
- 3) **Establish credibility.** At work, your credibility is based on what your peers think of you. Do you meet deadlines on time? Does your work reflect your capabilities? To build your credibility, seek feedback from your superiors and colleagues, be open to constructive criticism, and then make changes.
- 4) **Build personal relationships.** Building strong personal relationships with colleagues will not only make your work life more enjoyable, it could also be a great way to develop your career. It's a lot harder for someone to treat you poorly when they know you on a personal level.
- 5) **Say no in a helpful way.** In the workplace, people

See BRIDGET SHANE, page 8



PROFILE



Tracey Eaves, valuation advisory services, and husband Bill.

Doing what's right for the client

When she's not enjoying the great outdoors, Tracey Eaves is finding share value for firms that are either preparing to be acquired or are planning an internal transition.

By RICHARD MASSEY
Managing Editor

Whether it's out on an elk hunt or snuggled up in her cabin in the Rocky Mountains, that's where Tracey Eaves, valuation services advisor at Zweig Group, loves to be. But she's not always in her hiking boots. She spends plenty of time plying her trade finding share value for firms that are either preparing to be acquired, or are planning an internal transition. With 20 years in the field, she knows what firms need to do at that critical moment in their history.

SEVEN QUESTIONS WITH TRACEY EAVES.

The Zweig Letter: In your role at Zweig Group, how do you Elevate the Industry?

Tracey Eaves: I am helping to Elevate the Industry by extending the longevity of firms, either through ownership transition internally, or an exit through an acquisition. A majority of the valuation work I do is either for internal

share transactions or an acquisition. The determination of the value of shares facilitates transactions that bring in the next level of leadership internally or it allows a firm to grow and become stronger through acquisition.

“We oftentimes get calls from firm owners who are in their early to late 60s and ready to transition. Unfortunately, in some cases, it can't happen because there isn't enough time to let the process play out.”

TZL: You have been affiliated with Zweig Group for 10 years. Since 2012, you have worked as a remote advisor. What's the key to staying engaged with a company when you are only in the home office once a year?

TE: The valuation work that I perform with clients doesn't require my presence in the home office. I work closely with clients during the valuation process and establish a relationship with them that allows us to communicate frequently and discuss matters of a confidential nature. While I tend to visit the home office in Fayetteville in person only for our annual strategic planning exercise, staying connected with my colleagues is a nearly daily activity. I work closely with other people located in the home office on client projects and administrative matters and we communicate frequently via conference calls and email.

"I have been in the industry long enough that I know what the hot button issues are likely to be and I've had a 20-year career in valuation that has allowed me to see most every kind of situation. I can guide clients based on what mistakes or good moves previous clients have made."

TZL: The upturn in the economy has been good to the AEC industry for about the last decade. But there is certainly talk of a downturn. How can an engineering or architecture firm best protect its valuation during a bear market?

TE: Firms can protect value in many ways, such as diversification of their client base, markets served, reducing reliance on only a few clients for a majority of revenue, and being careful not to overload on debt. In the last recession, all too often I worked with companies that thought the recession was going to be short-lived and they spent too much money retaining their talent for too long. In some cases, it caused balance sheets to become burdened with a large amount of debt that put a damper on value.

TZL: As baby boomers continue to retire, ownership transition remains a major concern for outgoing owners and those who will replace them. What's the best way to preserve, and even enhance, a firm's valuation during an ownership transition?

TE: The first point I will make about ownership transition is that firm owners should start the process sooner rather than later. We oftentimes get calls from firm owners who are in their early to late 60s and ready to transition. Unfortunately, in some cases, it can't happen because there isn't enough time to let the process play out. By starting the transition process long before an exit window, it allows for more cash flow stability and management stability, which generally leads to enhanced value.

TZL: You conduct valuations across a broad spectrum of business types. What makes the AEC industry unique?

TE: The industry is unique in several aspects and several elements have to be understood when valuing a firm. The primary client base and lengthy collections on receivables can have a big impact on cash flows, while other industries don't face the same cash management issues. In my opinion, one of the most unique aspects of the AEC industry is the length of time that the employee base and management are associated with a firm. In today's world in other industries, an average employment period with one company might be three to five years, but it is not uncommon for my AEC clients to have employment relationships of 15 to 20 years or more. It certainly adds to the stability of the management team and generally reduces the risk around losing key people that could have a downward effect on earnings.

TZL: How do you earn the trust of your clients?

TE: I always want to do what's right for the client and provide them with the type of advisory services that they need to move their agenda forward. I have been in the industry long enough that I know what the hot button issues are likely to be and I've had a 20-year career in valuation that has allowed me to see most every kind of situation. I can guide clients based on what mistakes or good moves previous clients have made.

"It is not uncommon for my AEC clients to have employment relationships of 15 to 20 years or more. It certainly adds to the stability of the management team and generally reduces the risk around losing key people that could have a downward effect on earnings."

TZL: How did your experience working for the US Small Business Administration shape the work that you do now?

TE: I actually found valuation work through the attendance at an SBDC conference. I walked away from a presentation on valuing privately held companies and knew that is what I wanted to pursue. In my time with the SBDC program, I worked with clients that ranged from start-up mode to mature businesses that needed help with a variety of issues. It allowed me to become very well-rounded in my experience as a consultant and I still employ that knowledge with every valuation that I perform. ▀



SPOUSE AND FAMILY: I'm married to an awesome man who is in the natural gas and oil production business.

LEISURE: I love all that is outdoors. My husband and I spend as much time as possible at our cabin in the beautiful Rocky Mountains.

Tracey Eaves can be reached at teaves@zweiggroup.com.

ON THE MOVE

GLY CONSTRUCTION NAMES TED HERB AS CEO AND ANNOUNCES THREE NEW SHAREHOLDERS
GLY Construction, an employee-owned general contracting firm, announced that it has promoted Ted Herb to the role of CEO, effective immediately. Herb succeeds Jim Karambelas, who is retiring after 25 years with the company.

Herb joined GLY in 1987 as a project engineer, rising to vice president of operations by 2008, and has served as president since 2016. He brings a deep understanding of the diverse skills and perspectives that contribute to successful project delivery at every level within the general construction industry. He has played a major role in shaping the company's cultural focus on employee training, development, and recruitment.

"Ted has played a pivotal role in shaping the company we are today," said Karambelas. "He has always placed a great importance on investing in the safety and continuous education and training of the people who make our buildings possible and is the natural leader for GLY's next chapter."

"Our region is experiencing a period of tremendous growth and transformation," said Herb. "I'm aware of both the opportunities and the challenges this brings and remain convinced that our people are our greatest asset and ally in creating the best company possible. I'm humbled by GLY's trust in me

and believe that we can play an important role in shaping a place our children will be proud to call home for a long time."

Herb's projects help to shape the story of the city of Bellevue's growth and include the Lincoln Square real estate development projects and Overlake Hospital's expansions. He has a legacy of service to the community through positions on numerous boards and active participation in community events. Herb has served as a member of the Overlake Hospital Board of Trustees and is a past president of the Overlake Medical Center Foundation Board. Additionally, he currently serves as a facilities team member for Path with Art, a not-for-profit focused on arts engagement opportunities for low-to-no income adults in active recovery.

Herb has bachelor's degrees from the University of British Columbia and from the University of Washington.

GLY also announced the addition of three minority shareholders to its ownership: Joe Bonacci, CFO; Tess Wakasugi-Don, senior project manager; and Garrick Hughes, senior project manager.

"Joe, Tess, and Garrick are core to the overall success of GLY Construction and we are excited to invite them as shareholders as we head into 2020," said Herb. "Each of them are trailblazers in their own way and they bring

decades of experience that is core to what makes our company one of the best. We are excited to see them continue to grow and make an impact in these new roles."

Bonacci joined GLY in 2016 as director of finance, a role he held for three years before being named CFO in late 2018. Bonacci's involvement in leveraging new technology to improve various processes continues to have tremendous impact on internal and external customer service. He will also serve on the company's executive committee.

Wakasugi-Don serves as a senior project manager and is the first female owner in the firm's 52-year-history. She possesses an exceptional knowledge of construction methods, materials and resources and has coordinated the efficient delivery of highly complex projects in both Seattle and Bellevue.

Hughes currently serves as a senior project manager and his career at GLY has mirrored the growth of the tech industry with the delivery of multiple complex projects for Amazon and Expedia. He continuously pushes the tired conventions of the industry to improve efficiency and processes that eliminate waste and cost.

Founded in 1967, GLY Construction is one of the most established, locally owned general contractor and construction firms in the Pacific Northwest.

BRIDGET SHANE, from page 5

often look to women for help on tasks they can do for themselves. To combat this, the next time someone asks for help, teach them how to do the task themselves. For example, "Let me show you where to look for that information, so that you know for next time."

6) Use your body language. To express confidence, use your body language rather than your voice. In a meeting, stand up to make your point. Everyone will be paying attention, so you won't need to raise your voice.

For those in leadership roles – men and women alike – there are also steps you can take to help build a culture for women to succeed.

1) Encourage staff to speak up in meetings. Send agendas ahead of time to encourage questions during the meeting. A chance to prepare for meetings can often encourage interactions.

2) Give feedback kindly, but directly. As a leader, it can be difficult to provide your staff with negative feedback. It's important to get to know how your staff communicates best, and what works for one person may be different than someone else. Use a compliment sandwich: Provide a strength, something they do well, first. "What I appreciate is _____. You could be more effective by _____." However, be direct. If you bury the bad feedback it can get lost in translation.

3) Lead with empathy. You want to inspire and empower

"Women are often told 'you're too nice' or 'you need to toughen up' and then when they do, they are put into a category that is construed as ambitious, bossy, and unlikeable. How can women combat these stereotypes? And how can we advocate for our colleagues?"

your team, not command and control. By having personal relationships with your staff, you improve your understanding of their needs, goals, and communication techniques.

4) Explain the why. Going along with trust, to be a strong and effective leader, it is best to be transparent and explain the why. When you start explaining why decisions are made, you'll start sharing more context with your team, allowing them to connect the dots. This enables them to be more willing to work with you and be passionate about it.

By creating environments of open communication, we can allow authenticity to flourish. As demonstrated in a number of recent studies, trustworthiness and likeability rank above competency when it comes to how you are perceived at work. ▀

BRIDGET SHANE is Pennoni's corporate communications manager. She can be reached at bshane@pennoni.com.



Personalize your marketing

In this digital era of PURLs, OKRs, and java scripts, a dimensional mailer and handwritten note are still the best way to grab attention.



**Jane
Lawler
Smith**

Just last week, I attended a one-day marketing event. The breakouts were wide ranging and motivating. Topics covered ways to write stronger copy, how and when to use open thinking versus closed thinking, techniques for getting and keeping attention – a feast for marketing professionals!

Another topic was marketing personalization. This session turned out to be high tech, discussing the nuts and bolts of a campaign that was personalized from end-to-end. The anachronisms and initialisms were flying. The overall concept – personalizing your marketing – took on increasingly strange form when talk of java scripts, PURLs, and OKRs/KPIs took center stage.

However, when it got right down to it and the digital secrets were revealed, the core of the campaign – the attention grabber – was startlingly basic: A dimensional mailer and a handwritten note.

Why?

We walk around with handheld computers in our pockets or palms for almost all of our waking hours. Our keyboard skills are manic, whether we took a high school typing course or not. Many

of our daily activities involve interactions with screens. Not just work activities, but life activities as well.

Yet, we are still human.

Our reading comprehension is better if we are reading from paper, not a screen. If you want proof, ironically, you can Google it. Browse the plethora of articles. But if you want to really take in the content, print it out to read it.

We humans take in more when we get the full experience, when we hold things in our hands, and turn the page – when we can read with more than our eyes.

And we are curious.

Dimensional mail with its odd size and shape

See JANE LAWLER SMITH, page 10



BUSINESS NEWS

WARE MALCOMB ANNOUNCES CONSTRUCTION IS COMPLETE ON SAM CLAR OFFICE FURNITURE CORPORATE OFFICE AND SHOWROOM

Ware Malcomb, an award-winning international design firm, announced construction is complete on the newly re-built Sam Clar Office Furniture corporate office and showroom located at 1221 Diamond Way in Concord, Calif. Ware Malcomb provided architecture, interior design and civil engineering services for the project.

Founded in 1939, Sam Clar Office Furniture is one of the leading providers of commercial office environments in the Bay Area and is now owned and managed by the 4th generation of the Clar family. Construction began last year on the renovation of the company's 18,922 square foot facility, which was severely damaged in a warehouse fire on Thanksgiving Day in 2015.

Plans for the new facility focused on showcasing the company's office furniture displays as well as creating an open work space with multiple collaboration areas. The interior design features a mixture of permanent hard wall construction, as well as demountable walls for future flexibility. A living green wall

provides a natural accent to the space. The exterior of the building was also completely remodeled to provide a modern and inviting feel, including the addition of new custom steel storefront systems, steel canopies, textured stucco finishes, wood finishes, and new paint. Site improvement work completed for the project included the re-paving and re-stripping of the parking lot.

The building design maintained the fire walls that were integral to preventing even further damage at the time of the fire, and a new roof and fire sprinkler system were also installed.

The project is pursuing WELL certification from the International WELL Building Institute. WELL is the world's first building standard focused exclusively on human health and wellness, setting performance requirements in seven categories relevant to occupant health in the built environment: air, water, nourishment, light, fitness, comfort, and mind.

"Although Sam Clar hasn't missed a beat since the fire forced them to operate out of a different facility over the past couple years, it's exciting for the company to return to this space that has been completely rebuilt to meet

the needs of their customers and employees," said Gary Drew, Regional Vice President of Ware Malcomb's Pleasanton office. "This family-owned company can look forward to many more generations working out of their new, state-of-the-art corporate office and showroom."

The general contractor for the project was Vallee Construction.

Established in 1972, Ware Malcomb is an international design firm providing planning, architecture, interior design, branding, civil engineering and building measurement services to commercial real estate and corporate clients.

With 24 office locations throughout the United States, Canada, Mexico and Panama, Ware Malcomb specializes in the design of commercial office, corporate, industrial, science and technology, healthcare, retail, auto, public/educational facilities and renovation projects. Ware Malcomb is recognized as an Inc. 5000 fastest-growing private company and a Hot Firm and Best Firm to Work For by Zweig Group.

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almost always rises to the top of the "open me" pile. And rarely is it discarded – like so many other direct mail pieces in plain white envelopes. Industry studies report a nearly 100 percent open rate for dimensional mail.

Because whether B2B or B2C, it comes down to B2H where the H stands for human. People.

"Dimensional mail with its odd size and shape almost always rises to the top of the 'open me' pile. And rarely is it discarded – like so many other direct mail pieces in plain white envelopes. Industry studies report a nearly 100 percent open rate for dimensional mail."

Who are your humans? Who are the people you want to reach with your marketing?

By starting with this question, you can develop the most effective marketing outreach of your career. It is target marketing with a twist. And it is not one-size-fits-all.

Hopefully you already have your target markets defined. These are the consumer or business groups that are the aim of your services. Maybe it's the education market. Perhaps you refine that a bit more and focus on K-12 schools. Or you go even further than that to private K-12 schools. Moreover, you focus on private K-12 schools within a defined geographic region.

Which is great. But it is not enough information.

Who are the humans? This answer informs the core of your marketing personalization.

Back to our example from the marketing conference. This firm had a database of more than 9,000 contacts. For their high-tech, personalized campaign, they narrowed that list down to 492.

The criteria they used to winnow down the list included job titles, past purchase decisions, and length of time in a specific role. This is classic market segmentation.

If you haven't thought about market segmentation in a while, it is worth revisiting. There are many ways to segment markets. Some common ways are by geographic, demographic, psychographic, and behavioral means. But even classic marketing texts speak to our question – who are the humans? – by stating "the most specific form of market segmentation is to consider each buyer a market segment."

Do you know what the most beautiful sound is in any language? According to Dale Carnegie, "a person's name is, to that person, the sweetest and most important sound in any language." He was a master of business-to-human exchange since 1936 (the publication year of *How to Win Friends and Influence People*).

None of this is new, but it is true. It's not easy, but it is effective. B2H – you should try it. ■

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Testing leadership

Before you pass the torch, you need to make sure that your next generation of leaders is up to the task.



Leo
MacLeod

It would be nice if leadership transition was a refined science with its own set of rules that produced expected results. Figuring out who's going to take over and what that looks like is more like trial and error: You just need to try it to know if it's going to work. People who look like good candidates don't always work out.

Here are typical scenarios I've run into with strategies to help you identify problems sooner than later:

- **The eye-opener.** Being an owner looks like fun until you start walking around in the owner's shoes, sitting in tedious meetings talking about insurance, budgets or how to let someone go without getting sued; working on weekends; dealing with staff who are necessary but who always present problems; listening to two managers arguing over which software system to use and why, ad nauseam; looking at your line of credit to make payroll again because a project is delayed or a client is stalling on payment. I've seen promising stars take stock of the harsh realities of ownership and back away. No thanks, who needs that? This is especially true of a younger generation that values balance in their lives. The sooner you can expose emerging leaders to the unglamorous hard work of ownership, the sooner

"Knowing the potential of your staff will help you understand how far you can develop them and where they fit in the organization. It also helps you identify emerging leaders before they are faced with tasks beyond their nature."

you can weed out those who will chose a different path. Succession planning is always battling time. It takes a long time for people to really understand how to operate the business. If you wait too long, you could find yourself back at the beginning of the process and delaying your scheduled exit date.

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BUSINESS NEWS

RUSH AND CHICAGO DESIGN NETWORK TEAM UP TO EXPAND VISION FOR PATIENT-FOCUSED HEALTHCARE FOR ROAD HOME PROGRAM The Road Home Program at Rush had its ribbon cutting last fall to celebrate the completion of Road Home's latest space at 325 S. Paulina St. designed by architecture firm **Chicago Design Network**.

"Chicago Design Network went above and beyond Rush's expectations with their level of detail in design," Rush University Medical Center Project Manager Liz Ott said. "From the space plan to the final finishes, their entire team was dedicated to the mission of the project from start to finish. The firm created a warm and comfortable space where patients can feel safe in the home-like environment, and care providers can offer meaningful treatment in a combination of private and group therapy spaces."

The Road Home Program at Rush is a non-profit organization that helps veterans face the

challenges of life after deployment, offering aid regardless of discharge status or ability to pay. Established in February 2014, their intensive outpatient program has helped treat more than 1,000 veterans. Researchers at Rush found that Road Home's three-week IOP program reduced the number of patients reporting PTSD and depression symptoms by 50 percent. The program receives funding from the Warrior Project and Warrior Care Network.

"As a part of the Warrior Care Network, Road Home needed a space that's warm, safe and inviting," Road Home Program Executive Director William Beiersdorf said. "We are thankful that Chicago Design Network was able to help us lay out and develop great ideas and bring them to life. For veterans, half the battle is deciding to participate in the program. We now have a wonderful community space that veterans and their families love. We really appreciate everyone's thoughtfulness in helping bring the center to life."

Chicago Design Network began its partnership with the Road Home Program in 2013. The spaces embody Rush's vision for leading innovative, patient-focused health care. By working closely with Road Home personnel, the firm creates spaces tailored to the needs of veterans and staff.

"Working on Road Home projects has been a humbling experience," Chicago Design Network Principal Deborah Winchester said. "The staff is devoted to helping veterans from all over the country, so we want to make sure that same level of passion and dedication is reflected in each space. We draw inspiration from nature to create comfortable, flexible spaces for veterans, their families and staff to feel at ease throughout their time in each space."

Founded in 1985, Chicago Design Network is an architecture and interior design firm located in the West Loop of Chicago.

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■ **The fit.** Typically, emerging leaders are identified because they're really good at their jobs, can manage themselves with virtually no oversight, clients love them, and they've shown a desire and appetite to put in the extra work. And, they have made it known they want a seat at the table. How well do they manage people? Do they earn the respect of their peers? Who do staff turn to for questions? Effectively managing people just comes from doing it. Some people are just naturally gifted at tuning in to people and staying out of their way. For others, it's very difficult to not just do it themselves. Delegation can be learned, but are the people wired to be effective managers? Some people, who are good at their jobs, don't like dealing with people problems all day. It's not part of their natural skill set, and they fight it. Again, people need to be thrown into management positions and tested sooner than later. It's not uncommon to find leaders who don't have the aptitude to be managers nor do they have the interest to learn.

■ **The un-leader.** Leading and managing are different. I've coached people who are good managers of people but don't have the fire in the belly to be leaders. Leading requires passion, an appetite for risk, and an aptitude to think beyond the status quo. It's very challenging for people to think strategically if they've never been in that situation: Identifying core problems, gathering critical data, imagining different scenarios, thinking through the pros and cons, presenting and defending your plan, making adjustments, getting buy-in, following through with the hard implementation. I've given people templates and coached them to pick up the challenge. What I've found is people can be developed, but some people are not just wired to be leaders. They know their place, and it's not at the head of the table.

How do you screen and develop future leaders? There's no substitute for trial by fire. But there are also formal skill and personality assessment tools, of which there is no shortage in the market. What's critical is to try to understand fit and potential early by assessments that measure what potential candidates naturally gravitate

toward. People can be trained, but if an assessment indicates that a candidate is very low on initiative, you're not going to transform that person into an inspired leader who comes up with new ideas. The same can be said about other key leadership measurements, such as whether they are naturally a positive person or confident in presenting their own ideas. These assessments are useful, even if your candidates are not the future owners. Knowing the potential of your staff will help you understand how far you can develop them and where they fit in the organization. It also helps you identify emerging leaders before they are faced with tasks beyond their nature.

"I'm more inclined to trust someone who believes in their own ability to shore up areas of inadequacies and works to improve themselves. There's no measuring tape or easy predictor for a strong will. As you look at the future owners of the company, use everything at your disposal."

Even assessments that generate beautiful graphs and specific numbers can't predict that people can continuously surprise us. I'm more inclined to trust someone who believes in their own ability to shore up areas of inadequacies and works to improve themselves. There's no measuring tape or easy predictor for a strong will. As you look at the future owners of the company, use everything at your disposal: formal assessments, training, coaching, challenging assignments, and encouragement. The more information you collect, the better you'll be able to gauge if you have the right team for the future. ▀

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