

## Copy success



Mark Zweig

EDITORIAL

See what more successful firms than yours are doing, straight from ZweigWhite's surveys.

**W**e're down to the end of the year now and everyone seems to be working on their business planning. Part of that process usually involves benchmarking how your firm compares to other, similar A/E/P or environmental firms. I can see this is happening based on sales of our survey products. We just had the biggest single-day sales of surveys I have seen here in years last week. It's crazy.

My problem with benchmarking has always been: Whom are you comparing yourself to? While most firms in this business seem preoccupied with finding other firms that are their exact same size, or discipline, or based in Peoria like they are, the real issue in my mind may be finding other firms in this business that are super successful, and comparing yourself to them. Our "Successful Firms Survey" looks at companies that are growing faster (average of 20 percent or more for the past three years) and are more profitable (average profitability of 24.5 percent of net service revenue) than the bulk of the firms in this business.

I like this survey. It's one we can all learn from. Here are some interesting tidbits from it:

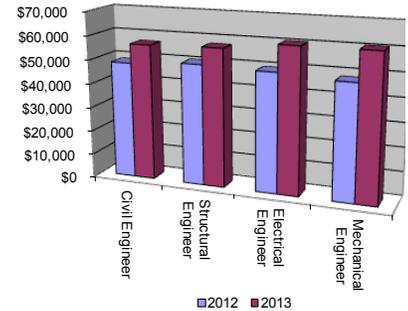
- **Successful firms budget more for marketing – 8.6 percent of revenue on marketing versus 3.5 percent for all others.** I have always believed there was a relationship between marketing budget and growth and profitability.
- **Successful firms have higher chargeability rates – ranging from 64.3- to 65.6 percent versus 57.3 percent for other firms.** Having principals and managers who work on jobs (instead of spending all their time on corporate management) and less support people goes a long way to help utilization rates. High utilization makes it easier to make money – plain and simple.

See MARK ZWEIG, page 2

The important thing for you to be thinking about is whom you are modeling yourself after. Make sure it is a company that is more successful than yours is – not less!

## TRENDLINES

### Price of entry



Salaries for entry-level engineers at leading engineering firms are on the rise this year. For example, the 2013 "Salary Survey of Northeast & South Atlantic Engineering Firms" finds that the median base salaries for key engineering titles at the entry level increased from 2012 to 2013: civil engineers from \$48,600 to \$56,680, structural engineers from \$50,253 to \$57,408, electrical engineers from \$49,504 to \$60,400 and mechanical engineers from \$48,000 to \$60,560.

– Margot Suydam, Survey Manager

## FIRM INDEX

Bioengineering Group .....	5
Bracken Engineering, Inc. ....	11
Carney Engineering Group .....	5
FPM Group .....	9
Fusco Engineering, Inc. ....	9
Kleinfelder .....	12
Lockett & Farley .....	5
MacKay Sposito .....	3
Merrick & Company .....	11
SAM, Inc. ....	9
Stantec .....	12
Sullivan International Group, Inc. ....	11
Thornton Tomasetti .....	12
WileyWilson .....	11
Withers & Ravenel .....	9

## INSIDE

- TOP PLAYER: Carving a path to success. Page 3
- PM PERSPECTIVES: PM resolutions for the New Year. Page 7
- HR: Hiring for potential or experience? Page 9
- FINANCE: Debt or cash for purchases? Page 11

## Handling on-the-job errors

Page 5

**TO OUR SUBSCRIBERS:** Due to the upcoming holidays, The Zweig Letter will not be published on Dec. 24. We will return on Dec. 31. Happy Holidays!

MARK ZWEIG, from page 1

- **Successful firms charge higher fees and manage their fees better.** High profit firms have effective multipliers of 3.37 versus 3.08 for all other firms. Having a brand name and providing high quality – along with being willing to ASK for a better fee – all contribute to higher multipliers. Higher multipliers make it easier to hire good people, spend money on I.T., and spend money on people.
- **Successful firms employ the simple tool of regular project progress reports to all clients on all projects.** Seventy five percent to all successful firms send out periodic PM reports, compared with only 68 percent of all other firms. I will never know why everyone doesn't do this. It is cheap and easy to implement and clients like it. It improves collections and client relationships.
- **Successful firms use continuous client feedback collected through a formal process.** Sixty seven to 75 percent of successful firms have a process for ongoing client feedback versus only 51 percent for all other firms. Regular polling of past, potential, and current clients and then publishing the information – good and bad – for all staff to see is a very powerful tool if you want to really have outstanding service.
- **Successful firms have harder working people in their management jobs.** If you can get your principals and PMs to work more hours, everyone will work more hours and you increase your production capacity at no cost to the firm.
- **The average work week in successful firms for PMs is 50 hours versus 45 in all other firms.** It's 57 hours in successful firms for principals versus 50 in all other firms. People only work like that if they are happy and challenged, and not upset with the company. Seems obvious!

There's so much more good information in here. The important thing for you to be thinking about – as the end of the year approaches – is whom you are modeling yourself after. Make sure it is a company that is more successful than yours is – not less! ▀▲

MARK ZWEIG is the chairman and CEO of ZweigWhite. Contact him with questions or comments at [mzweig@zweigwhite.com](mailto:mzweig@zweigwhite.com).

## A/E BUSINESS NEWS

### MODERATE RECOVERY PREDICTED:

Associated Builders and Contractors released its 2013 economic forecast for the U.S. commercial and industrial construction industry, and it shows the continuation of a modest recovery for nonresidential construction next year.

"ABC predicts nonresidential construction spending will expand 5.2 percent in 2013," said ABC Chief Economist Anirban Basu. "Given the remarkably deep reductions in nonresidential construction spending since the onset of the downturn, one would expect more robust growth during the fourth year of broader economic recovery.

"Thanks to a handful of segments experiencing more rapid economic recovery, much of the construction expansion next year will be in categories heavily associated with private financing," Basu said. "Due largely to constrained capital budgets at state and local government levels, as well as ongoing turmoil in Washington, D.C., publicly funded construction spending is expected to be flat next year, and perhaps worse.

"The fastest growing major U.S. industry during the last year in terms of absolute job creation was professional and business services," Basu said. Because many firms in this category use office space, office-related construction spending is expected to rise 10 percent in 2013.

"Consumer confidence also has progressed," Basu said. "Accordingly, ABC predicts total commercial construction will expand roughly 10 percent next year. Other industries positioned to experience rising levels of investment include power, up 10 percent; lodging, up 8 percent; health care, up 5 percent; and manufacturing, up 5 percent.

"Nonresidential building construction employment is expected to expand 2.1 percent in 2013, slightly better than the 1 percent performance estimated for 2012," Basu said. "Construction materials prices should rise a bit more rapidly in 2013 than they did in 2012, with substantially more volatility to be experienced from month to month next year.

"Despite ongoing slowdown in many of the world's largest economies, ABC anticipates many investors will opt to invest in hard assets as a way to avoid volatility in equity and bond markets," Basu said.

"Whether or not the nation falls off its fiscal cliff – a collection of spending cuts and tax increases that kick in at the end of the year – certain taxes likely are

headed higher," Basu said. "ABC predicts higher marginal income tax rates to reach pre-Bush levels, as well as an increase in tax rates on capital gains and dividend income. In addition, ABC expects the payroll tax credit to sunset in the first quarter of 2013.

"The U.S. economy is presently expanding at a 2 percent rate," Basu said. "Even in the absence of a dive off the federal precipice, the nation will struggle to achieve 2 percent growth next year as certain tax rates rise and as federal spending growth slows and perhaps turns sharply negative.

"Gross domestic product (GDP) has expanded for 13 consecutive quarters, which has reduced vacancy rates in certain segments and in key metropolitan areas," Basu said. "ABC's forecast for GDP growth next year is between 1 percent and 2 percent. If the nation falls off its fiscal cliff, recession will follow, with GDP falling between 2 percent and 3 percent for the year.

"With the elections now behind us, the hope is the White House and Congress will be able to successfully navigate the nation past its fiscal cliff," Basu said.

"If that happens, the latter half of 2013 could be surprisingly good for nonresidential activity given the large volume of construction projects that were put on hold during the course of 2012. However, the baseline forecast calls for only moderate expansion in nonresidential construction spending next year."

## THE ZWEIG LETTER

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## TOP PLAYER

# Carving a path to success

MacKay Sposito has undergone a transformation under Tim Schauer; they're now a Hot Firm.

During the Great Recession, **MacKay Sposito** took very concrete steps to overcome the odds. As a consequence, the Vancouver, Wash.-based 100-person consultant in energy, public works and land development, placed No. 54 on **THE ZWEIG LETTER** 2012 Hot Firm List.

Here, President and CEO Tim Schauer describes how that was accomplished, among other things.

**THE ZWEIG LETTER: How does it feel to be a Hot Firm?**



Tim Schauer,  
President and  
CEO, MacKay  
Sposito.

"We stopped hoping and began to implement deliberate business and strategic plans. We recognized that hoping for the market to come back, or hoping for opportunity to grab us, or hoping that our clients were satisfied, and hoping our employees weren't as worried as we were about the future, would not help us make the Hot Firm List."

**Tim Schauer:** We have admired those firms ranked as ZW Hot Firms for many years. It has been a very proud moment for our owners and our employees. While I have received some generous recognition this year for making the ZW Hot Firm List as well as other growth awards from our local and regional business journals, I have to be candid that recognition is not mine to accept personally. My partners and our employees deserve credit too for fueling our recovery and our record growth. I am grateful they have the confidence in my leadership to continue to choose me to sit behind the wheel and steer.

**TZL: How valuable will the Hot Firm status to your brand?**

**TS:** Making the Hot Firm list definite-

ly enhances our brand. The timing of making the list couldn't have been better. MacKay Sposito just spent the last two years investing in a significant re-branding effort that culminated in our critical mass brand launch in September of this year. This recognition adds timely credibility that our recent re-branding efforts are in fact motivated by growth and evolution, not by desperation or convenience.

**TZL: List three ingredients that allowed you to thrive when others have failed in difficult times? In other words, what makes a Hot Firm in 2012?**

**TS:**

**1) Bad news does not get better with age.** Fear of failure is a powerful mo-

tivator. Breathing into the very real possibility that if you don't make the necessary hard decisions (to cut costs, layoffs, ownership changes, reduce benefits, etc.) while simultaneously reinvesting money into the company to chase new revenue, your company could fail on your watch. Do not procrastinate when dealing with internal problems that are eating your firm's future.

**2) Hope is not a strategy.** We stopped hoping and began to implement deliberate business and strategic plans. We recognized that hoping for the market to come back, or hoping for opportunity to grab us, or hoping that our clients were satisfied, and hoping our employees weren't as worried as we were about the future would not help us make the Hot Firm List.

**3) The company comes first.** We used to say our people come first. This change to the company comes first is less a change and more redefinition of what the company's primary purpose is to us. For MacKay Sposito, the company must be healthy and financially stable with an optimistic outlook so that it can serve its employees (its owners included). I like the analogy of a life raft. What is more important? Every single person in the raft or the raft itself? A failed raft means no survivors. This became real to us as we looked at carrying all of our billable employees as the firm's utilization performance took a downward trend. In other words, the raft was getting smaller and for the benefit of the raft some people had to get in the water for a while or we would all be in the water.

**TZL: In 10 years, do you think you will still be a Hot Firm? What are the major threats to business success today?**

**TS:** I don't know if we will be on the list in 10 years. I know it will be hard to maintain our current growth curve that got us here. I do know that making the Hot Firm List won't be a direct focus for us that drives our business plan each year. We will focus on helping our clients be successful and making our communities better places to do business, to live, and to play. If we accomplish these goals, I believe our company will have lots of return business, we will be growing and profitable, and if that gets us on the Hot Firm List... I'll be thrilled.

I think the major threats to business success today for are the same as they have been, but the margin for error or cushion is thinner. I think there are a few paradigms or beliefs that settle on business leaders that can constrain and threaten success in business, and here are a few that stand out for me.

**■ Our problems are unique!** No one else has ever had a problem like this, therefore we necessitate a unique solution (invent the wheel on our own). I see this most often with internal operations and human resources.

See TOP PLAYER, page 4

## TOP PLAYER, from page 3

The realization that you are not unique and someone else has traveled this path before enables you to be open-minded and assume a posture that enables you to learn from others who have faced your same challenge before. Unless you like to invent instead of solve.

- **Someone else will fix that.** This one is not isolated to business but it casts a shadow on our futures. I believe it has seeped into many aspects of our society. Whether it is improving public education, or improving the regulatory reform, or achieving reasonable costs for healthcare insurance, to our eroding transportation infrastructure. Far too many business leaders believe they do not have enough time to help (with time and money) solve the problems they observe around them. My perspective is that many of these problems are like satellites in a degrading orbit around our businesses and over time threaten our ability to succeed in business. I believe my generation was provided much in the way of opportunity to thrive and if we wish for our businesses to succeed beyond us we have to pay it forward through helping to fix these problems. I am committing to work harder “to help fix that” in my professional and personal life and bring as many others along for the ride as I can.

**TZL: What are the major trends you must embrace to stay competitive?**

**TS:** The major trends or truths that I embrace are:

- Business is about relationships. Service is first and the product we provide is second.
- More and changing communication methods necessitate flexibility. Adapt to whatever communication tools are necessary to be accessible to your clients and employees, whether it be texting, instant messaging, email, Skype, GoToMeeting, LinkedIn, Facebook. Like them or not, they are being used around you. Ignoring them makes you less competitive.

“(My father’s) unwavering self-confidence and optimism that he will always succeed as long as he is honest, respectful, and willing to work harder has always empowered me. His core value is, ‘Always do the right thing no matter what, even when no one is looking.’ He talked and walked this in his career and it has served as a corporate and personal compass for me.”

- Promoting and modeling a work life balance is essential. This does not necessarily mean a 40-hour work week, but being flexible to accommodate your employees (and your) personal life obligations, such as coaching your kid’s team, getting exercise, and volunteerism. Work doesn’t start at 8 a.m. and end at 5 p.m. anymore, so why should we cling to the paradigm that everything else must only happen outside that time?

**TZL: On a personal note, do you remember your first paid job? What did you learn then that still influences the way you work today?**

**TS:** I worked as a cook and dishwasher at McDonald’s in high school and I worked a few more fast food jobs. These are basic but hard jobs that must be done well or customers aren’t happy or worse – get sick. I learned that every job is important to someone and there is pride in excelling no matter how basic your job is. I do not under appreciate any job that involves food prep or physical labor. They may not pay as well as my job, but it doesn’t mean their job is easier.

**TZL: Do you hold someone (inside or outside the industry) as a special mentor? How did this person influence who you are?**

**TS:** My father (Al Schauer) has been an important mentor both inside and outside the industry. His unwavering self-confidence and optimism that he will always succeed as long as he is honest, respectful, and willing to work harder has always empowered me. His core value is, “Always do the right thing no matter what, even when no one is looking.” He talked and walked this in his career and it has served as a corporate and personal compass for me.

**TZL: What’s the one trait you most admire in people and why?**

**TS:** Generosity, especially when talking about their time. People can always

make more money to replace the dollars they give away, but they can’t make more time. That gift is permanent.

**TZL: Describe the most challenging thing you have ever done/the biggest challenge you have taken on outside of work.**

**TS:** I am a self-confessed bicycling addict. I’ve been riding seriously for more than 20 years and racing more than 10 years. I don’t win very often, but the biggest challenges are not winning races – sometimes it is just finishing. I entered and finished the Mt Hood Classic stage race only once (2010) and I was dead last of the finishers. The last day (day 4) was a 90-mile, 5-hour day, with 10,000 feet of climbing just to finish last. I rode the last 80 miles by myself. One of the hardest things I’ve ever done. Check “do a bicycle stage race” off the bucket list!

**TZL: What lesson learned would you pass along to a recent college graduate embarking on a career in the A/E/P and environmental consulting fields?**

**TS:** The lessons I would pass along to a fresh graduate would be that getting the highest grades and where you went to school do not matter. If they do matter, find another company to work for. Being technically brilliant and the smartest person in the firm won’t get you very far if you can’t communicate it well or work as part of a team. Interpersonal skills are more scarce in this industry than technical talent. Learn how to be a team player and how to take pride in serving others because these factor more into success in this industry than being the best designer.

**TZL: What question would you ask of another Hot Firm leader?**

**TS:** What is your leadership transition plan? If you are a Hot Firm leader like me, then likely your firm has rising stars like we do that are enabling you to be at the helm of a Hot Firm. If you don’t have a plan, then they don’t know your plan, then they are likely making their own plan, which may or may not include you or your firm. We are working on our own leadership transition plans now for our rising stars and I trust our situation is not unique. Knowing what other Hot Firm leaders are doing would be valuable, rather than inventing the wheel on our own. ▀▄

## GROWTH

# Handling on-the-job errors

Three firm leaders answer the question, offering conciliatory approaches.

By BRYAN SULLIVAN  
Correspondent

**M**entoring and guiding a team can prove to be a difficult task, especially when you see a rising team member grapple with an assignment and

“Everyone makes mistakes, and for a young rising star to do so is not shocking. Those who do not make mistakes are playing it too safe.”

then make a mistake. It’s a challenge for even the most seasoned leader. How this situation is handled is vital to keep employees from being afraid to venture out of the realm of average and challenge themselves.

Great thinkers and famous individuals have often said that without making mistakes, greatness is never achieved. For example, Winston Churchill once said, “All men make mistakes, but only wise men learn from their mistakes.” And James Joyce said, “A man’s mistakes are his portals of discovery.”

So, to see how top firm management handle errors made on the job, we posted the following question to three A/E leaders.

**Q: One of your rising star principals (potential leader) makes a big mistake on a project he/she is handling as a project manager. This error or mistake will cost the firm thousands of dollars – if not more. How do you deal with this situation? What are the person’s prospects of continuing their rise inside the company?**

Wendi Goldsmith, CEO and founder of **Bioengineering Group** (Salem, MA), a science, engineering, landscape design, energy planning, and construction management firm, told **THE ZWEIG LETTER** that, “Mistakes get made for



Wendi Goldsmith, CEO, Bioengineering Group.

a lot of reasons – sometimes for reasons that are beyond the control of the individual. Usually they also involve teachable moments. The cost of mistakes can be huge, but the cost of losing key staff is also no small thing. We would find the right way to assess fault, and although we consider accountability to be crucial, we do not approve of pointing the finger of blame, especially when the individual is a great per-

former, but still relying on mentoring and development as a leader. Based on similar situations we have dealt with in the past, I would envision a loss of raise/bonus to drive the point home. We would then focus on helping the individual learn the lesson well and also ensure that others within the firm do too. On the flip side, when people risk new things and succeed, we sing their praises! Our business happens to endorse and practice risk-based design methods, for subject matter including sea level rise adaptation and mitigation. Our work in New Orleans involved supporting many key employees in doing things differently than what the client stated they wanted, and resulted in our project team (counting public and private partners intimately involved in the work) winning many national awards, from the Army Corps Innovation Award, to the ACEC Grand Conceptor Award in 2012, among others. We are dedicated towards supporting innovation and rapid adoption of new approaches, hence more interested in promoting a firm-wide culture of rigorous risk taking.”

Josh Carney, president of **Carney Engineering Group** (York, PA), a forward-looking, multidiscipline engineering firm, said, “Everyone makes mistakes, and for a young rising star to do so is not shocking. Those who do not make mistakes are playing it too safe. We would deal with it as with any mis-



Josh Carney, President, Carney Engineering Group.

take. We would review it, understand why the error occurred (judgment error, inexperience, system or process error, or random outside effect) and learn from it. If properly handled, the monetary loss can result in far more value in learning and experience to prevent such things

in the future. It would not affect their prospects in our company unless it became a regular occurrence or if they failed to take responsibility for it. That last one is the most critical; the one fatal flaw for us in an employee would be blaming others for mistakes. We have zero tolerance for that.”



Ed Jerdonek, President and CEO, Luckett & Farley.

Ed Jerdonek, president and CEO of **Luckett & Farley** (Louisville, KY), a multi-disciplinary architectural, engineering, interior design, program management and construction management firms, says, “Any architectural, engineering or interior design firm that hasn’t suffered from a costly mistake made

by a rising star probably doesn’t have any employees! Sure, we’ve all been there – myself included. Unfortunately, the most effective way to have a lesson permanently seared into your brain is to make a big hairy mistake and then shoot your way out of it. Nobody gets penalized for making mistakes at Luckett & Farley; our employee-owners exercise good judgment and technical ability with strong problem solving skills, but the occasional landmine does get stepped-on. When that happens, we assume responsibility and solve the problem – period! Pointing fingers or blaming others is a one-way ticket to a lost client relationship. We practice our A/E ‘Employer of Choice Continuum,’ which includes lots of training and lessons about recognizing your personal

See ERRORS, page 8

# Remote control



June Jewell

GUEST SPEAKER

Does your business management system belong in the cloud?

Since I started accounting software consulting in 1986 I have had to graduate to different technology platforms about every 10 years. It started with DOS in the '80s, then Windows, Client Server, and about 12 years ago came web-based systems. Now we have the cloud, and our clients are asking: Should we do this and it is more cost-effective?

To answer this, you must evaluate your strategic growth plans, IT strategy and tolerance for risk. Many A/E firms have applications in the cloud already, such as payroll, online bill pay with the bank, employee self-service, and recruiting. I recommend looking at the benefits, cost factors, as well as the risk factors, to determine the best way to go.

**IS MOVING TO THE CLOUD COST-EFFECTIVE?**

The true costs of internally hosted systems include the cost of the software licenses, annual maintenance, servers, server software and other licenses (e.g. SQL, virus protection, etc.), IT support and maintenance, the cost of upgrades, backup systems and time to manage them. Many people overlook many of these costs in assessing the value of outsourcing their systems.

My virtual company has had its entire infrastructure, including email, SharePoint for document management, and our Deltek Vision accounting and CRM system in the cloud since 2006. This has saved my company a lot of money in increased employee productivity, shared resources, ability to quickly scale when growing, and reduced risk of lost data and disaster such as failed hardware and power outages. We have remote access anywhere in the world, almost no down time, and our IT and capital expenditures have been nominal.

**WHAT IS THE RISK?** Most companies assume that their systems are more secure than those hosted or managed in a professional data center. However, we frequently see that server rooms are not as secured as they should be, with limited power and Internet back-up sources and accessibility to most employees and

visitors. A fire, hardware failure, disgruntled employee, power problem or software virus can have a devastating effect on a company's productivity.

During Hurricane Sandy many of our clients on the East Coast were down and out of business for days. Our company was fully operational and our employees were able to move to a different location and access all of our systems online.

We also had a client whose server died recently and when they went to restore the backup from their Deltek Vision system, they found that their backups had failed. They lost 18 months of data and had to incur a huge expense to recreate the lost transactions.

Both of these companies would have reduced or eliminated their losses if their systems had been on the cloud and not in their offices. Professional data centers used by hosting/Software-as-a Service (SaaS) providers must be compliant with many security standards, which are continuously changing and need to be tested regularly. They are also in very secure buildings with power and Internet backup able to withstand a two-week outage, and redundant operation in a remote location. A thorough evaluation of your internal IT systems might show that you can reduce risk of disaster by outsourcing some of your critical systems to a professional company that focuses a great deal of resources on maintaining a state-of-the-art secure environment.

**WHAT IS OUR IT STRATEGY?** The world of IT management and consulting has changed a lot over the last five years. IT managers must be more strategic as they advise their company executives on strategies to help them succeed with rapidly changing technology. An IT director who is still managing the day-to-day troubleshooting of the firm, and not taking an active role in helping the company use technology to be competitive, may find that their position is not as highly valued in the years ahead. Outsourcing can be a strategy that allows the company to grow without investing in hardware and software that will become obsolete, requiring maintenance and support, and can allow the IT resources to become experts in new technology rather than having to learn the intricacies of managing the servers and application support.

**WHAT KIND OF CLOUD DO WE NEED?** If you've determined that the cloud is a viable option, you'll want to next look at the different types of cloud offerings. The cloud is just another metaphor for having your software applications and data hosted on the

.....  
 Studies show that over the next five years most companies will start to move many of their critical systems to the cloud.  
 .....

See JUNE JEWELL, page 8

# PM resolutions for the New Year



Christine Brack

PM PERSPECTIVES

There's no better time to make some changes than the present.

**T**he holidays are coming fast upon us. With that comes the end of another calendar year. Projects are behind us, the election is behind us – but plans and goals lie ahead.

As leaders, we certainly know that growth is more than just revenue. Growth is also personal, professional, and organizational improvement. The best place you can dedicate emphasis for change this year is in the area of project management.

The following is a suggested recap of actions you can try to implementing immediately. These ideas are extracted from my 2012 series of articles in **THE ZWEIG LETTER**. Choose one or two and make the best of them. If you've been successful at implementing some ideas this year, try for more. Knowing how good it feels to make changes that stick is a big boost to organizational confidence and makes additional changes in practice so much easier.

- **Reduce everything that has “project” written on it.** Firms have too many people they call “project managers” reading too many project reports for too many “open” projects. Define what it truly means to be a project manager and designate only those who can shoulder those responsibilities and know where a project stands without having to crank out reams of paper.
- **View mistakes positively.** Science and research

tells us people learn more from making mistakes than through doing something correctly. So given that we are all far from perfect, we must have learned a lot by now. In your organization, this likely falls under the category of “lessons learned.” Make a habit of sharing these lessons. And more importantly, really make time for quality checks so we are the only ones that see them – not the client.

- **Synchronize marketing and project management.** When selling our services, we enthusiastically try to out wordsmith the next firm out there. We're client oriented, fast-track and Agile, innovative solutions providers, and trusted advisors. Be mindful that these descriptors come with promises you will actually have to deliver (quick turnarounds) and will generally always cost more money than you planned (more meetings, more calls, more everything). Check how your marketing slogan may quietly be gobbling up your fee.
- **Set a purpose for training.** Our industry thrives on gathering knowledge and we push to be experts through more and more learning. However, project management training won't cure a weak system – whether one manager sits through a session or several do. Give strong consideration for everyone that touches a project to learn best practices – then the entire team can really work in harmony. And just as firm leaders continue to beat the drum on marketing efforts or the strategic plan, relevant and useful aspects of project management should be a regular conversation piece.
- **Don't be broken down by the bad days.** I imagine you had more lousy days than you anticipated this year. Sometimes it seemed there simply wasn't a way out or a solution in sight. No one is a superhero. So if you lack the strength to get through, please try any combination of the following to tide you over: vent to a balanced, disconnected person, do something to treat yourself kindly, get some fresh air and breathe deeply, get some exercise and move about and, finally, just start over in the morning. Clearer minds always prevail.

If you've been successful at implementing some ideas this year, try for more. Knowing how good it feels to make changes that stick is a big boost to organizational confidence and makes additional changes in practice so much easier.

This list does not even exhaust the small places where project management can be improved – so it's worth thinking of what is unique to your firm and pledge to change. Even when you slip a little or have an all-out failure keep in mind that it is all part of the process. You have the ability and opportunity to start again tomorrow. We commit to resolutions to break a bad habit or improve. Good luck and happy 2013. I hope it is a prosperous one for you! ▲▲

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## IN BRIEF

**A SHINING EXAMPLE:** The results of the 2011 Emporis Skyscraper Award are now in: 8 Spruce Street in New York City is the winner of the renowned architecture prize for new skyscrapers. Every year, Emporis' expert international jury ([www.emporis.com](http://www.emporis.com)) rewards ten skyscrapers completed in the previous calendar year. The award is being given for the 12th time.

The winners were chosen from over 220 skyscrapers completed in 2011. 8 Spruce Street, the first skyscraper by the architect Frank Gehry, and also known as The Beekman or New York by Gehry, won over the jury with its magnificent undulating stainless steel facade. Commenting on the choice, the jury said: "8 Spruce Street stands out even in Manhattan's already remarkable skyline. It is a major new architectural landmark for New York."

The sculptured form of Skidmore, Owings & Merrill's Al Hamra Tower earned it second place in the ranking. Despite its great height, the skyscraper fits harmoniously into Kuwait City's urban landscape. The tower is engineered to take account of climate conditions: the south facade, with limestone elements cladding a concrete wall, protects the building from the searing desert sun and impressed the jury from both architectural and functional points of view.

DBI Design's Etihad Towers were voted into third place, the jury praising the complex as a particularly harmonious ensemble of buildings. Critical to the decision were the soft, curving contours of the towers: these suggest the shape of sails and are intended to evoke Abu Dhabi's history as a port. The jury of experts also singled out the exceptional facade of silver and blue glass.

8 Spruce Street is now the third New York tower to win the Emporis Skyscraper Award. The very first award (2000) went to Sofitel New York Hotel, while Hearst Tower won the coveted architecture prize for 2006. That makes New York City, the world capital of high-rise architecture, the city to which the Emporis Skyscraper Award has most often been awarded.

## JUNE JEWELL, from page 6

Internet by a third party company. Many software publishers are offering a SaaS solution in which they provide their software on an annual subscription basis rather than buying the software outright. They manage the system for you, including updates and support, and you just pay an annual fee. You can quit using the system, or downsize your licenses, after your SaaS term expires, and have no assets to capitalize or depreciate.

Studies show that over the next five years most companies will start to move many of their critical systems into the

## ERRORS, from page 5

Moment of Truth by leaving the people we interact with wanting more Lockett & Farley, not less. A big mistake offers our rising stars the perfect opportunity to perform Service Recovery by addressing the problem with the client in a direct, honest and speedy manner – then fix the mistake with the full sup-

port of Lockett & Farley and its leadership – even if that means writing a check. While we don't encourage our employee-owners at Lockett & Farley to make a habit of strengthening our client relationships through Service Recovery, when mistakes ultimately do occur (and they will), they offer outstanding opportunities to show our clients our firm's culture, character and

integrity. We learn from it, shake it off and then move on without any internal baggage. Besides, our rising stars are harder on themselves than we ever could be. If Lockett & Farley punished our employee-owners for their mistakes, I never would've made it to president and CEO; I've made more than my fair share of mistakes over the years. We're all human." ▀▄

## CALENDAR

**WOMEN IN DESIGN CONFERENCE:** In the near future, women are projected to account for 51 percent of total labor force growth, says the U.S. Department of Labor, Women's Bureau.

Yet, women make up less than one-quarter of the architecture work force, 9.7 percent of the civil engineering profession, and roughly 13 percent of other engineering professions.

ZweigWhite will present a conference May 9-10, 2013 in Boston focusing on issues that relate to women in the male-dominated design and environmental professions.

The program is now being organized by Claire Keerl, principal and director of corporate marketing and Christine Brack, principal and director of consulting, both with ZweigWhite. The multi-day event will include roundtable discussions, focus groups, networking sessions, as well as keynote presentations by industry leaders.

Issues that will be covered include:

- Work/life balance
- Women as bosses
- Mentoring women in design, engineering, and environmental consulting
- Encouraging women to enter the profession
- Physical presence (how this impacts coworkers and clients)
- Career paths for women
- Women and the path to principal
- The age factor
- Alternative careers for women in design and environmental professions
- WBE status

For more information about this upcoming conference email Claire Keerl [ckeerl@zweigwhite.com](mailto:ckeerl@zweigwhite.com) or log on to [www.zweigwhite.com/conference/women-in-design-and-environmental-professions](http://www.zweigwhite.com/conference/women-in-design-and-environmental-professions)

cloud. Many A/E firms have parts of their business in the cloud already. Putting the email, accounting system and other business applications in the cloud, in a SaaS model or having it hosted, has been done for years and is an excellent option that can allow your company to focus more resources on what it does best, and allow the experts to manage what they do best. ▀▄

JUNE JEWELL is the author of the upcoming book *Find The Lost Dollars in Your Business* and CEO of Acuity Business Solutions. Acuity is an award winning Deltek partner focused on helping A/E firms and government contractors find opportunities, win business, deliver projects, and increase their profitability. Read more tips for A/E firms at her blog at [www.AcuityBusiness.com/blog](http://www.AcuityBusiness.com/blog).

## RECRUITING

# Hiring for potential or experience?

It depends on the position and professional licensure requirements, among other things.

By LIISA SULLIVAN  
Correspondent

**H**iring the right people for the right job is a fussy process. In some cases, firms let the position dictate whether potential or experience will play a more important role in hiring; others say that experience is the only way to go.



Kevin Phillips,  
CEO,  
FPM Group.

*"Potential is very difficult to judge."*

For instance, Kevin Phillips, CEO at **FPM Group** (Ronkonkoma, NY), a full service, multi-disciplined engineering firm, says that he usually hires based on experience.

"Potential is very difficult to judge," he says. "It falls into the category of 'gut feel' and that can be the deciding factor in a hire."

**ENTRY-LEVEL POTENTIAL.** At **Withers & Ravenel** (Cary, NC), a full-service civil and environmental consulting engineering firm, Carla Erickson, director of human resources, says that choosing between experience and potential really depends on the open position.

"We are very much into hiring interns for the summer and depending on the department, we try to get the upper classmen to work while they are back to their classes (school work always first!). This way you are training the individual with the potential of hiring that student when they graduate. It is a great grooming process, if you want to call



Carla Erickson,  
Director of HR,  
Withers &  
Ravenel.

it that, because now you have an entry-level individual with experience to mold into the organization for growth for the company as well as their career path and growth," Erickson says.

Kelly Howard, talent acquisitions coordinator at **SAM, Inc.** (Austin, TX), a surveying, aerial mapping and engineering firm, says that they also look to interns to fill more entry-level like positions.

"College graduates are ideal for management grooming. And, they are also able to take the RPLS (registered professional land surveyor) exam (you have to be a college graduate to do this in Texas.)," Howard says.

She says that SAM, Inc. recently had a summer intern whom they hired. He is now doing some survey tech work and also field work.

"There is no doubt that he is being groomed for a project manager position," she says.

**SENIOR-LEVEL EXPERIENCE.** Now, when it comes to hiring for upper-level positions, experience seems to play more of a role.

"For example," Erickson says, "if you are hiring a geologist or stormwater engineer, you must look at their past experience, education and professional certifications and licensing. In the situation of a geologist position we recently hired for, the position warranted someone with landfill experience, field geologic assessments (soil assessment, groundwater monitoring, delineation of soil and groundwater contamination) and project management experience. This type of position could not be filled with candidates with a college education, but required actual field and office experience."

Howard agrees. She says that recently SAM, Inc. has been hiring more seasoned people because the open positions dictated a certain level of experience; potential was not really an issue there.

However, for 2013, SAM, Inc. has made a conscious decision to really make a push for hiring more graduates right out of college.

"They are eager to work hard, willing to learn, and tend to soak up so much knowledge," Howard says.

**EXAM ABILITY TO GROW.** **Fusco Engineering, Inc.** (Irvine, CA), a 97-person firm that provides civil engineering for land development and public infrastructure, hires candidates based on both experience and potential ability to grow within the firm.

Pamela Fleming, HR manager, says that the first thing you need to determine is what each position within the team you are hiring for needs for the long term. For example, does the situation require someone who aspires to a higher-level position (is there a realistic opportunity for them)? Or, does the situation call for someone who is going to master their role and remain content and engaged at that level? Once you establish that, you can determine what you're looking for.

"At Fuscoe, we definitely look for qualities in candidates who show that they are passionate about what they do, and will be able to provide the best possible service to our clients," Fleming says. "It is also important that they want to grow professionally."

Is it necessary that they want to be a future leader? Fleming says, "Not necessarily. As long as they aspire to be the best at what they do and their desire to stay on top of new technology and best practices is strong, then you are in a good spot and you will get a well-balanced team." ▀▲

## ON THE MOVE

**CHAMPALIMAUD DESIGN HIRES:** **Champalimaud Design** (New York, NY), a multidisciplinary interior design and planning firm, announced the appointment of **Edmond Bakos**, who will serve as the firm's new managing director. Bakos, a registered architect, served for 18 years as a principal and studio leader at **Rockwell Group** prior to joining Champalimaud Design.

Bakos' extensive luxury hospitality and restaurant experience, spanning 26 years, has positioned him as a leader in the design industry. He is recognized for his ability to collaborate with high-profile clients on complex projects to create innovative and engaging guest experiences. Past projects have included the first W Hotel, the Belvedere Hotel in Mykonos and the Cosmopolitan Resort and Casino in Las Vegas.

Regarding the appointment, Alexandra Champalimaud, founder and principal of Champalimaud Design, said: "We are all delighted that Ed has joined us as a creative and business leader of our firm. He has a proven record of creating emotionally engaging spaces that achieve his clients' strategic objectives. And, given his strong business management, operations and financial management skills, I have every confidence that he can successfully expand our services and grow our business."

"My career with Rockwell has been thoroughly rewarding, and I leave with the highest respect for David Rockwell and the firm," Mr. Bakos added. "But, I found this opportunity irresistible. I have long admired the work Champalimaud produces, and it is a great honor to become the firm's managing director. Working with Alexandra and the strong team she has assembled, we look forward to broadening the creative offering to clients and, as always, focusing our efforts on the delivery of well-crafted and financially successful projects for clients."

At Champalimaud Design, Bakos will oversee a staff of 35 and spearhead the firm's expansion into new project types that leverage the firm's hospitality focus and innovative approach to create relevant and differentiated design solutions for discerning clients.

**PSI HIRES:** **PSI** (Oakbrook Terrace, IL), an independent engineering and testing firm, announced that **Derek Boese** has accepted the position of vice president overseeing their New Orleans operations. Boese has over 17 years of industry experience.

PSI provides a wide range of environmental engineering and testing services, including environmental consulting, geotechnical engineering, construction materials testing and engineering, industrial hygiene services, facilities and roof consulting, and specialty engineering and testing services. PSI operates from 100 offices in North America, with more than 2,000 employees.

**EDSA PROMOTES:** Doug Smith, president and CEO of **EDSA** (Fort Lauderdale, FL), a 200-person full-service planning, landscape architectural, and urban design firm, recently announced the advancement of 14 professional staff members to the levels of vice president, senior associate and associate. Colleagues and EDSA principals recognized individuals representing three of EDSA's offices for their professional accomplishments and contributions to the firm. EDSA retains outstanding industry talent through its performance-based advancement structure, which rewards committed employees at every level with ongoing professional opportunities within the company.

"EDSA is dedicated to excellence and that includes the continued progress, growth and satisfaction of its employees," said Doug Smith, EDSA President and CEO. "We are proud to hold such an elite team of professionals whose passion, integrity and creativity are consistently exceeding clients' expectations and inspiring others to thrive as well. Their leadership, experience and quality of work are an asset to the future of EDSA."

Promoted to vice president:

**Michael Meyers** – Fort Lauderdale. Meyers officially joined EDSA in Fort Lauderdale in 2000, and has been a vital team member for a wide variety of EDSA's international master planning efforts for hotels and resorts as well as golf and waterfront-oriented communities.

**Matt Renaud** – Baltimore. Renaud, joined the firm in 2005 and works in the EDSA Baltimore satellite office. He possesses a very broad range of talents from large scale planning to detailed site design, from local and regional projects to international work in China and Brazil.

Nominations to senior associate:

**Jeremy Belitz** – Fort Lauderdale. Joining EDSA in 2002, Belitz has had the opportunity to work on a vast number of international projects from the conceptual design through construction document phases.

**Jeong Park** – Orlando. Park has been a member of the EDSA Orlando office since 2004. She has been project manager for many domestic and international projects and an essential part of the Orlando and EDSA team.

**Justin Rietema** – Fort Lauderdale. Rietema became part of the EDSA team in 2006. He has excelled in the production of concept design through detail design.

**Masa Taguchi** – Fort Lauderdale. Joining EDSA in 2005, Taguchi has had the opportunity to work in various complex projects as designer and project manager.

Nominations to associate:

**Danny Bulemore** – Fort Lauderdale. Bulemore joined EDSA in May of 2011. He quickly became immersed in the studio and understands EDSA's design and planning process. He has demonstrated outstanding graphics and innovative design techniques, serving as a key player in the effort to help blend EDSA graphic styles with new technology.

**Jack Garcia** – Fort Lauderdale. Garcia joined EDSA in 2007 as a CAD technician. He has played an important part within the firm not only providing technical assistance to the studios, sharing his expertise with AutoCAD, but also coordinating with clients and consultants.

**Garrett Mattes** – Fort Lauderdale. Joining EDSA in 2008, Mattes has worked on many challenging and notable projects such as Tiger Woods Dubai and the Al Ain Wildlife Park.

**Robert Micsak** – Fort Lauderdale. Micsak joined EDSA in 2007. He is a very creative designer possessing good hand graphics. He is also a talented photographer and has been on several assignments to take photographs of EDSA projects.

**Neal Schafers** – Fort Lauderdale. Schafers officially joined EDSA in 2007. He has been an important part of the coordination and design of the Al Ain Wildlife Park project and clients specifically request his presence due to his accountability, sense of responsibility, coordination skills and knowledge.

**Brett Tagtmeyer** – Fort Lauderdale. Joining the firm in 2008, Tagtmeyer is very experienced in supporting the studios by producing and packaging the conceptual and preliminary master plan submittals. He also has a strong ability to prepare design sets from the schematic design stages to construction documentation.

**John Torti** – Fort Lauderdale. Torti quickly showed his leadership skills and started managing projects, including some of the urban design work that we are doing in Florida, and is able to coordinate with clients and consultants, as well as run a small team.

**Lianying Wang** – Baltimore. Wang began her career at EDSA as a summer intern in 2007, officially joining the staff in 2011. Since rejoining EDSA she has taken on the huge task of coordinating much of the studio's China work.

## DEBT

# Debt or cash for purchases?

Some firms only trust the dollar bill, while others are willing to venture into the lending market.

By BRYAN SULLIVAN  
Correspondent

It's all about the bottom line. And, managing how and why a firm purchases large items can make all the difference in the world when it comes to budget. So, what are firms doing now? Some are withholding purchases, straying away from debt. Others are taking advantage of zero percent financing offers by companies for items such as software and heavy equipment. What's your firm doing? Is cash king or is debt still in?

With record amounts of cash sitting on the sidelines in corporate America, **THE ZWEIG LETTER** wanted to know if, how and why leaders in the A/E category are making their purchases.

### DEBT VERSUS CASH: WHO'S KING?

For some firms, it's as simple as just saying "no" to debt to keep competitive and still grow. William Bracken, president/principal engineer at **Bracken Engineering, Inc.** (Tampa, FL), a 40-person multidiscipline engineering firm, says that one of the reasons the company has been able to grow in this current economy (averaging 30 percent for each of the last three years) stems from not carrying debt.

Other firms believe that if purchases are necessary, cash is king.

With huge surpluses reported still on the sidelines, putting this capital to use is important. Roy Mitchell, CFO at **MBP** (Fairfax, VA), a multi-disciplined construction consulting firm, feels that way.

"At MBP, we plan major purchases in advance and our preferred method of funding them is with cash," he says.



Roy Mitchell,  
CFO, MBP.

"We recognize the need in this economy to be both conservative and proactive, and while we do have an active credit line, it primarily exists for any unanticipated expenses that may come our way. In 2009, we purchased a small company based

out of New York City and that purchase was made in cash installments, a decision that was driven by the essential need to continue our positive cash flow and to limit debt to the fullest extent possible."

**A MIXED BAG.** Some firms play both sides of the financing fence – using capital they have accumulated and taking advantage of historically low financing that is still available.

Mark Henline, vice president and CFO at **Merrick & Company** (Aurora, CO), an employee-owned engineering, architecture, design-build, surveying, planning, and geospatial solutions firm, says that Merrick currently has very little funded debt which, in part, is reflective of a strong cash position.

"The funded debt that we currently have is traditional bank financing," he says. "Merrick uses a bank participation agreement between two separate banks. This multi-bank relationship is very important in Merrick's treasury strategy and, as a result, we will usually give our primary banks the first 'shot' at debt placement. To date, we have found our debt terms to be very competitive with what we might have been able to secure on a 'one-off' basis from other, independent sources. Merrick has completed several acquisitions in the past couple years. We have used both bank financed and seller-financed debt (or form of deferred purchase price payments) depending upon the deal structure."

**ZERO PERCENT FINANCING.** With

super deals available for those willing to increase their balance sheets, it's difficult to say no to zero percent financing on items such as IT purchases.



Tim Davis,  
Controller,  
Sullivan  
International  
Group, Inc.

Tim Davis, controller at **Sullivan International Group, Inc.** (San Diego, CA), an applied science, environmental, and technology firm that has been serving both the commercial and government sectors, reports that the majority of its major purchases are IT-related.

"We have seen an increase in promotional financing (i.e., 0 percent interest) and larger incentive discounts from vendors," he says. "The promotional financing helps us to avoid large cash outlays, especially at the beginning of the year, when business is seasonally slower."

### USING CASH FOR ACQUISITIONS.

While using cash for small to mid-sized purchases is still commonplace in today's economy, some firms are using it for larger purchases, such as acquisitions, as well.

E. M. (Mac) Frankfort, vice president and CFO at **Wiley | Wilson** (Lynchburg, VA), a full-service professional architectural and engineering firm, says that, "Over the last four years, we've used cash for most capital purchases. That includes software, hardware, a few autos and even an acquisition. The acquisition was the only truly major purchase. There has been little opportunity for making money with cash since interest rates have been so low, so our strategy has been to avoid debt in order to strengthen the balance sheet."

So, the bottom line is this: No matter how purchases are made, figuring out how to utilize a firm's available credit or cash enables a firm to steady its course through turbulent times. ▲▲

## TRANSACTIONS

**KLEINFELDER BUYS:** Kleinfelder (San Diego, CA), a global science, architecture and engineering consulting firm, announced its second Australian acquisition in the last five months. **Alliance Environmental Engineering & Consulting Pty Ltd** (St. Kilda, AU) specializes in providing environmental services focused on the assessment, investigation, and remediation of impacted land and water. The transaction closed on Nov. 8, 2012, following a due diligence process and integration planning between the two firms.

“Given Alliance’s strength in the retail petroleum assessment and remediation market, they represent a significant addition of in-country capability for Kleinfelder,” said Bill Siegel, Kleinfelder CEO. “This acquisition, coupled with our recent acquisition of New South Wales-based firm, Ecobiological Group, will act as a springboard for our growth in support of multinational clients throughout Australia and the Asia Pacific.”

Founded by Andrew Johnston in 2006, Alliance provides environmental, project management, civil contracting and strategic advice services to clients in the petrochemical, manufacturing, construction and real estate/development industries. The firm employs nearly 30 people working primarily out of the St. Kilda location, with additional staff working remotely in Sydney and Perth. The entirety of the firm’s staff will now operate as part of Kleinfelder.

“The demand for environmental remediation services is growing rapidly, not only in Australia, but throughout the world,” said Johnston. “By becoming part of the Kleinfelder organization, our clients will have access to the resources of a global firm, while continuing to leverage the expertise of our local project managers that have served them well since 2006.”

Kleinfelder has been executing a strategic growth plan since 1992, and providing environmental services has been, and will continue to be, an important aspect of overall company growth. During the last few years, Kleinfelder has demonstrated a strong momentum of global expansion, opening its first offices in Australia (Melbourne) and Guam in 2010 and its first Canadian office (Alberta) in 2012. Since opening its Melbourne office, the firm has grown business significantly with new and existing clients in the region. With the July 2012 acquisition of Ecobiological Group – the firm’s first international acquisition – and the most recent acquisition of Alliance, Kleinfelder anticipates continued growth in the region to eventually encompass its full suite of services to the water, transportation, energy, facilities and government markets.

**STANTEC BUYS:** North American design firm **Stantec** (Edmonton, AB) announced plans to acquire Mid-Atlantic-based engineering firm **Greenhorne & O’Mara**. The multidiscipline, 520-person firm will expand Stantec’s presence and services across the U.S. Atlantic coast, particularly in the transportation sector and with the U.S. federal government. The transaction is expected to close by the end of the year, marking the third firm to join Stantec in the last quarter of 2012.

Headquartered in Laurel, Md., with 16 offices spread throughout the Mid-Atlantic and Southeast regions, Greenhorne & O’Mara specializes in the design of transportation facilities and other infrastructure, including highway and bridge design, traffic engineering, master planning and landscape architecture, structural engineering, U.S. Department of Defense services, and utilities design. Their work also includes particular expertise in water resource projects with U.S. federal agencies, such as flood hazard mitigation and floodplain mapping, National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) compliance, wetlands delineation and permitting, environmental impact statements, and stormwater management.

“Having Greenhorne & O’Mara join Stantec bolsters our already growing presence along the U.S. Atlantic coast,” said Bob Gomes, Stantec president and CEO. “Their outstanding reputation with

federal clients, coupled with several office locations in and around Washington, D.C., provides a perfect opportunity to leverage each other’s strengths and provide even more services for our clients in that area.”

Founded in 1950, the firm has led a number of prominent projects up and down the East Coast, including the infrastructure, access, and site design of the Washington Redskins’ FedEx Stadium and a forensic analysis of the structural performance of the World Trade Center following the 9/11 attacks, which was ultimately presented to Congress.

“We have gotten to know Stantec very well as one of our FEMA Risk MAP STARR partners and found that our culture and values are very similar,” said Joe Skinner, Greenhorne & O’Mara president and CEO. “We have been looking for a strategic partner that would provide a greater opportunity for us to grow and expand our services, and Stantec provided that perfect strategic fit to complement what we can offer our clients.”

Greenhorne & O’Mara will become the third firm to join Stantec in the last quarter of 2012. Twenty-one employees of New Brunswick-based **Architecture 2000** joined Stantec, bringing their bilingual architectural, master/urban planning, interior design, and project management services to the company’s over 850 staff and 12 offices in Atlantic Canada. Architecture 2000, which has also operated as **Design Workshop Ltd. - L’Atelier De Design Ltée**, has successfully completed over 1,000 commissions, representing construction value in excess of \$1.5 billion, and has designed numerous LEED-certified and high-performance buildings, as well as the award-winning Dieppe Aquatic Centre (Dan Hanganu Architectes/Architecture 2000 Inc., en consortium) and the Spanier-O’Neill Residence.

Stantec also announced the completion of its acquisition of **C3TS**, a Florida engineering and design firm with 150 employees. The move established a much stronger presence for Stantec on Florida’s Atlantic coast, bringing total staff in the state to more than 350 in 12 offices.

## FIRMS ON THE MOVE

**TT OPENS IN SÃO PAULO:** International engineering firm **Thornton Tomasetti** (New York, NY), announced the opening of a new office in São Paulo, Brazil. With this commitment, Thornton Tomasetti now has 27 offices internationally, including offices in each of the “BRIC” nations – Brazil, Russia, India and China – where strong economies have emerged. The São Paulo office is part of the firm’s East U.S. region, led by Senior Principal Michael Squarzini.

Euclides Trovato, director of engineering, is the local manager of the new office. The Brazilian native has 25 years of experience in structural design and analysis, critical integrity and structural safety assessments, and fatigue and fracture mechanics.

The move to São Paulo is strategic and timely, as the country continues preparations for the 2014 World Cup and 2016 Olympic Games in Rio de Janeiro. This provides Thornton Tomasetti with opportunities to contribute to the development of transportation – rail, aviation and marine – commercial, hospitality, healthcare and entertainment infrastructure.

Many of Thornton Tomasetti’s clients have made the move to Brazil, and the firm’s new office in São Paulo creates a stronger network of interaction and support. Additionally, Thornton Tomasetti’s recently launched Beijing office provides new opportunities for international collaboration since Brazil is China’s largest trading partner.