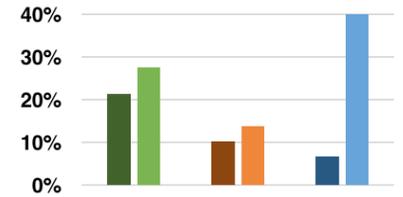


TRENDLINES

Ideal vs. real time spent on marketing



The disparity between the real (7 percent) and ideal amounts of time (40 percent) that owners in **declining-growth** firms spend on marketing shows how marketing, or a lack thereof, affects the growth of a firm. Other growth categories – such as **fast-growth** and **stable-growth** – show a much smaller disparity between real and ideal amounts of time spent on marketing, according to the 2016 *Principals, Partners & Owners Survey*. (Special discount to TZL subscribers: Use code **TZL15OFFSURVEY** to order this survey at 15 percent off on zweigroup.myshopify.com/collections/frontpage)

Phone dependence

“My phone contains every phone number, address, birthday, password, number, security code, paint color, article idea – everything. I need my phone badly!”



Mark Zweig

EDITORIAL

My name is Mark. I am an addict. A phone addict.

But before you sign me up for a 12-step program, I have some good reasons for my addiction. I have two businesses. Four children. Thousands of readers from our newsletter and magazine. Many rental property tenants. Over 100 current students and more than 1,000 former students. My phone contains every phone number, address, birthday, password, number, security code, paint color, article idea – everything. I need my phone badly!

This weekend I got a new phone. Anyone who knows me knows I am a dedicated BlackBerry user. On the recommendation of a good friend and multi-year Hot Firm winning, globetrotting CEO Kit Miyamoto, I got the new BlackBerry PRIV instead of an iPhone, which I had considered. At this point I am about ready to send out a death squad to hunt Miyamoto down. I can't use this damn phone for anything. I don't have my photos from my media card that we installed. I don't have the over 400 notes I completely depend on. Every calendar item is repeated three times over. I cannot even figure out how to use the alarm. Take a deep breath. Exhale.

I'm sure I will get through all this. It will be a matter of time. Maybe I will just decide to completely change my life if I can't. Sell everything and take off on a years-long motorcycle ride. To Hell with my creditors, family members (current and "ex"), friends, employees, suppliers, students, subconsultants – everyone. If I don't have a phone that works I cannot work. So

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BUSINESS NEWS

ALCOA INC. ANNOUNCES BOARDS OF DIRECTORS FOR FUTURE ARCONIC AND ALCOA CORPORATION In preparation for its separation into two industry-leading companies, **Alcoa Inc.** has named the members of the boards of directors for the future **Arconic Inc.** and **Alcoa Corporation**.

To ensure continuity and retention of valuable Alcoa experience, each new company's board will include members of the current Alcoa Inc. board, who will serve alongside new directors appointed after a comprehensive search.

"We have established two world-class, diverse boards for Arconic and Alcoa Corporation to accelerate value for the shareholders of each company," said Alcoa Chairman and CEO Klaus Kleinfeld. "The new directors – like the directors they join – are high-caliber executives who bring to the table track records of success in relevant industrial and leadership roles. Arconic and Alcoa Corporation will draw on the valuable experience of its directors as each company sets course for a promising future."

Arconic will be a provider of high performance materials and engineered products to the aerospace, automotive, commercial transportation, and other growth industries, with a portfolio and strategy positioned to achieve consistent profitable growth. Klaus Kleinfeld will serve as Arconic chairman and CEO.

The Arconic board of directors will comprise the following:

- Amy Alving, former senior vice president and chief technology officer, Leidos Holdings, Inc.
- Arthur Collins, Jr., former chairman and CEO, Medtronic, Inc.
- Rajiv Gupta, chairman, Delphi Automotive PLC and chairman and senior advisor, New Mountain Capital, LLC.
- Klaus Kleinfeld, chairman and CEO, Arconic Inc.
- Sean Mahoney, private investor and former partner and head of the Financial Sponsors Group, Goldman, Sachs & Co.
- E. Stanley O'Neal, former chairman and CEO, Merrill Lynch & Co., Inc.
- John Plant, former chairman, president, and

CEO, TRW Automotive

- L. Rafael Reif, president, Massachusetts Institute of Technology
- Julie Richardson, former partner and the head of the New York office, Providence Equity Partners LLC
- Patricia Russo, chairman, Hewlett Packard Enterprise and former CEO, Alcatel Lucent
- Ulrich Schmidt, former executive vice president and CFO, Spirit Aerosystems Holdings, Inc.
- Martin Sorrell, founder and CEO, WPP plc
- Ratan Tata, former chairman, Tata Sons Limited

Alcoa Corporation will be a globally-competitive industry leader in bauxite, alumina, and aluminum products, positioned to succeed throughout the market cycle. Roy Harvey, current group president of the Alcoa Global Primary Products business, will be CEO of Alcoa Corporation.

The full Alcoa Corporation board of directors will comprise the following:

- Mary Anne Citrino, senior advisor, The Blackstone Group L.P.
- Timothy Flynn, former CEO, KPMG
- Kathryn Fuller, chair, the Smithsonian's National Museum of Natural History
- Roy Harvey, CEO, Alcoa Corporation
- James Hughes, former CEO, First Solar, Inc.
- Michael Morris, former chairman and CEO, American Electric Power Company, Inc.
- James Nevels, founder and chairman, The Swarthmore Group
- James Owens, former chairman and CEO, Caterpillar Inc.
- Carol Roberts, senior vice president and CFO, International Paper Company
- Suzanne Sitherwood, president and CEO, Spire Inc.
- Steve Williams, president and CEO, Suncor Energy Inc
- Ernesto Zedillo, former president of Mexico and current director, Yale Center for the Study of Globalization

MARK ZWEIG, from page 1

meanwhile I will have to type away on this thing on my desk called a "computer." Funny thing about it – every website looks like it should. All my info is here and I can find it. The keyboard is good for typing. It has USB ports. It's pretty doggone nice come to think of it!

Maybe I'll just go to Wal-Mart and get a flip phone next time! On second thought, I am gonna get this new one going. It's what allows me to work anytime, anywhere, and be amazingly responsive and productive – two keys to any success I have ever enjoyed! ▀

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

Take your advice from Mark Zweig to-go.

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PROFILE



The Gorecki Alumni Center at the University of North Dakota. JLG designed the building as a LEED platinum facility. / JLG Architects

Fargo, for sure

Lonnie Laffen, CEO of JLG Architects, is a Bison who likes burgers and fries, a big motor bike, but not politics.

By LIISA ANDREASSEN
Correspondent



Lonnie Laffen,
Founder and
CEO, JLG
Architects

Twenty-seven years ago, Lonnie Laffen, president and CEO of **JLG Architects** (#4 Best Firm Architecture and #75 Hot Firm for 2016), established the firm in Fargo, North Dakota. Over time, JLG has grown to more than 100 “blue chippers” and Laffen says he is privileged to work with them each day.

“I’m a work in progress and my leadership style continues to evolve, but I try to find great people and let them run.”

Prior to founding the firm, Laffen graduated from North Dakota State University in 1982 and worked for design firms in Des Moines, Iowa, and in Fargo. He grew up in a small farm town in North Dakota, where he says you had to participate in everything.

For example, he played basketball and would stay on the court to play in the band at halftime.

“I wouldn’t trade it for anything,” he says.

A CONVERSATION WITH LAFFEN.

The Zweig Letter: What are some of the most significant changes you have seen since founding the firm?

Lonnie Laffen: There are a few. These top the list:

- Specialization has created larger teams and more collaboration for each project.
- Sustainability has been a great change, but I think we are just scratching the surface, especially in energy usage.
- The computer has allowed us to better visualize the end product and has greatly reduced the time it takes to get to construction.
- The iPhone has eliminated the need for 90 percent of my desk space.

See Q&A, page 4



Q&A, from page 3

TZL: What are your firm's key strengths?

LL: Taking care of customers. Our firm has always had a practical approach to building design including a healthy respect for our clients' money. We love what we do, we like working with people, and we communicate very well.

TZL: How would you describe your leadership style?

LL: I'm a work in progress and my leadership style continues to evolve, but I try to find great people and let them run. My role is to give them the tools and motivation to excel.

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

LL: We have had periods of explosive growth where we needed more staff, and attracting top talent to live in Grand Forks, North Dakota, has always been our top challenge. The computer allowed us to form teams from different locations so we spread out to 10 new cities. Not only did that help us to attract new talent, but we found work in all those new locations.

TZL: What is your vision for the future of JLG?

LL: We will continue to grow into new locations. We love improving communities through design and will probably start to develop our own projects. The building process is becoming increasingly complicated for our public clients – we think we can make it easier for them.

TZL: Tell me about a recent project you are especially proud of and why.

LL: The University of North Dakota's Gorecki Alumni Center. The client wanted a traditional, collegiate, gothic-style building on campus, but also wanted it to be iconic and appeal to the next generation of students. We helped them understand that a more contemporary solution might better accomplish these goals. In fact, the design intrigued donors to step up and make the building a LEED platinum facility.

“We learned a long time ago that the key to a successful firm is to have the best people. We have worked very hard to create a place where the best talent will want to work. It's why we are 100-percent employee-owned.”

TZL: How have you helped your firm to outperform some competitors? What do you feel sets you apart?

LL: We learned a long time ago that the key to a successful firm is to have the best people. We have worked very hard to create a place where the best talent will want to work. It's why we are 100-percent employee-owned. We were recently recognized by *Inc.* magazine as one of America's 50 Best Places to Work – how cool is that?

TZL: Do you have any news you care to share about recent

projects or anything else?

LL: We recently acquired **Studio Five Architects** in Minneapolis. Studio Five was a key team member in the new U.S. Bank Stadium project, home of the Minnesota Vikings. We are passionate about sports at JLG and it has been fun to be involved with this project.

“Our firm has always had a practical approach to building design including a healthy respect for our clients' money. We love what we do, we like working with people, and we communicate very well.”

TZL: Are you married? Children? Pets?

LL: I married my kindergarten sweetheart – sounds sappy, but I am the luckiest man alive. She is an equal part of the company's success. We have three grown boys who live in Fargo, Indianapolis, and Austin. We have no pets, but when I retire I am hoping for a black lab instead of a gold watch.

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

LL: Considering I'm a North Dakota state senator – they probably don't know that I'm not a big fan of politics.

TZL: Best vacation spot? Dream destination?

LL: We have a group of eight couples that rides motorcycles together around the country. Wherever they are going is my favorite destination. I would also highly recommend Oktoberfest in Munich, Germany.

TZL: What's the last book you read?

LL: *Vanished: The Sixty-Year Search for the Missing Men of World War II*. The last 100 books I have read have been about World War II. I still can't believe it happened.

TZL: What's the last movie you saw?

LL: *Big Hero 6*. Disney's animated movies are all awesome.

TZL: What's the best piece of work-related advice you've ever gotten?

LL: If you don't love what you do, go do what you love.

TZL: Who is a leader you admire? Why?

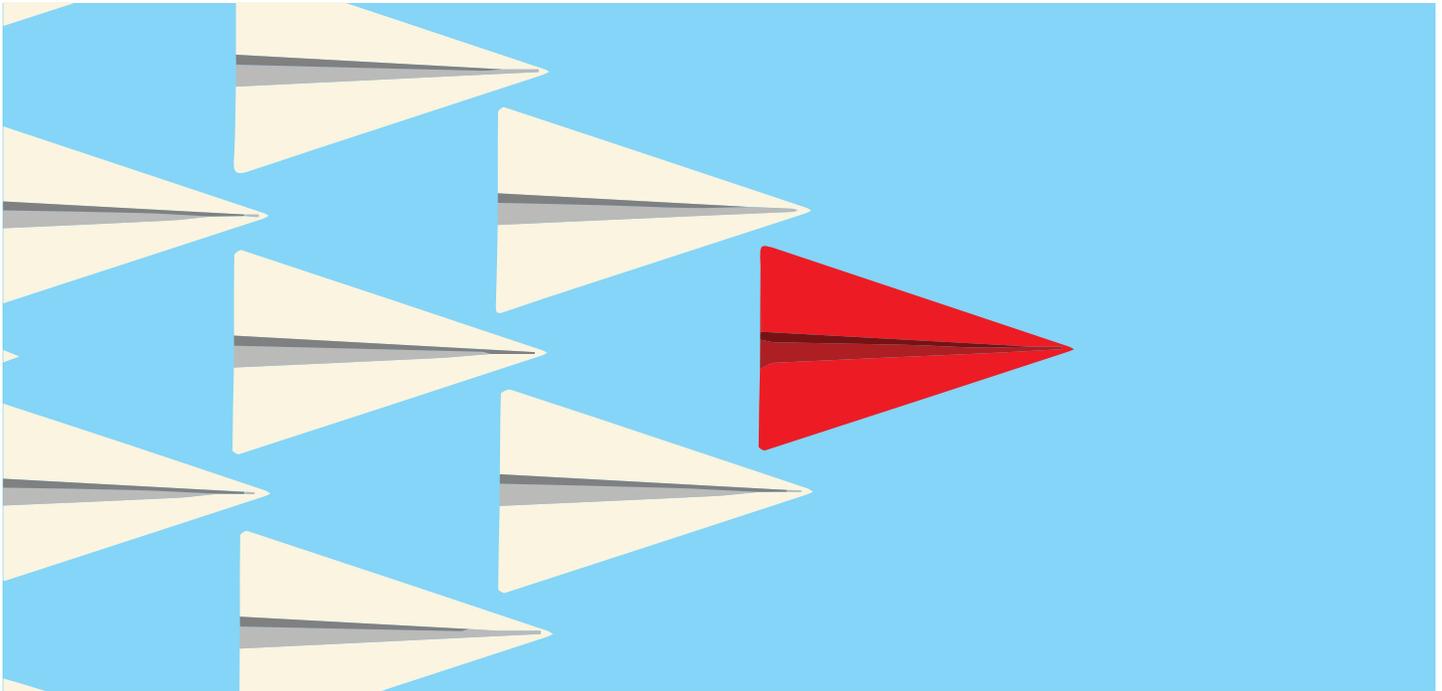
LL: Dwight Eisenhower and Mike Krzyzewski: Quiet and meticulous preparation beats everything else.

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

LL: I'm somewhat of a motor head and find boats, motorcycles, and airplanes very relaxing.

TZL: What's your favorite lunch?

LL: McDonald's #2. Two cheeseburgers, medium fries, and a Mountain Dew. ▀



Life events and the sports page

Empty slogans and tired jargon don't do the trick. To be a great leader you have to make a personal connection with members of your team.



**Bill
Murphey**

**CONTINUING
ED**

I've attended a lot of leadership courses over the years and have learned much about how to lead organizations. What I didn't learn in those courses was how to be great a leader.

Throughout the programs, I learned how to build teams, how to motivate people to achieve exceptional results, how to provide feedback, and even how to project an executive presence. Some of it was really good, foundational information that all leaders should have. Some of what I heard was worthless garbage peddled as profound.

I spent 15 minutes in one leadership course learning how to shake hands. As someone approaching AARP eligibility, I think I've got the handshake thing figured out. Apparently, the instructor was unable to discern from the gray-haired crowd of senior executives that the lesson was a waste of everyone's time. I left the course during the lunch break and didn't return.

Sometimes, I hear those in leadership positions spout the vacuous lines of carnival barkers and snake oil salesmen. Lines such as, "They won't care how much you know until they know how much you care" are like fingernails on a chalkboard. I realize it may sound profound to some, but to real leaders, it reeks of Leadership by Bumper Sticker,

and that's not an effective approach to leading others.

I wouldn't be so pompous as to call myself a great leader. I'm simply passing on some things that have worked for me that are not taught in leadership courses.

■ **Keep track of important dates.** Is someone in your organization graduating from a program or about to earn a professional certificate? Put the date on your calendar and either plan to attend the event (if invited), or pay the person a special visit to personally congratulate them. Work anniversaries are another great addition to your executive calendar. Recognizing that someone has been with your firm for 41 years is a big deal, but so is recognizing that someone has been there for two.

■ **Celebrate life events.** We all have important events in our lives, such as birthdays, weddings, births, promotions, graduations, and more. Celebrate those events publicly, but also commemorate them privately. Share a cake with the office, but also include a personal touch.

See BILL MURPHEY, page 8



SP@TLIGHT ON: Buff

PROFILE



Buffalo City Hall, an enduring symbol of past glory, and recently, a beacon of renewal.

Welcome back to Buffalo

In decline since 1950, the city is finally reversing its downward trend, and architects and engineers are taking part in the recovery.

By RICHARD MASSEY
Managing Editor



Michael S.
Tunkey,
Principal,
CannonDesign

When architect Michael Tunkey graduated from his hometown college, the University of Buffalo, in 1998, he really had no choice. He had to leave town. There just wasn't any work in the Rust Belt city, still in the midst of a catastrophic, multi-decade economic implosion.

So he did as many did back in those days. He packed his bags and left. And for Tunkey, it was certainly for the best. He worked in Boston – where he earned his M.A. in architecture from Harvard – New York, and for eight years in one of the most dynamic cities in the world, Shanghai, before returning to Buffalo with his family two years ago.

Like many ex-pats from Buffalo – and there are plenty of them – Tunkey never quite got over the love for his hometown, and during

summer vacations, would return to his roots to visit friends and family. And as time unfolded, he started noticing something.

“A lot of cool stuff was going on in Buffalo,” he says. “The economy was growing enough to give me opportunity.”

Perhaps the biggest catalyst for the turnaround was the location of the Buffalo Niagara Medical Campus downtown. The consortium of healthcare institutions, clustered in a 120-acre area, kicked off a building boom and reinvigorated a blighted part of town, two things Buffalo desperately needed. The city also began to reclaim its Inner Harbor, a key initiative for quality of life.

Also of significance is that both Delaware North, a global hospitality company, and Pegula Sports and Entertainment, owner of the NFL's Buffalo Bills



and the NHL's Buffalo Sabres, opened headquarters downtown.

The foundation of the renaissance, of course, is that at one point Buffalo was a big city with an established culture, broad parkways, and an impressive inventory of prized architecture. For people like Tunkey – citing landmarks like the Richardson Olmstead Complex, and institutions like the Albright-Knox Art Gallery – there was a lot to return to.

“It’s a beautiful city,” he says.

A principal with **CannonDesign**, a global multidiscipline firm founded in Buffalo about 100 years ago, Tunkey finds himself in a good position. With so much going on there, the firm has been able to capture local work, as it recently did with the \$112-million, eight-acre QueensLight redevelopment of the former site of the Women & Children’s Hospital of Buffalo – a team proposal that beat out three others. The firm augments its Buffalo portfolio with work out of Toronto, Montreal, and Boston.

“A lot of cool stuff was going on in Buffalo. The economy was growing enough to give me opportunity.”

With development ongoing across the full range of projects – industrial, commercial, institutional, and residential – Cannon isn’t the only firm beefing up its backlog. Small, medium, and large firms are busy, and when the really big jobs come up for bid, the degree of difficulty only increases.

“For larger projects, we see all the big East Coast competitors,” Tunkey says.

New York-based **HOK**, for example, recently won the design contract for a 105,000-square-foot field house and event facility for the University of Buffalo.

You win some and you lose some, but if recent developments are any indication, there’s plenty more in the offing for Buffalo. Douglas Development Corp., based in Washington D.C., recently purchased the city’s tallest building, One Seneca Tower, for around \$12 million. According to *Buffalo Business First*, the building could cost anywhere from \$100 million to \$200 million to renovate, plenty to support an assortment of A/E/P contracts.

Douglass Development’s founder and president, Doug Jermal, told the Buffalo press that he is likely interested in a mixed-use project, and that he will explore the possibility of using incentives from the public sector to help finance any improvements to the building.

When and if an RFP/RFQ is issued, Cannon figures to be an interested party.

See BUFFALO, page 8



BILL MURPHEY, from page 5

Each month, I would write and sign notecards congratulating each employee on their birthday. In a 400-person organization, that's an average of more than 30 cards each month. It's a lot of work, but they were appreciated by my team and were personally rewarding for me. A word of caution, once you start a program such as this, you must be diligent about doing it every year, because your employees will remember when you miss their birthday.

“There are many distinctions between leaders and great leaders, but you won't learn many of the techniques at your run-of-the-mill leadership course.”

■ **The lost art of writing.** I wouldn't say I'm old-fashioned. I'd say I'm classic, in that I appreciate the art of writing. I enjoy sending and receiving letters and notecards. For me, a letter or thank you card in my hands will always beat a well-written email or text message.

During my Air Force years, for new parents, I would mail a letter to the new baby welcoming him or her to the organization. In that letter, I would provide a brief summary of that day's events: “On the day you were born, your mommy helped load 435 passengers and 34,000 pounds of cargo on eight airplanes that flew all over the Pacific.” I later found out that many of the parents kept those letters as a keepsake along with the baby's first footprints and lock of hair.

If you have young employees, consider sending their parents a letter. This may sound odd or a little invasive, but it's amazingly powerful. I would write letters to the parents of my new employees telling them what their son or

daughter is doing for the company. It helped the new professionals connect with the company, because their leaders took a few minutes to recognize their contributions. Don't forget to include your business card with the letter so the parents can reach you.

■ **Read the sports page.** For many people, sports are a way of life. Many people follow their favorite sports teams and love to share the latest scores, statistics, and game highlights.

Spend a few minutes each morning reading the headlines in the sports page of your local newspaper or check out the home page on espn.com. See which team won the latest game or who had the fastest time. I'm not suggesting that you fake interest in sports. I'm recommending that you take time to understand what's important in your employees' lives and find a way to stay connected with them.

One area I can't cave into is the celebrity world. I don't care which Hollywood personality is seeing whom, nor will I ever care about what somebody wore to a movie premier. Some people find enjoyment in that, but as a strategic thinker, I have bigger thoughts to ponder. You'll have to decide what works for you.

There are many distinctions between leaders and great leaders, but you won't learn many of the techniques at your run-of-the-mill leadership course. Avoid the programs that speak in the language of bumper stickers. For the architects, engineers, and consultants, I'll shamelessly promote Zweig Group's The Principals Academy program as the best in the AEC industry. We provide industry professionals with practical information about what works and what will make you a great leader. ▀

BILL MURPHEY is Zweig Group's director of education. Contact him at bmurphey@zweiggroup.com.



A NEW SEMINAR FOR A NEW ECONOMY The Principals Academy 2.0 is an updated version of Zweig Group's crash course in all aspects of managing a professional service firm.

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The two-day agenda covers six critical areas of business management from the unique perspective of architecture, engineering, and environmental consulting firms, and is presented in tutorial and case study workshop sessions. The six critical areas include:

- Business planning
- Marketing/business development
- Financial management
- Project management
- Ownership transition planning
- Recruitment and retention

To sign up or for more information, please visit zweiggroup.com/seminars/ or call 800.466.6275.

BUFFALO, from page 7

“We would be in the running for it,” Tunkey says.

As the One Seneca project is just beginning, another is well underway. A massive factory for Elon Musk-backed SolarCity, a maker of solar panels and solar roofs, is expected to be finished next year. Even as SolarCity has experienced a downturn – lethargic sales, a flagging stock price, and subsequent layoffs – a recent listing of SolarCity job openings at the Buffalo location included at least 26 engineering positions, reflecting Buffalo's pivot toward a modern economy.

The redevelopment of Buffalo has been helped in large part by the public sector. New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo pledged his “Buffalo Billion” for revitalization, and though, according to multiple news sources, that program is facing allegations of corruption, it's still credited with jumpstarting

investment in Buffalo, and, in particular, of luring tech titan Musk and his SolarCity factory to town.

At the local level, city government is rewriting the city's archaic zoning code, and renaming it the Buffalo Green Code. Addressing land use, development, waterfront revitalization, urban renewal, and brownfields, the new code is expected to guide Buffalo for the next couple of decades.

Even if Buffalo has seen a welcome uptick in progress during the last decade, it's still true that there's a long way to go. Buffalo, still mired in population decline, is half the size it was during the '40s and '50s Golden Era. For Tunkey, that's not necessarily a bad thing.

“There's still a lot of opportunity for growth,” he says. “Buffalo has great bones.” ▀



Multitasking malfunction

From ex-girlfriends to meerkats, internet overload can put a serious dent in your productivity, even while it makes you feel good.



Christina
Zweig

MARKETING
MATTERS

I am a champion multi-tasker. I pride myself on my ability to write an email, post something on social media, design something for our next conference, answer my phone, eat a sandwich, and write an editorial. But am I really accomplishing more than I would if I just worked methodically through each task until completion? Is my “ability” to multi-task really such a great asset, or am I just looking for an excuse for my inability to truly focus?

To some extent, multitasking is necessary in today’s work environment, especially in the AEC industry. You need to be able to look at a project/design/report, respond to emails, research alternatives, focus on a budget, respond to requests, answer questions from coworkers, and much more, almost simultaneously. But this process has its disadvantages, too. Technology has made it easier than ever to focus on more things at once, but it also introduces a lot of unnecessary and unproductive distractions.

Research shows that people who multitask are not accomplishing more than people who focus on just one thing at a time. In fact, the brain isn’t focusing on a lot of things at once, but rather switching quickly from task to task.

Multitasking is addictive. Researcher Zhen Wang, lead author of a study on multitasking and an

“Research shows that people who multitask are not accomplishing more than people who focus on just one thing at a time.”

assistant professor of communication at Ohio State University, says, “[People who multitask] are not being more productive – they just feel more emotionally satisfied from their work.”

Wang’s research suggests that people get used to multitasking, which makes them more likely to continue.

“We found what we call a dynamical feedback loop,” she says. “If you multitask today, you’re likely to do so again tomorrow, further

See CHRISTINA ZWEIG, page 12



CALENDAR: OCTOBER 2016

conference/seminar webinar award deadline

10.12-15 **INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON DEEP FOUNDATIONS, SEEPAGE CONTROL AND REMEDIATION**

DFI's 41st Annual Conference is introducing a new technical track in 2016, featuring seepage control and remediation for dam and levee projects worldwide. The DFI conference will attract industry professionals from across the globe to gather and share experiences, exchange ideas and learn the current state-of-the-practice from various disciplines. Engineers, contractors, manufacturers, suppliers, owners, government agencies and academicians will meet in New York City to attend informative technical sessions, learn more about the latest innovations in deep foundations technology in the Exhibit Hall and much more.

cost: members: \$1,045; non-members: \$1,190
location: New York City
more info: dfi.org/dfieventlp.asp?13260



10.13 **BECOMING A BETTER RECRUITER**

This is a webinar series specifically designed to help firm principals, managers, HR people, and design and technical professionals in architecture, engineering, planning, and environmental firms become better at hiring top talent. We will help you and your team be more comfortable approaching great talent and learn how to promote the firm, its culture, and career opportunities and advancement.

cost: free
time: 12 p.m. CDT
more info: zweiggroup.com/seminars/better_recruiter/



10.16-18 **INTERNATIONAL CODE COUNCIL ANNUAL CONFERENCE**

Education program addresses critical challenges in the building safety and fire-prevention professions, plus the industry's latest products, services, and technologies, including a workshop on use of drones.

cost: members: \$825; non-members: \$950
location: Kansas City, MO
more info: media.iccsafe.org/2016_ICC_PCH/index.html

10.17-18 **WATER REUSE POTABLE REUSE SUMMIT**

The summit will bring together leading experts from the U.S. to discuss critical factors in the success of potable reuse projects, including addressing regulatory issues, demonstrating environmental and economic viability, and enhancing public understanding and acceptance.

Case studies and panel discussions will enable participants to discuss challenges, lessons learned and successes of potable reuse projects and hear about recent and ongoing research related to potable reuse.
cost: members: \$400; non-members: \$475
location: Oklahoma City
more info: watereuse.org/news-events/conferences/potable-reuse-summit/

10.17-19 **BIMFORUM**

The BIMForum's mission is to facilitate and accelerate the adoption of building information modeling in the AEC industry. Fall meeting theme: What is the new standard for professional coordination? Examining the changing standard of care for designers, builders, and owners.

location: Atlanta
more info: bimforum.org/events/88/2016-fall-bimforum/



10.19 **ADVANCED PROJECT MANAGEMENT WORKSHOP**

Advanced Project Management Workshop is a one-day seminar that was specifically developed to help higher-level design and technical professionals in architecture, engineering, planning, and environmental firms develop the advanced leadership and management skills to better lead projects and clients. Many architects, engineers, planners, and environmental consultants get little or no training in project management and are drafted into project manager roles totally unequipped.

The one-day agenda covers seven critical areas of project management from the unique perspective of architecture, engineering, and environmental consulting firms, and is presented in tutorial and case study workshop sessions.
cost: first attendee: \$975; additional attendees: \$825
location: Denver, CO
more info: zweiggroup.com/seminars/advanced_pm/



10.27-28 **THE PRINCIPALS ACADEMY 2.0**

The Principals Academy 2.0 is an updated version of Zweig Group's crash course in all aspects of managing a professional service firm.

The two-day agenda covers six critical areas of business management from the unique perspective of architecture, engineering, and environmental consulting firms, and is presented in tutorial and case study workshop sessions.

cost: first attendee: \$1,575; additional attendees: \$1,475
location: Cambridge, MA
more info: zweiggroup.com/seminars/tpa/

10.30-11.2 **ACEC ANNUAL CONVENTION & LEGISLATIVE SUMMIT**

It's time to solve America's water infrastructure challenges. AWWA's newest conference is focused on addressing and protecting our asset and infrastructure challenges. With workshops, tours and six session tracks, this four-day conference and exposition will address water infrastructure planning and reinvestment strategies, critical infrastructure protection through comprehensive emergency preparedness efforts, and enhanced security measures.

cost: members: \$775; nonmembers: \$875
location: Phoenix
more info: awwa.org/conferences-education/conferences/water-infrastructure.aspx

OPINION



Sweet summer of 2016

Did your interns live the dream? If so, great, but if not, it might be time to retool your program by taking these six simple steps.



Kelly
Thompson

GUEST SPEAKER

As a communications major with an interest in broadcast journalism, my first summer internship was at a large television station where I was immersed in the hustle and bustle of reporters and police scanners. It's where I first learned the saying, "If it bleeds, it leads." It's also where I learned the media business is fierce and if I wanted a chance in the market, I had to have grit and be willing to trade my summer by the pool for several months of free labor. Thankfully, with monetary support from my folks and a pantry full of ramen noodles, I survived. But, even more than that, I had one of the most invaluable experiences of my career.

Today, there aren't too many unpaid summer internships due to the Unpaid Labor Declaration Policy. Most companies, especially AEC firms, seem to compensate their college-age interns with a fair wage, but, beyond a paycheck, what are these future leaders yearning for in their summer experience? In early June, I sat down to talk with each of our 18 interns, ranging from college sophomores to graduate students. I asked questions about why they chose Little, what they wanted to accomplish this summer and what they were most looking forward to during their internship. Over the next several months, I watched them intently, feeling much like the paparazzi seeking a coveted photo of a Hollywood celebrity. I captured video of them in meetings, snapped hundreds of pictures, held a panel

"The summer internship is a small window for interns to make a good impression. It's also a small window for companies to make a good impression."

discussion with them and, before they departed for school, sat down with each of them once more to gauge whether their experience was all they had hoped for.

Through this comprehensive documentation, I found that the following six practices were

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strengthening the behavior over time.”

This multitasking addiction not only makes you feel less satisfied from working on only one thing at a time, but also makes you less productive.

“Heavy media multitaskers are more susceptible to interference from irrelevant environmental stimuli,” says the National Academy of Sciences. In fact, another study showed, “When workers don’t check email, they focus for longer on tasks and show less psychological signs of stress.”

So what can we do about it?

A funny article and video by *The Atlantic* titled, “Single-tasking is the new multitasking,” introduces a new concept: *Tabless Thursday*. An entire day where participants are only allowed to use one tab on their internet browser at any one time. The article states: “Trying to do too many internet things at once makes it hard to get anything done at all. *Tabless Thursday* is a vacation from distraction.”

In the video, James Hamblin, M.D., states, “If you asked me the last time I did a thing and just did it, and wasn’t also trying to do something else – I wouldn’t be able to tell you.”

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beneficial for any intern, regardless of their age or career path.

■ **Immerse them in your culture.** Not only are interns truly interested in becoming part of your culture, they can help strengthen it. This generation of students wants to have a sense of belonging and have a passion for making a difference. Let them become fully immersed in your culture through events, client presentations and outings. A positive company culture will be the No. 1 reason these young leaders return for a full-time position upon graduating.

“These individuals could very well be future leaders at your firm, so take the time to carefully plan an intern program that allows them, and your company, to flourish.”

■ **Apply the buddy system.** Interns are known for having a multitude of questions, and it’s the job of those in the firm to answer them in as much detail as possible. Pair each intern with a young leader (perhaps someone outside of their day-to-day group who he/she wouldn’t get to know otherwise), to be a personal go-to resource – work-related or not – throughout the summer. You’ll be surprised what your young leader will also learn from the intern.

■ **Allow them to explore.** An internship lets students take their career plan for a test drive. The best experience, however, leads them off the beaten path by allowing them to explore other interests. For example, a student interested in architecture may also be intrigued by how digital animation can build powerful interactive tools of the buildings they design. An engineering student, on the other hand, may be interested in learning about how to optimize a building’s performance. Provide knowledge-packed lunch-and-learns that allow them

He continues on, recounting a time when he tried to write a paper, but ended up on the internet looking at meerkats, which led to three-toed sloths, joining a cause about the prevention of the illegal trade of these beautiful creatures, noticing an ex-girlfriend liked a photo on Facebook, and spending an inordinate amount of time writing this person a message. While this is supposed to make you laugh, it shows how quickly and easily multitasking can lead to distraction.

“Technology has made it easier than ever to focus on more things at once, but it also introduces a lot of unnecessary and unproductive distractions.”

Is it efficient for most people working in the AEC industry to have only one tab open for an entire day – probably not! But if you find yourself feeling stressed, or getting distracted by the never ending vortex of the internet, and too much input – don’t be afraid to turn your phone on silent, not check your email, and force yourself to just focus on one thing for a designated period of time. ▀

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to explore interests outside of what their college curriculum may provide.

■ **Work hard, play hard.** Build camaraderie between your interns and your young, emerging professionals. Whether or not we are willing to admit it, these are the folks in your office who know how to have the most fun. Let them plan parties, scavenger hunts, happy hours, and sporting events that create fun activities for your interns while providing opportunities for them to connect throughout the firm and the community.

■ **Let them be the experts.** During a summer internship, students spend the majority of their time listening and absorbing. It’s equally important, however, to reverse the roles and allow the interns to educate your leadership team. Little held a reverse mentoring discussion where the interns served as esteemed panelists and answered questions from various leaders related to the importance of company culture, the future of workspace, the role of social media in marketing/recruiting, and the myths of millennials.

■ **Address their No. 1 fear.** Discussions with this rising class of professionals revealed their primary fear after graduation is being underutilized, and therefore, restricted in the opportunity to grow their career. Put these fears to rest by involving them in valuable projects and creating opportunities for their input on important decisions. While their project expertise may be limited, a voice in the decision could go a long way in how they envision their future career.

The summer internship is a small window for interns to make a good impression. It’s also a small window for companies to make a good impression. These individuals could very well be future leaders at your firm, so take the time to carefully plan an intern program that allows them, and your company, to flourish. ▀

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The 2016 Financial Performance Survey shows how firms performed on nearly 100 indicators. Each measure is described in detail so firms can better understand the implications of being excessively high or low on any one measure. Firms can use this to target internal initiatives, investment opportunities and improvement efforts to match their best performing peers, or simply to determine if their metrics are moving in the right direction.

EBITDA margin on NSR (medians)

