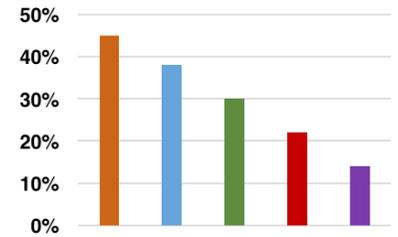


## TRENDLINES

### Marketing expenses



According to the *2016 Marketing Survey*, firms on average spent 45 percent of their marketing budget on **labor**, 38 percent on **proposals**, 30 percent on **entertainment**, 22 percent on **trade shows**, and 14 percent on **market research**, among other categories. Totals sum to more than 100 percent because more than one answer choice could be selected. (Special discount to TZL subscribers: Use code **SPRINGMKT15** to order this survey at 15 percent off on ZweigGroup.com)

## FIRM INDEX

Aegion Corporation .....	12
Cardno Inc. ....	6
FINLEY Engineering Group .....	3
Fluor Corporation .....	2
Insituform Technologies, LLC.....	12
Jacobs Engineering Group Inc.....	2, 12
T.Y. Lin International.....	10
Underground Solutions, Inc. ....	12

## Improving project management in your firm

“If everyone who runs an AEC firm would just do these things, their companies would be so much more successful and their lives so much better!”



Mark Zweig

### EDITORIAL

Everyone wants better project management. That’s why principals of AEC companies spend more time and money on PM training than any other type of business training.

But I’m not here to talk about training. I am here instead to talk about some things you can do to improve your overall PM effectiveness firm-wide. Here are a few ideas for you:

- 1) Stop using your lowest rated PMs as project managers.** In most companies, about 30 percent of your PMs should never manage another project. Rarely is being a PM a full-time role. So just use those people doing stuff they can do and give their projects to your top-ranked PMs.
- 2) Stop making the wrong people manage projects.** You know what I’m talking about here. And you know when you give someone a PM role and it’s a mistake, too. People with short tempers, people who don’t listen, people who can’t influence anyone – just stop doing it. Give your best managers more projects to manage.
- 3) Stop using PMs as bill collectors.** Most of them are lousy at it and it puts them in a tough role with their clients. And stop telling me this is a cop-out and PMs need to do this job. They don’t. Let your F&A people do the job and only involve your PM if there’s a dispute on scope or deliverables.
- 4) Stop making your PMs do stupid stuff that demotivates them.** It’s hard enough doing the job when few or no people actually report

See MARK ZWEIG, page 2

## MORE COLUMNS

- BRAND BUILDING: Quality is (not) job one Page 5
- MARKETING MATTERS: Inbound marketing made simple Page 9
- POP MARKETING: Buzzwords and buzzkills Page 11

# The ‘sheep dog’ approach

Page 3

# Uranium time

Page 6

## BUSINESS NEWS

**FLUOR-LED TEAM COMPLETES FIRST MAJOR U.S. TRANSIT P3 COMMUTER RAIL LINE FROM DENVER'S DOWNTOWN TO AIRPORT** Fluor Corporation announced that the University of Colorado A Line of the Denver Eagle P3 Commuter Rail Project has been completed and is open to the general public.

The 23-mile electric commuter rail line between downtown Denver Union Station and Denver International Airport opened April 22. The University of Colorado A Line contains eight stations along the route and uses new rail cars that are a first-of-their kind in Denver with level boarding to better accommodate travelers with luggage and accessibility needs. The cars reach 79 mph and can carry up to 200 passengers.

"The Eagle P3 project is the nation's first public-private partnership project for commuter rail, and we want to congratulate the Regional Transportation District and all its partners on completing the University of Colorado A Line," said David Seaton, Fluor's chairman and CEO. "This project is an outstanding example of how the private and public sectors can partner to deliver infrastructure projects on time and within budget. This line will connect communities and provide a vital transportation link for adjacent employment, neighborhoods, and new development. The innovative financing, design, construction, and operations demonstrate the full integrated solutions that Fluor provides its clients."

The Eagle P3 project also includes the Gold Line between Denver Union Station and Arvada/Wheat Ridge; an initial segment of the Northwest Rail Line to South Westminster, called the B Line; and the LEED Gold certified Commuter Rail Maintenance Facility. Using the Design-Build-Finance-Operate-Maintain model, Denver Transit Partners, a Fluor-led joint venture, will operate and maintain the University of Colorado A Line, G Line, B Line, and the CRMF for the next 28 years.

"The University of Colorado A Line opening not only marks an exciting time for the transportation and infrastructure world, but also for the Denver metro region," said Aaron Epstein, executive project director of Denver Transit Partners. "We are thankful to all of the partners who, over the last six years, helped make this project a reality. We look forward to the ongoing partnership with RTD during the operations and maintenance phase for the next 28 years."

The Eagle P3 project is part of the RTD's voter-approved FasTracks program to build 122 miles of commuter rail and light rail, 18 miles of bus rapid transit service, add 21,000 new parking spaces, redevelop Denver Union Station, and redirect bus service to better connect the eight-county district.

**JACOBS WINS CONSTRUCTION MANAGEMENT CONTRACT FOR TENNESSEE VALLEY AUTHORITY** Jacobs Engineering Group Inc. announced it received a contract to provide managed task construction management services to the Tennessee Valley Authority Civil Projects and Coal Combustion Product Management group. Officials did not disclose the contract value.

The contract has a base period of three years followed by two one-year options. Under the terms of the contract, Jacobs will support TVA's fossil plants and hydro dams located within its service area, including Tennessee, Alabama, and Kentucky. Services include project and construction support, contractor oversight, safety monitoring and control, quality assurance/control, and field engineering support.

In making the announcement, Jacobs Senior Vice President Aerospace and Technology Ward Johnson stated, "We are delighted to be awarded the CM services contract and strengthen our existing relationship with TVA. We look forward to working together to achieve zero safety incidents and reduce TVA's total ownership costs."

MARK ZWEIG, from page 1

to you on a permanent basis. So why make your PMs suffer through needlessly long meetings or fill out unnecessary internal forms for things?

**5) Track and publish PM performance metrics for all to see.** Just showing the numbers to the PMs themselves will not work. You have to create peer pressure and complete transparency so everyone can see numbers such as budget-to-actual variance, WIP write-offs, dollar amount of work managed, average collection period, and more – all by individual PM.

**6) Make everyone do a weekly job status report.** Send this to your client, your client's boss, and everyone on the entire project team inside and outside of the company. Keep it simple – what you did this week, what's happening next week, and other "issues," such as you need to get paid for a bill that is now 60 days old (or anything else). These reports are essential!! Don't wait for your client to demand one to do it. Make it part of your PM process.

**If everyone who runs an AEC firm would just do these things, their companies would be so much more successful and their lives so much better! ▀**

MARK ZWEIG is Zweig Group's founder and CEO. Contact him at [mzweig@zweiggroup.com](mailto:mzweig@zweiggroup.com).

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## PROFILE



When he's not building bridges for the firm, Craig Finley races a Porsche 997 GT3 Cup car.

# The 'sheep dog' approach

Known for building bridges, the founder of FINLEY Engineering sometimes has to bark and nip to get the best out of his firm.

By LIISA ANDREASSEN  
Correspondent



Craig Finley,  
Founder and  
Managing  
Principal,  
FINLEY  
Engineering  
Group

As fate would have it, once Craig Finley decided it was time for a career move, he got a call that would set the founding of his firm in motion. That was 12 years ago. Today, **FINLEY Engineering Group** (#4 Best Firm Civil for 2015) is a 25-person, specialty engineering firm recognized nationally and internationally for its expertise in complex bridge projects of all kinds.

The firm, based in Tallahassee, Florida, has a portfolio that includes all bridge types and materials, and some of the most notable bridge projects of the last 30 years – the Sunshine Skyway Bridge, the Woodrow Wilson Bridge replacement, the Natchez Trace in Tennessee, the Tacoma Narrows Bridge replacement, the Seabreeze Bridge, and the Sidney Lanier Bridge replacement project.

### A CONVERSATION WITH FINLEY.

**The Zweig Letter:** How have you seen FINLEY evolve since its founding?

**Craig Finley:** We've gone from a couple of people based in Tallahassee, Florida, to more than 25 staff members with an additional location in Prague, Czech Republic. We continue to be involved in

construction driven, big bridge projects all around the world.

**TZL:** What were the key drivers for founding the firm?

**CF:** After three years of working for a large international engineering firm, it was acquired. I ran their bridge and tunnel division on a worldwide basis. I was successful, but missed working with people on a more personal basis. I was focused on corporate management and my personal and professional lives were not in balance. My kids were active in sports and I wanted to be home to watch them play. I was tired of all the traveling. I didn't really know what I wanted to do, but I knew this was not it. That's when I received a call from the Florida Department of Transportation. They asked me to do some consulting work on a large, segmental bridge for a toll authority where an accident had occurred. I helped them and before I knew it, FINLEY was born.

**TZL:** Do you have any key insights for others seeking to start a firm?

**CF:** Know what market you will serve. Have a plan of what you will do, and get some very good

See Q&A, page 4



Q&A, from page 3

advisors – banker, accountant, and someone who has an entrepreneurial background. Next, get to work. It will be more difficult than you expected, take longer, and will be one of the most rewarding things you'll ever do.

**TZL: What are your key strengths?**

**CF:** Dogged determination and a drive to be better. I believe that I instill this into some very talented people, too. The people I have the pleasure of working with believe there is no other option than great service, delivered on time, and within budget to the clients' full expectations. I tell people that we're successful if we're having fun, making money, and doing something that makes us proud.

**TZL: What do you feel the key strengths are for an effective leader?**

**CF:** Honesty, integrity, a strong work ethic, empathy, and the ability to listen. It's also important to take responsibility for decisions and mistakes, and mentor staff along the way. If you have the ability to instill belief in people for a common goal and give them the confidence to accomplish more than they think they can, you are a good leader.

**TZL: How would you describe your leadership style?**

**CF:** I call it the "sheep dog" approach. I am willing to lead from the front, back, and sides – with barking and nipping as needed. I always have the best welfare of my team in mind.

"The people I have the pleasure of working with believe there is no other option than great service, delivered on time, and within budget to the clients' full expectations."

**TZL: To date, what has been your greatest challenge? How did you deal with it?**

**CF:** My father died a few years ago. I always thought we'd have plenty of time to do the things we had planned together. Unfortunately, it didn't happen that way and I regretted not always having my personal priorities ahead of my business ones. I made some personal changes and now my family comes first. I think the results have been positive for both my family and FINLEY.

**TZL: What is your vision for the future of FINLEY?**

**CF:** There are a few:

- To continue to grow at a rate that makes sense for our capabilities and resources.
- To work with great clients on larger and more complicated bridges around the world.
- To bring the next generation of FINLEY leadership along.
- To continue to evolve our company culture.

**TZL: Tell me about a recent project you are especially proud of?**

**CF:** The SR 836 / 826 Interchange (Palmetto – Section 5) in

Miami is very special to me. This was a big interchange near the Miami airport that had been under design for about 20 years. The department of transportation decided to let it out for D/B, with a limited budget and with some gap financing required. We got to work with close and old friends, some new and talented people who became close friends, and won a challenging project. Technically, the schemes were innovative and the construction techniques critical in how the project was developed. It's not often that you have this type of win-win across the board.

"If you have the ability to instill belief in people for a common goal and give them the confidence to accomplish more than they think they can, you are a good leader."

**TZL: Is there any news you care to share about current projects?**

**CF:** I think the most exciting thing is that we've opened a Prague, Czech Republic office. We are thrilled about the increased international opportunities that this office can provide and the staffing diversification we've already experienced.

**TZL: Are you married? Do you have kids? Pets?**

**CF:** Teresa and I have been married for more than 30 years. People still tell me I outkicked my coverage! We have three sons – Tyler, Trey, and Will – and two English Bulldogs, Layla and Floyd.

**TZL: What's one thing most people at the firm don't know about you?**

**CF:** I raise registered Angus cattle and race a Porsche 997 GT3 Cup car on a national basis.

**TZL: What's been your best vacation spot? Do you have a dream destination?**

**CF:** I worked in France and love going back. Dream destination? Istanbul, Turkey.

**TZL: What's the last book you read?**

**CF:** *Mornings on Horseback* by David McCullough.

**TZL: What's the last movie you saw?**

**CF:** *The Revenant*.

**TZL: Who is a leader you admire?**

**CF:** Pope Francis. I think he's doing a great job in making Catholicism relevant in modern times and his message of compassion for the world's poor is very important.

**TZL: When you're not working, what types of activities do you enjoy?**

**CF:** I like to play golf, buy and sell Angus cattle, and race Porsches.

**TZL: Do you have a favorite lunch?**

**CF:** A rare hamburger and a very dry gin martini. ▀

## OPINION



# Quality is (not) job one

The marketing of 'quality' is ubiquitous in the A/E industry, but oftentimes, the difference between perception and reality can undermine a firm's brand equity.



**Chad  
Clinehens**

## BRAND BUILDING

**M**any firms are dealing with record high workloads. That translates into tight deadlines, long hours, and, unfortunately, problems with quality. We see increasing data that suggests quality, or lack thereof, is becoming more of an issue for A/E firms. What this means is that quality is not Job One. Firms are just simply getting the work done. The threat this poses to your firm is obvious and includes long-term damage to your brand. The effects will become more evident when the market cools down and your clients are able to be choosier with their distribution of work.

To better illustrate the significance of this problem, we need to zoom out and review the definition of brand equity. Brand equity is the net sum of your brand assets minus your brand liabilities. So think of brand equity like your net worth. A brand has high equity and is valuable when it has lots of assets and few, if any, liabilities. The major brand asset categories are:

- **Brand name awareness.** Strength of a brand's presence in the client's mind.
- **Perceived quality.** The client's perception of the overall quality or superiority of a product or service with respect to its intended purpose, relative to alternatives.
- **Brand associations.** Extent to which a particular brand calls to mind the attributes of a general

product or service category. An example is asking for a "Kleenex" instead of a tissue.

- **Brand loyalty.** Brand loyalty is when clients become committed to your firm (brand) and make repeat purchases over time.

Your professional services company has a strong brand when your firm's name is at the top of the list, your clients perceive a high level of quality from your firm's services, and you enjoy a high repeat client rate. Of course, problems in any of the asset categories can be a liability as well, especially for perceived quality.

Among all brand associations, only perceived quality has been shown by research to drive

See CHAD CLINEHENS, page 8



# SPOTLIGHT ON: Cardno

## PROFILE



Cardno UAS platform Vapor 55 mounted with LiDAR, Inertial Measurement Unit (IMU), GPS and gamma sensor, used to assess abandoned uranium mines. / Cardno

## Uranium time

Global infrastructure and environmental services firm poised to introduce patent-pending workflow process to \$1B market in remediation of abandoned Navajo uranium mines.

By RICHARD MASSEY  
Managing Editor



Jason Kack,  
West Business  
Unit Manager  
of Cardno's  
Geospatial  
Services Area

A billion-dollar market in the remediation of abandoned uranium mines is about to open up in the Navajo Nation, thanks to an historic settlement by the U.S. Department of Justice in its case against oil and gas giant Kerr-McGee Corp.

“Our patent application covers the concept and the work flow. Our patent application includes claims on the process itself. This is more than merely a device patent.”

The settlement, reached in 2014 with Kerr-McGee's parent company, Anadarko Petroleum Corp., affects 49 of Kerr-McGee's Cold War-era mines dotting Navajo lands, which straddle the borders of Utah, New Mexico, and Arizona. With the funding

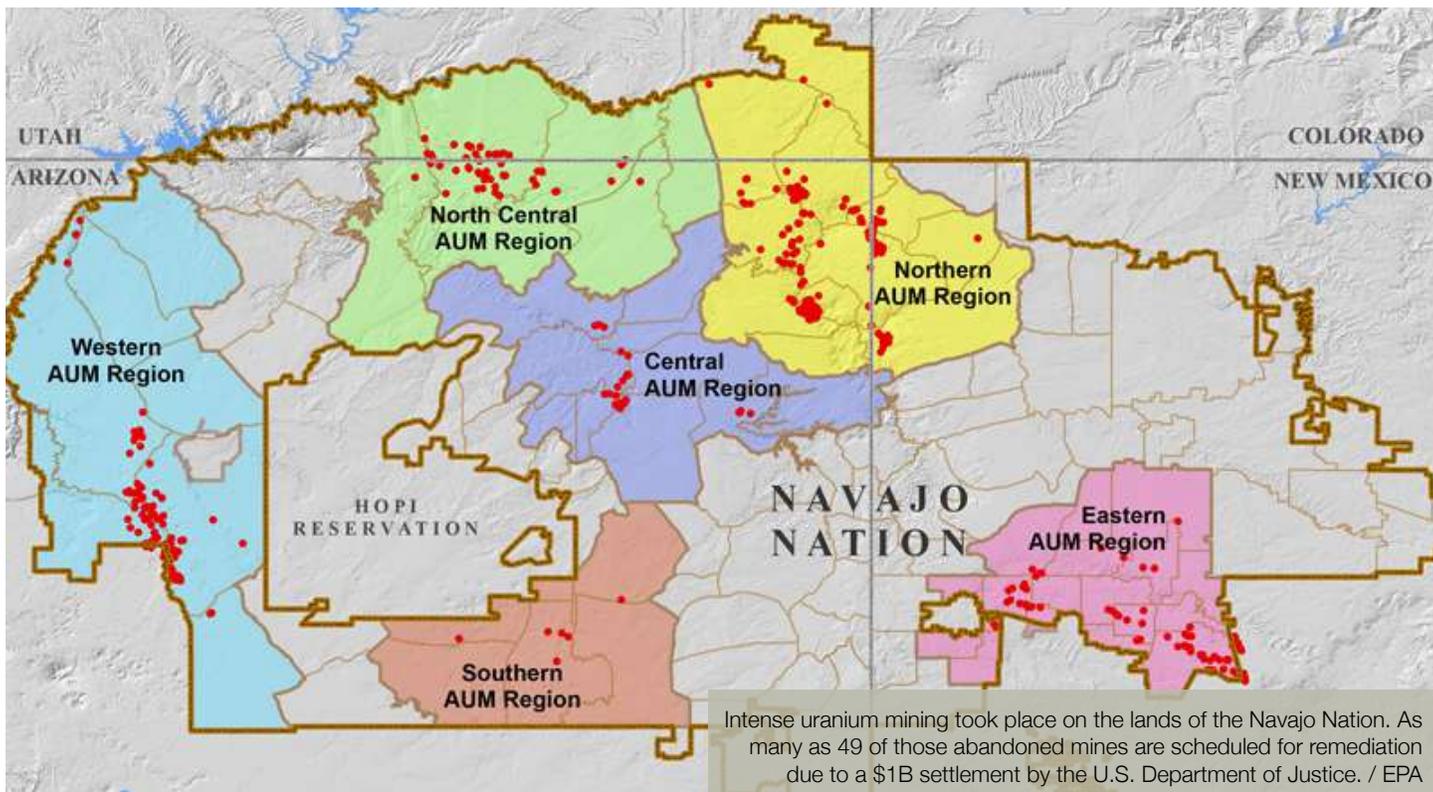
in place, a series of RFPs will be issued on a rolling basis and across a range of jobs, according to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

Poised to bring shape and substance to the unprecedented cleanup is **Cardno Inc.** (#35 Hot Firm for 2014), a global infrastructure and environmental services firm with a patent-pending process tailor-made for the difficult task of assessing an impaired site.

In April, Cardno Inc. filed a patent application with the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office for use in the unmanned aerial systems industry. The patent application is directed to several inventions including a remote sensing workflow process using drones and specialized sensors to assess contamination at abandoned uranium mines.

The system, essentially a one-stop shop that entails surveying, high-res photography, LiDAR, and gamma sensing – all administered from a military-grade drone – would safely allow for unprecedented





evaluation of not only the size and scope of a contaminated area, but also of the removal and disposal of the waste.

“Our patent application covers the concept and the work flow,” says Jason Kack, west business unit manager of Cardno’s geospatial services area. “Our patent application includes claims on the process itself. This is more than merely a device patent.”

“There are countries that have the resources and commitment to complete remediation and others that are not there yet. Initially our focus will be on the countries that have active programs and resources to conduct projects.”

While the 49-mine cleanup is enormous, it is only a fraction of the total market in the remediation of uranium mines. According to the EPA and the Bureau of Land Management, there are about 15,000 such mines in the United States, with most of them clustered in 14 western states. To remediate all of them would cost multi-billions, and the process of stabilizing the sites could last as long as a century.

The mines are strewn across a mix of lands owned by the U.S. government, tribal groups, and the private sector. With its patent-pending workflow process, Cardno would be in

a position to contract with all of them as the remediation unfolds. And on top of that, the firm could add clarity to the price tag associated with a particular cleanup, an established problem in the field.

“We can obtain a better understanding regarding the extent of the contamination,” Kack says. “Producing better data allows for better remediation planning.”

The heyday for domestic uranium mining began in 1948, when the Atomic Energy Council announced it would purchase all uranium ore mined in the U.S. According to the EPA, a lot of that mining – as much as four million tons worth from 1944 to 1986 – took place on the lands of the Navajo Nation.

Uranium is a very heavy metal that can be used as a source of concentrated energy, and, according to the World Nuclear Association, was formed in supernovas about 6.6 billion years ago. Uranium, which provides the main source of heat inside the earth, is 18.7 times as dense as water. While uranium has many uses, it is best known as the principal fuel for nuclear reactors, and as the raw material for nuclear weapons.

The world’s largest producers of mined uranium are Kazakhstan, Canada, and Australia, which collectively account for two-thirds of the global supply, according to the World Nuclear Association. The United States is the world’s largest

See CARDNO INC., page 8

CHAD CLINEHENS, from page 5

financial performance. Perceived quality is often a major strategic thrust of a business and is often heavily promoted by A/E firms. Perceived quality in professional service firms can drive other aspects of how a brand is perceived. Most A/E firms promote quality and talk about innovation when neither matches up with the perception of their clients.

“Stop talking about how great your quality is and actually measure it.”

That is why we use the term “perceived quality” as opposed to just quality. Quality is subjective. When we talk in terms of perceived quality, it forces us to look through the lens of our clients and face reality. For firm leaders, this is about bringing marketing, sales, and project management into alignment, and closing the gap of our beliefs versus reality. Unfortunately, these groups are separated from each other in many A/E firms. Here are a few things to consider implementing to improve perceived quality in your firm:

■ **Connect marketing and sales with project management.**

Marketing staff needs to be more plugged into projects and clients. And likewise, project management needs to be more plugged into marketing, messaging, and branding. The first opportunity to fumble here is not following through on perceived promises made during proposals and interviews. Develop a list of all of the things you said you would do in the business development process and give that list to the project manager before they write up the scope and fee estimate. This assures that all of those services have a cost associated with them, and offers the client the opportunity to pay for them or not. Additionally, invite your marketing and BD staff to meetings where projects and upcoming work are discussed.

■ **Implement a continuous client feedback system.**

The goal here is to get real feedback that you can use to improve your services and close the gap on what is believed to be the quality of your service versus the reality. Firms are not doing a good job of getting feedback, and even when they do, too many are not using the info. Part of the reason for this is that firms like to check the client feedback box and then

get back to work. Feedback without action is a waste of resources. View client feedback as a two-way street. Consider having your PMs send out regular reports to clients outlining the work completed so far, any needed resources, and what is next. It is a tremendous communication builder, and considering communication problems are the number one cause of quality problems, this practice should improve real quality and thus the perceived quality.

■ **Make quality Job One.** This does not mean that everything else comes second. It means that everything else supports a true commitment to quality control. That means that during a tight market like the one we are in now, we are hiring people to keep the workload at reasonable levels and the quality high. If you are trying to hire and are having trouble, then ask yourself why. Do you need to outsource your recruiting? Do you need to improve your pay and benefits? Do you need to consider an acquisition? A serious commitment to making quality Job One means that someone in the firm is making this their mission and they are addressing any problems that get in the way.

To conclude, stop talking about how great your quality is and actually measure it. And then, no matter how good it is, make improvements to close the gap even further. If quality is good, look at threats down the road. Are your people working so hard that you are going to lose them, thus threatening quality? Put a high-level person in your firm in charge of monitoring quality, a most important feature of your business.

Research shows that perceived quality of your firm’s services can drive financial performance, one way or the other. The next time you talk about branding and someone in your firm rolls their eyes, break out the definition of brand equity and give them the mathematical perspective on this and tie it into project management. That should get their attention. Become the firm that walks the walk when it comes to quality. Trust me, it will differentiate you from your competitors, many of which talk about it, but provide average service. ▀

CHAD CLINEHENS is Zweig Group’s executive vice president. Contact him at [cclinehens@zweiggroup.com](mailto:cclinehens@zweiggroup.com).

CARDNO INC., from page 7

consumer of uranium, but is expected to be overtaken by China at some point in the near future.

The competitive market in drone technology is undergoing explosive growth. *Business Insider* says drones will consolidate around agriculture, energy, utilities, mining, construction, real estate, media, and film. *Business Insider* also says that on the commercial/civilian side, the drone market will grow at a compound annual growth rate of 19 percent between 2015 and 2020.

Cardno not only uses drones, but has a significant presence in the drone industry. The firm has FAA 333 exemptions allowing it to legally fly more than 1,150 different drone platforms nationwide from ground level to an altitude of 400 feet in unrestricted airspace. Cardno maintains a fleet of drones and sensors, and has a professional team of pilots.

Its workflow process for uranium mines is but the latest service in its comprehensive drone package. And the firm plans

to continue seeking exclusivity over what intellectual property it’s developed.

“If you get an issued patent, you can eliminate much of the competition by controlling the patent,” Kack says. “We seek to establish a first mover position for advanced sensor applications within the UAS industry.”

As a 6,500-person global firm, Cardno is well aware of the global potential of its workflow process. There are abandoned uranium mines across the world. But in a global context, several considerations come into play. Can an issued patent be protected? Does the country have a real problem with abandoned uranium mines? And are there resources for projects?

“There are countries that have the resources and commitment to complete remediation and others that are not there yet,” Kack says. “Initially our focus will be on the countries that have active programs and resources to conduct projects.” ▀



## Inbound marketing made simple

If your content is consistently valuable, potential clients might give up their personal information to have it, and choose your firm over others when it's time to close the deal.



**Christina  
Zweig**

**MARKETING  
MATTERS**

**A**re you lost in the jargon about inbound marketing, content marketing, thought leadership, and converting leads?

Here's a no-nonsense explanation of inbound marketing and where I think this concept is going:

To first understand inbound marketing, you have to understand outbound marketing. Outbound marketing relies on "old-fashioned" tactics like buying ads, buying mail lists, cold calling, and mass-emailing direct promotions of products/services. Outbound marketing is a billboard on the highway that says: "Use my firm because it is the best!"

Inbound marketing works in a more subtle way: First, a firm creates something valuable. This is called "content." The key to creating valuable content is putting yourself in your clients' shoes and understanding what interests them. Some examples include a fascinating article on a person your audience wants to know, a presentation of research that might help your clients do their jobs better, or a white paper on a new approach used to tackle a project.

"Inbound marketing works in a more subtle way: First, a firm creates something valuable. This is called 'content.'"

No matter what you create, you have to be able to effectively get it out into a public space where your potential clients can find it. Inbound marketing usually relies on internet-based methods. This piece of content has to be so appreciated and so valuable that not only will your potential clients like it, they will also pass it on to others they think might be interested. Content sharing happens when a news or industry website picks up your content and re-publishes it, social media posting, liking, sharing, and retweeting, or simply by forwarding an email.

See CHRISTINA ZWEIG, page 10



# BUSINESS NEWS

## T.Y. LIN INTERNATIONAL WINS 2016 HONOR AWARDS FOR TILIKUM CROSSING, BRIDGE OF THE PEOPLE AND PORT MANN BRIDGE FROM ACEC

T.Y. Lin International, a globally recognized full-service infrastructure consulting firm, announced that two of its major bridge projects, Tilikum Crossing, Bridge of the People in Portland, Oregon, and the Port Mann Bridge in Vancouver, British Columbia, have received 2016 Engineering Excellence Honor Awards from the ACEC. TYLI and the firm's project partners accepted the awards at ACEC's Engineering Excellence Awards Gala.

"T.Y. Lin International has had the privilege of designing some of the world's most important and iconic bridges. We are tremendously pleased that the American Council of Engineering Companies has honored our work on Tilikum Crossing, Bridge of the People and the Port Mann Bridge," said David Goodyear, P.E., S.E., PEng, TYLI senior vice president and chief bridge engineer. "These two projects demonstrate how the application of innovative engineering solutions, along with an unprecedented level of cooperation and collaboration between design-build teams and their respective project owners, can solve project challenges and advance the bridge design industry."

Located in Portland, Oregon, and the nation's largest transit-only bridge, Tilikum Crossing is the first major bridge in the U.S. dedicated to progressive, alternative solutions to meet urban transportation needs. TYLI was charged with satisfying special transit design, seismic design, and aesthetic design requirements established by TriMet for this project, including the form of the bridge, the towers, and the stay-cables. To control such unique design conditions, the firm designed the bridge as a hybrid between a traditional cable-stayed layout and an extradosed bridge. The visually striking structure features two 180-foot-tall stay-cable towers and two landside piers. Taken together with the flatter rise of the cables, the modern profile of Tilikum Crossing reflects the slopes of the Cascade Mountains, which provide the visual backdrop for the bridge when looking toward the triangular form of Mount Hood.

TYLI engineers also introduced numerous value engineering concepts to reduce project costs. These included optimizing the foundation system by reducing the number and size of drilled shafts, and providing a superior, cost-effective, alternative seismic design solution that removed the need to stabilize the soil or handle hazardous materials on the west approach.

The Port Mann Bridge in Vancouver, British Columbia, is the centerpiece of the Port Mann Bridge/Highway 1 Improvement Project, the largest transportation infrastructure project in the history of the Canadian province to address escalating traffic congestion throughout Greater Vancouver. The bridge project includes the 850-meter-long crossing over the Fraser River, a 350-meter-long segmental box girder south approach in Surrey, and an 820-meter-long segmental box girder north approach in Coquitlam. Carrying 10 vehicle lanes (five lanes in each direction) and a barrier-separated bicycle-pedestrian path, the Port Mann Bridge now reduces drive time for its users by as much as 50 percent.

TYLI's innovative design for the Port Mann Bridge enabled a new 10-lane span within the right-of-way allowed for the five-lane twinned bridge envisioned in TI Corp's reference documents. The bridge also features a clean, dramatic profile, with two 163-meter-high single mast concrete towers and a three-span superstructure that is a composition of two separate, five-lane deck structures separated by a median where the towers are located. Each deck structure has two planes of stay cables that are supported off of a single central pylon.

CHRISTINA ZWEIG, from page 9

Inbound marketing really works when this content is not only virally shared, but so incredibly wonderful that people are willing to give up something for it – their personal information. By hiding parts of this content behind forms, or dazzling them with something so interesting right from the start that they are willing to give you their information in the hopes of receiving something similar in the future, you can effectively begin to collect names and addresses of people who have a much higher likelihood to use your firm than others.

From this point, firms should have a growing list of potentially interested clients coming to them, but the work isn't over. All these potential clients have to be followed up with and, ideally, consistently impressed with more content. From this point on, much like outbound marketing, firms have to close the deal, and do the job.

"The key to creating valuable content is putting yourself in your clients' shoes and understanding what interests them."

Make something cool, put it on the internet, collect information from people who are interested in it, give them more, get them to share it, collect new information, follow up, and repeat over and over. Inbound marketing really isn't that difficult.

So where do firms in the A/E industry go wrong with

### inbound marketing?

**1) Not understanding what is "valuable" content.** For this to work, your firm has to create something useful. A press release on a new hire is not valuable content. I'm not recommending you don't ever send these out, but they won't work as the cornerstone of your inbound marketing campaign.

"Inbound marketing really works when this content is not only virally shared, but so incredibly wonderful that people are willing to give up something for it – their personal information."

**2) Not following up.** Once you start finding out who is interested in you, you have to follow up, and follow up in the right way. It's unlikely that a random person who was forwarded an email is going to immediately call you looking to give you work. They will need more exposure over time. Continue to impress them with more useful content (see #1).

**3) Not closing the deal.** At some point, you need to have some good who can sell your work.

While the term "inbound marketing" may be long gone five years from now, the idea that you want to find ways to draw potential clients to your firm is not something that is going to go away anytime soon. So give it a try, you don't have much to lose. ▀

CHRISTINA ZWEIG is Zweig Group's director of research and marketing. Contact her at christinaz@zweiggroup.com.

## OPINION



# Buzzwords and buzzkills

Marketers in the AEC industry fall into the trap of using buzzwords to create momentum, toot their own horns, and give the impression they are ‘moving forward.’



Javier  
Suarez

POP  
MARKETING

**M**oving forward is an extremely tricky business. Sometimes, at the expense of doing what is best for the situation, we take steps just because they are the ones that are supposed to happen at that particular junction. Finished college and had the same girlfriend for the last three years? You need to get married. Been married for five years? You’re ready to become parents. What can go wrong with those scenarios, right?

As a professional group, us marketers in the AEC industry fall into the trap of using buzzwords to create momentum, toot our own horns, and give the impression that we are “moving forward.” Big data, content marketing, blah, social media engagement, branding, blah, persona-based marketing, B2B e-commerce, account-based marketing, blah, blah, blah. Not that these are unimportant, irrelevant, or inconsequential. But we get hung up on these buzzwords and in essence we turn them into buzzkills.

In an effort to, dare I say it, create trends, our conversations revolve around the latest fad and we forget the root of the issues that led to the buzz du jour. Do we really want, and are we ready for, children, or are we becoming parents because it’s “the thing to do now?” Do we need to debate ad nauseam the particulars of account-based

marketing or should we remind ourselves and our technical staff that we need to move away from pursuing opportunities and focus on being true consultants and cement long-lasting relationships with our clients? This is nothing new. We are reinventing the wheel, spending the majority of our time mixing the frosting while forgetting to review the recipe for the actual cake.

“We get hung up on these buzzwords and in essence we turn them into buzzkills.”

Maybe we are victims of our circumstances. Our industry has been buzzkill-heavy for a long time, too. Who can deny the warm and fuzzy feeling

See JAVIER SUAREZ, page 12



## BUSINESS NEWS

**AEGION CORPORATION AWARDED A \$6.8 MILLION MUNICIPAL CONTRACT FROM CITY OF WEST PALM BEACH, FLORIDA** Aegion Corporation announced the award of a \$6.8 million contract from the City of West Palm Beach, Florida for its **Insituform Technologies, LLC** subsidiary. The City of West Palm Beach evaluated dig and replace, sliplining and cured-in-place pipe solutions before selecting Insituform's CIPP technology as the method to rehabilitate this pipeline.

Insituform began the project in May 2016 with the rehabilitation of approximately 6,000 feet of 48-inch diameter force main sewer pipelines and is expected to complete the project by September 1, 2016. A flow bypass system will be set up throughout the project in order to minimize disruption to the community as Insituform crews install the InsituMain system. This large-diameter pipeline transfers all wastewater from the Town of Palm Beach and the City of West Palm Beach to the East Regional

Wastewater Treatment Plant in West Palm Beach.

Aegion's president and CEO, Charles R. Gordon, said, "The award of this contract is a direct result of our investments in R&D to develop innovative solutions for the pressure pipe rehabilitation market. Our new liner materials provide an effective solution for large-diameter pipelines. We will continue to target this key market with improvements to our existing products and new innovations as well as the patented Fusible PVC pipe technology offered through our recent acquisition of **Underground Solutions, Inc.**"

**JACOBS PROVIDING ENGINEERING AND PROCUREMENT FOR PLANT EXPANSION IN LOUISIANA: MONSANTO APPROVES FUNDING FOR PROJECT** Jacobs Engineering Group Inc. announced that its client, Monsanto Company has announced that it has approved plans to expand its St. Charles Parish operations in Luling, Louisiana.

Following completion of front end engineering, Jacobs is to provide detailed engineering and procurement for the project now that Monsanto's board has approved the expansion.

In making the announcement, Jacobs senior vice president of petroleum and chemicals Manuel Junco stated, "The continuation of our relationship through the funding of this project reflects our strength in full-service delivery of major chemical facilities on the U.S. Gulf Coast. We are excited to continue working alongside Monsanto to deliver this important project."

Monsanto, headquartered in St. Louis, Missouri, is committed to bringing a broad range of solutions to help nourish our growing world.

Jacobs is one of the world's largest and most diverse providers of technical, professional and construction services.

JAVIER SUAREZ, from page 11

of terms like sustainability, going green, innovation, and optimization? A lot of firms jump into the bandwagon of one (or more) of these trends without figuring out if these concepts mesh with their mission, vision, values, and culture. For marketers, these "new" ideas seem like perfect low hanging fruit since it's easy to create branding campaigns around them. Certainly, these are more attractive than "sweating to the oldies" and sharing with a wider audience the benefits that your long-standing brand have yielded to your broad client base.

"Our industry has been buzzkill-heavy for a long time, too. Who can deny the warm and fuzzy feeling of terms like sustainability, going green, innovation, and optimization?"

So what do we make of all this? Salman Kahn, founder of the Kahn Academy, said: "Do not throw out buzzwords without really knowing what is going on behind them." We need to peel away the layers of each of these onions to get to the heart of the matter. A lot of the times, when we finally reach the last layer, we are reminded of a principle we know and love, one that has proven to be successful to our business. Did we just waste our time? Yes and no. Maybe we should not need to go through the lengthy process of deciphering the backbone of each buzzkill, but reinforcing the effectiveness of a principle is always a healthy proposition.

"Repetition is underrated. Eighty percent of the time I feel like a broken record, but this is extremely important and effective with technical folks who jump in and out of the marketing train."

Repetition is underrated. Eighty percent of the time I feel like a broken record, but this is extremely important and effective with technical folks who jump in and out of the marketing train. We need to keep reminding ourselves and others of the most important aspects of our work: That it is about the client, not about us, and that we need to constantly strive to be a true extension of our client's staff while providing a solution to their problems. We could apply a favorite buzzw – I mean buzzkill – and either talk about the term or repeat to ourselves and to others what our focus should be.

In the 1960s, the U.S. Navy came up with the KISS principle (Keep It Simple, Stupid), which states that most systems work best when kept simple and we should avoid complexity. I think that the KISS principle is a buzzword that does not create a distraction. Let's focus on providing such a highly effective level of service that our clients tell us: "The party's just begun/we'll let you in." Then and only then can we "Rock and Roll All Nite." ▀

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**TALK TO US**

Do you have an interesting story to tell? Is your company doing things differently and getting results? Let us know. We'd love to contact you and feature you in an upcoming case study. If interested, please email [rmassey@zweiggroup.com](mailto:rmassey@zweiggroup.com).